Discourse of Advaita: Hinduism and the Vedanta Myth

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Abstract

The teaching tradition of Advaita Vedanta is one of the most widely represented forms of Indian religion both outside of India and on the subcontinent itself. The reasons for this popularity are complex and an understanding of it involves an analysis of colonial discourse and the ongoing interest in the tradition by Orientalists and Indian nationalists, as well as an understanding of pre-colonial practices of Brahminization. The academic study of Advaita Vedanta has been continuous since the origins of Indology and the comparative study of religion. In spite of this interest, the tradition has often been represented simplistically as a type of mysticism and as the essence of Hinduism. With this, little attention has been paid to the teaching methodologies (*prakriyas*) presented in the Upanisads or the traditional understanding of words as a means of knowledge (*sabda pramana*). One result of the new understanding of 'birth of language' and modern trends of secularization has been the discrediting of scriptural authority and the revelatory dimension of religion. More recently, the discipline of religious studies has become involved in debates of method and theory which attempt to move beyond the study of 'origins' and towards an understanding of power-knowledge relations and the privatization of religion. Nevertheless, the approach of Indology, while currently conducted across a range of area studies, is still largely limited to philological and textual analysis. This study takes an Indo-critical and structuralist approach to the discourse of Advaita in an attempt to understand Vedanta as an indigenous epistemic tradition, or form of Indian constructivism, while at the same time widening the scope of postcolonial theory and semiotic studies of religion. The Upanisads provide a variety of generic attributes, paradigmatic elements which I delineate, but it is their institutionalization as *epistemic* and *mystic* genres of *traditional* and *neo-colonial* discourse that I primarily analyze. The broad methodological stance of this study stems from an attempt to come to terms with ethnographic observation of the *actual event* whereby Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1930-) teaching in India and the West assumed the role of a *guru*, as he had discerned it in the Upanisads. It also began with the attempt to provide theoretical hypotheses for the cultural and ideological context within which this event took place.

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Introduction

India, America, and the Discourse of Late Capitalism

> There is a method of teaching, a method of communication, by which the vision of the whole can be imparted to the other. We have a tradition that begins from Lord *Siva* and comes down to us through the *Rishis*. The tradition has always been the same. It has not undergone any change; it cannot undergo change because it deals with the whole.[1]

> To say that history is fabricated is to blur the myth/history distinction by pointing out that all histories are socially located, that is to say, they provide contextualised meaning for those who adhere to them. Histories always function as sacred stories which give meaning to particular communities—i.e. they are also myths.[2]

The overall methodology adopted in this thesis, broadly derived from structuralist semiotics and discourse analysis, problematizes paradigmatic narratives of Aryan mythology with narrators in the discourse of late capitalism who serve to privatize the Upanisads, those referential narratives uttered at the end (*anta*) of the Veda. As a first step towards destabilizing the hegemony[3] of these narrators, epistemic narratives silenced by them are appropriated for an Indo-critical subversion of the Hindu discourse where

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[1] Swami Dayananda, *Arsha Vidya: The Vision of the Rishis* (Rishikesh: Sri Gangadhareswar, 1991), p. 10.

[2] Richard King, *Indian Philosophy: An Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1999a), p. 10.

[3] Only brief clarification is currently allowed for terms appearing particularly technical or theoretical. It may be noted that theorization of 'hegemony' in the discourse of Advaita has been largely derived from the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). We can appreciate Gramsci's contributions to Marxist analysis of socio-cultural transition, however, only if we understand the question of consent starting from a novel reflection on the crisis of capitalism. As Feminist theorist Christine Buci-Glukman correctly suggests, "If the Marxist tradition has always primarily though not exclusively insisted on the forms of *domination*, Gramsci brings to the fore in a detailed way the new historical role specific to developed capitalist societies of the forms of class *leadership* in the whole of social life". See Christine Buci-Glukman, 'Hegemony and Consent', in Anne Showstack Sassoon, ed., *Approaches to Gramsci* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society, 1982), p. 120. Gramsci primarily understood hegemony as a revolutionary strategy whereby consensus enables the Italian working class to overthrow the bourgeoisie during the turbulent thirties, a critical time of fascism and the New Deal, but his theorization of this concept has much wider applicability. While the complex nature of the term eludes firm definition, hegemony will be further discussed in chapter three. Also relevant is Gramsci's concept of an 'historic bloc'. For a succinct definition of this term see Anne Showstack Sassoon's 'A Gramsci Dictionary' in Anne Showstack Sassoon (ed.), *Approaches to Gramsci* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society Ltd., 1982). For our purposes, it is important to note that "An historic bloc is specific to a national context in which a different historic bloc may be created under the leadership of a revolutionary class" (p. 14). Gramsci himself discusses this concept at many places in his Prison Notebooks. See for instance his remarks on the study of philosophy in Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (eds.), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 2003), pp. 365-366.

this silence is invested.[4] Taking a subalternist approach to the Upanisads, the internal structure of this genre of discourse is subjected to a semiotic exegesis to produce a novel construct of Aryanism whereby subversive gurus are codified with ancestor lineages of Saivism. Investigating inheritors of this epistemic tradition, I expose a mystic discourse institutionalized in the mythic structure of modernity, the bourgeois private sphere.[5]

The broad methodological stance of this study stems from an attempt to come to terms with ethnographic observation of the *actual event* whereby Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1930-) plays the role of a *guru*, as he has discerned it in the Upanisads. It also began

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[4] By stating my position in these terms, I wish to highlight two separate areas of concern. In one sense, my approach is similar to Michel de Certeau's analysis of the ways in which the "scriptural apparatus" of modernity formed a discipline during the late seventeenth century which both "colonized" and "mythified" the "living word", or "Grail of orality." Reflecting upon the silence which now replaces the Muses and multiple poetic voices which once spread songs and murmurs of 'the people' among the pagan pastures and countryside of Europe, Certeau explains that "these voices can no longer be heard except within the interior of the scriptural systems where they recur." In this sense, then, while it is true that the voice of the people has been transformed, it could be argued that they have not been wholeheartedly silenced: "Rather, orality insinuates itself, like one of the threads of which it is composed, into the network-an endless tapestry-of a scriptural economy." See Michel De Certeau, 'The Scriptural Economy,' in Graham Ward (ed), *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 158-59. It is true that in my reading of the Upanisads I have remained constantly aware of the oral nature of their original transmission. The orality of these texts is clearly discernable in their narrative structure. Nevertheless, as an additional issue I wish to raise for the further development of Indo-critical theory I maintain that the verbal authority of the Upanisads may serve as an indigenous epistemic tradition only to the extent that they are uttered by competent speakers. In this context we may begin to answer the important questions raised by Richard King: "To what extent can one read Orientalist discourses 'against the grain'—that is, provide counter-readings in order to highlight those positions that have been silenced or transformed by the Western colonial filter? Equally, to what extent should we problematize Orientalist and native representations of those groups for whom self-representation was an impossibility?" See Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'the Mystic East* (London: Routledge, 1999b), p. 206. The thesis which I put forth in this study concerning the authority of the Upanisads, what is known as *sabda pramana* (verbal means of knowledge) in the Indian tradition, will further suggest that adherents of this pedagogy may represent an authentic subaltern voice. To the extent that we are able to appropriate this voice at all, one may be sure that it can only be heard through the Hindu discourse obscuring its epistemic power. Further discussion of the problems this creates for defining our approach as subalternist will be provided in chapter one. See chapter five for an understanding of traditional discourse and 'competent' narration.

[5] This typology of subversives in contrast to those who narrate the *Upanisad*s for the bourgeoisie will become apparent as I proceed, but I do not wish to reify the categories 'mystic', 'folk psychologist', 'philosopher,' 'theologian', etc. as stable or apolitical elements in binary opposition to *gurus*. As Terry Eagleton notes, "The phrase 'bourgeois ideology', for example, is simply shorthand for an immense range of discourses scattered in time and space. To call all of these languages 'bourgeois' is of course to imply that they have something in common; but that common element need not be thought of as some invariable structure of categories." For Eagleton, a prototype for this mode of discourse is conceived as a node of signifiers which categorize a "network of overlapping features rather than some constant essence". See Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991) p. 193. Eagleton analyzes this bourgeois node along the lines of Ludwig Wittgenstein's idea of 'family resemblances'. See chapter two for clarification of Saivism and the interchangeable signs 'Aryanism' and 'Vedism'. At the outset, however, it should be stated that my intentions are not to provide any firm definition of these terms.

with the attempt to provide a theoretical hypothesis for the broader ideological context within which this event takes place. As will become apparent with our recognition of certain unverifiable truth claims, a key component of this analysis involves not historical verification but, rather, acknowledgement of important elements central to the traditions self-understanding. This approach does not simply amount to merely accepting these claims, but should be understood as a phenomenological account of how the tradition views itself. The claim for an unbroken lineage of teachers traced to Siva, for example, should be understood from the perspective of Dayananda's own self-understanding of *Arsha Vidya*. Regardless of the individual fabrications of this narrative, on the other hand, it is also true that the concept of *sabda pramana* (verbal means of knowledge) must be described as an integral component to epistemic narratives of Vedanta.

The main focus of this study is not Swami Dayananda. Rather, Dayananda may be taken as an example for a particular subaltern perspective of Vedanta. It should also be stated that previous studies of Dayananda have been methodologically naïve.[6] Part of the goal of this study is to contribute towards clarification of the concept of the subaltern while at the same time acknowledging that the category is entirely fluid and may be deployed differently in different contexts. Dayananda, for instance, is highly involved with an elitist discourse of Indian nationalism (i.e. Hinduism) while at the same time continuing to represent traditional discourse of Vedanta. The novelty of our theoretical construct of Aryanism, moreover, lies with the acknowledgement that this narratological analysis is comprised of multiple braids of discourse. To expect any new definition of Aryanism would simply be to misunderstand my position. In fact, the discursive elements of our analysis is limited to those necessary for understanding the cultural and philosophical differences carried out under dualistic and non-dualistic cosmologies.[7]

Approaching the teaching tradition of Advaita Vedanta and the discourse of late capitalism, I hope to provide a narrative which contributes to the deliverance of

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[6] See pp. 38-40.

[7] For an example of how such bipolar distinctions may replicate binary truisms such as Orientalist distinctions of the 'East' and 'West' see Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

individuals from ideological illusions.[8] As the French communist Louis Althusser reminds us, in order to grasp the significance of capitalist ideology it is important to recognize Karl Marx's maturation process in relation to his dialectical, or scientific, understanding of history.[9] If the 'proletariat' recognizes the history of his 'class struggle,' more specifically, one may secure a 'theoretical weapon' for resisting emergent forms of bourgeois ideology. Similarly, extended beyond the class system from the view of the oppressed, dominated, or exploited, this approach may shield the epistemic violence of ruling hegemony. Describing the paths traversed by Marx in an attempt to return to the Workers Movement in a theoretical form what he took from it in a political and ideological form, Althusser points the way for a critique of imperialism and emergent forms of oppression in the discourse of late capitalism.

In his influential essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation),"[10] Althusser puts forth an important idea of 'interpellation' whereby ideology is defined according to its functional constitution of concrete individuals as

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[8] In constructing this narrative and its accompanying registers of discourse I am somewhat indebted to the overall aims of Marxist criticism and its interpretation of the subversive potential of the aesthetic. For an account of the ways in which art and narrative in general are able to distance themselves from the ideology through which they are produced, and thus reveal the limits of that ideology see Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 16-18. See also Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 408-415. The aesthetic as an operation of discourse is located in the realm of ideological laws concerning the philosophy and critique of 'universals' and 'particulars.'

[9] Marxist science, in short, may be characterized as a form of immanent analysis which places the elements of its critique within the very structure of its enunciation. As Althusser explains, "Precisely because it reveals the mechanisms of class exploitation, repression and domination, in the economy, in politics and in ideology, it cannot be recognized by everyone. This science, which brings the social classes face to face with their truth, is unbearable for the bourgeoisie and its allies, who reject it and take refuge in their so-called 'social sciences': it is only acceptable to the proletariat, whom it 'represents.'" Thus, for Marx, "class conditions had to be achieved for Marx to carry out his scientific work." See Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), pp. 7-8. Summarizing Marx's early works in relation to his subsequent 'rupture', Althusser notes: "So long as he remained on bourgeois and petty-bourgeois positions, Marx was still subject to the ruling ideology, whose function it is to mask the mechanisms of class exploitation. But it is only from the point of view of class exploitation that it is possible to see and analyse the mechanisms of a class society and therefore to produce a scientific knowledge of it...Marx had to abandon his bourgeois and then petty-bourgeois class positions and adopt the class positions of the proletariat" (p. 8). As Althusser emphasizes, moreover, "It is only on the positions of the proletariat that it is possible to provide a radical critique of the new forms of bourgeois ideology, to obtain thereby a clear view of the mechanisms of imperialism...This struggle entails a radical critique of all forms of bourgeois ideology and of all 'bourgeois' interpretations of Marxism. At the same time it demands the maximum attention to the resources, new forms and inventions of the class struggle of the proletariat and of the oppressed peoples of the world" (pp. 9-10).

[10] Althusser (1971), ibid., pp. 127-186.

autonomous subjects. In this context, Althusserian Marxism, or what is more generally referred to as 'neo-Marxism,' allows a strategic position for discourse analysis of Advaita. Following Althusser, I wish to define ideology as the political, social, familial, and cultural apparatus which serves to constitute material individuals as limited subjects, or personological co-ordinates, of that ideological apparatus. Moreover, I shall argue, with Althusser, that what is actually represented in ideology, therefore, is not the real system of relations which govern the lives of individuals, but the imaginary (or, better yet, fabricated) relations of those egocentric individuals to the real relations in which they live.[11] Althusser's theorization of the ideological formation of subjectivity, or subjectivation, will prove useful later in this study, but we must also analyze the predominant historical and cultural trends involved in the maintenance of bourgeois ideology, or the category of the autonomous, independent, and 'free-thinking' individual.

Cautiously drawing upon theorists who construct some Axial Age around 500 BCE, the sociologist of religion Jose Casanova adds a significant element to the historical relations between religion and world.[12] The post-Enlightenment 'second axial shift' Casanova registers concludes with a global production, the birth of the modern individual. Though Casanova's analysis will prove insightful, it should be noted that I am not particularly interested in locating this work within the categorical definitions of social or political theory. The institutionalized private sphere with which I am concerned, which may be designated as the 'sphere of the self,' can be more generally defined as an imperialist domain which colonizes all previous attempts to divide the world into dualistic categories of analysis, from the ancient distinction between 'oikos' and 'polis' to the public/private model currently under consideration. That is, this emergent or perhaps late bourgeois sphere "stands 'between public and private' yet has expansionist tendencies aiming to

[11] Althusser (1971), ibid., pp. 164-165.

[12] Considering "...the wave of world-renunciation which, beginning roughly around 500 B.C., shook one ancient civilization after another, from India to China, from the Near East to Greece" in the religious and cultural development of humanity, the element Casanova adds to this model is seismic: "taking a lofty view of world history, while being conscious that such a perspective flattens out all the "differences," one may easily discern two great axial shifts in the relation between religion and world." See Jose Casanova, 'Private and Public Religions', in *Social Research*, 59.1, 1992, pp. 17-57; 52. The aftermath of this individualistic turn of history provides a 'new attitude' for modern philosophers and prophets.

penetrate and absorb both."[13] The structure of this autonomous domain is directly related to neo-colonial trends in the late capitalist discourse of 'spirituality.'[14]

What I hope to achieve by framing this study in the wider context of capitalist ideology is new insight for an Indo-critical analysis of cultures and a postcolonial approach to the comparative study of 'religion'. In this analysis, I am also interested in the representation of Vedanta in comparative studies of 'mysticism', a subfield in the discipline of religion. One of the first issues to emerge from this context involves an awareness of the Eurocentric presuppositions underlying both the conceptual category of 'religion' and the social construction of the idea of 'the mystical.' In large measure, this analysis has been influenced by the Indologist and postcolonial theorist Richard King's study *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India, and 'The Mystic East.'*[15] The importance of King's call for the development of an Indo-critical approach in the nascent field of postcolonial studies of religion will become obvious at many points in this study.

It is especially important to understand how the modern dichotomy between the private (individual) realm and the public (social) domain has served to marginalize religious authority. In a consumer society religion becomes a matter of individual choice, another optional commodity, divorced from issues of social or political authority.[16] The post-Reformation distinction between institutional/organized religion and private religion, moreover, has largely contributed to the psychologization of religion as a private,

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[13] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 21.

[14] As we shall see, the privatization of Vedanta has been largely accomplished as a result of the discourse of New Age spirituality. The similarities this discourse has with modern trends towards the privatization of religion in general will be further discussed in chapter four. By describing modern spirituality, or New Age capitalism, as 'neo-colonial' I simply wish to highlight the extent to which this discourse is indebted to colonial hegemony and Eurocentric presuppositions and post-Enlightenment forms of knowledge.

[15] King (1999b), ibid.

[16] Cf. "The secularization process that has occurred in modern Western societies since the Enlightenment has not led to the inevitable decline of religion, as some sociologists had prophesied, but rather to the erosion of the authority of institutional religions in the modern era. In this context the consequences of the Enlightenment dichotomy between public and private has been not only the delegitimization of institutional religion (i.e. religion as a social and political phenomenon) but also the increasing tendency to locate religion within the private sphere, thereby separating or excluding it from the realm of politics and power. Thus, while it is not true to say that religion is dying out in the Western world, it is certainly true to say that religion has been increasingly located at the margins of society, that is, away from the major centres of power and authority." King (1999b), ibid., p. 13.

mystical, phenomenon. Similarly, the 'psychological turn' in the academic discipline of religious studies can be traced to an overwhelming concern with private experiences and 'altered states of consciousness', as clearly expressed by seminal exponents such as William James.[17] This phenomenon is also related to the discourse of New Age spirituality and a variety of figures struggling for recognition and authority.

It should be further emphasized that King's outline for Indo-critical analysis of colonial discourse is related to a broader plea for the proliferation of 'ethno-critical' perspectives within religious studies to counteract the Christian theological approach prevalent in the history of the discipline.[18] Indeed, such an analysis is important not only for the insight it may provide to the study of Indian religion in the academy, but also the critical light it may shed upon the methods that diaspora Indians and their Western devotees use to transmit Indian traditions abroad. As John B. Carman notes, "many of the important mechanisms for the transmission of Indian religious traditions to other countries were developed in India in the nineteenth century. Some were quite consciously borrowed from Christian missionaries in the process of reacting to them."[19] Nevertheless, in spite of this awareness, accounts of Indian religion rarely problematize the psychologized framework of Indology and religious studies nor question the authority of certain indigenous figures who now represent an essentialized 'India' and its people.

As I shall argue in this thesis, the transmission of Vedanta is predominantly framed in a mystical context that is based upon modern psychologized notions of experience. While this issue will be elaborated in more detail, I am somewhat taking for granted the fact that India has played a major role in Western constructions of the 'mystic East.'[20] Likewise,

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[17] William James has become popular just as much for his account of religion as a private affair of what humans do in their solitude as for his preoccupation with the varieties of religious experience. See William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

[18] King (1999b), ibid., p. 211.

[19] See John B. Carman, 'Handing Down and Reaching Across: Stability and Movement in Indian Religious Traditions,' in Raymond Brady Williams (ed.), *A Sacred Thread: Modern Transmission of Hindu Traditions in India and Abroad* (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Publications, 1992), pp. 7-20; 13.

[20] Cf. "Whether colonized and homogenized by perennialists or essentialized and segregated by the constructivists, these stereotypes of 'the Mystic East' have been used to make a variety of competing claims about the 'mystical', spiritual or other-worldly nature of Eastern culture and the limitations (or not) of human experience. Such debates also serve to locate the certain aspects of Asian and Western culture

we will have further opportunity to see the ways in which this projection is derived from modernist presuppositions generating the birth of the individual and the private sphere. Without going into detailed explanation of these assumptions, I will now briefly comment upon the discourse of Vedanta in the academic context of Religious Studies.

Like King, I wish to emphasize two main approaches dominating the study of Indian religion. On the one hand, Vedanta has served as a prime example for those who wish to elucidate and support the widely acknowledged construct of perennial philosophy. At the same time, Vedanta has largely been discredited by scholars influenced by social-constructivist paradigms of contemporary theory. This dismissal, however, is founded upon the continuation of Eurocentric epistemological theories and repudiation of the psychologically inspired paradigm which provides perennialists their underlying idea that a pure, unmediated, and unconditioned, experience of reality is a common feature of the mystical philosophy characterizing the essence of the world's religions. Further discussion and disruption of this debate shall elucidate our contributions to the development and intervention of Indo-critical theory.

At this point, it is unnecessary to provide evidence of the historical rise and development of either the perennialist or constructivist paradigm in modern philosophical and critical theory, or the presence of these trends within religious studies. Suffice to note the epistemological and methodological differences forged as a result of their own respective conditioning. One of the more important contrasts between these two approaches concerns their differing beliefs surrounding the limitations or possibilities of knowledge in relation to any unconstructed, or unmediated, reality. This issue is summarized quite well by King's description of social constructivism as offering an 'epistemology of limitation' at odds with Indian forms of knowledge which recognize an 'epistemology of enlightenment.' The fact that the latter are appropriated and reinterpreted by perennialist philosophers further highlights a second major difference with the methodological tenets

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within a modernist and psychologized framework that misreads the phenomenon of 'mysticism' on a number of levels. From a postcolonial perspective, contemporary debates within the comparative study of mysticism ignore the inequality of power implied when Western scholars pass judgment upon the belief systems and forms of life of cultures that are still coming to terms with centuries of Western colonial hegemony." King (1999b), ibid., p. 185.

of social constructivism. This distinction is again aptly summarized by King in terms of the perennialist philosopher's 'Myth of the Transcendent Object' and the social-constructivist stance of cultural isolationism, or 'Myth of the Isolated Context.'[21] King's analysis highlights the limited framework of this debate in reference to the cross-cultural and comparative study of religion, but also recognizes the ways in which it is structured by an underlying concern and exclusive emphasis upon the experiential dimension of mysticism. As a result, King suggests two trajectories for problematizing the Eurocentric and modernist context in a move towards a postcolonial approach to Indian religion.[22]

In an attempt to provide Indo-critical trajectories which problematize the modernist and Eurocentric stance of critical theory, King offers a plea for the recognition of differences in the realm of epistemological theory. Additionally, he problematizes the ways in which the perennialist construction of 'mysticism' has been framed as a predominantly experiential phenomenon garnered with the psychological discourse of consciousness studies. In short, King seeks to "undermine the false dichotomy between perennialism and constuctivism by displacing the psychologically inspired paradigm that has framed the debate in the first place."[23] A central tenet adopted by adherents to the paradigm of perennial philosophy relies upon a distinction between an experience and its interpretation in order to account for the acknowledgement of a transcendent reality or universal truth purported to underlie the seemingly diverse accounts of mysticism provided by cross-cultural analysis of this phenomenon. From a different perspective, constructivism also invokes the rhetoric of experience to discredit mysticism as a pernicious claim to obtaining pure or unmediated access to reality.

The implications of this debate are important for the discourse of Advaita, but Indo-critical analysis is not limited to contemporary epistemological theories or restrained by

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[21] King (1999b), ibid., p. 183.

[22] Cf. "Moreover, such comparativism fails to engage seriously with the indigenous theories, categories and forms of life of those under analysis. Fundamentally, the problem with this entire debate is that the study of mystics has become skewed by the contemporary (post-Jamesian) construction of 'mysticism' in exclusively experiential terms. This, above all else, does violence to the traditions, literature and lives of those who are described as 'mystical', as well as to those who are subject to the sweeping cultural caricatures that such representations frequently imply." King (1999b), ibid., p. 185.

[23] King (1999b), ibid., p. 175.

the experientialist and universalist claims which undermine the cultural particularity and localized institutional authority of religious traditions in favor of privatized conceptions of mysticism. Advaita Vedanta itself may be conceptualized as a form of Indian constructivism which recognizes the role of cultural conditioning, but while at the same time acknowledges an unmediated awareness of reality.[24] Epistemic variants of Vedanta subvert narratives of the tradition which exemplify the methodological limitations of perennialism and social constructivism as an approach to Indian religion and mysticism.

A central task of Indo-critical analysis involves acknowledgment of indigenous epistemic traditions and recognition of the truth-claims offered by those who have been subjected to centuries of colonial oppression and the hegemony of Eurocentric ideology. In this context recent remarks of one contemporary teacher of Advaita Vedanta, Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1930-), are particularly relevant and suggestive of the way in which Indo-critical theory might further proceed in its postcolonial analysis of Indian religion. For Dayananda, the modern construction of Advaita Vedanta as mysticism is rejected on the basis that the teaching tradition involves transmission of knowledge in contrast to the spurious insights and intuitions of those involved in mystical pursuits:

> Mystics do not create mystics—because they are mystics. A mystic cannot make another one equally an eloquent mystic. If he can, then there is a means of communication and therefore there is nothing mystical about it. Then there is a teacher. Mystics have no tradition whereas when teaching is involved, there is communication. Then there can be a tradition—a teacher, a student and his or her student; *guru-sisya-prasisya parampara*. Then the flow is possible.[25]

In this account, Dayananda bears testimony to the fact that the idea of 'the mystic' is a socially constructed category as well as a conceptual site for the struggle of power and authority. Dayananda's implicit denial of any common-core at the root of Advaita

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[24] Cf. "Again, in the Advaita Vedanta tradition of Sankara, the realization of enlightenment is best exemplified by the *jivanmukta*—one who is liberated while alive. Such a being is said to pierce the veil of illusions that constitutes our illusory (*maya/mithya*) experience of the world and achieve what the dualist Vedantin Madhva described as an unmediated awareness (*aparoksa jnana*) of reality." King (1999b), ibid., p. 181.

[25] Dayananda (1991), ibid., p. 3.

Vedanta and mysticism further distances the tradition from the perennialist paradigm whereby it is often appropriated as an example of the experientialist and transcendent dimension of religion.[26] Moreover, Dayananda's attention to the culturally specific forms of knowledge thoroughly embedded in the pedagogical methods of his teaching tradition may provide an alternative to Eurocentric presuppositions of constructivism.

Without denying the many important problems involved in recovering, or appropriating, any idea of 'the indigenous' and its accompanying means of knowledge for an alternative cultural model of understanding religion, any postcolonial approach in this regard must primarily understand itself to be a truly comparative exercise.[27] As King points out, postcolonial theorists of religion must pay far more attention to the 'fusion of horizons' previously encountered in liberal, humanistic, and comparative studies: "Engagement with the theories, categories and world-views of the cultures under examination also requires an acknowledgement of the cultural particularity of Western concepts and theories and a recognition of the politics of comparative analysis."[28] One political element of this theoretical exercise for the discourse of Advaita involves recognition of the epistemic violence entailed by the post-Enlightenment secularization of language and European cultural trends discrediting revealed knowledge, 'scriptural,' or verbal, authority, and the role of sacred language in Indian religions derived from the Vedas. As I wish to argue, this above all else has led to mystic narratives in the discourse of Advaita.

The tradition of Advaita has a long history of debate surrounding the power of words as a means of knowledge (*sabda pramana*) in regard to whether utterances of the Veda

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[26] See also Swami Dayananda, 'Do All Religions Lead to the Same Goal,' in *Pearls of Wisdom* (Sri Gangadhareswar, No Date), pp. 1-3.

[27] Cf. "This is vital for the comparative study of religion, not only in avoiding a reinforcement (however unintentional) of the Europeanization of other cultures but also in order to take account of the religious pluralism that is now the norm rather than the exception, especially within the major metropolitan centres and urban settlements of Europe and North America. However, it is important that the proliferation of such perspectives does not lead to fragmentation, and scholars wishing to explore alternative cultural models for understanding religion must be prepared to consider this to be a truly *comparative* exercise. Replacing Western Christian models of religion with Indian, African or Chinese conceptual frameworks not only creates the danger of falling into the trap of cultural isolationism and a chauvinistic indigenism but may also ignore the heterogeneity of these cultures themselves. There is no single 'Indian', 'Chinese' or 'African' way of looking at the world, just as there is no definitive 'gender-critical stance' from which to approach the study of religion." King (1999b), ibid., pp. 211-212.

[28] King (1999b), ibid., pp. 185-186.

provide provisional or sufficient conditions for the transmission of *brahmavidya* (knowledge of *brahman*). Without recourse to this debate, modern teachers influenced by Eurocentric linguistics and the 'birth of language' have been left with their own variety of experiential visualizations, meditations, internalizations, etc. One camp of Orientalists, the perennialist philosophers, may certainly be understood in this context. Less obvious are the implications of this phenomenon in relation to constructivist interpretations of Indian religion and mysticism, of which Advaita Vedanta is a central focus.

The importance of our semiotic approach and structuralist analysis of the discourse of Advaita may be understood as an engagement with the politics of comparative analysis. Put another way, our methodology is conceived along the lines of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's conception of historiography as strategy.[29] In Spivak's 'against the grain' reading of European sources of humanism it is only by strategically adhering to essentialist notions of consciousness that she is nevertheless able to theorize the 'subaltern subject of history' as an 'autonomous domain,' in spite of the debt to which her theoretical apparatus owes to post-structuralist forms of anti-humanism. For Spivak, however, "A theory which allows a partial lack of fit in the fabrication of any strategy cannot consider itself immune from its own system. It must remain caught within the possibility of that predicament in its own case."[30] Indeed, Spivak is furthermore conscious of the asymmetry which exists between the subaltern and postcolonial intellectuals and she reckons that any elegant solution devised for this dilemma would merely mark a site of desire. The intentions of Spivak and the Subaltern Studies Collective nevertheless seem to reject the hegemonic power of colonial discourse as initially represented by scholars in the field of postcolonial theory immediately subsequent to its inception. With an aim to challenge such notions by highlighting a variety of contestatory discourses and indigenous responses to colonial power, Spivak is content to acknowledge her role as a *bricoleur*.[31]

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[29] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography,' in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak, (eds.), *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 3-32.

[30] Spivak (1988), ibid., p.15.

[31] Cf. "It is best to attempt to forge a practice that can bear the weight of that acknowledgement. And, using the buried operation of the structure of writing as a lever, the strategic reader can reveal the asymmetry between [subaltern and mediator]...Yes, since a 'reading against the grain' must forever remain

While using a host of our own methodological tools at hand I wish to wedge the trajectories of Indo-critical theory in Brahmanical networks of power, so as to arrive at a more self-reflexive representation of our predicament. Similarly aligning the 'anti-essentialist' stance of Buddhist philosophy in the context of anti-humanist approaches of post-structuralist theory, King explains that the rejection of humanism is really a debate about universalism and the commonality of human nature during the Enlightenment period. With this recognition, postcolonial critics are offered a more enlightening stance, or cultural path, which "allows for a recognition of the universality of suffering among all sentient beings (not just humans) and the cessation of this state of affairs as a primary and *universal* objective."[32] In addition to a number of Indo-critical positions drawn from Buddhist thought, as an alternative to the autonomous subject of Enlightenment humanism he suggests one could similarly explore traditional Islamic notions of 'brotherhood.' The alterity of Muslim mimics shatter all notions of 'autonomy.'[33] To translate this approach in terms of Vedanta, I intend to institutionalize the disciplinary power of Advaita in the fraternal lineage of Siva.

It is not in response to humanism that we have found Indo-critical theory most useful for our analysis of the discourse of Advaita. The paradox of our study is that it may be resolved by focus upon the pure, formless, non-dual, unmediated, unconstructed,

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strategic, it can never claim to have established the authoritative truth of a text, it must forever remain dependent upon practical exigencies, never legitimately lead to a theoretical orthodoxy. In the case of the Subaltern Studies group, it would get the group off the dangerous hook of claiming to establish the truth-knowledge of the subaltern and his consciousness." Spivak (1988), ibid., pp. 25-26

[32] In this suggestion, King does not wish to imply that "postcolonial theorists should become Buddhists", nor does he suggest that "...the Buddhist position is true or superior to Western world-views..." More importantly, Buddhist forms of knowledge serve to disrupt "...the Scylla and Charybdis of contemporary postcolonial theory." King is motivated by "a concern to transgress the limits set up by the opposition of humanism and anti-humanism and thereby to highlight the lacunae in much contemporary postcolonial theorizing—as if the European framings of the debate were the only options available to the postcolonial critic." See King (1999b), ibid., pp. 198-199.

[33] Concerning the communal subjectivation of Muslims, Peter van der Veer makes explicit the mundane formation of Islamic identity: "the examples of the saints and the Prophet organize one's emotions and show one the proper way of life—even the proper way of dressing and the proper hairstyle. It is in the body rhythm, including his emotions of shame, honor, and desire, that a Muslim man feels part of a community." See Peter Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 37.

limitless, nature of consciousness, or awareness, revealed in the Upanisads.[34] This resolution is rendered paradoxical from two different perspectives. On the one hand, it is the interpretation of just these very *essentialistic*, *substantialistic*, and homogenizing concepts which we seek to challenge in mystic genres of discourse of Advaita. At the same time, it is with discourse theory that we discover the greatest challenge to these concepts with its origins in the thought of social constructivism. As King has correctly observed, however, the false dichotomy posited here may be resolved by displacing the psychologically inspired paradigm that has framed the debate in the first place.

As far back as Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) 'Copernican Revolution' one can see the realization that human experience is preconditioned by certain a priori categories, such as 'space' and 'time,' that structure our perception of the world. With this intellectual revolution humans are prohibited from ever knowing things-in-themselves (*noumena*), but may only experience the *phenomena* constructed from the appearances organized through the a priori categories of our intellect.[35] With the advent of discourse theory, the development of neo-Kantian thought has gained greater impetus via the recognition that social conditions also provide a priori factors which construct our experience. The philosophy of anti-humanism was not enough to simply discard the subject, since humans were still experiencing themselves as thinking, willing beings. Discourse theorists sought to explain this phenomenon with their presumption that the subject is constructed in and through discourse.[36] One's feeling of 'I' is fabricated with the braids of discourse, modes of production, and networks of power in which the subject has been constructed.

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[34] I would not even mind using such terms as 'experience,' 'direct experience,' 'immediate experience,' etc., were they not so ambiguously employed in Euro-American culture so as to render them conceptually useless. As we shall see, however, when the *Upanisads* employ such words as awareness (*cit*), bliss (*adanda*), self (*atma*), existence (*sat*), etc., they do so in contexts which release these words from their ordinary limitations which might otherwise refer to finite objects in the world, fluctuating thoughts of mind, etc. While I am not so much interested in this study with the ways in which different cults of pre-colonial Indian theologians have dealt with experience, a more common translation here might be the word *anubhava* or, better yet, *aparoksatva* (immediate or self-evident awareness). From a philological perspective we may allow some significance to the fact that the Sanskrit √*bhu* in *anu* itself means 'to be.'

[35] For an interesting discussion of the challenges and influence of Kant in Western philosophy see Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View* (NY: Ballantine, 1991), pp. 341-351.

[36] For a useful introduction to discourse theory and analysis see Diane Macdonell, *Theories of Discourse: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986). For a discussion of discourse theory as an methodological approach in the field of religious studies see Tim Murphy, 'Discourse' in Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon (eds), *Guide to the Study of Religion* (London: Cassell, 2000), pp. 396-408.

In the study of mysticism, traditions such as Advaita Vedanta which posit a non-conceptual and unmediated awareness have been viewed by social constructivists as being in fact forms of re-conditioning which simply provide their adherents with a newly constructed mind-set. Nevertheless, the study of non-Western cultures by Western scholars necessitates an awareness and appreciation of indigenous categories, theories, and forms of knowledge in and on their own terms. Furthermore, many Indian traditions themselves recognize the role of cultural, social, and mental concepts in the conditioning process of the individual while at the same time accepting the notion that one may be released from these limitations through the attainment of knowledge. The introduction of indigenous forms of Indian constructivism presents a range of possibilities:

> Nevertheless, there may be dimensions of human experience that are not conditioned by such cultural factors. A constructivism grounded in an epistemology of enlightenment-postulating an unconstructed awareness-provides some light at the end of a very dark tunnel. One might also opt for a more open-ended and agnostic position, refusing to pass judgement on the question of the farthest reaches of human possibility. Further work is also needed in the development of alternatives to the late Capitalist constructivist or productivist metaphor as a paradigm or model for understanding the nature of the interaction between humans and their cultures.[37]

It is my belief that a better understanding of the pedagogy of Advaita may transgress or disrupt the debate about mysticism as represented through privatized and psychologically inspired paradigms of analysis. If we may enlighten the paradox other postcolonial theorists have chosen to embrace, then what of the notion of truth? Furthermore, how would this truth function in the context of scholarly pursuits such as the academic study of Indian religion? We will return to these types of questions in the conclusion of our study, but a few passing remarks will serve to introduce our perspective. In raising such questions, however, I do not wish to pose the issue in terms of how Indian conceptions of the individual might truly fit in any one-to-one correspondence with ultimate reality. On the one hand, I feel that religious studies should proceed along the lines of cultural studies. In this case one does not question if, say, Brazilian culture is true or false. Not

[37] King (1999b), ibid., p. 184.

only would such a query seem incomprehensible it would also be irrelevant to understanding the culture in question.[38] In this regard one may opt for a form of 'methodological agnosticism' which refuses to assume the position as an arbiter of ultimate truth claims and recognizes the plurality and diversity of religious phenomenon.[39] In large measure, this has always been the approach of post-Enlightenment scholarship in the Western academy.[40]

What is distinctive about the history of religious studies as a discipline of knowledge is that it has previously been involved with departments of theology which have advocated particular religious positions. Similarly, scholars of religion often ground their studies in a form of phenomenological reductionism which tends to represent the category 'religion' as *sui generis*.[41] Colonial discourse analysis and other approaches which recognize the mutual imbrication of religion, culture, and power are positioned to study the legitimation of values, institutions, and ideologies to arrive at better insight into religion than that provided by conceptions of religion as an autonomous essence isolated from the realms of politics and power. On the other hand, it is also important that neither religious studies nor cultural studies reduce themselves to secularist and naturalistic perspectives ('methodological atheism') which lead to the erasure of emic perspectives.

The plea for difference is an important one to recognize and now seems more urgent than ever, as King notes: "The task of creating a space for and recovering indigenous

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[38] King (1999b), ibid., p. 57.
[39] King (1999b), ibid., p. 57.
[40] Of course, taking a non-confessional and agnostic approach to teaching about the beliefs of 'others' need not preclude one from obtaining their own opinion on the matter. Nevertheless, a more fruitful approach may emerge with the development of semiotic approaches to religion. As Tim Murphy notes, as of yet the uses of discourse theory in religious studies is all but uncharted territory. See Murphy, (2000). For the future course of discourse theory in religious studies Murphy suggests we rethink the crucial impulses provided by Roland Barthes. Rather than support the Western academy as a platform where ministers, or even *gurus*, enter to profess their truths one might simply accept the following: "Is it not the characteristic of reality to be unmasterable? And is it not the characteristic of any system to master it? What then, confronting reality, can one do who rejects mastery? Get rid of the system as apparatus, accept systematics as writing." See Roland Barthes, *Bathes by Barthes* (NY: Noonday Press, 1977), p. 172; cited in Murphy (2000), ibid., p. 407. As Murphy explains, "scholarly products are of the same substance as the cultural phenomenon we study, that is, they are both, finally, discourse." Murphy (2000), ibid., p. 407.
[41] See Russell T. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse of Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1997).

perspectives and practices in a postcolonial age has barely begun."[42] The unique aspect of our study concerns the fact that 'recovering' the indigenous perspective of the Upanisads can only be achieved through the teaching lineage initiated therein. Themselves codified in the form of teacher-student dialogues, inheritors of this epistemic tradition are possessed with the teaching methodologies (*prakriyas*) and insight required for the transmission of knowledge. While our anthropological approach to religion represents some attempt to resolve this obstacle, it has also been necessary to reconfigure modes of ethnographic description for empirical observation of Vedanta.[43] The field of structuralist poetics and literary criticism has provided some assistance for a discursive means of appropriating, narrating, and theorizing this tradition. This study may even be conceived as a structural analysis of one profound utterance (*mahavakya*) derived from a single Upanisad, the *Chandogya*: *tat-tvam-asi* (that thou art).[44]

The structural constraints of Advaita are revealed by virtue of their place within the myth of Vedanta. In this regard, I am interpreting Advaita in terms similar to pre-Christian conceptions of *religiones* as *traditiones* and theorizing the language of *mythos* as genres of discourse. Indo-critical analysis of the discourse of Advaita and the comparative approach to religion that I am advocating should continue to explore the methodological field of postcolonial theory, a mode of colonial discourse analysis founded upon Eurocentric forms of literary and cultural criticism.[45] This study has found useful a broad range of tactics among recent developments in discourse analysis and the theorization of power-knowledge relations. The merits I have found in contemporary theory will become apparent in narration of the discourse of Advaita. Still, I do not ultimately wish to simply

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[42] King (1999b), ibid., p. 60.

[43] Our theorization of traditional discourse as put forth more explicitly in chapter five is largely indebted to Pascal Boyer's description of tradition as truth and communication. Our broader cultural analysis, however, should be viewed as a modification of Boyer's more limited focus upon the underling procedures of cognition. See Pascal Boyer, *Tradition as Truth and Communication: A Cognitive Description of Traditional Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). I am greatly sympathetic to Boyer's specific refutation of previous models of tradition in terms of 'cultural models' and 'world views' etc., but the differences of our approach stem from the broader intentions of my analysis of Advaita.

[44] This sentence is spoken several times in the sixth chapter of the *Chandogya* Upanisad. See *Chandogya Upanisad with the Commentary of Sankaracarya*, Swami Gambhirananda (trans), (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1983), pp. 406-502.

[45] For a good introduction to the history and methodological perspectives of postcolonial theory see Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (NY: Routledge, 1998).

embrace the paradox and ambivalence entailed by methodological forms of 'strategic essentialism.' While inevitably empowered, or at least employed, as a *bricoleur* in our own case, it should be emphasized that the Indo-critical approach to postcolonial theory has itself a role to play in the critique of currently perceived limitations of the field. For instance, witness the space Indo-critical theory may occupy in the wake of problematizing the cultural production of late capitalism, or strategically displacing hegemonic trends in the intellectual movements of postmodernism:

> Postmodernism as a specific cultural and intellectual movement within the West has also tended to be rather narcissistic and self-congratulatory in its claim to have unmasked the universalistic pretensions of all meta-narratives. Postcolonial theory, therefore, should remain wary of the rather premature call for the postmodernist 'to dance upon the grave of modernity' and this is best achieved by displacing 'Europe' and the European paradigms of knowledge that inform much postmodernist reflection from the centre of the postcolonial space.[46]

Particularly problematic in this regard is postmodernist conceptions of 'identity' and subjectivity.[47] In his seminal publication 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', Fredric Jameson provides a typology of 'theoretical discourse', 'contemporary theory' or, more simply, 'theory,' a style of analysis purported to mark the end of philosophy as such, whereby our critique of Advaita may be characterized as 'post-structuralist'.[48] Inserting a radical variant to postmodern anti-humanism, post-structuralist critics purportedly provide a mythic dimension to the ideological formation of bourgeois subjectivation. As a staunch modernist with Marxist inclinations in contrast to the rampant anti-representationalism of postmodernists, for Jameson, post-structuralist theory does not merely suggest that bourgeois autonomy is a figment of the imagination: "it adds: not only is the bourgeois individual subject a thing of the past, it is also a myth; it never

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[46] King (1999b), ibid., p. 200.

[47] As Richard King correctly argues, "...the postmodernist rejection of 'identity' as foundational and pernicious in favour of a decentred and fragmentary self has tended to take the free-floating dislocation of the 'postmodern subject' far too seriously. Instead, emphasis should be placed upon 'identity' as relational rather than fragmentary and as embedded in historically produced social forms and political structures rather than disengaged from historical location." King (1999b), ibid., p. 198.

[48] See Frederic Jameson, 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', in Hal Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983), pp. 111-125.

really existed in the first place; there have never been autonomous subjects of the type."[49] As Jameson explains, for structuralism in general there is also a tendency to feel that "reference is a kind of myth, that one can no longer talk about the 'real' in that external or objective way."[50] Similar 'anti-realist' assumptions plague the field of 'post-Marxist' discourse theory which blends concern for class relations, ideology, and political economy with post-structuralist assumptions of logocentrism, texuality, or *ecriture*.[51]

Summarizing Jacques Lacan's 'orthodox' conceptualization of linguistic signs whereby "a word, a text, is here modeled as a relationship between a signifier—a material object, the sound of a word, the script of a text—and a signified, the meaning of that material word or material text", while admitting "we are left with the sign itself and its two components", Jameson bemoans the absence of a significant element of this prototype, that is, he is at a loss for "the so-called 'referent,' the 'real' object in the 'real' world to which the sign refers—the real cat as opposed to the concept of a cat or the sound 'cat.'"[52] In a search beyond this situation he turns toward other variants of signification which assist the linguistic correspondence of signifier's and signified's by reading the inter-relation of material signs in order to derive a 'meaning effect' outside the realm of referential discourse. In this case, however, we are still in the myth of structuralism and, indeed, stuck with a "signified—maybe even the illusion or the mirage of the signified."[53]

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[49] Jameson (1983), ibid., p. 115.
[50] Jameson (1983), ibid., p. 119.
[51] Concerning the ideological history behind this covert camp of bourgeois humanism, Terry Eagleton asserts that the error consists in projecting a model of fascism "onto the quite different discourses of liberal capitalism." In reference to the Yale deconstructionists, like their Frankfurt School predecessors, "ideology, for them as for the end-of-ideology theorists, then comes to signify Hitler or Stalin, rather than Trump Tower or David Frost." Eagleton (1991), ibid., pp. 198-199. In this context, however, we are not simply dealing with a matter of ideology or political action. As Eagleton notes elsewhere: "it is the ideological, not the political, which is the enemy. But to select Stalinism and fascism as prototypes of the ideological is drastically reductive and essentialistic. For it is simply false to believe that all ideologies, in some structurally invariant manner, relay as profoundly upon apodictic truth, metaphysical groundedness, teleological vision and the violent erasure of difference as these brutally extreme models would suggest." Ideology for such theorists, most of whom are Jews, signifies a "minatory shadow, that of the holocaust." As Eagleton argues, "it is to that traumatic experience, one imagines, that much of their anxiety over the transcendental signifier, totalized system, historical teleology, self-evident truth and 'naturalization' of the contingencies of consciousness can be traced back." See Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism: From The Spectator to Post-Structuralism* (London: Verso, 1984), pp. 101-102. In any case, it is obviously incorrect to limit any prototype of fascism to a mere event in the traumatic history of Semites.
[52] Jameson (1983), ibid., pp. 118-119.
[53] Jameson (1983), ibid., p. 119.

The predicament of this problem is widely illustrated with the theoretical construct of 'discourse' and ongoing contemporary trends of analysis.

Analyzing the history of discourse analysis the literary critic Terry Eagleton praises the Soviet philosopher V.N. Voloshinov and the "fertile strain" in which analysts and socio-linguists have carried forth his work in order to serve a number of positive ends, such as investigation into "the ideological effects of oral narrative organization".[54] Distinguishing the widely influential analysts who rather follow the structuralist approach of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) as a contrasting mode of inquiry, for the avant-garde "ideology is essentially a matter of 'fixing' the otherwise inexhaustible process of signification around certain dominant signifiers, with which the individual subject can then identify".[55] A significant point of development in the history of these currents is that the first stream incorporates theorems of orality and Marxism whereas avant-garde theoreticians modify Saussurean semiology and psychoanalysis. In either instance, language and ideology construct a set of subject-effects internal to discourse. Semiotic exegesis of Advaita derives conceptual insight from discourse analysis but is not limited to any of the ideological formations intermingling therein.

Along with Eagleton, moreover, we safely distance ourselves from post-structuralist discourse analysts displaying "an anarchistic suspicion of institutionality as such" and 'utopian' accounts whereby "the nature of all identity slides at its worst into an irresponsible hymning of the virtues of schizophrenia".[56] Yet, as starkly demonstrated

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[54] Eagleton (1991), ibid., p. 198.

[55] Eagleton (1991), ibid., p. 196.

[56] As Eagleton explains, post-structuralist discourse analysis may be classified as a "style of thought about language and ideology" which largely developed in France through a number of writers associated with the semiotic journal *Tel Quel* and thereby "came to characterize avant-garde European thought in the 1970s." Central issues surrounding avant-garde analysts involve their fear of institutional authority, but this mode of representation furthermore "tends to 'demonize' the very act of semiotic closure and uncritically celebrate the euphoric release of the forces of linguistic production." Eagleton (1991), ibid., pp. 196-198. With some irony, then, one of this groups more prominent members could claim that "what the avant-garde does not tolerate about the bourgeoisie is its language, not its status". See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Vintage, 2000), p. 139. As Thomas Luckmann surmises, "but what were marginal bohemian, avant-garde, and intellectualist phenomena at one time, now seem to have become characteristic of the orientations of broad strata of *embourgeoise* populations." See Thomas Luckmann, 'The Privatization of Religion and Morality' in Paul Heelas, Scott Lash, and Paul Morris (eds.), *Detraditionalization: Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 72-86; 74.

with Jameson's taxonomic recalibrations, avant-garde post-structuralists are not alone in their suspicious production of bourgeois classifications. Since, according to 'anti-humanists', so-called individuals no longer have "a unique private world and style to express", Jameson takes as his aesthetic task the discernment of "what the artists and writers of the present period are supposed to be doing."[57] For his part, failing to provide any construct of discourse, Jameson offers a linguistic theory of schizophrenia to hypothesize the cultural production of late capitalism, specifically postmodern art, music, writing, and other imagistic reconstructions as historical developments strikingly similar to the schizophrenic experience of time and space. Analyzing mythic symbols, images, representations, etc., Jameson provides an insightful critique of postmodernism but his constructivist approach is rather naïve.

In Jameson's analysis of late capitalist cultural production, or postmodernism, schizophrenia is theorized as an incoherent experience of isolated, disconnected, signifiers which fail to link up in any meaningful sequence. Simply put, "what we need to retain from this is the idea that psychosis, and more particularly schizophrenia, emerges from the failure of the infant to accede fully into the realm of speech and language."[58] Jameson's schizophrenic does not only fail in the realm of referential enunciation, he is strategically placed in a narrative whereby "the experience of temporality, human time, past, present, memory, the persistence of personal identity over months and years—this existential or experiential feeling of time itself—is also an effect of language." For an ignorant subject for whom self-understanding is therefore impossible, the implications of this schizophrenic mode of individualization are: "the schizophrenic thus does not know personal identity in our sense, since our feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the "I" and the "me" over time."[59] It is indeed 'scandalous' to find Jameson perpetuating post-Fordist models of production, but failing to "accede fully into the realm of speech and language" we must commit ourselves to an asylum of Indo-critical

[57] Jameson (1983), ibid., p. 115.
[58] Jameson (1983), ibid., p. 118.
[59] Jameson (1983), ibid., p. 119.

destruction.[60] Narrating a mythic variant of Saiva destruction, moreover, we must reconfigure late capitalist replications of linguistic production.[61]

Our interest in Jameson lies with his contestation of postmodernism as a regime of literary, artistic, and stylistic forms which reinforce the cultural logic and aesthetic production of multinational capitalism by replicating hegemonic patterns of individualization supporting the ideological consensus of our socio-economic order. It may be readily conceded, Jameson's reformulation of 'late capitalism' as a conceptual category for postmodernism provides a descriptive analysis which encompasses the hegemonic elements with which he is concerned; fragmentation of the 'me' or 'I' as a basis for identity and a perpetually changing experience of time and space, but we must relieve his materialistic anxiety over the 'realities' mythologized by (post-) structuralists. Theorizing such productions in opposition to 'realism' and some objective reality, the effects of which simply serve to provide us with schizophrenic images, Jameson's model of 'consumer society' provides no alternative to late capitalist constructions.[62]

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[60] To be sure, the productive power of language must be resisted, but we must consider the ways in which the Upanisadic method of negation (*neti neti*) would not leave one with schizophrenic implications.

[61] In his linguistic model of schizophrenia, Jameson's approach may be characterized as 'descriptive', that is, he is interested in "...discovering or rediscovering the delirious person in his own specific world." See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), p.24. Similar to Deleuze and Guattari, we find descriptive approaches neither interesting nor theoretically useful for schizoanalysis: "there are those who will maintain that the schizo is incapable of uttering the word I, and that we must restore his ability to pronounce this hollowed word. All of which the schizo sums up by saying: they're fucking me over again" (pp. 24-25). Regardless of their assessment of descriptive analysis, moreover, in terms of our interests there is no doubt that even if a so-called schizophrenic ever "...does chance to utter the word I again, that won't make any difference either" (p. 25). Theorizing "sounded word as power", Walter Ong, certainly provides a more aesthetically pleasing metaphor than descriptive constructions, but it is important to understand that the power of orality is dispersed in time, the latter is not constructed with verbal enunciation: "sound is an event in time, and 'time marches on' relentlessly, with no stop or division." As Ong correctly reminds us, moreover, "time is seemingly tamed if we treat it spatially on a calendar or the face of a clock...but only seems to be, for real, indivisible time carries us to real death" (75-76). See Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1982), pp. 75-76. Schizoanalysis of the psychoanalytic colonization of myth looms large at just this point: "it reeks of the great death and the little ego" Deleuze and Guattari (1983), ibid., p. 368. Of course, we agree with the underlying general idea that space and time are mental constructions (*vikalpa*).

[62] Jameson simply laments the fact that: "cultural production has been driven back inside the mind, within the monadic subject: it can no longer look directly out of its eyes at the real world for the referent but must, as in Plato's cave, trace its mental images of the world on its confining walls. If there is any realism left here, it is a "realism" which springs from the shock of grasping that confinement and of realizing that, for whatever peculiar reasons, we seem condemned to seek the historical past through our own pop images and stereotypes about that past, which itself remains forever out of reach" (p. 118). Perpetuating an image of

The periodization of late capitalism is expressed by Jameson as the formal features and cultural logic of a single motif, "namely the disappearance of a sense of history, the way in which our entire contemporary social system has little by little begun to live in...a perpetual change that obliterates traditions of the kind which all earlier social formations have had in one way or another to preserve."[63] Draining the subversive force of late capitalism Jameson's model of neo-colonialism represents the "necessary failure of art and the aesthetic, the failure of the new, the imprisonment of the past". Indeed it appears that "in a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum."[64] In this study I analyze the myth of Vedanta as bourgeois variants of English-speaking Indians whose hegemonic idiom is widely imitated. Unless we resist this mimetic ensemble our critical efforts are all in vain. As such, I fabricate the late capitalist discourse of Advaita with neo-colonial braids of Hindu narration and thereby taxonomize our subjectivation.[65] In taking this approach, however, I do more than bridge the curators of Indian religion and their imaginative constructions. In short, I seek to displace both 'representational' and 'anti-representational' productions.[66]

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schizophrenic language with critique of some 'school' of 'New Poets' and a stylistic form of 'New Sentences', Jameson's critique is logically connected to photorealism and other anti-representational abstractions, that is, "false realisms, they are really art about other art, images of other images" (p. 123). This image of schizophrenic experience, or free-floating signifiers, may be explained by Jameson's referral to psychoanalysis: "Psychoanalysis settles on the imaginary and structural representatives of reterritorialization, while schizoanalysis follows the machinic indices of deterritorialization." (Deleuze and Guattari (1983), ibid., p. 348. Oedipal configurations of schizophrenia indeed dwell in a cave of psychotic restrictions: "at its most autistic, psychoanalysis is no longer measured against any reality, it no longer opens to any outside, but becomes itself the test of reality and the guarantor of its own reality...Psychoanalysis index sui, with no other reference than itself or 'the analytic situation.'" (p. 344). Deleuze and Guattari articulate precisely the significance of this entire Oedipal projection, as well as the territorial path of our schizoanalytic direction: "Shit on your whole mortifying, imaginary, and symbolic theater. What does schizoanalysis ask? Nothing more than a bit of a *relation to the outside*, a little real reality" (p. 367). Rather than praise Lacan for giving us a linguistic version of schizophrenia we simply note these perversions. The realist and literalist issues addressed by Jameson's critique of *ecriture* are further discussed in chapter five, as well as in the conclusion of this study.

[63] Jameson (1983), ibid., p. 125.

[64] Jameson (1983), ibid., pp. 115-116.

[65] Fieldwork for this study has been conducted in America, India, and Australia.

[66] As Terry Eagleton correctly explains, "there is no reason to imagine that the complex conventions involved in associating an image with its referent are adequately explained by the empiricist version of the process, and no need to throw up trying to give an account of the former simply because the later model has been discredited." Eagleton (1991), ibid., p. 210.

Like Jameson, I resist the erasure or colonization of cultural networks of (de-) individualization which may provide a stable, or 'realistic', self-identification, but our allegorical register should not be seen as some heterogeneous form of linguistic anarchy or pathological discourse of Vedanta. Nevertheless, we may benefit by following a mode of schizoanalysis developed by the French theorists Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, especially in the first part of their two-volume work on capitalism and schizophrenia, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.[67] We agree with Deleuze and Guattari: "when we say that schizophrenia is our characteristic malady, the malady of our era, we do not merely mean to say that modern life drives people mad. It is not a question of a way of life, but of a process of production."[68] Instead of bemoaning late capitalist modes of hyper-reality, for instance, one could unleash the destructive force of consumer societies within their specific locality. In other words, I recognize the fact that "we are all little dogs, we need circuits and we need to be taken for walks."[69] The point I wish to emphasize is quite simply that one should not so readily dismiss the bulk of contemporary theory, in spite of its obviously limited and Eurocentric outlook.[70]

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[67] In contrast to Jameson, Deleuze and Guattari frame their schizoanalysis in direct opposition to established forms of psychoanalysis, particularly as developed by Sigmund Freud and modified with the work of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. Summarizing the so-called 'critical revolution' of Immanuel Kant, with specific attention to Kant's intentions to discover criteria immanent to understanding and thereby distinguish the functions and exploitations of consciousness, Deleuze and Guattari note: "in like fashion we are compelled to say that psychoanalysis has its metaphysics—its name is Oedipus. And that a revolution—this time materialist—can proceed only by way of a critique of Oedipus, by denouncing the illegitimate use of the syntheses of the unconscious as found in Oedipal psychoanalysis, so as to rediscover a transcendental unconscious defined by the immanence of its criteria, and a corresponding practice that we shall call schizoanalysis." Deleuze and Guattari (1983), ibid., p. 83.

[68] Deleuze and Guattari (1983), ibid., p. 37.

[69] Deleuze and Guattari (1983), ibid., p. 347.

[70] My aim to short-circuit the Eurocentric and 'productive' power of (post-) modernity necessitates a nuanced approach to schizophrenia, but this need not suggest an etic dispute with Deleuze and Guattari's intentions, as "the schizophrenic deliberately seeks out the very limit of capitalism: he is its inherent tendency brought to fulfillment, its surplus product, its proletariat, and its exterminating angel" Deleuze and Guattari (1983), ibid., p. 38. Indeed, remarks prefacing Jameson's classification of postmodern commodification represent precisely the implications of our mimetic enunciations: "I'm not even sure the view of schizophrenia I'm about to outline…is clinically accurate; but that doesn't matter either, for my purposes." Jameson (1983), ibid. More importantly, our configuration of schizophrenic discourse—a view indebted to Jameson's understanding of the breakdown of the relationship between signifiers, the structuralist poetics of Tzevetan Todorov, schizoanalysis of Deleuze and Guattari, and Richard King's location of Indian constructivism in the postcolonial study of religion—provides Indo-critical displacement of late capitalist regimes of normalization.

As an allegorical register of discourse which may provide our narrative with a more critical edge but, by the same token, we must admit that "a schizophrenic out for a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on the analyst's couch."[71] Of course, in our attempt to benefit from the approach of schizoanalysis we are not strolling down the same path as Deleuze and Guattari. Our routes are similar, but this process cannot be grasped without a clear indication of the procedures of individualization currently under consideration.[72] In addition to the fact that we do not efface the modernist categories of genre and discourse, our position towards "the emergence of the bourgeoisie as the hegemonic social class" during the modern era when "there was such a thing as individualism [and] individual subjects", is in contrast to postmodernist critics who may indeed believe that the "older bourgeois individual subject no longer exists" but do no more than theorize "the concept of the unique individual and the theoretical basis of individualism as ideological."[73] Not simply another heterogeneous form of French aesthetics, Michel Foucault's analysis of disciplinary regimes institutionalizing "individuals as correlative elements of power and knowledge" plugs us into the social production of subject formation, as he explains: "the individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an 'ideological' representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called 'discipline'."[74] In drawing attention to this issue I wish to emphasize both the ideological creativity and disciplinary procedures constructing modern subject formations.

The very 'fixing' of subjects around dominant poles of individualization (such as institutions, families, bodies, minds, nations, etc.) is itself a complex network of territorialization. In similar recognition of this issue, Deleuze and Guattari note that "schizoanalysis would come to nothing if it did not add to its positive tasks the constant destructive task of disintegrating the normal ego."[75] Again, Deleuze and Guattari are involved in psychiatric, even antipsychiatric, concerns with which we have no interest. For them, disintegrating and 'taking apart' the 'ego' will allow for the liberation of pre-

[71] Deleuze and Guattari (1983), ibid., p. 2.
[72] Cf. "The movement of deterritorialization can never be grasped in itself, one can only grasp its indices in relation to the territorial representations." Deleuze and Guattari (1983), ibid., p. 347.
[73] Jameson (1983), ibid., p. 115.
[74] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (NY: Random House, 1977), p. 194.
[75] Deleuze and Guattari (1983), ibid., pp. 349-50.

personal repressions, desires, etc., as well as subsume the individual for the sake of group identity and communalism. In our task of deterritorialization there is no need to destroy personological co-ordinates constituting the normal ego, but psychologized reterritorializations exceed the territorial and familial constellations which initially lead the task of individualization. What is relevant to the discourse of Advaita, however, is ones self-understanding (*atmavidya*) and identification with reality *(brahman*).

At this point it may be appropriate to address a general assumption guiding this study and more specifically clarify what we may describe as the 'politics of subversion.' A useful context for this discussion may be adopted from Jonathan B. Imber's analysis of the current 'culture wars' in the United States.[76] This requires a basic knowledge of what Imber and others have described as 'maximal' and 'minimal' culture and his sociological classification of cultural components of the 'cognitive-left' and the 'cognitive-right.' Imber's analysis provides a useful corrective that would allow one to theorize the nature of cultural struggle beyond the elite *kulturkampf* and its enduring optimism about 'political correctness' and moral pluralism. It is important to bear in mind, however, that like all binary classifications Imber's distinctions are limited and through the slippage between them we may in fact see deeper structures of their commonality. As we shall argue, the reigning psychological paradigm, or what Imber and his colleagues theorize as therapeutic discourse, binds both cultural conservatives and cultural progressives.[77]

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[76] See Jonathan B. Imber, 'Introduction: One Culture After All' in Jonathan B. Imber (ed), *Therapeutic Culture: Triumph and Defeat* (New Brunswick, NY: Transaction, 2004), pp.ix-xxxii.

[77] Imber does not highlight this issue directly but instead chooses to retain these distinctions for heuristic purposes. As he concludes in relation to unique kinds of struggles represented within the Western academy, "It is altogether a different kind of culture war, not one that engages the religious against the post-religious, and not one that is deadened by the legal doping of millions of people whose therapeutic thought-world controls all but their suicidal tendencies. Rather the culture war in academic precincts especially concerns the fate of generalization about the meaning of culture itself. If we adopt the thought-world of the cognitive left, we give up a great deal in our effort to understand the failure of social policy that has been guided by ideological illusions of equality that no advance in prosperity will ever achieve. On the other hand, if we adopt the thought-world of the cognitive right, we admit certain inevitabilities that make us mostly concerned with the incidence of such failure rather than with what it means to live largely indifferent to some acceptable and expected level of it. The cognitive right attracts the specialists without spirit and the cognitive left attracts the sensualists without heart." Imber (2004), ibid., pp. xxi-xxii. In chapter four we shall provide further discussion of the ways in which the privatization of life and psychotherapeutic hegemony is effected through both personal relations and established institutions.

Following his mentor Philip Rieff, Imber describes the thought-world regulating members of minimal culture as *technological* and that which governs maximal culture as *religious*. The predominant technological trends of the public media and popular culture are illustrated with the fact that effective communication is translated in terms of one's ability to obtain one's market share of the economy. On the other hand, "minimal culture, from the cognitive left, is what capitalism is conceived to be, that is the mindless pursuit of more without maximal reasons for why more is better, except for those who have more."[78] With these differing thought-worlds in action we witness the power generating the maintenance of cultural struggle: "the cognitive left draws its energy from a powerful envy that it would eliminate, while the cognitive right sees that envy as constitutive of and constructive to social order itself."[79] Yet it appears more and more obvious that this power struggle is in the process of being unplugged. Doubting culture wars would certainly lessen ones critical perspective, but there may indeed be 'one culture, after all.' Circulating the powers of pyschologization beyond the parameters of Imber's analysis may shed light upon the increasing visibility of the private sphere.[80]

As a lens of analysis for the politics of subversion the concept of cultural struggle elucidates the elite contenders of American culture. Investigating the origins, nature and consequences of the 'therapeutic school' in America, John Steadman Rice notes that liberation therapy's core ethic is that the true self of the individual is inherently positive and benevolent in nature. Stemming from this assumption is the important conviction that "...cultural and societal repression of the self is the cause of virtually all forms of psychological sickness."[81] It is this same idea that is also translated in terms of the 'sickness of the soul' and its cure through various practices of the New Age movement which are purported to lead to authenticity, self-knowledge, or self-liberation. For

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[78] Imber (2004), ibid., pp. xv-xvi; xiii.

[79] Imber (2004), ibid., pp. xv-xvi; xiii.

[80] As Imber observes, "Psychology has long since passed into a struggle between its clinical and positivist vanguards, while the clinical wing asserts its jurisdictional power over medicine proper. All of this takes place in an evermore transparent enviorment of activity and communication." Imber (2004), ibid., p. xxx.

[81] John Steadman Rice, 'The Therapeutic School: Its Origins, Nature, and Consequences' in Jonathan B. Imber (ed), *Therapeutic Culture: Triumph and Defeat* (New Brunswick, NY: Transaction, 2004), pp. 111-136; 114.

practitioners of the New Age, humans may only realize their true nature by moving beyond conventional procedures of social engineering:

> The great refrain, running throughout the New Age, is that we malfunction because we have been indoctrinated—or, in the New Age sense of the term, been 'brainwashed'—by mainstream society and culture. The mores of the established order—its materialism, competitiveness, together with the importance it attaches to playing roles—are held to disrupt what it is to be authentically human. To live in terms of such mores, inculcated by parents, the educational system and other institutions, is to remain the victim of unnatural, deterministic and misguided routines; to be enslaved by unfulfillable desires and deep-seated insecurities; to be dominated by anxiety-generating imperatives such as creating a good impression; to be locked into the conflictual demands of the ideal relationship.[82]

It is widely known that the New Age movement derives many of its basic assumptions from a broad range of 'Eastern' traditions. The Upanisadic revelation of the self (*atman*) as nondual (*advaita*) has played no small role in New Age conceptions of 'enlightenment.' With any examination of New Age methodologies and practices which are supposed to lead to knowledge of oneself as non-dual the oncoming arrival of 'post-colonial missionaries' could naturally be anticipated.[83] Nevertheless, there may still yet be some time before the institutionalization of these trends are recognized, popularized, and resisted in any wide scale or cross-cultural manner.

As I have suggested, an Indo-critical appropriation of epistemic narratives of the Upanisads may provide some fuel for contesting the power-knowledge relations of late capitalism. The *rsis* themselves, from whose speech-acts the Upanisads are purportedly composed, clearly demonstrate their beliefs about knowledge and differing views of

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[82] Paul Heelas, *The New Age Movement: The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 18-19.

[83] In terms of the attempt to re-educate those with identities that have been oppressed, Imber notes: "Marx contended that the proletariat was already converted to be revolutionary by virtue of its station and that the bourgeoisie could not be because class consciousness defined identity as well as action. Marx's alleged determinism did provide the generational trapdoor that would allow the children of the bourgeoisie to become revolutionary in some manner...They are post-colonial missionaries." Imber (2004), ibid., p. xv. Moreover, the artistry of escape from a limiting theoretical thought-world is described as the mark of distinction between conformative and transformative theoretical traditions.

various practices which lead to erroneous cognitions of reality. In this regard it should be noted that established modes of early identity formation, such as family and communal networks, were respected and there can be no comparison to contemporary trends toward anti-authoritarian resistance and struggles for liberation from institutional and social forms of subjectivation.[84] The individual is understandably related to their various roles and functions and the teacher-student relationships illustrated in the Upanisads highlight the social values for knowledge.[85] The subversive force of the Upanisads may be discerned in their strategic delineation of the possible rewards of knowledge and action. In addition to the tenor with which they reveal the limited or infinite results of each, the subservience of opposing schools of thought is also witnessed with the canonical structure of the Vedas and the *inclusivist* assertion of the Upanisads as the final word on knowledge. In contrast, in the context of late capitalism and Vedanta in America it is the subalterneity of this perspective which proves tactical for discourse analysis of Advaita.

In the Upanisads, groups of *gurus* and disciples (*sisya*) portray a community cult legitimated with the transmission of knowledge (*brahmavidya*) through Aryan teaching lineages (*parampara*). For instance, in a particularly salient verse of the *Kena* the epistemic power of speech generates narratives of de-individualization, the disciplinary procedures of which are irreversible by any other discourse of verbal signification, and the narrators conclude with an authoritative warrant for the power of their orality: "thus

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[84] It may be added that others have found in the Upanisads evidence of not only subversive but also revolutionary strategies. Investigating the 'ineffability' of these documents, J.H. Hattiangadi observes that "Mysticism in India was not however the outburst of the 'mystical impulse' at all. Rather, I shall argue that mysticism was originally an expression of, if anything, the most extreme kind of 'logical impulse.' The doctrine of ineffability was a revolutionary attempt to combat obscurantism and cant. It was meant to encourage one to think for oneself, to challenge authority." See J.H. Hattiangadi, 'Why Is Indian Philosophy Mystical,' in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 3, 1975, pp. 253-257; 254. Such attempts to garner respect for the rationality of Indian philosophy are becoming increasingly popular and represent a form of Indian apologetics in the light of Orientalist constructions of 'mystic India.' Hattiangadi's particular assertions are also based upon the speculation that the Upanisads were produced by the class of Ksatriyas who are reported to have been struggling to subvert the social ascendancy of the Brahmins. In any case, his interpretation of the Upanisads is totally unfounded and unwarranted. Hattiangadi appears to be involved with the old Orientalist tendency to project ones contemporary concerns onto the area of their analysis. In contrast to this apparent New Age description of the Upanisads, the *rsis* tirelessly express both the limited results of ritual actions and the necessity of *gurus* in the attainment of knowledge.

[85] For a recent attempt to discern the character of knowledge and contexts of the teaching presented in the Upanishads see Brian Black, *The Character of the Self in Ancient India: Priests, Kings, and Women in the Early Upanisads* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).

we have heard from those who uttered it to us" (*iti susruma purvesam vyacacaksire tat nah*).[86] On the ground, however, the dialogical properties codified by gurus who transmit *brahmavidya* to their disciples in the *Upanisad*s have recently been appropriated from traditional lineages and deinstitutionalized by philosophers, theologians, folk psychologists, and other exponents of belief and experience. The Upanisads, nevertheless, are replete with dialogues whereby knowledge is incontestably transmitted and I delineate the *guru-sisya-parampara* as the paradigmatic axis of Advaita.[87]

Dialogues of the Upanisads are institutionalized with *rsi*-regimes of pedagogical instruction, but discourse analysis of Vedanta cannot limit itself to examining intertextual construction. As Bruce Lincoln explains while analyzing taxonomic variants of truth and legitimation one must remain aware of the interplay between codified narratives, audiences, and modes of negotiation: "Ultimately, what come to be accepted as standard, proper, or hegemonic versions of myths are collective products that have been negotiated between narrators and audiences over time. These form the background against which future narrators craft their interventions and future audiences judge them".[88] Resisting the privatization of Aryanism, in this analysis I strive to negotiate a subaltern variant of Saivism, the narratives of which are intertwined with epistemic enunciations of truth and transmission and, more recently, 'spiritual' confessions of New Age mystics.

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[86] KU. 4. In its own task of clearing away false notions with which the individual has previously identified, or what I am referring to as de-individualization, in addition to being grounded in the incontestable authority of sacred ancestors the Kena employs a pedagogical technique verbal implication (*laksana*) to refer to an object of knowledge which is not the direct meaning of any word. See *Kena Upanisad in Eight Upanisads with the Commentary of Sankaracarya*, Swami Gambhirananda (trans) (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1996), pp. 35-95; 49.

[87] As Bruce Lincoln explains: "Religious claims are the means by which certain objects, places, speakers, and speech-acts are invested with authority, the source of which lies outside the human. That is, these claims create the appearance that their authorization comes from a realm beyond history, society, and politics, beyond the terrain in which interested and situated actors struggle over scarce resources. Among these resources figures prominently one that is both a prize and a weapon in such struggles: the capacity to speak a consequential speech and to gain a respectful hearing. With religious claims, the attempt is made to naturalize (indeed, to supernaturalize) this capacity, thereby placing it—and some people's hold on it—beyond the possibility of contestation". See Bruce Lincoln, *Authority: Construction and Corrosion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) p. 112. Indeed, it is due to divine authorization of the *guru-sisya-parampara* that the Hindu brotherhood transmits incontestable knowledge. The characterization of tradition as 'authority' is further discussed in chapter five.

[88] Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) p. 150.

In an attempt to institutionalize the Upanisads in the corpus of authoritative narrators, the narratives wherein their words are uttered are analyzed in the context of Foucault's genealogy of the procedures whereby disciplinary regimes are inscribed in the discursive and non-discursive formation of disciplinary societies, or ideological communities fabricated with power relations which signify "the reversal of the political axis of individualization".[89] Foucault's analysis of Western society, though somewhat limited in its Eurocentric perspective,[90] is nevertheless important for Orientalism and the discourse of neo-colonialism. While the discourse of Advaita could not be configured upon the disciplinary axis Foucault has problematized until Europeans rediscovered Aryan mythology, from the late eighteenth century onwards this discourse has been structured with cultural trends whereby private beliefs, bourgeois languages, and psychologized experiences have recently been institutionalized.

As we have noted, the construction of the idea of the mystical represents a cognitive site for the struggle of power and authority. If my own parodic approach to this discourse has been to incorporate the constructivist language of Advaita into the scholarly debate between cultural isolationism and *sui generis* narratives of essentialism, it is not only because I have more sympathy for the rigorous analysis of language and ideology than rhetorical and emotive narratives appealing to subjective experiences of autonomous individuals. It is understandable that the psychological and therapeutic paradigm regulating the contemporary conception and expression of mysticism should serve to place this cognitive domain in contrast to other historical and culturally specific modes of understanding ones subjective experiences and internalization of external authority. Aside from the methodological preference I have adopted from the tradition of Advaita, however, the approach of modern New Age exponents of Vedanta (as I shall often

[89] Describing the European phenomenon of individualization simply as 'the adventure', Foucault observes that "...if from the early Middle Ages to the present day the 'adventure' is an account of individuality, the passage from the epic to the novel...from long exiles to the internal search for childhood, from combats to phantasies, it is also inscribed in the formation of a disciplinary society." The post-Enlightenment adventure of individualization may be traced throughout all late capitalist societies, but the disciplinary regimes responsible for this 'childish' search inward serves to psychologize the surplus power of internalization, as Foucault notes concerning the modern direction of subject formation: "All the sciences, analyses, or practices employing the root 'psycho-' have their origin in this historical reversal of the procedures of individualization." Foucault (1977), ibid., pp. 192-193.

[90] For a further critique of Foucault from a postcolonial perspective see Loomba (1998), ibid., pp. 40-44.

henceforth signify contemporary mystical genres of discourse in Advaita) seem to me so far removed from pre-colonial representations that in spite of their sympathetic affirmation of Vedanta (indeed in many such instances the narrators of this discourse even locate themselves within the ancestral lineage of Siva) they may only be analyzed here in terms of the hegemonic implications of their neo-colonial reteritorrializations.[91]

The complex genealogy of the mystical cannot yet be interpreted but it is appropriate to now briefly introduce the structure of this discourse and its relation to disciplinary societies. For well over thirty years now scholars in a range of disciplines from sociology to political theory have emphasized modern trends of secularization in terms of their influence upon such notions as cultural values, norms, morals, human subjectivity, and personhood. Terms and phrases such as "cultural narcissism," "psychologization," "privatization," "triumph of the therapeutic," "ascent of psychological man," etc. have all been employed in various contexts to underline a basic problem in the institutional segmentation of modern society. These expressions imply a concept of culture linked with political economy, and politics linked with self. Accepting that something resembling the triumph of the therapeutic has occurred, similar to Jonathan B. Imber I maintain that "a constructive social science devoted to exposing that triumph is also a key to its defeat."[92] Related to this conviction I might also lament that the failure of popular widespread or mass cultural critique to have yet emerged from this phenomenon is an

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[91] Cf. "Instead of being a documentation of subjective experience, the Veda is an objective structure which guides, controls and gives room to legitimate experience, as well as legitimate argumentation." Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 388. Indeed, following this approach Halbfass argues that the Brahmanical theologian Sankara possessed a critical attitude toward subjective experiences reported to be of some transcendent or mystical nature: "Sankara does not invoke any extraordinary 'psychological events,' and he does not try to validate the truth of non-dualism be referring to 'visionary' or 'mystical' experiences of extraordinary persons. Instead, he reflects on the nature of self-awareness and immediacy, as it is present even in ordinary life, and he tries to find in it what the Upanisads teach explicitly." (p.390). In this context, in fear of stating the obvious, I might highlight a particularly striking note of irony. Specifically, in my approach to the discourse of Advaita I have found the language of structuralist poetics more appropriate for not only theorizing this tradition but also as a means of elucidating the particular concerns and arguments of traditional Vedanta than that of modern orthodox authorities. That this is true in spite of the fact that contemporary saints employ the Sanskrit language and specific categories of knowledge provided in the Upanisads is further testament to their pedagogical failures. While reading the terse arguments of Althusser, as well as some post-structuralists, and the subtle theoretical analysis of individualization and constructivism, for example, one notices the same sort of debate and engaging issues which could have just as well been argued in the context of Vedic schools of thought.

[92] Imber (2004), ibid., pp. ix-x.

indicator of the fact that the therapeutic ethos has already been internalized in society.

While research surrounding the historical manifestation of the 'New Age' as a term for modern forms of inner spirituality (in contrast to the external authority of religion) is admittedly incomplete, in an important study Paul Heelas suggests that its origins appear no earlier than the later part of the nineteenth century.[93] The New Age, of course, is perhaps most notably recognized by the variety of lifestyles it is purported to encompass. This fact has led some critics of the New Age to suggest that it cannot be analyzed as a coherent system or cultural movement. Nevertheless, I agree with Heelas in his argument that the *lingua franca* of this discourse does indeed serve to characterize it as a movement with a large degree of uniformity and consistency. In particular, the New Age speaks the common language of 'Self-spirituality,' a unique idiom sacralizing the Self within and the internal quest for existential authenticity.[94] In his investigation of terminology signifying the New Age, Heelas is also correct that this movement inherits a range of cultural trajectories. What should be made explicit is the Marxist notion that the development of any social formation replicates its conditions of production.[95]

In a recent article by a sociologist of religion who correctly predicted the social structural manifestation of late capitalist cultural production, Thomas Luckmann reflects upon his early speculations.[96] While there was decline in institutionally specialized religion in

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[93] Heelas (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 17.

[94] Cf. "Perfection can be found only by moving beyond the socialized self—widely known as the 'ego' but also as the 'lower self', 'intellect', or the 'mind'—thereby encountering a new realm of being. It is what we are *by nature*. Indeed, the most pervasive and significant aspect of the *lingua franca* of the New Age is that the person is, in essence, spiritual. To experience the 'Self' itself is to experience 'God', the 'Goddess', the 'Source', 'Christ Consciousness', the 'inner child', the 'way of the spirit', or, most simply and, I think, most frequently, 'inner spirituality'. And experiences of the 'Higher Self', to use another favoured term, stand in stark contrast to those afforded by the ego. The inner realm, and the inner realm alone, is held to serve as the source of authentic vitality, creativity, love, tranquility, wisdom, power, authority and all those other qualities which are held to comprise the perfect life." Heelas (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 19.

[95] Similarly relevant is Emile Durkheim's original stipulation of the isomorphic relationship existing between religious and collective representations of social reality. As James Tucker's study of New Age healing practitioners indicates, this classification holds true for the new religions emerging with the individualistic ideology of late capitalism. See James Tucker, 'New Age Healers and the Therapeutic Culture,' in Jonathan B. Imber (ed), *Therapeutic Culture: Triumph and Defeat* (New Brunswick, NY: Transaction, 2004), pp. 153-169; 167.

[96] Thomas Luckmann, 'The Privatization of Religion and Morality,' in Paul Heelas, Scott Lash, and Paul Morris (eds.), *Detraditionalization: Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 72-86.

mid-twentieth century America, or the dominant form of social religion represented by churches, sects, and denominations in the Christian West, Luckmann could nevertheless see that the social reach and cultural pervasion of religion had not come to an end:

> The widespread view that this meant the end of religion seemed erroneous to me. Even in the heyday of secularization theories, there were signs that a new, institutionally less visible social form of religion was emerging, and that it was likely to become dominant at the expense of the older form. Churches and sects would henceforth have to exist in a radically transformed social structural and cultural context. The new, basically de-institutionalized, *privatized* social form of religion seemed to be relying primarily on an open market of diffuse, syncretistic packages of meaning, typically connected to low levels of transcendence and produced in a partly or fully commercialized cultic milieu. The new situation permitted, even encouraged, individual bricolage. Relying for its essential legitimations upon the modern myth of the autonomous individual, it had a pronounced elective affinity for the sacralization of subjectivisms.[97]

As Luckmann goes on to say, the New Age movement represents the social formation of the invisible religion. In its programmatic refusal to be organized with canonical dogmas or articulate itself through any fixed range of myths and symbols, the New Age instead cultivates a network of communication which renders the products of its enterprise commercially viable for a cultic milieu which, until recently, exists on the peripheries of society. At a later point in this study, I wish to take the opportunity to challenge predominant assumptions about the privatization of religion by those who maintain that the psychotherapeutic ethos underpinning the New Age movement has failed to gain any prominent institutional structure in the United States.

In more specific reference to our study, it may be acknowledged that Vedanta and especially the concept of Advaita (non-duality) have played no small role among the adherents of New Age ideology. As Luckmann suggests, the New Age is not merely a new religious movement, it is an emergent discourse which "...revives elements of older religious traditions that were canonized and that it interprets in un-orthodox (often far-fetched) ways. It collects abundant psychological, therapeutic, magic, marginally

[97] Luckmann (1996), ibid., p. 73.

scientific, and older esoteric materials, repackages them, and offers them for individual consumption and further private syncretism."[98] On the other hand, as we shall see, the New Age movement also has a history in India and elements of this discourse have dominated the representation of Vedanta from within the confines of orthodox authority. Most narratives of the origins of the Upanisads even reveal these pedagogical dialogues as contemplative products and visionary experiences of some primitive imagination. Given these facts, in the pluralist and multicultural context of religion in America, it may be argued that the privatization of religion represented by New Age spirituality may in fact be institutionalized with mystic genres in the discourse of Advaita.

Similarly, reference to the absence of Indo-critical scholarship of Advaita Vedanta, and to the universal beliefs of transnational Indian missionaries, will serve as a brief introduction to the ideology of trained Indologists. We are told that Sankara's (700-750 CE) Advaita Vedanta was simply transplanted to the United States in 1893 via Swami Vivekananda for American consumption,[99] but we are compelled to ask: What in America is 'simplified' Advaita Vedanta and how is it transmitted, let alone transplanted? Moreover, what is lost in the process of its commodification?[100] In Sue Hamilton's

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[98] Luckmann (1996), ibid., p. 75.

[99] Noting "Sankara's Advaita Vedanta is perhaps the best known of Indian 'philosophies'..." and the Brahmanical theologians orthodox regime as "...the first to be exported to and propounded in the West, being presented by the Vedantin practitioner Vivekananda at the World Council of Religions in Chicago in 1893 as 'Hinduism'...", Sue Hamilton provides a brief postscript that Sankara's Advaita "very successfully presented itself in a simplified form for Western consumption". See Sue Hamilton, *Indian Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) pp. 131; 138.

[100] Vivekananda is clearly a hegemonic agent of the discourse we seek to subvert, but we are not directly interested in the ideology of this politician. Nevertheless, our synchronic approach places the saint within the range of our analysis. Other Indologists have found it useful to conduct a theological survey of the sage. Indeed, according to Paul Hacker historians of Indian thought should compare the politician to other archaic saints of the 'old school' of Vedanta in pre-colonial India. As Hacker argues, "He saw in the Advaita Vedanta the bond that linked together the diverse varieties of Hinduism. In fact, he took it to be coterminous with Hinduism itself. But he did not simply restate the ancient doctrines. He modified them so as to make them appear relevant to the national and social problems of his time. The student of the history of Indian thought must ask himself whether this modification is a straight prolongation of the lines traced out by the ancient masters of the monistic Vedanta, or whether there is a break between the ideas of the old school and Vivekananda's presentation of the Vedanta". See Wilhelm Halbfass (ed.), *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1995) p. 240. This theological approach is adopted by scholars who seriously think the sage warrants doctrinal attention. Anantananda Rambachan goes so far as to posit theological contrasts between the *swami* and Sankara. See Anantananda Rambachan, *The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Vedas* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

simplistic survey, though left with no further comments about the American transmission of Advaita Vedanta, we may find a clue as to why she fails to observe Vivekananda's reconstruction of the Upanisads. Theorizing their 'origins', Hamilton describes these documents as psychological visualizations of radicals who abandoned Vedic sacrificial rituals and internalized their meaning in solitary contemplation.[101]

The hypothetical Proto-Indo-European (PIE) **weid*, reconstructed as 'to see,' bestows a conspicuous connotation to the knowledge (*veda*) of the Aryans, the latter-day speakers of Sanskrit, and gives us such words as *wise*, *wisdom*, and *vision*. Though preoccupation with the visual focus of knowledge, legitimated with this etymology, is reflected in modern reconstructions of the 'origins' of the Upanisads, this emphasis tends to obscure the importance of understanding the Veda as utterance.[102] The authoritative status of these documents is derived from their generic categorization as *sruti*, a noun derived from the Sanskrit √*sru*, 'to hear.' Now transcribed in edited monographs and popular paperback translations, ethnographic fruits reciprocating our desire to listen (*sravana*) to the idiomatic narration of modern Indians allow us to hear the *Upanisad*s in an ancestor lineage of ancient *rsi*s (seers). As a result of hearing them, our taxonomy of these documents classifies a prototype of the teaching tradition institutionalized therein.

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[101] As Hamilton explains the origins of the Upanisads, "alongside the continuing practice by the majority of outward and visible sacrificial rituals, the Vedic texts record that some began to go on retreat to contemplate the nature of the sacrifice in more depth. Eventually, some of these people came to think that the sacrifice could be "internalized", practiced by means of concentration and visualization techniques." Hamilton (2001), ibid., pp. 25-26.

[102] There is, however, a strong hypothesis for the hegemonic preservation of modern derivations, as Bruce Lincoln explains in terms of those desirous of forging historic fabrications: "When neither the data nor the criticism of one's colleagues inhibits desire-driven invention, the situation is ripe for scholarship as myth. Prehistory here becomes "pre-" in a radical sense: a terrain of frustration and opportunity where historians-cum-mythographers can offer origin accounts…which reflect and advance the interests of those who tell them. Ideology in narrative form". As for his own interests, Lincoln interestingly confesses: "At a certain level, I suppose I am arguing to relocate the *Urheimat* once more, not to any quarter of the globe, but to a specific discourse. Excavating the texts within which that discourse took shape and continues to thrive, we can explicate their content by placing them in their proper contexts, establishing the connections among them, probing their ideological and other dimensions, explicit and subtextual. All this can be done with occasional horror; critical rigor, perspective, and distance; and considerable regret. As students of myth, we can turn our attention to the mythmaking of our scholarly, as well as that of our other, ancestors, secure in the knowledge that our descendants will one day return us the favor. In short, the story I would tell—and like all others, it is a story with an ideological dimension, conditioned by its author's interests and desires—is one that recalibrates categories and redistributes privilege, encouraging a move away from projects of "reconstruction" and toward those of criticism". See Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 215-216. The discourse of Aryan Urheimat is also a subtext of our narrative, but we are most interested in the mythic origins of Vedanta.

Swami Dayananda (1930) was initiated in the *saraswati dasanami* on the customarily auspicious day of sivaratri in 1962 by Swami Chinmayananda (1916-1993), a world-renowned Indian nationalist and leader of the international missionary movements Chinmaya Mission (1953) and Chinmaya Mission West (1975). In spite of this monastic initiation (*diksa*), he regards Swami Pranavananda, an obscure Telugu-speaking swami from Gudivada, Andhra Pradesh, as the primary influence upon his self-understanding. When explaining the heritage of his Aryan tradition, however, Dayananda presents himself as heir to an archaic *rsi*-regime of Arsha Vidya, an ancestor lineage whose truth and transmission is traced to Siva in the form of Daksinamurti.[103] Arsha Vidya signifies non-dual knowledge revealed in the Upanisads and transferable power wielded by Siva and communicated through contemporary heirs of the ancient *risis* subject to the implications of his divinity, mythic narratives of which entails a silent teaching of unilateral transmission.

Aside from his self-location within a lineage of 'Arsha Vidya', however, Dayananda also aligns his vision with that which he sees as the teaching tradition of Advaita Vedanta. "The vision of Advaita Vedanta", says Dayananda, "is an equation of the identity between the *jiva* (individual) and *Isvara* (the Lord)".[104] It should be tacitly acknowledged, then, it is going too far to simply state that it is Dayananada's role as a traditional teacher of Advaita Vedanta with which we are primarily interested. Nevertheless, it is important to articulate the pre-colonial hybridization of his lineage. This study is placed in the context of the teaching tradition of 'Advaita Vedanta' for heuristic purposes. As William Cenkner correctly notes, "an understanding of a religious figure in India can be achieved only within the framework of the teaching tradition from which that individual has come...If clarity is to be achieved in understanding a particular guru in modern times, it can only result from examining the meaning of teacher as instanced within his lineage".[105] In traversal of Dayananda's domain, moreover, I have discovered that the *swami* has also succumbed to the neo-colonial discourse of

[103] Dayananda's understanding of *arsha vidya* will be developed throughout this thesis.

[104] Swami Dayananda, *The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedanta* (Saylorsburg, PA: Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, 1993), p. 3.

[105] See William Cenkner, *A Tradition of Teachers: Sankara and the Jagadgurus Today* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983/1985) p. x.

'Hinduism,' an Orientalist construction adopted by Indian nationalists subjected to the power relations of British India and sustained by those suffering the contemporary effects of colonial authority.

The fact that the *guru* under consideration presents himself as a theologian of Vedanta, and a Hindu, provides us with an opportunity to analyze the regimes of power which configure his self-understanding. At the same time, however, it should be understood that Dayananda serves as an example for the fabrication of tradition in the modern world. Aside from his nationalist stance towards Hinduism, importantly, Dayananda's self-assertion as a traditional teacher stems from his understanding of the role of the *guru* in the Upanisads. We are fundamentally concerned with the teaching tradition to which Dayananda adheres, an ancestor lineage purportedly initiated by Siva and documented in the Upanisads. Analysis of this empirical and conceptual site of conflict and compromise, this hybridization of Orientalist and traditional authority, is conducted along the lines of a semiotic exegesis modified by discourse analysis of the religious canon Dayananda has delivered upon America.[106] This work is located in the field of postcolonial studies, at the intersection of Indology and the anthropological study of Indian religion. In this study, I do not employ such concepts as "Arsha Vidya movement," "Swami Dayananda cult," or similar models which belong to previous scholarship of Indian religion in the United States; it has been found more appropriate to analyze variants in the discourse of the *swami* similar to the way which an Indo-critical theorist might envisage the origins and transformation of an ancient Indo-European myth. I have approached the empirical field of this genre of performance as well as the recordings and transcripts upon which our narratological analysis is based with theorems of agency and orality which register the discourses discovered in the transnational interaction of Dayananda's mythic domain.

There have been no previous studies of Swami Dayananda. The 'Arsha Vidya Gurukulam,' an Institute of Advaita Vedanta and Sanskrit established by the *swami* in the United States, is briefly discussed in Diana Eck's narrative of *A New Religious*

[106] This text is woven throughout with 'orientalist', or 'neo-colonial', and 'traditional' braids of discourse.

America.[107] In a typical reminiscence, Eck recalls her fieldtrip to this institution before seeking to root a cult of bourgeois Indians under the towering sprouts of Saylorsburg. Eck sets the scene of her encounter, "under the pines was a cluster of summer cabins and an open meadow where American-born Hindu teenagers were throwing a football", but it is the roots of her discourse with which we are concerned: "More than one hundred years after Swami Vivekananda planted the seeds of Vedanta in American cities, the Hindu tradition has truly taken root in America...Were he to return to the U.S. today, Vivekananda would be pleased to find these Indian professionals studying Vedanta under the pines in Pennsylvania, and he would recognize the forms of their study and practice".[108] Eck's study, typical of Orientalist historiography of Indian religion, illustrates her desire to introduce the world to Dayananda's religious movement but it informs us very little about her experience with the seeds of the *swami*. Eck would rather harvest a diverse field of 'world religions' in America. To focus her theological perspective, Eck devotes one chapter each to 'American Hindus,' 'American Buddhists,' and 'American Muslims.' Failure to problematize the transmission of Indian traditions is demonstrated with Eck's study of religious pluralism in America. In particular, though she fails to elaborate the studies undertaken at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, it is significant that they are envisioned as practices familiar to the characteristically proud Swami Vivekanada.[109] Fertilizing 'Hinduism' in the United States, Eck discovers Vivekananda as 'America's First Hindu' and praises the saint for internalizing Vedanta.[110]

Focusing our perspective of late capitalist society, our present concern lies with the diaspora of middle-class Indians who, since the nineteenth century, usually in mid-life after an otherwise successful career in medicine, journalism, politics, law, technology,

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[107] Diana Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2001) pp. 137-139.

[108] Eck (2001), ibid., pp. 137-139.

[109] The only details Eck provides about the instruction taking place at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam on the day of her visit is that "a Hindu swami in traditional orange robes was speaking to a group of summer campers on the subject of *viveka*, 'discrimination', in Hindu philosophy". Eck (2001), ibid., p. 138.

[110] For Eck, "Vivekananda not only was fluent in English, he also became fluent in the distinctive idiom necessary to translate Vedanta for the West". Describing the idiom voiced by Vivekananda, Eck explains: "concentration is the key to this 'psychological way to union.' The chemist, the astronomer, the professor, the working person—all are able to excel in what they do only by concentration, bringing the mind to one-pointedness. So it must be with the spiritual life, the disciplines of body and mind that will lead to clarity and concentration in the realization of God." Eck (2001), ibid., p. 98; 100.

etc., have suddenly decided upon a mendicant (*samnyasi*) mode of religious life (*asrama*), taken up the role of a preacher, and with their 'inner experience' of knowledge conduct psychologized missionary campaigns throughout the world.[111] For our part, we formulate the 'micro-physics' of the disciplinary apparatus constructing the nucleus of their authority, effectively investing their bodies as a corpus of resistance, an analysis of the 'surplus power' of which, following Foucault, is conceptualized as "an element in a genealogy of the modern 'soul'."[112] In stark contrast to the illusions invested in the bodies of those subjected to Semitic discourse, however, "the historical reality of this soul, which, unlike the soul represented by Christian theology, is not born in sin and subject to punishment", but rather produced as an effect of corporeal subjection, surveillance and discipline.[113] Indo-critical analysis of Advaita theorizes a prototype of de-individualization, but to reroute epistemic and mystic narratives in the myth of Vedanta the discourse of neo-colonialism must reterritorialize Hinduism.

The discourse of subversive Aryan *rsi*s has been thrice colonized: once by the 'tradition' of 'Advaita Vedanta', a discursive and non-discursive network of Indian saints; secondly, more recently, by Indologists who scrutinize the ideas, doctrines, practices, even experiences, propagated by the Saivite ascetics in whom the normative power and authority to traffic this discourse have been invested; and thirdly by the mystical essence and nationalist discourse of 'Hinduism,' a 'world religion' the prototype of which,

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[111] As Romila Thapar notes, when Indian saints "seek legitimacy from history, thereby imprinting themselves on the perception of the present, and are used as building blocks in the construction of contemporary identities, then the voice of the historian has perforce to be heard". Romila Thapar, *Cultural Transaction and Early India: Tradition and Patronage* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 40.

[112] It should be noted that my focus upon the 'surplus power' of those colonized is in contrast with Foucault's approach, which is often viewed as placing too much emphasis upon the 'dominant' power of the colonial apparatus. For instance, Richard King has also recognized this concern and has found the form of 'micro-politics' advocated by Michel de Certeau more useful for analyzing the power of Indian nationalists. As he notes, "...Foucault's tendency to underplay the possibilities of resistance to dominant discourses suggests that we consider Michel de Certeau's modifications of Foucault's analysis of power in terms of his emphasis upon the micro-politics of resistance." The work of Certeau displays an interest in the popular procedures, tactics, and manipulative strategies of those already caught in the disciplinary network of power. See King (1999b), ibid., pp. 202; 152-153. It is true that Foucault's approach somewhat privileges the dominance of power in its focus upon the productive apparatus of 'discipline.' For an example of Foucault's interest in codifying the 'lack of power' of those subject to punishment in contrast to the 'surplus power' possessed by the sovereign of discipline see Foucault (1977), ibid., pp. 28-29. Further discussion of the surplus power of Indian nationalists is provided in chapter four.

[113] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. 29

according to Timothy Fitzgerald, is derived from "evangelical Christianity of the capitalist west".[114] Classifying narratives of neo-colonial mystics, I problematize discourse of Advaita with the Hindu taxonomy they reconfigure. De-institutionalization of the *guru-sisya-parampara* stems from post-Enlightenment discourse of universalism and affirmative strands of Orientalism.[115]

In an interview with *Magazine littéraire* conducted shortly before his death in 1984, Foucault elaborates his approach in terms of writing the "history of the present" and speaks directly of his method: "Problematization is not the representation of a preexisting object, or the creation through discourse of an object that does not exist. It is the totality of discursive and non-discursive practices that brings something into the play of truth and falsehood and sets it up as an object for the mind".[116] While critics have observed that Foucault's later work exhibits an attempt to move beyond 'power' as the central category of analysis,[117] 'problematization' is no doubt a conceptual technique with which he was still struggling at the time of his death. As such, problematization occupies a conclusive position as an explanatory device in the production and regulation of truth, or a method which may indeed assist the resolution of Foucault's own self-confessed problem. "My problem," says Foucault, "is to know how men govern (themselves and others) by means of the production of truth".[118] Problematizing a domain of power, that is, "grounding our understanding of its current structure on the series of its previous transformations", necessitates "viewing it from the standpoint of the historical basis out of which it

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[114] Timothy Fitzgerald, 'Hinduism and the 'World Religion' Fallacy', in *Religion* 20, 1990, p.104.

[115] Affirmative Orientalism, an element of colonial discourse indebted to European Romanticism and "generally motivated by an admiration for, and sometimes a firm belief in the superiority of, Eastern cultures" is a gross distortion that, "even if motivated at times by a respect for the Orient...participates in the projection of stereotypical forms that allows for a domestication and control of the East". See King (1999b) ibid., p. 92. Further discussion of Orientalist trends in terms of the genealogy of mystical genres in neo-colonial discourse of Advaita, as well as the ways in which New Age 'spirituality' appropriates, or integrates, the myth of Hinduism, is provided in chapters three and four.

[116] Michel Foucault, 'Le Souci de la verite', in *Magazine litteraire* 207, 1984, p. 18, cited in Robert Castel "Problematization as a Mode of Reading History", in Jan Goldstein ed., *Foucault and the Writing of History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 237-238.

[117] See King (1999b), ibid., p. 208.

[118] Michel Foucault, *L'Impossible Prison: Recherches sur le systeme penitentiaire as XIXe siecle*, ed., Michelle Perrot (Paris: Seuill, 1980), p.47, cited in Robert Castel "Problematization as a Mode of Reading History", in Jan Goldstein ed., *Foucault and the Writing of History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 238.

emerges"[119] The discursive and non-discursive practices analyzed by Foucault are laws, regulations, institutions, administrative officials, authorized texts, and licensed speakers.

With investigation of *rsi*-regimes involved in the liberation of individuals as *jivanmuktas* (liberated while living), I wish to emphasize the Foucaultian analysis of this pivotal moment: "In short, I would like to place the register of the production of truth and falsehood at the heart of historical analysis".[120] With heed to his tireless maxim, "I repeat once again that by production of truth I don't mean the production of true statements but the administering of realms in which the practice of the true and the false can be both regulated and relevant," the significance of neo-colonialism is registered as spiritualizing elements of American mysticism.[121] In this investigation, Foucault's genealogical approach is adopted as a mode of analysis: "I start with a problem in the terms in which it is currently posed and attempt to establish its genealogy; genealogy means that I conduct the analysis starting from the present situation".[122] At a particular moment in a specific field of knowledge an apparatus of power begins to register truth, not necessarily issuing true statements but regulating realms wherein warrants of truth are served.

The Upanisads provide a variety of generic attributes, paradigmatic elements which we shall delineate, but it is their institutionalization as *epistemic* and *mystic* genres of *traditional* and *neo-colonial* discourse that I primarily wish to analyze. In terms of the sociopolitical institutionalization of these narratives, I refer primarily to the genres of discourse and systems of classification, or taxonomies, enforced within the culture of late capitalism. As such, this approach requires analysis and conceptualization of Vedanta as a genre of performance. Genres of discourse in the myth of Vedanta form a semiotic system codified with epistemic and mystic narratives of Advaita.[123] Institutionalization of

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[119] Castel (1994), ibid., 238.

[120] Michel Foucault, *L'Impossible Prison: Recherches sur le systeme penitentiaire as XIXe siecle*, ed., Michelle Perrot (Paris: Seuill, 1980), p.47, cited in Robert Castel "Problematization as a Mode of Reading History", in Jan Goldstein ed., *Foucault and the Writing of History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 238.

[121] ibid., p. 238.

[122] ibid., p. 238.

[123] As John Frow explains, "Genre is neither a property of (and located 'in') texts, nor a projection of (and located 'in') readers; it exists as a part of the relationship between texts and readers, and it has a systemic existence. It is a shared convention with social force. The imputations or guesses that we make about the

these narratives is theorized in relation to the Bulgarian literary critic Tzevetan Todorov's typology of genres in discourse.[124] With the historical formation of discourse, we analyze the internal structure of generic narratives as cultural hegemony and ideological forms of language which authorize, institutionalize, and taxonomize variant genres of orality.[125]

These variants are presented along the lines of Bruce Lincoln's characterization of myth as a style of language in "the history of speech, thought, and knowledge/power relations" whereby the narratives of Vedanta function as "the sites of pointed and highly consequential semantic skirmishes fought between rival regimes of truth".[126] The task of semiotic exegesis of Advaita involves concomitant critique of neo-colonial representation, or mystification, and methodological resistance to the productive force of signification. While there have been no previous semiotic studies of the Upanisads, any cursory glance at the hermeneutes surrounding these documents make explicit the implications of their generic performance of orality, or the fact that representatives (narrators, informants, catalysers, etc.) of the internal structure of Advaita are codified with dialogues which ostensively refer to an objective reality. As such, I wish to mark the

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appropriate and relevant conventions to apply in a particular case will structure our reading, guiding the course it will take, our expectations of what it will encounter. But they are grounded in the institutions in which genre has its social being: the institutions of classification in the broadest sense." See John Frow, *Genre* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 102-103.

[124] As Todorov explains, "genres communicate indirectly with the society where they are operative through their institutionalization". Admitting "all genres stem from speech acts", Todorov asks "how can we explain that not all speech acts produce literary genres", or why all speech acts are not institutionalized. His answer conjoins elements in the formation of discursive and non-discursive reality: "the answer is that a society chooses and codifies the acts that correspond most closely to its ideology; that is why the existence of certain genres in one society, there absence in another, are revelatory of that ideology and allow us to establish it more or less confidently. It is not a coincidence that the epic is possible in one period, the novel in another, with the individual hero of the novel opposed to the collective hero of the epic: each of these choices depends upon the ideological framework within which it operates." See Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 19.

[125] As Todorov notes, "discourse is not made up of sentences, but of uttered sentences, or, more succinctly, of utterances. Now the interpretation of an utterance is determined, on the one hand, by the sentence that is uttered, and on the other hand by the process of enunciation of that sentence…discourse is always and necessarily constituted by speech acts." Todorov (1990), ibid., p. 16.

[126] Lincoln (1999), ibid., 18. Explaining the function of myth, Lincoln argues: "when a taxonomy is encoded in mythic form, the narrative packages a specific, contingent system of discrimination in a particularly attractive and memorable form. What is more, it naturalizes and legitimates it. Myth, then, is not just taxonomy, but ideology in narrative form" (p. 147). In this context, we may even enforce our theoretical appropriation of 'myth' as a taxonomic subversion of 'philosophical,' or scholastic, fabrications of 'Vedanta.' In this context, I provide a classification of authoritative Saivite implications with semiotic models resistant to neo-colonial regimes of epistemological and ideological contestation.

codes naturalizing their unmediated object of knowledge and index their destruction of duality. As a first step towards providing a semiotic framework for Saivite reality, then, I resist (post-) modern conceptions of referentiality.

This 'semiotic construction and displacement' of Dayananda's fixative connotations, "traditional Vedanta" and "Hinduism," is little concerned with the classical Saussurean distinction between *langue* (the system of language) and *parole* (particular utterances).[127] Our focus, rather, is upon the discursive and non-discursive formation of these signs and the subversive effect which their conjunction may, in turn, have upon their systematic production. In our genealogical decodification and institutionalization of the *guru-sisya-parampara* these utterances provide codes for the internal structure of Dayananda's Vedanta myth. In this study, I analyze Dayananda's message as a braid of discourses constituting a single object of knowledge: the myth of *Hindutva*. Now, one may wish to argue that the sprawling narratives of 'Hinduism' cannot be braided as variants in the myth of Vedanta. One might also suggest that I have misidentified the internal structure of *Hindutva*, for instance. Some readers may go so far as to complain that the cohesion of 'Hinduism' is indebted not to colonial discourse but to some transcendent principle such as an eternal righteousness (*sanatana dharma*). However, I wish to argue, semiotic exegesis of Dayananda's canon problematizes a domain of power, the field of relations through which this braid was produced. This ethnographic interpretation of his contemporary religious movement serves to expose truth and its regulation, as herein

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[127] For a general discussion of the structuralist concept of paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis, or the associative field of signifiers and their combinatory relations, see Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics* (London: Routledge, 2002). Chandler also provides a basic understanding of diachronic (historical change of an element of discourse, such as a code) and synchronic (conceptualization of sign system as a self-contained structure not subject to change) analysis and the accompanying concepts of langue (systematic rules of a signifying system) and parole (engagement of these conventions in any semiotic system). For the application of semiotics and discourse theory in the field of religious studies, however, Tim Murphy notes it is imperative to understand that "as langue is to parole, specific texts manifest an historical discourse, or many historical discourses to a greater or lesser degree." Moreover, in the hermeneutical selection of paradigmatic elements and their formation of syntagmatic combinations, Murphy explains: "An interpretation is, by definition, a second text. Consequently, to interpret is to form a syntagm, or to combine two elements together, to put into conjunction one term with another, thereby claiming that this conjunction is what this element or instance means. To interpret is also, often simultaneously, to extract an element from a given associative field and graft it onto a particular person, event, thing—there is no limit to what a canonical paradigmatic may be applied." See Tim Murphy, 'Elements of a Semiotic Theory of Religion', in *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, 15, 2003, pp. 48-67; 63; 56. In other words, it is a theoretical imperative to move beyond Saussurean lingusitcs for a semiotic study of religion.

transmitted with a signifier of deterritorialization: traditional Vedanta-cum-Hinduism.

Chapter One

Elements of a Postcolonial Approach to Advaita Vedanta

> Perhaps, too, we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, demands and its interests. Perhaps we should abandon the belief that...the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge.[128]

The discourse of Advaita is laced with diachronic braids of interrelating narratives, but the syntagmatic axis of this network of power is regulated by fraternities of pious exegetes who pledge allegiance to an ancient Vedic deity.[129] Dedicated to transmitting knowledge of *brahman* (*brahmavidya*), the ultimate reality revealed in the Veda, these so-called ascetics are authorized through their self-confessed, even vowed (as *sannyasin*), location within an uninterrupted teacher-student succession (*guru-sisya-parampara*) which derives its knowledge from Siva, a God who makes his appearance in an archaic recension of these divine revelations, as narrated by the *Rg* itself, wherein he is surrounded by a tribe of Aryan *rsis*.[130] Regardless of whether or not this mythic prototype

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[128] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. 27.

[129] The semiotic approach of this study has been influenced by the few works in religious studies that have extended structuralist analysis to the interpretive field of religion. One of the first such attempts has been provided by Jonathan Z. Smith in his formulation of langue/parole in terms of canonical elements of a religious system and the exegesis of this canon by hermeneutes involved in the interpretation of their religion and the application of canonical elements to concrete instances of syntagmatic relations. See Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 49-50. Significant development of Smith's initial theorization of langue/parole has recently been accomplished with Tim Murphy's analysis of the canon-hermeneute relationship in structuralist terms of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations and the structural addressivity of signification. See Tim Murphy, 'Elements of a Semiotic Theory of Religion', in *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, 15, 2003, pp. 48-67. The importance of this discussion for the discourse of Advaita is that as a semiotic system the myth of Vedanta does not pose problems in terms of historical continuity, let alone origins. Our interests, rather, surround the interplay of canonical (paradigmatic) elements and their syntagmatic relations, as witnessed in hermeneutical interpretations of authoritative Vedic dictums (*mahavakyas*). Of far greater importance for most hermeneutes of Vedanta has been various Indian epics surrounding the exposition of mundane issues such as proper conduct etc., but it is in the context of their sermons that we are able to analyze the significance of these Vedic declarations.

[130] In relation to the nationalist discourse of Aryan *Urheimat*, we should briefly note the recent preoccupations of Patrick Olivelle. Depicting a tribe of seers in the Taittiriya Aranyaka in relation to the *risis* surrounding Siva in RV 10.136, Olivelle is even obliged to refute a body of contemporary Indian scholarship which has gone so far as to posit these *rsis* as "non-Aryan precursors of later sectarian ascetics". Clearly, Olivelle correctly suggests, these Indians "are drawing conclusions that far outstrip the available evidence" See Patrick Olivelle, *The Asrama System: The History and Hermeneutics of a Religious*

initiates or reflects an extra-literary crisis, or community cult, at the outset, we abandon the conditions with which *brahmavidya* is transmitted by modern Indian renunciates. Unrelated to established recognition of unconditioned awareness, this approach warrants a means of anti-colonial resistance to inverse power-knowledge relations generating transnational circulations of these Hindu nationalists.

In following this transformation, we enter a site of contestation conceptualized as a mythic adventure whereby we contest the disciplinary procedures of Indian *gurus* along the lines of Foucault's analysis of the way in which Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari defeat the "major enemy", or "strategic adversary," of their narrative. Prefacing their schizoanalysis as an *Introduction to the Non-fascist Life*, Foucault provides an 'essential principle' which may serve as a guide to the "art of living counter to all forms of fascism": "the individual is the product of power. What is needed is to "de-individualize" by means of multiplication and displacement, diverse combinations. The group must not be the organic bond uniting hierarchized individuals, but a constant generator of de-individualization."[131] In hopes of rendering this more concrete, our interests may be placed within the context of Richard King's analysis of the historical fact that "through the colonially established apparatus of the political, economic, and educational

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Institution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 14. Lacking sufficient textual proofs, or "evidence" at the philologist's disposal, Bruce Lincoln explains the role of such scholarly mythmakers in relation to scholars who go even further and actually suggest that the Aryans are indigenous to India: "they attempt to reach so far back into prehistory that no textual sources are available to control the inquiry, but where archeology offers a plethora of data." In his analysis of the discourse surrounding the nationalist quest for Aryan identity, while Lincoln has surveyed the archaeological data scattered throughout Europe and preliminarily concurred with the research of Marija Gimbutas, he later discerned that she, too, fleshed out a "transparent subtext" in the aftermath of the Soviet imperial annexation of her native Lithuania." See Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative Ideology and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 215. For his earlier view accepting the research of Gimbutas see Bruce Lincoln, *Priests, Warriors, and Cattle: A Study in the Ecology of Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 181-182. Lincoln is particularly hesitant to accept any conclusive view concerning whether the Proto-Indo-European community migrated via the Caucasus or east of the Caspian Sea. As such, he fabricates an original myth. In his study of the myth of the original homeland of the Aryans, Lincoln ultimately resolves to relocate the *Urheimat* within the range of discourse analysis and thus narrates the mythic illusion that the existence of a protolanguage (Indo-European) does not imply the existence of a "protopeople, protomyths, protoideology, or protohomeland." See Lincoln (1999), ibid., p. 216. In this study, I am interested in the internal structure of Advaita, not the systematic preoccupation with 'origins', or original variants, of Aryan mythology. Nevertheless, I do not wish to characterize the narratives therein as some form of postmodern linguistic idealism. As Olivelle clearly explains in reference to the tribes surrounding Shiva, "the author of this text uses the term [*rsi*] no longer as an adjective but as a noun denominating a class of *rsis*." Olivelle (1993), ibid., p. 13. Nor shall I portray these 'Aryan' figures with any humanistic quality, such as nobility.

[131] Deleuze and Guattari (1983), ibid., pp. xiv-xvi.

institutions of India, contemporary Indian self-awareness remains deeply influenced by Western presuppositions about the nature of Indian culture."[132] That is, to extend King's astute analysis, as a result of elite colonial alliances Indian saints themselves now form a hegemonic regime of Eurocentric individualization.

A powerful adversary in this contest is discovered in a dialogical inter-religious arena, but we cannot abdicate our opportunity to enter a debate which is even more urgent. 'Hinduism' currently serves as "the cognitive site of a power struggle", but it is due to the prize on offer that we herein attempt to displace this battle of jingoists. Indian chauvinists are presently struggling to define the 'soul' of Hinduism and, once they do, they will surely attempt to 'liberate' its prisoners with the disciplinary regimes whereby it was constructed. One might, then, understand the urgency of our attempt to de-individualize (or liberate) the souls regulating this corpus of power (or 'fascism') along these lines: "in so far as such conceptions of Indian culture and history prevail and the myth of 'Hinduism' persists, contemporary Indian identities remain subject to the influence of a Westernizing and neo-colonial (as opposed to a truly postcolonial) Orientalism."[133] The myth of 'Hinduism' is contested with hegemonic variants of colonial administration, including 'Aryanism,' 'Vedism', and 'Brahmanism', but neo-colonial modes of individualization operates similarly to the normalization of French penal instrumentation.[134]

In the work of Romila Thapar, the contemporary office of the *sammyasi*, an 'orthodox' ascetic restrained by rituals of renunciation which serve to locate him within a Brahmanical stage of life (*asrama*), is directly linked to ancient *rsis*. Analyzing the socio-political role of these figures in Indian history, Thapar correctly notes that "as a source of alternative authority the renouncer is distinct from both priestly power and the coercive

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[132] King (1999b), ibid., p. 117.
[133] King (1999b), ibid., p. 117.
[134] Cf. "The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself. A 'soul' inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body." See Foucault (1977), ibid., p. 30.

authority of the state."[135] Though she fails to theorize any model of power or authority, if we accept Agehananda Bharati's distinction of the renouncer as an "itinerant or *asram*-bound full-time religious specialist, expert in salvation-giving meditation, as opposed to the ritualistic specialist, the hereditary brahman, who plays a very insignificant part...except as a scapegoat," then there can be no doubt that the renouncer's 'alternative' authority is wielded differently than that of priestly *brahmins*.[136] Just as significant is the contrasting channels of power through which they each are subjected.[137]

The importance of Bharati's distinction lies in his linguistic model of the authoritative language of modern English-speaking Indians and categorization of their idiom with the

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[135] For reasons which we may only speculate as apologetic, Thapar limits her analysis of *rsis* to epic narratives produced on the subcontinent and specifically wants to show that some of these foundational figures are even portrayed therein as the offspring of indigenous Indians. See Romila Thapar, *Cultural Transaction and Early India: Tradition and Patronage* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 8-9; 13.

[136] See Agehananda Bharati, 'The Hindu Renaissance and Its Apologetic Patterns', in *Journal of Asian Studies* 29.2, 1970, pp. 277

[137] In either case, to whatever degree (or tendency) modern Indians conduct their salvific affairs, by means of 'alternative' or 'priestly' powers, their duties are certainly in contrast to the manner in which the State regulates its subjects. The State is often successful in gaining the consent of the majority but the loyalty of its subjects depends precisely upon the extent to which they are unaware of the force they serve to support. The State may reserve and deploy its coercive troops in realms governed by opposing systems of power, through practices that engrave rival societies in its image, such as the discursive and non-discursive installation of global democracy, but as Bruce Lincoln explains in reference to the construction and corrosion of authority when authoritative regimes resort to force we may observe the loss of trust and devotion which initially instilled their power, elements upon which both priests and renouncers certainly depend, and the totalitarian mechanisms harbored for the catastrophic event of their failure, or breakdown of consent. See Bruce Lincoln, *Authority: Construction and Corrosion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) p. 6. Thapar is correct to note that throughout Indian history the renouncer has been "regarded as an alternative source of power, a symbolism which has been respected even in the Indian political movement of the twentieth century", however, due to modern trends which serve to render these collectives as authorities of an elite 'world religion', a conceptual site wherein sociopolitical relations of power are contested, I do not accept her untenable assertion that "the renouncer cannot be explained away in the simplistic formula of being a religious leader since he accumulates in himself a complex inter-relation of social signals." See Thapar (1987), ibid., p. 13. While muddying the waters of Thapar's simplistic analysis of religious authority, I wish to view contemporary Indian priests as leaders of one of the more powerful ecumenical constructions of the modern era. In our refusal to construe the production of their authority as a nostalgic discourse of apolitical sacred elements structured according to the binary opposition of those who possess piety and those who do not, we also move beyond Lincoln's formulization of 'religious authority' which has as its baseline maxim: "those who wrap themselves in the cloak of religion make themselves vulnerable to the charge that they are insufficiently, inadequately, or improperly religious." See Lincoln (1994), ibid., pp. 112-113. Indeed, as Brian Smith phrases the contemporary problem facing scholars of Indian religion, the question which one may wish to ask is: "what allegiance do we as scholars owe to our own intellectual traditions of historical documentation of the events of the past when faced with religious discourse that disguises itself in the garb of secular discourse." See Brian Smith, 'Re-Envisioning Hinduism and Evaluating the Hindutva Movement,' in *Religion* 26, 1996, pp. 119-128; 124. This perspective is especially important for understanding the alliance of modern Indian saints and right-wing political parties.

semantic framework of a theoretical "rsi-model". Bharati also distinguishes the renaissance discourse of modern Indians exposed to Western models from those who ignore the discourse of Indologists, for whatever reason, and continue to work in some frozen realm. He notes that some "brahman specialists who have a fair grasp of orthodox material, ritualistic and ideological...have not changed significantly in their approach to things, and they take little note of what is going on in the world of the Sanskrit scholars exposed to Western models", however, "it was chiefly against these men [i.e. orthodox pandits] that the great reformers, and most of the founders of the [Indian] Renaissance directed their criticism."[138] In the context of disciplinary societies we are interested in renaissance descendants subjected by the West, not changeless *brahmin*s idealized by Orientalists such as Bharati. Nor do we require examination of *brahmavidya* as transmitted exclusively through Sanskrit, much less any vernacular Indian language.[139] It is important, however, to understand that "traditional" exponents of Brahmanical ideology, even those who refuse to engage with the modern (i.e. Western) world, are subjected to (or individualized with) the hegemonic authority of renaissance Indians.

In his characterization of contemporary Indian thought, the German Indologist Wilhelm Halbfass relies upon a conceptual model which asserts a binary opposition of 'traditional' and 'modern' hermeneutical strategies.[140] In this analytic distinction one finds modern Indians classified as "Neo-Hindus," a term also used by Bharati as a taxonomic synonym to classify renaissance saints. For Halbfass, traditional Indians are represented by *pandits* who preserve the "traditional schemes of knowledge." Worried about who is capable of representing the Indian tradition in the modern world, Halbfass asks of these commentators: "can those guardians and representatives of the tradition and its authoritative language provide it with a living presence? Can they, who speak the

[138] See Bharati (1970), ibid., p. 281.

[139] Though beyond the scope of this study I may note that the inventory for that history has not even been compiled, as Wilhelm Halbfass explains: "The history of modern Sanskrit literature, and of the continuation of traditional commentarial and exegetical forms in modern times, has not yet been written. The developments which have taken place within these traditional forms, and in the framework of the traditional schemes of "sciences" (*vidya*), have not yet been explored." See Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 258.

[140] See Halbfass (1988), ibid.

language of tradition, also speak it for the modern world?"[141] To answer these questions, however, we need only note that the pandits "authoritative language of tradition" is spoken at the mercy of those ordained with the power of salvation.[142]

The authority of those within Bharati's *rsi*-model, both *brahmin*s and brahminized non-brahmins, is contrasted with other brahmanical authorities such as ritualists and commentators. Quoting a canonical verse from the Upanisads, Mundaka III.2.9, "the knower of brahman is brahman" (*brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati*), as an authoritative warrant for his typology, Bharati places these agents atop his taxonomic hierarchy: "the sadhu is, by definition, the brahman-specialist—not the purohit or ritualistic practitioner."[143] Purportedly, as a result of recent structural trends these figures now unanimously speak an authoritative idiom categorized as "saintly."[144] The novelty of this

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[141] Halbfass even questions if pandits are prepared to transmit 'Hinduism,' an ecumenical construction developed by Orientalists in the nineteenth century but now projected upon pre-colonial Indian thought as a category of analysis: "is the tradition of the Sanskrit pandits the most authentic form of survival of traditional Hinduism? Are they more qualified to speak for the tradition than the Neo-Hindus? Do they represent the life and strength of the tradition—or its final petrification?" See Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 261.

[142] Indeed, clarification of the communication patterns between these groups provides a 'common denominator' for analyzing the internal dialogue of India: "the pattern is ubiquitous: If a modern pandit gives praise to Aurobindo, or Satya Sai Baba, or Swami Chinmayananda, he does so because these teachers instantiate canonical statements, thereby giving a new lease to the commentators' activity—and it is commentary, now as in old times, which the pandits continue." See Bharati (1970), ibid., pp. 268-269. Not only is the direction of this traffic unilateral, the orthodox authority whereby it is regulated is hegemonic.

[143] See Bharati (1970), ibid., pp. 278-279

[144] According to Bharati, "the statements which constitute the idiom seem rather amusing, if not at times grotesque" See Bharati (1970), ibid., p. 268. Nevertheless, "If the modern Indian chemical, mechanical, or civil engineer, or the surgeon, does not enter into discourse with the culture critic, he can abide by science and small talk. But if he feels he has to make himself known in any sort of identity roll call, he will invariably align himself with the apologetic pattern" (pp. 271-272). Bharati compares the idiom of renaissance Indians to the countless polychromes that "fill every nook and corner of the subcontinent." Due to the simple fact that these artifacts contain pictures of various Gods, Bharati suggests, no one objects to this propaganda: "if it is religious it must be good." Parallels to this hegemony are located among the "full-time religious practitioners of the Hindu Renaissance, the monks, swamis, sadhus, and a host of monastic and lay exponents of modern religious ideology". Accordingly, "the oratory of the Indian Renaissance is not challenged because its *contents* are revered, ancient, and profound by ascription". This leads to the conclusion that "[m]odern Indians neither challenge nor criticize the diction of the Indian apologetic. They tend to feel that such criticism would entail contempt of the Indian spirit; for however "secular" an English-speaking Indian hopes to be, he does not seriously challenge the words and the works of Sivananda etc., nor the forensic of the living gurus" (p. 268). Linking this propaganda to the political sphere wherein it now circulates, Bharati notes that renaissance saints "monastic and lay, address and impress those who run, or will run India" (p. 281). As Bharati explains, "ministers in the central and state governments, government servants, officers of the armed forces, not excluding the rank of brigadier and higher, choose as their preceptors those teachers of the Renaissance who did not use Sanskrit or any primary source for their sermon. For again, any use of Sanskrit originals beyond the standard quotations and the elongated chanting

discourse, the effects of which are more appropriately understood as a 'reincarnation' than a 'renaissance', is made explicit in the light of Bharati's characterization of Indian saints as teachers of Vedanta, or gurus of *brahmavidya*. Moreover, the crisis which had to be resolved by the English-speaking 'Vedantins' who chose to reckon with Orientalist authority provides insight into the reversal of colonial hegemony. Though we must further theorize the interpretational focus of this enterprise, Bharati has precisely diagnosed the idiomatic source of its disciplinary power.

The renaissance 'modification' of Vedanta is explained by Bharati on the basis of the shift in canonical authority from the *Upanisad*s to a non-canonical Vaisnava text, the *Bhagavadgita* (200 BCE). The contemporary status of the *Bhagavadgita* as the orthodox text of Hinduism illustrates the paradigm whereby Western praise is harnessed as a means of Indian self-affirmation, a pervasive pattern of cultural communication that may be understood as a hegemonic element of colonial discourse, but this Vaisnava text also functions as an indigenous compromise with humanistic and democratic conceptions.[145] As Bharati correctly delineates an antagonistic element in the emergent structures of British India, the Upanisadic conceptualization of the individual "soul's" relationship with the "Absolute" "was not at all compatible with the imported concept of the "infinite

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of *OM* in which modern audiences exalt, makes its use suspect" (p. 283). Bharati argues that "the full-time religious practitioners of the Hindu Renaissance" control the production of meaning in modern India.

[145] The significance of the Bhagavadgita in colonial discourse serves to illustrate Bharati's widely cited model of the "pizza effect". For instance, although Gandhi had no doubt been exposed to the *Bhagavadgita* during his "Vaisnava childhood", "the conversion which made him espouse this text as the vademecum for his political creed" is the result of a transformative episode in London when he read the theosophist Annie Besant's artistic and imaginative translation" See Bharati (1970), ibid., 274-275. Bharati explains that from the first embellished English translation of the *Bhagavadgita* by Charles Wilkins (1785) and prefaced by Warren Hastings, Indian nationalists have eulogized its cultic ideology as a means of appropriating its "chauvinistic underpinnings". In the *Bhagavadgita* "the individual remained intact, its absorption into the brahman being presented as a secondary, and slightly inferior choice. The man of the Indian Renaissance can identify with Arjuna and he can neglect those passages which represent the canonical, quietistic stream which submerged the individual, as it were, before it could acquire the value and the dignity humanism had generated, not alongside the Judeo-Christian tradition but against it. The modified Vedanta complex typifies the position of urban Hindu sermon: the individual approaches divinity, potentially to merge with It some day. For the time being, however, it is real in the ontological sense, hence amenable to social control. More importantly, there is no longer the opprobrium of being an alien import, say, like technology or parliamentary democracy. The newly established dignity of an empirical, social, and autonomous individual is a tender growth: It must not be tampered with (p. 287). In this context, Bharati suggests that colonial discourse of the *Bhagavadgita* provides "fuel to Indian jingoism."

value of the human individual." The corpus of knowledge produced for the middle-class mendicants who intervened in this ideological dilemma is staggering.[146]

The Upanisads no doubt present a vision of the soul which cannot be harmonized with Semitic theology, or its secular counterparts, by any stretch of the imagination, and Bharati is correct to analyze colonial discourse of Vedanta in the context of this hegemonic structure of modernity. Moreover, in their scramble for power it is not surprising that modern Indians would attend the 'prestigious' ready-made school of Vedanta (which had itself long ago succumbed to the hegemony of Vaisnava theology) as an institution in which to profess their beliefs, but due to their cultic and humanistic resistance to the generic properties codified in this paradigmatic ensemble of orthodox canonical authority, the fraternities within which their bourgeois brotherhood is initiated would have to consent to a novel means of authority. Important elements of neo-colonial power, if not necessary components of vulgar manipulation, reside in the procedures whereby the imperial effects of this consensus are camouflaged.

In the saintly idiom of renaissance Indians one no doubt discovers "the inclusion of highly coded Sanskrit terms...a limited number of passages from the Upanisads, about a dozen slokas from the Bhagavadgita, perhaps some verses by medieval saints", but it is the ideology their theatrical performance serves to conceal which is more significant: "reference to further texts is frowned upon—for it bespeaks "intellectual jugglery" (Vivekananda's recurrent phrase), pride in traditional learning (which is bad), or it is felt to border on the wide limbo of "superstition."[147] Instead of cultivating the humanistic dignity required to preserve the private autonomy and "delicate novelty of the Renaissance ego" of modern Indians, one could offer to liberate their souls from the consensual networks of power wherein they are currently submerged. In our analysis of

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[146] Bharati theorizes the modern transformation of Vedanta along the following lines: "the classical *Vedantic* soul is the Absolute, the *brahman*, and 'infinite value' can hardly be intended to refer to this Absolute. The *brahman* is not the object of sociocentric action or reflection. Since the Indian Renaissance transplanted the Western notion of the value and dignity of the individual into the language of Indian modernity, the monistic doctrine of Vedanta, the most highly prestigious philosophy of India's intellectual leadership for about a thousand years, had to be drastically modified." See Bharati (1970), ibid., p. 286.

[147] See Bharati (1970), ibid., pp. 272

these *rsi* descendants, it is not the archives of their canon with which we are concerned. It matters less if they are familiar with countless Indian epics and poems than if they utter a single verse from an Upanisad within their Vedantic narratives of salvation. Moreover, I wish to trace the colonial trends which lead Indians to frown upon the authority of Sanskrit and Aryan revelations, or even indigenous superstitions.

The point to be emphasized in relation to the descendants of Bharati's *rsi*-model is that modern English-speaking Indians are "anti-Sanskritic" While he offers a wealth of support for this claim, I suggest this bias is reflected as an effect of ignorance in the hegemonic role of the modern Indian renouncer, or "expert in salvation-giving meditation". Saivite ascetics have long been preoccupied with various Indian methods of subjectivation, as well as committed to propagating these technologies as a means of salvation for those susceptible, even devoted, to their power, but the transformative element in the renaissance souls subjected to colonial discourse lies in the fact that their techniques of internalization are hesitatingly coupled with Sanskrit maxims, however authoritatively conceived. I would argue that these missionaries instantiate another instance of the 'pizza-effect,' but this hypothesis seems a bit naïve.[148] To the curators of British India, subjugated saints compromised indigenous regimes of privatization and were proud of their compensation, psychologized affirmations, but the fact that the Upanisads are frowned upon by Vedantins, an event never witnessed in the history of this discursive and non-discursive formation, requires further explanation.[149] The exhibitions of this fraternal cult shall be displayed with an Indo-critical perspective of Orientalism.

[148] While Bharati's influential model may help explain the hegemonic role of English translations of the *Bhagavadgita* in neo-colonial discourse of Advaita, understanding the concomitant dismissal of Sanskrit texts deserves further analysis. Nevertheless, just as the *Bhagavadgita* was praised by Indian saints subsequent to the text's warm welcome by Orientalists, the philological discovery of language and the dismissal of revealed authority may indeed operate along the lines of a 'reverse pizza-effect.' That is, if sacred language could no longer be viewed by any thinking, rationalist, European as a unilateral transmission of the divine, then Indians might just look 'backwards,' or even 'primitive' and 'tribal,' were they to continue to embrace the epistemological tradition of *sabda pramana*. Of course, the case is much more complex than this and also involves pre-colonial disputes within the tradition of Advaita, as well as the cognitive competency of all involved in the act of locution.

[149] Of course, this follows the rejection of Sanskrit texts in general during the Indian renaissance.

Hearing Voices: Echoes of Eden, or Deterritorializing Subaltern Heathens

In a postcolonial context one is inevitably faced with an epistemic aftermath of geopolitical domination, but like Michel Foucault, in his genealogy of the 'modern soul', I analyze the 'micro-physics' of the British expansion of power as a continual battle rather than a historic contract regulating the conquest of a territory.[150] Analysis of individualization is central to Foucault's theorization of "subjectivation" (*assujetissement*) and his model of disciplinary power is pertinent to understanding the routes of colonial production, but his theories are not attuned to the radical reconfiguration of power and knowledge in British India. For this, we may benefit by examining Edward Said's construction of 'Orientalism', that is, discourse of Eurocentric cognitive imperialism.[151] But we should remember that he too has insufficiently theorized the power of neo-colonial Indians and the mystic realms in which they have been produced. In large measure, Said's characterization of colonial discourse is derived from Foucault's conception of disciplinary power as productive, in contrast to juridical regimes of subordination, but his humanistic analysis is unfortunately at the expense of individualization and the bourgeois procedures of colonial subject formation.[152]

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[150] See Foucault (1977), ibid., p. 26

[151] See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978).

[152] In his study, Said claims to have relied upon Foucault to understand the "discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient…during the post-Enlightenment period." Said also confesses debt to Foucault for analysis of the ways in which the conditions of knowledge are regulated by 'epistemes' and historically emergent 'discourses.' According to Said, without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot understand the disciplinary power of this post-Enlightenment production. See Said (1978), ibid., p. 3. As Richard King suggests, however, to the extent that Said fails to register the ways in which Orientalist discourse is constructed with the effects of Orientalists "he does not follow Foucault's approach, which focuses upon the sense in which discourses construct both the subject and object of their analysis." See King (1999), ibid., p. 230 n. 19. Though a necessary component of discourse analysis, King does not accuse Said of methodological deviance or of misreading Foucault. As he notes, in Said's response to critics he does not offer complete endorsement of "Foucault's method, or anybody's method." See 'Interview with Edward Said,' in Imre Salusinzsky, *Criticism in Society* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 137, and cited in King (1999), ibid., p. 84. Furthermore, Foucault would balk at those constrained to his work at their own expense: "All my books…are little tool boxes…if people want to open them, to use this sentence or that idea as a screwdriver or spanner to short-circuit, discredit or smash systems of power, including eventually those from which my books have emerged…so much the better." Cited in Paul Patton, 'Of Power and Prisons', in Meaghan Morris and Paul Patton (eds), *Michel Foucault: Power/Truth/Strategy* (Sydney: Feral Publications, 1979), p. 115, and again in King (1999b), ibid., p. 208.

The 'corporate institution' of 'Orientalism' and its cultural mode of production, Western epistemic hegemony and discipline of the 'East', have been under constant surveillance since Said commenced its analytic construction.[153] Leaping into the eighteenth century, having scantly detected Orientalism in ancient Greece, Said's move is explained by the linguistic discoveries of philology, or Europe's 'expanded scope' and the refinement of its interpretive techniques for receiving the Orient. Though the singularity of this discourse is hegemonic throughout, the climax of *Orientalism* is reached when the 'discourse of philology' finally asserts itself with the epistemic authority to classify the world's languages into "families" and subsequently displace the Semitic hegemon of "primal language given by the Godhead to man in Eden."[154] The disciplinary power of philology was indeed flexed when it was "discovered empirically that the so-called secular languages (Hebrew, primarily) were neither of primordial antiquity nor of divine

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[153] Said's first application of the term is used within an academic context and he notes that "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient…is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism." Directly related to this "academic tradition" of Orientalism, Said assigns a more general meaning to describe basically anyone who has "accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind", destiny, and so on." While ambiguity intervenes at the intersection, 'traffic' between academic and "more or less imaginative" representations of the East "…based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between "the Orient" and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" leads Said to his most significant formulation of 'Orientalism,' one "more historically and materially defined than either of the other two": "Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient-dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient". See Said (1978), ibid., pp. 2-3. Concerning this configuration of 'Orientalism,' Richard King correctly notes that, "for Said, all three elements in the Orientalist equation are interrelated, though he never really clarifies the nature of their relationship." Highlighting the fact that Said offers an "imperialistic projection of the humanistic values of Enlightenment Europe onto the material under consideration", King points out that the constructivist implications of the first and third of Said's meanings of Orientalism, which seem to be influenced by Foucault, render ambivalent his underlying assumption that there is an authentic Orient 'out there,' actively misrepresented. See King (1999b), pp. 83-85. Said's constructivist approach to the Orient, moreover, also serves an imperialistic function in the discourse of Orientalism.

[154] This historic moment, analyzed by Foucault and others as the 'discovery of language,' is construed by Said as "the final rejection of the divine origins of language…a secular event that displaced a religious conception of how God delivered language to man in Eden" when Sanskrit was empirically determined to predate Hebrew." The pivotal moment when the Semitic "divine dynasty of language was ruptured definitively and discredited as an idea", there occurred another event of importance: "the terminology has also shifted: there are now families of languages." Scientists imbibed with the power which led to "reclassification of languages into families" also installed Sanskrit as the domineering Indo-European patriarch. See Said (1978), ibid., pp. 135-137. Furthermore, "along with the discrediting of the Edenic origins of language, a number of other events—the Deluge, the building of the Tower of Babel—also were discredited as explanations" (p. 362 n. 1). For further discussion of this phenomenon see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Pantheon), pp. 290-300.

provenance." As a result, the Semitic myth of divine revelation was reconfigured by Indology and the discovery of Aryan mythology.[155]

To be sure, it was largely William Jones' establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 that marked the end of the "Persian Interlude" prior to the institutionalization of Indology, [156] the Indo-European branch of philology but, for Said, the importance of this event is signified by the fact that when "the Orient definitively revealed the age of its languages-thus outdating Hebrew's divine pedigree—it was a group of Europeans who made the discovery, passed it on to other scholars, and preserved the discovery in the new science of Indo-European philology."[157] In his analysis of this definitive moment in the history of Orientalism, Said failed to account for the ways in which Indians assisted in the preservation of this received wisdom.[158] Without doubt, Said is correct to sense "an

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[155] Said does not even use the word 'Aryan,' but instead chooses to substitute this category with 'Indo-European.' Said notes that "the idea of a first Edenic language gives way to the heuristic notion of a protolanguage (Indo-European, Semitic) whose existence is never a subject of debate, since it is acknowledged that such a language cannot be recaptured but can only be reconstituted in the philological process. To the extent that one language serves, again heuristically, as a touchstone for all others, it is Sanskrit in its earliest Indo-European form." See Said (1978), ibid., pp. 136-137. In this sense, Said seems to be following an approach akin to that of Bruce Lincoln who warns that in the light of the fact that "more than ink was spilled by advocates of a northern *Urheimat*...memory, decency, and scholarly prudence suggest we ought exercise extreme caution when we theorize about matters now politely called "Indo-European."" Nevertheless, whether or not one chooses to exercise such prudence, Lincoln is surely correct that "surely it is wrong to hold Sir William Jones and his brethren accountable for all atrocities committed under the Aryan banner." See Lincoln (1999), ibid., pp. 215-216. Indeed, William Jones cannot even be credited with forging the astute Aryan/Semite distinction.

[156] As Halbfass notes, "these scholars turned to the original Sanskrit texts, and the use of Persian and other intermediary languages became obsolete...their effort led to the establishment and institutionalization of a research tradition—the tradition of modern Indology." See Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 62.

[157] In demonstration of a certain promiscuity of Said's work, it should be noted that he does not make any distinction between the work of individuals amongst the "group of Europeans" involved in the concomitant dating of Sanskrit and displacement of Hebrew. Indeed, Said's analysis of this event illustrates his failure to distinguish between the relations of power surrounding the academic and imaginative discourses of Orientalism. Said simply compares this historic occasion to a host of imaginative discourses which 'similarly' "restructured the Orient by their art and made its colors, lights, and people visible through their images, rhythms, and motifs." See Said (1978), ibid., p. 22. The account I have provided, while consistent with Said's general thesis, aims for greater conceptual clarity. Jones made his historic announcement concerning the 'familial' relations of Indo-Europeans and the ancestry of Sanskrit in 1786.

[158] Amidst this family feud one detects the power of subjugated Indians, agents of mimetic inversions, but the direction of colonial hegemony is nevertheless guided by their resistance to Indological perversions. Linguistic studies concur that the language of the Aryans is part of a larger family designated as Indo-European. While Fillippo Sassetti, a merchant who visited India from 1583-1588, could speculate on the uniqueness of Sanskrit and its linguistic affiliations, it was not until the discoveries of Sir William Jones that these observations could assume the force which would later effect the thought of Europe. On February 2, 1786, less than a year after he had managed to find someone to teach him the language, Sir William Jones, the first Englishman to learn Sanskrit, initiated the science of comparative philology with an

unmistakable aura of power about the philologist."[159] If it radiates from him alone, however, one might legitimately ask of the productive 'discipline' of Orientalism: "is it not somewhat excessive to derive such power from the petty machinations of discipline?

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announcement so often quoted that it hardly needs repeating. Though largely inaugurated by Jones, a man who produced the first translation of any Upanisad from Sanskrit to any Western (English) language, his discourse continues unabated. For instance, in the most recent translation of twelve "principal" Upanisads, Patrick Olivelle relies upon contemporary philological, anthropological and historical research in order to introduce the socio-linguistic background of the Aryan nomads amongst whom these family hymns were heard. Olivelle summarizes the tireless plight of the Aryans accordingly: "they were a pastoral but militarily powerful people who called themselves arya (literally, 'noble' or 'honorable'; whence the word Aryan). Modern linguistic studies have demonstrated that the language of these people, the language in which the ancient vedic literature including the Upanisads was written and which later came to be known as Sanskrit, belongs to a family of languages (generally referred to as Indo-European) that includes Greek, Latin, and most of the modern European and northern Indian languages, as well as the ancient and modern languages of Iran. This distribution of languages suggests that a related group of nomadic pastoral people migrated across Europe and towards the east, settling first in Iran and finally in northern India." See Patrick Olivelle, *Upanisads* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. xxv. Concerning the discussion of Aryan invasions Olivelle admits that this history may need revision. For instance, "the Aryan migrations may have occurred at different times and at a much earlier period," but "the preponderance of evidence still supports the view that there was an Aryan migration into India in the second millennium BCE and that the language of the Veda reflects the language of those Aryans" (p. xxv, n. 3). Clearly, the Veda is understood as a fundamental source of knowledge by individuals who refer to themselves within the text as *arya* (√*r*: 'to rise upward'). Incidentally, it may be noted that William Jones had a particularly strong desire to translate the Indian law codes of Manu (*manusmrti*). When finally able to do so, we surmise, Jones no doubt stumbled upon the prohibitions explained by Halbfass in his study of this text, a treatise composed a thousand years after the Aryans invaded the subcontinent: "*Bharata*, India, is the area in which the *arya* has his true and proper home, which supports and upholds his status as an "Aryan." Within *Bharata*, *aryavarta*, the area north of the Vindhya mountains, plays a special...clearly privileged role. The Aryan or "twice born" (*dvija*) who hails from this country preserves his identity and status only as long as he lives in it." See Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 177. Thus, at least by the composition of the *manusmrti* (200 BCE-300 CE), it is clear that the Aryans had come to think of themselves as native inhabitants of not only India but, indeed, indigenous to a very specific location of the subcontinent. This is not surprising, as Olivelle notes, "the Aryans themselves soon lost any collective memory they may have had of having migrated from the west; none of the early vedic texts preserve any such memory" (p. xxvii). We can imagine, then, Manu faced no Aryan resistance while issuing his commandments; indeed, by this time the Aryans had already begun to merge their ideology with that of aboriginal Indians. On the other hand, this amnesia has proved important for modern Indian chauvinists. While the *manusmrti* is an early document preoccupied with such matters, there is certainly no dearth of historic accounts of the "original homeland" (*Urheimat*) of the Aryans. According to Bruce Lincoln, this matter can be settled by way of an analysis of all the archaeological evidence scattered throughout Europe and into Asia across a period of several millennia: this material "can be constituted as evidence from which to craft the final narrative, but it is often the researcher's desires that determine their principles of selection." Concerning the fiery desires and tarred narrative of recent years, most of them have been "fueled by parochial nationalisms." As Lincoln correctly notes, Indian nationalists prefer, for the origin of the Aryans, the Hindu Kush. See Lincoln (1999), ibid., p. 215. If we shall benefit by 'indigenous epistemic traditions' and their understanding of the origins of the Upanisads, if not the birthplace of their Aryan receptors, we must move beyond such jingoism. Besides, Indian missionaries campaigning in villages throughout *Bharata* in the name of "tribal uplift" and preaching across the black waters on behalf of one of the 'world's religions' have already inverted the "exclusion of the *mleccha*" outlined in the *manusmriti*.

[159] See Said (1978), ibid., p. 132.

How could *they* achieve effects of such scope?"[160] To answer this question, which Said failed to ask, one may recall Foucault's distinction between the procedures of individualization in feudal societies and those governed by disciplinary regimes.

Feudal regimes are regulated with the procedures of 'ascending' individualization "where sovereignty is exercised and in the higher echelons of power. The more one possesses power or privilege, the more one is marked as an individual". In a colonial context, however, power is dispersed through the capillaries of society, as Foucault explains: "in a disciplinary regime...individualization is 'descending'...power becomes more anonymous and more functional."[161] Disciplines mark the moment when power begins to circulate and the sovereign merchant of force no longer contracts the autonomous subjects whom he had previously bargained, but in Said's narrative Orientals remain silent and dominated, seemingly paralyzed. As a result of the power attributed to philological discourse, moreover, the structure of Said's myth of Orientalism, or creation story of post-Enlightenment Orientals, is codified with the "final rejection of the divine origins of language" and the hegemonic consensus that for the philologist "language cannot be pictured as the result of force emanating unilaterally from God."[162] In his study of philology, Said could not register the productive power of this disciplinary apparatus.

For Foucault, the 'physics' of power generating disciplinary regimes operate precisely according to 'laws' which do not depend upon "force." Disciplinary power is "absolutely 'discreet', for it functions permanently and largely in silence."[163] In order to assess the productivity of Orientalism, I wish to retain Foucault's model of disciplinary power. Surely, Orientals 'produced' by Orientalists are not all mutes. Quite the opposite, as any brief survey of indigenous resistance to being disciplined shall make explicit, they have spoken, loudly, in the language imposed by their colonizers, but this imposition should not be understood as a historic fact of force or coercion. Largely focused upon the work of European philology, moreover, Said failed to analyze colonial discourse of South Asia

[160] See Foucault (1977), ibid., p. 194.
[161] See Foucault (1977), ibid., pp. 192-193.
[162] See Said (1978), ibid., pp. 135-136.
[163] See Foucault (1977), ibid., p. 177.

and the disciplinary power of Indology. In his groundbreaking work, Said leveled a critique against post-Enlightenment representations of the Orient, the implications of which have been explored in recent years by a number of other scholars, namely postcolonial theorists and 'area studies' specialists. Leaving aside Indian contributions to the tradition of Orientalism, for the moment, it is important to identify hegemonic assumptions of colonial discourse analysis in relation to knowledge and representation. Indeed, Said's characterization of the Orient, when characterized at all, creates a significant obstacle for attributing colonial hegemony to Orientalism.[164]

Strategic assumptions are discerned in Said's debt to Giambattista Vico (1688-1744), as

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[164] Reliance upon Antonio Gramsci's theorization of class leadership in terms of 'hegemony' and 'consent' align Said with the politics of class exploitation, but methodological eclecticism renders problematic his representation of Orientalism as an apparatus of domination. The fact that the exercise of hegemony depends upon a reformed base of rulers and ruled, its subversion dependent upon an elitist national consensus of those subjugated by imperialist authority, is a central component of Gramsci's theorization of this concept as a political strategy which functions precisely to the extent that 'force' and 'consent' reflect the 'natural', or 'normative,' power of cultural discourse. Moreover, as Christine Buci-Glukman correctly suggests, "if force and consent balance each other in a just relation, if 'force appears to rest on the consent of the majority', power is exercised in a 'normal' way." See Christine Buci-Glukman, 'Hegemony and Consent', in Anne Showstack Sassoon, (ed.), *Approaches to Gramsci* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society Ltd., 1982) p. 124. Indeed, from a standpoint that most would consider 'common' sense, it is obvious that the normative power of Orientalism in British India, specifically sources translated for agents of the Hindu Renaissance, was not a matter of subjugation: "European translations of Indian texts prepared for a western audience provided to the 'educated' Indian a whole range of Orientalist images. Even when the anglicised Indian spoke a language other than English, 'he' would have preferred, because of the symbolic power attached to English, to gain access to his own past through the translations and histories circulating through colonial discourse. English education also familiarised the Indian with ways of seeing, techniques of translation, or modes of representation that came to be accepted as 'natural.'" See Tejaswini Niranjana, 'Translation, Colonialism, and Rise of English', in *Economic and Political Weekly* 25.15, 14 April 1990, pp. 773-779; p. 778.; cited in King (1999b), ibid., p. 93. We should also bear in mind the broader implications of this naturalization, as noted by Paul Hacker in his analysis of the Orientalist configuration of Indian self-understanding: "to a very large extent modern Indians think in concepts associated with English words. Even when they write in an Indian language, their mind is moving in the framework of these concepts...The result is a language which outwardly looks purely Indian but which by its conceptual contents belongs to the type that an American linguist has described as "standard average European." See Wilhelm Halbfass (ed.), *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1995) p. 231. In a broad sense, it should be noted that Wilhelm Halbfass is correct to suggest that "Hacker's observations may appear trivial and obsolete after the intellectual and rhetorical fireworks displayed by Edward Said and Ronald Inden." See Halbfass (1995), ibid., p. 13. As Said has demonstrated, after the work of Sir William Jones, the first scientist to prove that Sanskrit was far older than Hebrew and all the other languages of the 'Middle' Eastern Biblical lands, Europeans began to "live in it [the Orient] with greater authority and discipline than ever before." See Said (1979), ibid., p. 22. As Said's depiction of Orientalist hegemony is inadequate for understanding colonial discourse of Indian religion, in chapter three I shall further theorize the procedures of 'reverse colonialism,' a model of power-knowledge relations which may balance the register of force and consent for Orientalist and nationalist discourse on the Indian subcontinent.

stated in the introduction to his seminal study: "we must take seriously Vico's great observation that men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made." This influence is also detected with *Orientalism*'s constructivist extension in the realm of geography. Irrespective of their historical presence, Said notes that as cultural entities and geographical sectors ideas such "as 'Orient' and 'Occident' are man-made." Again, writing an afterword in 1994, Said reminds us of his mentor: "the central point in all this is, however, as Vico taught us, that human history is made by human beings."[165] In his analysis of Orientalism as "a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it", Said precisely describes the disciplinary power of narratives thereby produced: "such texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition."[166] It is the 'reality' of *this* domain that interests Said: "therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West."[167] Since these images support and reflect each other, then, 'Easterners' and 'Westerners' are subject to all sorts of hybrid identities.

In seeming contradiction, Said's humanist methodology makes explicit his belief "in the determining imprint of individual writers upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism."[168] On the other hand, Said even goes so far as attributing agency to (European) culture. In contrast to Foucault's conception of discourse, the power of 'Orientalism' appears to be wielded by a sovereign agent (Human Nature or European Culture) invested with a sense of direction, and control. Indeed, Said discovered such a mass of 'cultural strength' in Occidental representations of the East that he was led to construe Orientalism as a discourse whereby "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self."[169] In effect, Said reifies the object 'culture' and the position of social agency while oscillating between the extremes of

[165] Said (1979), ibid., pp. 4-5; 331.
[166] Said (1979), ibid., p. 94.
[167] Said (1979), ibid., p. 5.
[168] Said (1979), ibid., p. 23.
[169] Said (1979), ibid., p. 3.

expressivism and functionalism.[170] In this context, it may be noted that Said's methodology is directly related to the absence of Oriental agency in the discourse of Orientalism. To be fair, Said admits that his interest in the discourse of Orientalism lies with the West's "ideas about the Orient...despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a "real" Orient."[171] Although Said declares "there were—and are—cultures and nations whose location is in the East, and their lives, histories, and customs have a brute reality greater than anything that could be said about them in the West", in reference to the 'reality' of the 'East' his study "has very little to contribute."[172] Said's construction, carried forth by postcolonial theorists, not only fails to offer knowledge of the 'Orient,' his anti-representational stance provides a Eurocentric obstruction.

The synchronic and historicist approach which Said adopts in order to launch his humanistic plea for oppressed Orientals, combined "with the relativistic anti-representationalism with which Said seems to flirt", leads to the central ambiguity of his work: "Said's problem, then, is that, in so far as he wishes to plead the case for those dispossessed by such colonialist discourses on humanistic grounds, he believes that he must endorse such grounds as fundamental, thereby rejecting a relativistic conception of all Orientalist discourses (humanistically inspired ones being superior)". Moreover, this critique should be understood regardless of the fact that Said's "ambivalent oscillation" between a "half-hearted Foucauldian analysis" which is "destructive of old regimes rather than constructive of new ones" and a humanistic concern for colonial subjects has been "embraced by some reviewers of Orientalism as a catachrestic move that destabilizes the cognitive and disciplinary boundaries set up by colonial and neo-colonial regimes of

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[170] Criticizing both the view that "society projects/creates/sustains images" and the idea that "a belief or practice has a function in relation to a larger totality", Tim Murphy resolves: "the suspect notion is that collectivities somehow create expressions, projections, or the like. This is tantamount to the attribution of agency to fictional entities—there is no such "thing" as society or culture, to which we may attribute agency. "Society" does nothing; it is nothing more and nothing less than a contingent ensemble of relations." Such a stance may be avoided with Foucaultian analysis of the production, dissemination, and contestation of a series of articulations. See Tim Murphy, 'Elements of a Semiotic Theory of Religion', in *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, 15, 2003, pp. 49 n. 1. For a different attempt to reconstruct social agency in these terms see Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, (London: Verso, 1985), pp. 105-122.

[171] Said (1979), ibid., p. 5.

[172] Said (1979), ibid., p. 5.

knowledge."[173] We must always bear in mind the famous phrase of Karl Marx, that is, the traditions of all the dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living. Men do not simply make their own history. If they do, they make it under the circumstances inherited from their fellowmen.

The epistemic violence of social constructivism stems from intellectual trends in the work of Giambattista Vico and Immanuel Kant. This discourse achieved wider circulation throughout Europe following the rise of secular and humanistic philosophies from the Enlightenment period onwards. Following the emergence of the hermeneutics of suspicion towards the end of the nineteenth century, the 'constructivist paradigm' gained further popularity in the work of post-structuralist and postmodernist critics. Treading the path of Said, it is largely upon the method and theories of this later development that postcolonial theorists have based their accomplishments. Of course, Said's own relation to this debate is ambiguous, as he simply forged the routes of Orientalism with a variety of humanistic appeals for displacement of the binary opposition of 'Occident' and 'Orient.' Post-structuralist emphasis upon discourses of heterogeneity has been found useful by postcolonial theorists who challenge the monolithic power often attributed to colonial hegemony. In this context, it should be emphasized that Foucault's acknowledgement of the instability of cultural dominance as well as the resistance and reversal of hegemonic discourses should not be readily dismissed.

Outlining an emergent Indo-critical perspective strikingly similar to Foucault's 'specific intellectual',[174] King notes: "the '-critical' aspect of this enterprise must remain as vigilantly self-reflexive as it is critical of Western epistemic hegemony. Nevertheless, such an approach must involve itself in the development of critical perspectives that are grounded in (though not subsumed by) Indian cultural and epistemic forms."[175] It is in this context that I support the introduction of various forms of Indian constructivisms to

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[173] See King (1999b), ibid., pp. 84-85.

[174] Despite Foucault's anti-foundational position, he allows for resistance to hegemonic power-knowledge relations. Thus, for Foucault, the 'specific intellectual' acts as a subversive who serves to "problematize the 'normative' by focusing attention upon the ways such 'received wisdom' legitimates the authority of some and silences others," "as opposed to the Enlightenment notion of the 'legislative intellectual' who determines the nature of truth through his position of authority." See King (1999b), ibid., p. 84.

[175] See King (1999b), ibid., p. 212.

the contemporary debate of mysticism and religious studies. Distinguishing the neo-Kantian tradition of social constructivism as *epistemologies of limitation* from Indian forms of constructivism as *epistemologies of enlightenment*, the later are described as such based upon their acknowledgement of an unconstructed awareness which subverts "the Judaeo-Christian roots of contemporary Western debates about the nature and status of mysticism and the limitations of humans in relation to the divine."[176] These paradigms of Indian constructivism displace Semitic discourse:

> The acceptance of the reality (indeed, for these Indian traditions the centrality) of an unmediated and unconstructed awareness constitutes a major point of disagreement between mainstream Western intellectual thought and classical Asian traditions of spirituality. The disagreement is highly significant since to accept neo-Kantian versions of constructivism is to reject the possibility of such enlightenment and therefore to subvert the central tenet of these traditions.[177]

With King's "genealogy of the idea of 'the mystical'", the history of this limitation may be discerned in the rhetoric of ancient Semitic ancestors.[178] Problematizing the epistemic arsenal of Aryanism in contrast to the scriptural authority of Semitism requires contestation of Semitic modes of signification.[179] The discursive authority of the

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[176] See King (1999b), ibid., p. 212.

[177] See King (1999b), ibid., pp. 182-183

[178] For early Christian appropriation of mustikos, an event whereby Semitic hegemony was strengthened throughout the medieval period, King delineates an important distinction clearly drawn by the African saint Augustine (354-430); the saint forged a binary opposition "between linguistic allegory (allegory in verbis), when linguistic signs are used to refer to something other than their usual referents, and historical allegory (allegoria in factis), which denoted the hidden and subtle meanings underlying the objects, persons and events of history created by God." See King (1999b), ibid., p. 15. The point I wish to emphasize is that the history of Western conceptions of scriptural hermeneutics and textual analysis demonstrates the limitations involved with contemporary translations of such Indian notions as *laksana* (implication) in terms of metaphors or allegorical forms of signification.

[179] Scriptural hegemony, of course, has origins in the 'Middle Eastern' region where Abrahamic beliefs were founded. Concerning the internal structure of Semitic mythology, Walter A. Graham notes: "the development of the concept of a scriptural book in the great Western, or "Semitic", monotheisms has been often linked to the apparently older idea of a heavenly book. This idea is an ancient and persistent one that seems to be the legacy of the ancient Near Eastern—Mediterranean world—in other words, the cultural world in which writing probably began, and in which the first phonetic and alphabetic writing systems were developed. Jewish, Christian, and Islamic notions of a scriptural book rest at least in part upon the idea of a heavenly writ containing divine knowledge or decrees, and this idea is demonstrably much older than any one of the three great monotheistic traditions themselves, however great an impact each has had upon its ultimate development." See Walter A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 50. An immediate hazard arising from the Semitic concept of God's word written in stone, as Walter Ong explains in reference to the

Upanisads may be appropriated for hermeneutical connotations but their phonological properties cannot be institutionalized with epistemic narratives of linguistic production for the very simple reason that the ideological framework, or myth, with which we codify this genre of discourse subverts such constructions. Similar to the analysis of structuralist signification, or signs delimited by material signifiers and a conceptual signifieds, I refute the linguistic implications of Semitification. As Fredric Jameson notes, the general "thrust of structuralism has been to try to dispel the old conception of language as taming (e.g., God gave Adam language in order to name the beasts and plants in the Garden), which involves a one-to-one correspondence between a signifier and a signified.[180] Similarly, it should be emphasized that Indo-critical theory may displace Saussurean linguistics and constructivism for a postcolonial approach to mysticism. Indo-critical analysis of Advaita resists not only de-institutionalization of the *guru-sisya-parampara* and neo-colonial narratives in the bourgeois genre of mysticism, but also the Semitic influence of nationalist discourse of all-India communalism.[181]

In a 'strategic' reading of Indian history, which she believes can get bourgeois Indian historians "off the dangerous hook of claiming to establish the truth-knowledge of the subaltern and his consciousness," Gayatri Spivak provides a touch of irony for

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'context-free' and 'autonomous' nature of the written word, is that "a text stating what the whole world knows is false will state falsehood forever, so long as the text exists". This is a primary reason, as Ong correctly suspects, why such books are often burned. See Ong (2002), ibid., p. 78. Contrasting the orality of Aryanism and the structure of Abrahamic theology, particularly the written (or engraved) elements of God's law, this broad cultural conception is delineated as a colonizing narrative of Semitism.

[180] As Jameson explains, "taking a structural view, one comes quite rightly to feel that sentences don't work that way: we don't translate the individual signifiers or words that make up a sentence back into their signifieds on a one-to-one basis. Rather, we read the whole sentence, and it is from the interrelationship of its words or signifiers that a more global meaning—now called a "meaning-effect"—is derived. The signified—maybe even the illusion or the mirage of the signified and of meaning in general—is an effect produced by the interrelationship of material signifiers." See Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society", in Hal Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983) p. Further discussion of signification in terms of reference and meaning in an Indian context will be provided in chapter five.

[181] Explaining the Orientalist background of the 'nation-state', Peter van der Veer locates this discourse in the context of religious tolerance, universalism, and the erosion of authority once possessed by Semitic religious institutions: "religious tolerance as an ideal in the West derives from an abstraction and universalization of religion that is part of the Western discourse of "modernity." The move in seventeenth century Europe to produce a universal definition of "natural religion" as existing in all societies indicates a fragmentation of the unity and authority of the Roman Church but also the rise of new discourses and practices connected to modern nation-states. A growing emphasis on religious tolerance as a positive value is thus related to the marginalization of religious institutions in Europe." See Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 66-67.

methodological intervention.[182] Struggling to align her interests with the subaltern, however, Spivak's narrative is hanging in a dire position. Trapped between post-structuralist theories of subjectivity and linguistic production, which "suggest that all possibility of expression, spoken or written, shares a common distancing from a self so that meaning can arise—not only meaning for others but also the meaning of the self to the self", and the failures of their alliance with anti-humanism, Spivak accepts a model of constructivism whereby "the 'self' is itself always production rather than ground," and draws a general conclusion: "if writing is seen in terms of its historical predication, the production of our sense of self as ground would seem to be structured like writing."[183] With this purported strategy, Spivak frames the merits of subaltern historiography.

At the outset, Spivak's suggestion that "the mind-set of the peasants is as much affected by the phonocentrism of a tradition where *sruti*—that which is heard—has the greater authority, as is the mind-set of the historian by the phonocentrism of Western linguistics," sounds peculiarly Eurocentric in its question of complicity.[184] Now, let us recall that it is the 'people' silenced by elite historiography who are of interest to subaltern historians.[185] In this context it is difficult to imagine how Spivak's analysis of phonocentrism, let alone her imposition of this model upon those subaltern 'peasants' of India who are said to be under its seductive influence, could be justified for those who proclaim the verbal authority of the Upanisads and the ways in which their words provide a means of knowledge (*sabda pramana*) in the tradition of Vedanta.[186]

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[182] See Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak, (eds.), *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 3-36.

[183] Guha and Spivak (1988), ibid., p. 22.

[184] Guha and Spivak (1988), ibid., p. 23.

[185] A major accomplishment of the Subaltern Studies Collective, whose writings were first published in Delhi in 1982, lies in their effort to recast Indian history so as to highlight local and regional forms of resistance. In their approach to subaltern historiography, the Collective has primarily sought to displace the complicity between European imperialism and Third World nationalism in the discourse of the 'nation-state.' Guha, for instance, frames the discussion of elite historiography in terms of the nationalist model that "originated as the ideological product of British rule in India." Of the two "varieties" of elitism which have given rise to this model, colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism, that is, dominant foreign and indigenous groups operating at the all-India level and dominant indigenous groups operating at local and regional levels, Guha rejects both and argues for a historiography that accounts for intervention of the subaltern, or "the people." See Guha (1988), ibid., pp. 37-44

[186] Of course, Spivak does not specifically apply her analysis to the tradition of Vedanta.

In an insightful analysis Walter J. Ong traces the history of phonocentrism to the Platonic doctrine of 'ideas'.[187] The importance of his analysis lies with his suggestion that "Plato's phonocentrism is textually contrived and textually defended."[188] Western conceptions of phonocentrism clearly lie in contrast to traditional Indian conceptions of verbal testimony and the authority of *sruti*, divine revelations never written in stone.[189] At their worst, textualists assume an overriding bias in the history of writing and spoken expression. In Jacques Derrida's pipeline model of logocentrism, a process which posits the spoken word as primary and thereby debases writing as a bastard derivation of speech, the written word is defended on the basis that "writing breaks the pipeline model because it can be shown that writing has an economy of its own so that it cannot simply transmit unchanged what it receives from speech."[190] Starting from a naïve assumption of one-to-one correspondence between sign and referent, textualists refute the "prior presence of an extramental referent which the word presumably captures and passes on through a kind of pipeline to the psyche."[191] Understood correctly, however, "one can see that the pipeline is broken even earlier by spoken words, which do not themselves transmit an extramental world of presence as through transparent glass. Language is structure, and its structure is not that of the extramental world."[192] Significantly, this does not imply any anti-representational or constructivist stance whereby literature or language refers to no reality outside itself.[193] Spivak is correct, nevertheless, to suggest "not even a 'language' of gesture, can signify, indicate, or express without the mediation of a pre-existing code"[194] An initial problem lies in eliciting codes in discourse of Advaita.

Similar concerns are expressed by structuralists such as Roland Barthes in refutation of

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[187] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1982), pp. 164-165.
[188] Ong (1982), ibid., p. 165.
[189] Spivak's understanding of phonocentrism is largely derived from the grammatology of Jacques Derrida.
[190] Ong (1982), ibid., p. 163.
[191] Ong (1982), ibid., p. 163.
[192] Ong (1982), ibid., p. 163.
[193] Of course, as Eagleton explains in the context of post-Marxist analysis of representation and signification: "Nobody is much enamored these days of an idea of representation in which the signified spontaneously puts forth its own signifier; in which some organic bond is imagined to exist between the two, so that the signified can be represented only in this way; and in which the signifier in no sense alters the signified, but remains a neutral, transparent medium of expression." See Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 210.
[194] See Guha and Spivak (1988), ibid., p. 23.

the 'objectivity' of traditional literary criticism.[195] In contrast to critics who maintain that literature and writing, or indeed speech, contains some kind of 'evident truths', Barthes understands these 'truths' as choices of interpretation. Taken literally, of course, the matter is indisputable: "nobody has ever denied or will ever deny that the language of the text has a literal meaning, of which philology will, if necessary, inform us."[196] Barthes also takes issue with what he describes as an 'act of censure' by critical verisimilitude.[197] Critical verisimilitude normally chooses in favor of literalness and clarity, however, such banal choices do not exhaust the forms of discourse analysis: "philology does indeed have the task of fixing the literal meaning of an utterance…On the contrary, the work of linguistics is not to reduce the ambiguities of language but to comprehend them and, so to speak, to *institute* them."[198] In their contemplation of language as 'text' avant-garde analysts such as Barthes rarely provide an analysis of discourse. Like their philological opponents, they are limited by formalism and abstraction.[199] Still, the issue for Barthes is legitimately posed as a question of method and theory in the context of the symbolic nature of language and the importance of decoding for objective textual analysis.[200]

The question could also be phrased from a different perspective, as in relation to the text of theory and the discourse under analysis. Bridging the relationship between scriptural canons and the hermeneutes involved in the syntagmatic application of paradigmatic elements to genres of discourse and their codification, Tim Murphy explains: "the code, in turn, is a braid of connotations, of anonymous 'sayings', understandings', the always-already known and said, or the flavor within and around that which in a culture passes for conventional wisdom."[201] Structural analysis of discourse in the history of religion

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[195] Roland Barthes, *Criticism and Truth* (London: Continuum, 1987) pp. 5-13.
[196] Barthes (1987), ibid., p.5.
[197] Particularly, Barthes complains that "some forms of language are forbidden to the critic as being 'jargon'. Only one form of language is allowed: 'clarity.'" Barthes (1987) ibid., p. 9.
[198] Barthes (1987), ibid., pp. 26-27.
[199] Cf. Eagleton (1991), ibid., p. 197.
[200] Cf. "What we need to know is whether or not one has the right to read in this literal language other meanings which do not contradict it; it is not the dictionary which will answer this question, but an overall decision on the symbolic nature of language. And similarly for the other 'evident truths': they are already interpretations, for they imply a pre-existing choice of psychological or structural model; this code-for it is a code-can vary; all the objectivity of the critic will depend then, not on the choice of code, but on the rigour with which he applies the model he has chosen to the work in question" (Barthes 1987: 5-6).
[201] Murphy (2003), ibid., pp. 57-58.

simultaneously encodes the indigenous knowledge of cultural traditions and the mythic variants in the genres of its application.[202] The textualist approach of philology has been to simply read archaic texts in the history of traditional Vedanta in an attempt to arrive at an interpretation of Advaita. As such, one may question the extent to which such studies actually replicate the structure of Orientalism. Acknowledging the epistemic role of *sruti* involves recognition of the agency of verbal authority and an attempt to displace Orientalist discourse which ignores the methodology of *sabda pramana*. Locating Saiva lineages, however, creates a problem of agency in the modern context of those (*rsis*/*gurus*) who offer to transmit these ancient traditions in the modern world.

The Advaita tradition, of course, itself offers no consensus on the role of *sruti* in the attainment of knowledge. While it is important to understand that such debates were never concerned with the signifying power of the written word, it is also worth acknowledging that the argument for *sruti* as a means of liberation has always been a minority, or subaltern, perspective in India. The tradition of Vedanta pre-dates Sankara (c. eighth centurty CE) and is derived from the Upanisads, the central focus for our analysis of Advaita. In passing, nevertheless, we may note that it was not until Vacaspati Misra (tenth century CE) sought to reconcile Sankara's teachings with his older rival Mandana-Misra that we see an increasing interest in Sankara.[203] The importance of this event is that Vacaspati and Mandana-Misra's interpretations were at odds with Sankara

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[202] As Tim Murphy explains, quoting a contemporary anthropologist: "the situation between object-language and meta-language, between interpreter and interpreter of interpretation, is the same as James Clifford has said of the text of ethnography: 'A scientific ethnography normally establishes a privileged allegorical register it identifies as 'theory,' 'interpretation,' or 'explanation.' But once all meaningful levels in a text, including theories of interpreations, are recognized as allegorical, it becomes difficult to view one of them as privileged, accounting for the rest.'" See Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 66 and quoting James Clifford, 'On ethnographic allegory', in James Clifford and Geroge Marcus, (eds), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 103. In such a case, moreover, as Murphy explains certain interpretations (or allegorical registers of discourse) may seem heretical, but: "The rules for the proper combination of elements are part of *both* the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes, or adhere and constitute *both* the canon and the legitimacy of its interpretation. Heretics, that is, those who form illicit syntagms, are always possible, but by definition they are *derivative* of the rules which govern the order of the proper" (p. 37, italics in original). Moreover, in his analytic strolls of deterritorialization the schizo "...scrambles all the codes and is the transmitter of the decoded flows of desire. The real continues to flow." See Deleuze and Guattari (1983), ibid., p. 38.

[203] Cf. Paul Hacker, On Sankara and Advaitism,' in Wilhelm Halbfass (ed), *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 30.

and his direct disciples on the role of *sruti*. This reconciliation is largely due to Vacaspati's *inclusivist* attempt to harmonize doctrines of Sankara and Mandana-Misra.[204]

One point I wish to emphasize in the light of Orientalist discourse is that the subaltern perspective of Advaita in India has also received little recognition abroad. For instance, in his widely read textbook for Advaita, Eliot Deutsch recognizes that there are views within the tradition that assert it is only through the profound utterances (*mahavakyas*) of the *sruti* that one may attain knowledge, but such views are reckoned to be culturally specific forms of authority irrelevant to the path of liberation (*moksa*): "for purposes of a reconstruction, however, we can better follow those Advaitins like Mandana and Vacaspati who look to intellectual discrimination and meditation as the most efficacious means to *moksa*."[205] In addition, even in studies which have considered the sources of Advaita where *sruti* is clearly upheld as the only means available for knowledge of *brahman*, the reading of these texts have been skewed by their methodological positions.

The contemporary misunderstanding of *sruti* in Advaita, as well as preoccupation with psychologized notions of ' mystical experience,' is starkly demonstrated by Stephen H. Phillips.[206] Far from wanting to explain the possibility of any "mystical state and show it to be the *summum bonum* (*paramapurusartha*)," as Phillips suggests, Sankara's primary concern lies with removing superimposition (*adhyasa*) and discerning Brahman through the words of the *sruti*. In his attempt to understand Vedanta as a mystical philosophy, Phillips has unfortunately overlooked the nature of ordinary experience in Advaita.[207] If

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[204] Further discussion of this issue in terms of doctrine and 'schools,' etc., is provided in chapter five.

[205] Eliot Deutsch, *Advaita Vedanta: A Philosophical Reconstruction*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1969), p. 110 n. 5. Also Cf. "Most of the leading spokesmen of Neo-Hinduism, among them Radhakrishnan, are advocates of Vedanta, specifically Advaita Vedanta. Sankara is its central figure, and his thought is very frequently presented as the philosophical culmination of Hinduism, the religion of experience. And explicitly or implicitly, the concept of experience appears as the key to his thought. Western authors, too, often try to interpret Sankara's Advaita Vedanta as a philosophy of experience, although few go as far as Eliot Deutsch..." Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 387.

[206] Cf. "Advaita Vedanta's tradition of reflection on perceptual illusion arises out of a concern with mukti, a "liberation" or "salvation" that is conceived as a radical change of awareness, thus as a "mystical experience." Developing the teachings of the Upanisads and the Bhagavadgita, Sankara (circa 700 A.D.) and his followers try to articulate a world view that would explain the possibility of this mystical state and show it to be the summum bonum (paramapurusartha)." Stephen H. Phillips, "Padmapada's Illusion Argument," in *Philosophy East and West*, 37:1, 1987, pp. 3-23. p. 3

[207] Cf. "What Advaita is saying may indeed appear mystical, but when properly understood, Advaita (or at least the Advaita of Sankara and his disciples, Suresvara, Padmapada, Totaka, and Hastamalaka) is

Phillips could not understand the immediate and self-evident (*aparoksata*) nature of awareness in Sankara, it is perhaps more ironic that he was unable to gain this insight from the *acarya's* disciples.[208] Incapable of appreciating the 'phenomenology of immediacy' and the role of *sruti* in Sankara's school of Advaita, Phillips has further complicated the matter by constructing a dichotomy between 'intellectual' knowledge and the 'psychological event' of 'mystical,' understanding, a dichotomy which has no parallel in the attainment of *brahmajnana (*knowledge of *brahman*).[209] In fact, such confusing comments are best understood within the modernist context of "renaissance idiom." As Anantanand Rambachan notes, saints such as Swami Vivekananda dismissed scriptural exegesis "as activities at a theoretical and intellectual level, and Vivekananda even classifies scripture as belonging among the nonessentials of religion."[210] As well as

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speaking about the nature of everyday Consciousness (which it distinguishes from "thought") at it attempts to liberate the seeker from the misunderstanding about the finite nature of that ordinary Consciousness. It is not talking about the existence of a "super-Consciousness" as something existing apart from ordinary Consciousness itself." Michael Comans, *The Method of Early Advaita Vedanta: A Study of Gaudapada, Sankara, Suresvara and Padmapada*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2000), p. 458 n 50.

[208] Analyzing the hermeneutics of several figures in the widely revered cult of Sankara, Wilhelm Halbfass notes that not only did the saint use conjunctions of the word *anubhava* in an absolute sense, such *anubhavatman*, *brahmanubhava*, and *brahmabhava*, to signify the nature of immediate awareness, but "Sankara's disciple and commentator Padmapada pursues the phenomenology of immediate awareness (*anubhava*) further than his master." Moreover, Halbfass insists: "Padmapada's argumentation, which is based upon a phenomenology of immediacy and deals with the nature of experiencing as such, is obviously different from any mystical reliance on extraordinary experiences. As a matter of fact, Padmapada never refers to such special experiences. And Sankara's other great disciple, Suresvara, reminds us once more of the ambiguity and unreliability of experiences: *Anubhava* which is not guided by scripture does not speak for its own truth, as the experience of the conch-shell as silver exemplifies; it can be valid or invalid, depending on its agreement or non-agreement with its object." See Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), pp. 388-391; 568 n. 47-54. Some of Sankara's more important discussions of *anubhava* are found in his commentaries (*bhasya*) of the *Brahma Sutra* verses 1.1.2 and 4.1.2. See Swami Gambhirananda (ed. and trans.), Brahma-Sutra-Bhasya of Sri Sankaracarya (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1965), pp. 13-18; 814-818. Also significant are verses 1.5.5, 1.12.8, 1.18.201-202, 2.2.45, 2.2.73, and 2.2.88 of his independent treatise *Upadesasahasri*. See S. Mayeda, *A Thousand Teachings* (NY: State University of New York Press).

[209] Summarizing Anantanand Rambachan's study of the role of *sruti* in Sankara, Phillips writes: "Rambachan's worst error is, I repeat, that he conflates the ideas of intellectual and existential understanding and fails to see that according to sruti as interpreted by Sankara the liberating "knowledge" of Brahman is a "psychological event" (anubhava), not an "intellectual comprehension" (sabdadhigama)." Phillips (1987), ibid., p. 22, n. 63. See also Anantanand Rambachan, Sankara's Rationale for Sruti as the Definitive Source of Brahmajnana: A Refutation of some Contemporary Views,' in *Philosophy East and West*, 36.1, 1986, pp. 25-40.

[210] Anantanand Rambachan, *The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Vedas*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), p. 133. Of course, when sruti is even acknowledged by modern teachers it is often viewed as a mere secondary or poor substitute for those incapable of attaining the self-certifying fulfillment of anubhava (experience).

countering such distorting presuppositions, I wish to argue that Orientalist interpretations of Vedanta also often fail to understand the pedagogy of Advaita.

In a more detailed and careful study of Padmapada, the Australian Indologist Michael Comans recalls the often invoked rope-snake analogy, or illustration (*drstanta*), of Advaita and notes that even when we discover that what we thought to be a harmful snake is in fact not a snake at all, still, we do not rest content with this negative knowledge until we know it is a rope, or stick, etc. With this example in mind, concerning the mutual superimposition (*anyonya-adhyasa*) of awareness and the body etc., Comans points out that "merely discriminating the 'I' from the body and senses etc., is not sufficient to remove the superimposition."[211] Therefore, it is important to note that:

> The knowledge generated by the Upanisads, however, is a different type of knowledge, for it reveals Brahman. The Vivarana points out here that *samsara* is not caused by a lack of discrimination of oneself as distinct from the body etc., but it is caused by not knowing oneself to be Brahman.[212]

In the words of Padmapada, "because mere Awareness is not negated, and because it is not seen to have any intrinsic distinguishing characteristics, the negation of everything has the immutable, immediately evident and uniform Awareness as its limit."[213] As we have noted, the Vivarana School of Padmapada has been largely overshadowed by the work of Vacaspati, Mandana-Misra, and others among the Bhamati School of interpretation who maintain that the words of *sruti* are insufficient for generating knowledge of *brahman*. We shall have occasion to notice later in this study that the idea of Schools are abstractions that generally provide little help in determining such things as doctrinal significance or teaching methodology. Individual members of such Schools, through their unique creativity, often produce works which move beyond the formal parameters entailed by scholastic conceptions.

As a structural element of discourse, however, I wish to make a distinction between narratives of Advaita which on the one hand uphold the liberating power of *sruti* and

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[211] Comans (2000), ibid., p. 444.
[212] Comans (2000), ibid., p. 444.
[213] Comans (2000), ibid., p. 423-424.

others which suggest that *sruti* must be verified by some sort of repetitive meditation. In doing so, my intentions are not simply to challenge those who believe some sort of extraordinary psychological or mental experience is capable of providing knowledge of *brahman*. More importantly, I believe that in a postcolonial context it is important to further theorize the role of *laksana* (indication) for the pedagogy of Advaita. The indicative function of words in Advaita is not sufficiently theorized with comparisons of *laksana* with Western concepts used for words denoting referents beyond their ordinary significance, such as 'metaphor' and 'allegory.'[214] In this context it is important to bear in mind that the necessity of *laksana* arises in the light of understanding that as the unsublatable positive substratum of existence, *brahman* is not subject to negation. The role of *laksana* consists in the revelation of brahman, as indicated once all superimpositions are negated.[215] Put another way, in the context of the Upanisads, the function of *laksana* in relation to the revelation of *brahman* cannot be separated from the process of negation (*neti neti*). To suggest otherwise is to take part in a long history of failure to appreciate the power of revealed authority.

Notice, for example, the epistemic constraints revealed in John Grimes' theory of "two-levels of language" in the teaching tradition of Advaita Vedanta.[216] In this model Grimes correctly distinguishes between the literal and symbolic levels of language, but notice their respective functions: "a first level of language which is a literal expression directly naming the fact of the non-dual Absolute as well as a second level of language which is secondary, symbolic, and figurative."[217] Concerning the first level of language and those who fail to understand the fundamental literal meaning of the revealed word, Grimes exclaims: "it is true that there are some interpreters who do resort to the process of implied meaning to interpret first level language statements...it is only because one has failed to grasp the literal meaning, that one need resort to a secondary implication at

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[214] For a good attempt to understand *laksana* as metaphor see K. Kunjunni Raja, *Indian Theories of Meaning* (Madras: Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1963), pp. 229-273.

[215] The role of the *guru* and the utterance of *sruti* is nicely illustrated in traditional Indian verses to the *guru* (*gurustotram*), the refrain of which praises the teacher who is possessed with the word 'that' *(tat)* to reveal *brahman* (*tatpadam darsitam yena tasmai srigurave namah*). Of course, tat refers to the *mahvakya tat tvam asi* and represents the fact that is the role of the *guru* in the revelation of *brahman*. Discrimination of the meaning of the word *tvam* in the phrase may be undertaken independently.

[216] John Grimes, *An Advaita Vedanta Perspective on Language* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1991).

[217] Grimes (1991), ibid., pp. 267-268.

all."[218] With Grimes, we witness a novel assessment of Indologists/theologians who refer meaning beyond the literal word of divine revelation.[219]

It is especially important to understand Grimes' assertion that sentences such as *tat tvam asi* express "identity even though all the words have their own individual significance."[220] In Indian theories of language it is accepted that in addition to their primary meaning (*vacyartha*) words may also express an implied meaning (*laksartha*) aside from that which they ordinarily signify. A word refers to its direct meaning through signification (*sakti*) and to its implied meaning through indication (*laksana*). When it comes to interpreting a group of words in grammatical apposition such as *tat tvam asi* it would appear that the meaning of the sentence is rendered unintelligible. For a word to indicate, however, there must be some relation between its usual referent and the implied meaning. The co-referentiality (*samanadhikaranya*) of *tat* and *tvam*, each of which signify their own seemingly incompatible meaning, leads to reasoning of their relation. Concerning the signification of *tat tvam asi* in his 'naming' (or 'taming') model of language, Grimes asserts that "this expression directly names the Reality without resorting to the necessity of secondary implication."[221] According to Grimes, the *mahavakya tat tvam asi* expresses identity through a unique sort of tautology. When the sentence is initially heard, or read, it may indeed sound confusing. Through sublation, however, knowledge of identity is said to be attained: "the existence of a single content is asserted once the accidental and apparent determinants are negated."[222] The ways in which the assertion of this content relates to *brahman* remains unclear.

Our analysis of Advaita is largely indebted to the procedures, or methods (*prakriyas*), of the Upanisads, that is, 'metaexegetic functions' which ensure that "the text itself always

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[218] Grimes (1991), ibid., p. 233.

[219] Cf. "This is the only way that language, which is usually relational, can give an immediate realization of the impartite Reality. Such statements name the Absolute directly. The knowledge of the entitative oneness of the individual soul with the Absolute is the purport of the *mahavakyas*. At the two-level theory of language, the *mahavakyas* directly state the fact of this entitative oneness while all other statements do so only indirectly…And for those who cannot render the literal meaning intelligible, the significance should be sought for." Grimes (1991), ibid., pp. 235-236.

[220] Grimes (1991), ibid., p. 235.

[221] Grimes (1991), ibid., p. 235.

[222] Grimes (1991), ibid., p. 237.

contains an indication of the way it is to be read,"[223] but the literal significance of written words (i.e. scriptures) serves to de-institutionalize, or universalize, Aryan lineages of power. The epistemic power of orality should also be understood in the context of narratives which portray *gurus* as mystic figures who fail to utter a single word of truth.[224] As Swami Dayananda narrates in reference to Daksinamurti's transmission of *brahmavidya* to four prototypical disciples:

> We hear that Lord Daksinamurty revealed through silence the truth of oneself being Brahman, the limitless, to the four disciples, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara, and Sanatsujata. This story is often cited to prove that silence is the means of communicating the ultimate truth, not words. This notion has turned many a person away from the study of the scriptures. It is important, therefore, to understand the truth of the concept.[225]

Confusion surrounding scriptural hermeneutics is one possible outcome for those religious traditions which have been transformed under colonial authority. In this context it has been suggested that the technique of *laksana* and the indicative function of words deserves further investigation. As Federico Settler notes, "recent works in the study of postcolonialism display a primary concern with the mutual constitution of the identities of both the colonizer and the colonized. A further element of originality lies with the

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[223] Tzevetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1990), pp. 44-46.

[224] In fact, the dominant 'mystical' perception of the *guru* in the United States seems to remove any necessity for words, provisional or otherwise. For example, one writer discussing the '*guru* and *sisya* in Indian tradition' in a quasi-academic journal even thought that, "the best amongst gurus teach in silence". In order to prove his point, Purusottama Bilimoria refers to two popular mystics: "Ramana Maharshi taught his disciples through silence, while Meher Baba, the Sufi mystic, kept a vow of silence for forty years; and yet both were excellent teachers in that they conveyed perfectly the essence of their teachings." See Purusottama Billimoria, "The Spiritual Guide (*guru*) and the Disciple (*sisya*) in Indian Tradition," in *Journal of Dharma*. 5, 1980, pp. 270-278. pg. 271. Though in service of the privatization of 'religious experience', Bilimoria is incapable of appreciating the use of words in 'Indian tradition'. He has not even taken note from Agehananda Bharati who had already pointed out what happened when Meher Baba decided to speak: "Quite obviously, there are "saints" who are very much in the center of the Renaissance, though they themselves may not phatically contribute to it; see for instance Meher Baba, the late, Parsee born saint who had undertaken a vow of silence until the day when he would tell the Truth to the world. It appears the day had come. Meher Baba spoke and, he spoke in terms of the Hindu Renaissance and its apologetic." Bharati (1970), ibid., p. 277. On the other hand, one can't even begin to perceive the depth of confusion surrounding 'gurus' in the American public. One need only recall the variety of students who have claimed the lineage of Ramana Maharshi, the other figure to whom Billimoria refers.

[225] See Swami Dayananda, *A Collection: Talks and Essays of Swami Dayananda* (Rishikesh: Sri Gangadhareswar Trust, 1999), p. 51. As we shall see in chapter two, a subaltern variant is subsequently revealed with Dayananda's traditional discourse of truth.

ability to identify and analyze the chronic instabilities inhabiting and destabilizing the colonial project."[226] Subaltern discourse of scriptural authority contests the disciplinary power of Orientalism with lingering signs of colonialism. The noisy 'discovery of language' is silenced in spite of Swami Dayananda's discourse of nationalism.[227] As we shall see, Daksinamurti's silence is directly related to the words of the Upanisads (*sruti*).

Where the subtlety of our methodology emerges is in explication of this silence as a means of displacing its neo-colonial implications, or negation of the power relations constructing Dayananda's nationalist method of subjectivation. Desirous of deterritorializing Dayananda's domain of knowledge, we locate this Indian saint in a neo-colonial realm of power whereby subaltern resistance is appropriated for Indo-critical reversal of Hindu indoctrination. In a sense, "one could conceive of this as the construction of new *epistemes* in the silent spaces or gaps to be found in the hegemonic discourses of the present."[228] In this approach, at least, the *swami*'s propaganda serves to subvert the hegemony of bourgeois variants in the Hindu taxonomy of Advaita.

Reterritorializing the force of this movement in America, more specifically, traditional discourse functions as a genre of knowledge.[229] Narrating Dayananda's lineage, in the course of our enunciation, the *swami* is subjected to an epistemic tradition codified with a breakdown which leads to his institutionalization. It should be clearly stated, moreover,

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[226] See Federico Settler, '*Orientalism and Religion*: The Question of Subject Agency', in *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 14, 2002, p. 259.

[227] Cf. "If the effect of colonial power is seen to be the production of hybridization rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions, then an important change of perspective occurs. The ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority enables a form of subversion, founded on the undecidability that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention." See Homi Bhabha. *The Location of Culture* (NY: Routledge, 1994), p. 112.

[228] See Richard King, *Indian Philosophy: An Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1999a), p. 233. Moreover, as King explains elsewhere, "recognition of the polysemic nature of 'the subaltern' remains a strength of a theoretically sophisticated and nuanced use of the category by subalternists, rather than a weakness since it acts as a crucial counterpoint to the dangers of an incipient essentialism often found in the use of the category. It would seem, therefore, that one can be 'subaltern' in one context and a member of an 'elite' group in another." King (1999b), ibid., p. 195. In our attempt to institutionalize an epistemic narrative of subaltern enunciation at the center of an elite nationalist discourse of domination, our approach remains sensitive to the micro-politics of power-knowledge relations surrounding the voice of subalterns.

[229] Cf. "In short, it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge." Foucault (1977), ibid., p. 28.

our ethnographic activities have been conducted in Dayananda's hybrid sphere of authority, a field of orality the roots of which implicate our work in the institution of Arsa Vidya, or align our vision with *risis*.[230]

Visions of Indian Agency: Representation, Resistance, and Perverse Persistence

In his seminal analysis of colonial discourse and Orientalist hegemony, in the midst of the 'productive' power of the discipline of Orientalism, Said argued that agency had been stripped from dispossessed Orientals and the Orientalist had, in turn, through a process of reification and essentialization, spoken authoritatively on their behalf. The most startling result of Said's work, perhaps, is that it inaugurated an academic quest for Indian agency. That is, despite the Orientalist production of modern English-speaking Indians, scholars of South Asia demand that there is some subjugated (even 'subaltern') native voice, which they seek to recover, silenced by the 'hegemony' of colonial discourse. In large measure, this adventure centers upon an attempt to capture, recover, or actually (re)construct, the voice of the colonized Indian subject.

Reviewing recent scholarship in the wake of *Orientalism*, which he believes distinctly altered the conceptualizations and practices surrounding the contemporary study of Indian religions, Brian Smith recollects the spate of works flooding the Academy, all embracing Said's argument, "contending that modern articulations of a unified 'world religion' called 'Hinduism' are nothing more than imaginary (and mistaken) representations issuing forth, originally, from Western Orientalism."[231] According to Smith, this phenomenon was "the first phase of reaction to *Orientalism*," a phase still evidenced in academia, for example in Ronald Inden's (1990) wholesale critique of the

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[230] The mode of discourse constructing the myth of Vedanta has direct implications for our self-reflexivity, as Foucault explains: "these 'power-knowledge relations' are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations." Foucault (1977), ibid., pp. 27-28.

[231] See Brian K. Smith, 'After Said, After Ayodhya: New Challenges for the Study of Indian Religions', in *Religion* 26, 1996, pp. 365-72. p. 365.

discipline of Indology. The significance of Inden's analysis lies in the power attributed to Orientalist discourse. For instance, Inden believes that "in many respects the intellectual activities of the orientalists have even produced in India the very Orient which it constructed in its discourse."[232] Reflecting on the subjection of Gandhi and the Orientalist truism of "Hindu non-violence," Inden exclaims: "I doubt very much, for example, if Gandhi's concept of non-violence would have played the central part it did in Indian nationalism had it not been singled out long ago as a defining trait of the Hindu character."[233] Now, clearly, the overwhelming perception of 'Hinduism' as some "non-violent" World Religion is the result of a long discursive and non-discursive process of Orientalist romanticism, however, Gandhi's subsequent participation in this discourse indeed raises important issues concerning the exercise of hegemony.[234]

Concerning a 'second phase' of reaction to *Orientalism*, claimed to be in its nascent stages, Smith notes that a few scholars are beginning to use Said's arguments against him, and these critics call into question the hegemonic power attributed to Orientalism.[235]

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[232] Ronald Indian, *Imagining India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 38.
[233] Inden (1990), ibid., p. 38.
[234] If one doubts the power of Orientalism, as strengthened by Gandhi, Peter van der Veer reminds us that "it is sometimes difficult for Westerners to grasp the violence perpetuated by Hindu monks who speak and act militantly, since the notion of 'nonviolent' otherworldliness is persistently attributed to Hindu 'spirituality.'" As van der Veer correctly notes, "Hindu saints (*sadhus*) have always been soldiers as well as traders, and fighting ascetics (*nagas*) form important military sections of most Hindu monastic orders." Van der Veer (1994), ibid., pp. 70-71; 43-44. Simply put, the fact that Hindu violence may surprise naïve or nostalgic bystanders no doubt illustrates the hegemony of affirmative Orientalist discourse.
[235] Smith's point of complaint is now focused upon the strategy of intervention these scholars purport to execute, but the problem he identified with the second phase of post-Saidian scholars Indologists had already leveled against the first generation. Smith summarizes the affair succinctly: "The overweening power and dominance granted to the West and its discourses reappears in many post-Saidian critiques of Indian nationalism, communalism, and religion. Here, as in the prototype, the argument fundamentally comes down to this: the West invented such notions as 'the Orient', 'India' qua modern nation-state, 'Hindus' qua a communal group, and 'Hinduism' qua world religion; the East subsequently passively accepted these false notions; and now we (often, but not always) Westerners need to deconstruct them for you Easterners (and for ourselves). This vision of the relationship between West and East, and between modern scholarship and its object of study, is unfortunately all too familiar and can be labeled a form of 'neo-Orientalism.'" Smith (1996), ibid., p. 367. In this harangue, Smith echoes an earlier sentiment expressed by Wilhelm Halbfass when he finally responded to the Orientalist critique of Indology. Before qualifying his statement by a series of sober queries, Halbfass exhorts: "The West has imposed its methods of research, its values and modes of orientation, its categories of understanding, its "epistemic absolutism" upon the Indian tradition and alienated the Indians from what they really were and are. It now takes the liberty to remove such superimpositions, to release the Indians into their authentic selfhood, to restore their epistemic and axiological sovereignty. This self-abrogation of Eurocentrism is at the same time its ultimate affirmation." See *Wilhelm Halbfass, Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian Thought* (Albany:

Besides two broad post-Saidian reactionary camps, one uncritically embracing Said, the other questioning the hegemonic force of Orientalism by means of a self-invested attempt to subvert it, Smith argues that a handful of scholars have managed to complicate the picture of modern India which portrays the subcontinent as "simply conforming to images of itself stemming from the West."[236] The point to be noted is their astute understanding of reality, or 'representations,' which Smith labels 'constructions.'

Given Said's rhetorical and imaginative demonstration of the colonial manipulation of the Orient, combined with his confession of the most significant limitation of *Orientalism*, the birth of postcolonial theory was, perhaps, inevitable. Of the many tasks left 'embarrassingly incomplete,' Said admits the most important requires future scholars of the Orient to "rethink the whole complex problem of knowledge and power."[237] In spite of Said's honest admission of the limited nature of his study, however, Smith goes so far as to argue that "the real issue" that Said's work presents is it's "forceful enunuciation of the postmodernist predicament" which, Smith believes, serves "to close the door definitively on any subsequent re-envisioning of 'the Orient', 'India', or 'Hinduism' that poses as being 'truer' or 'more accurate' than prior ones."[238] Smith's assertion raises

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State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 12. Smith complains that Orientalists attempt to restore the voice of the downtrodden Indians for whom their forefathers had previously spoken, but the underlying assumption of his argument is that, if taken "seriously," the beliefs of so-called indigenous agents who have apparently survived the impact of colonialism unscathed may be recorded and circulated, perhaps for the sake of understanding or critique, by scholars of Religious Studies. "A post-Saidian study," says Smith, "will take seriously indigenous agency; it will listen to and reproduce native voices and thus counter Marx's pronouncement...'They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented'" (p. 368). Of course, Smith's is a highly unusual and naïve stance to maintain. As Richard King notes, Said refutes the "suggestion that only Orientals can legitimately speak of the Orient (a position that mistakenly presumes that the Oriental is also free from an agenda)." King (1999b), ibid., p. 94. The contrite nature of Smith's argument belies the hermeneutical quest for cross-cultural understanding. It is as if scholars of religion, apparently keen to recognizing 'authentic' indigenous voices when they hear them or, rather, in what would amount to an even more disastrous reproduction, bent on conceptualizing modern Indians as indigenous agents due to the simple fact that they sprouted from pre-colonial roots lodged in the subcontinent, are transparent filters within which native ideologies may be deposited and preserved. In other words, to twist King's self-reflexive comments to our advantage, in spite of "the radical reconfiguration of indigenous forms of knowledge precipitated by European colonialism", Smith seems to offer "an uncritical acceptance or endorsement of 'the indigenous' as if this were free from its own set of power relations and oppressive practices." King (1999b), ibid., p. 185. Due to the limited nature of Smith's suggestion it is impossible to determine how indigenous voices are supposed to function in the Western Academy once they are reproduced, or manufactured, in departments of religion.

[236] Smith (1996), ibid., p. 367.

[237] Said (1978), ibid., p. 24.

[238] Smith (1996), ibid., p. 366.

many issues, not least of which is the fact that this is precisely the grounds upon which so many critics of Said have issued their complaints:

> Much of the contemporary reflection that has gone on within 'postcolonial studies' has been informed by the popularity of post-structuralist and postmodernist theories within Western intellectual circles since the 1980s. This involvement begs a serious question. To what extent should the postcolonial agenda be aligned with the kind of anti-representationalism characteristic of much post-structuralist and postmodernist thought?[239]

In answer, King offers a novel suggestion, but it should be noted that his question is linked to another significant Eurocentric projection. More specifically, as King aptly states the issue: "the problem for postcolonial theory, which makes its relationship with post-structuralist theory somewhat uneasy, has been that of finding a moral platform from which to speak and a recognition of solidarity both among the oppressed and between divergent groups, having excluded the possibility of a humanistic appeal to a common human nature."[240] In the light of Smith's beliefs, let alone the Eurocentric stance of Said, it is important to note that "Said's final position accepts the theoretical possibility of a legitimate representation of the Orient and is grounded in a universal humanism" despite his "equivocations about the means for determining such legitimacy in practice."[241] This move has involved Said's departure from the company of post-structuralists.

In his own words, it is actually Smith's approach to Indian religion which may be characterized as 'postmodern' and, thus, highlights a significant distinction between Indologists and scholars trained for the recent discipline of religious studies, or science of religion (*Religionwissenschaft*).[242] The point to be noted in reference to Orientalist

[239] King (1999), ibid., p. 197.
[240] King (1999), ibid., p. 198.
[241] King (1999), ibid., p. 95.
[242] Tracing the history of Orientalist analysis, Said notes that the discursive "conversion from a fundamentally philological discipline" into a "social science specialty", is the unique contribution which America offers to the discipline of Orientalism. In America, "no longer does an Orientalist try first to master the esoteric languages of the Orient; he begins instead as a trained social scientist and "applies" his science to the Orient, or anywhere else" As Said explains, "...in the United States knowledge of the Orient never passed through the refining and reticulating and reconstructing processes, whose beginning was in philological study." Said (1979), ibid., p. 290. In contrast, Said defines the early European philological approach to the Orient with a succinct illustration: "as a scholarly attitude the picture of a learned

constructions and those scholars of 'Hinduism' who have somehow managed to move beyond *Orientalism* is that they purportedly take seriously and integrate "the Indian contributions to the history and formation of those representations."[243] Armed with his faith in the constructivist nature of reality, Smith congratulates the post-Saidian scholars of Indian religion who acknowledge this inevitable epistemic situation.

As a model, Smith refers to Peter van der Veer's study of religious nationalism, in which he states: "I do not agree with Said's notion that colonialism and orientalism created the reality in which Indians had to live. This notion is itself an orientalist fallacy that denies

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Westerner surveying as if from a peculiarly suited vantage point the passive, seminal, feminine, even silent and supine East, then going on to "articulate" the East, making the Orient deliver up its secrets under the learned authority of a philologist whose power derives from the ability to unlock secret, esoteric languages." (pp. 137-138). Said's own approach to the discipline of philology may be highlighted in the ambiguous context of his half-hearted debt to Foucault, specifically his anti-representational approach to the images constituting this colonially produced domain of knowledge. Upon stating his *strategic location*, or authoritative position, as an analyzer of *strategic formation*, Said provides an insightful reason for focusing upon 'exteriority' in the study of Orientalist authority: "another reason for insisting upon exteriority is that I believe it needs to be made clear about cultural discourse and exchange within a culture that what is commonly circulated by it is not "truth" but representations." Said's position is starkly demonstrated when he approaches the birth of the science of philology and the 'Oriental renaissance' of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. With the discovery of Oriental languages, Said is able to focus his stance on *strategic formation*, the way in which texts "acquire mass, density, and referential power among themselves and thereafter in the culture at large." Still, Said insists upon exteriority: "the things to look at are style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances *not* the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original." (pp. 20-21). As such, we should briefly note that the questions asked by Wilhelm Halbfass, such as "what kind of "authenticity" would the Indian civilization have once it has been freed from "Orientalist constructions" and Western 'discourses of domination,'" much less any answer he may wish to provide, do not concern themselves with issues which discourse analysts seek to interrogate. Halbfass (1991), ibid., pp. 12-13. Moreover, contrary to his representation of European philology, Said is not alone while analyzing discursive formations irrespective of ontological fidelity to their object of knowledge. Some otherwise intelligent scholars do in fact truly believe that philological investigation provides some sort of objective knowledge, but we should recall that the scientific discipline of philology prides itself upon an inability to discover "truth." While philological analysts view themselves as scientists who practice a method of textual formalism which eradicates all subjectivity of the translator by focusing upon the objective system of language, as Gavin Flood correctly notes "the objectivity of the text spoken of here is not so much an argument for the objectivity of knowledge, but is rather an argument about perception and seeing whether a particular manuscript accords with another, whether the grammatically correct form of the verb is used, and so on." Nevertheless, and this may be what Said is trying to convey with his portrait, philologists constantly betray this myth of objectivity, take "one small step beyond this into the meaning of the text…the realms of interpretation and the construction (or attempted reconstruction) of meaning" but, in doing so, they "are immediately thrown back into wider cultural questions and into questions about the motivation behind particular research programmes that post-colonial theory has criticized." See Gavin Flood, *Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion* (NY: Cassell, 1999), p. 233. Among many aftershocks, it is little wonder that *Orientalism* initiated a radical field of literary and cultural criticism described as 'colonial discourse analysis,' or postcolonial studies.

[243] Smith (1996), ibid., p. 367.

Indians agency in constructing their society and simplifies the intricate interplay of Western and Indian discourses".[244] Analyzing the ethics of pacifism, a hegemonic element of colonial discourse which is somehow associated with religion in India, for instance, van der Veer notes that the concept of non-violence (*ahimsa*) has a specific theological basis in direct opposition to the tireless practice of violent animal sacrifice and he explains that Indian ascetics have long been involved in violent warfare, as well as inter-religious rivals.[245] Indeed, this is mundanely demonstrated by the regular violent clashes at one of the most 'Holy' gatherings of Hindu monks, ritual bathing festivals (*kumbha mela*) where "even today the order of precedence in taking a bath is a matter of conflict between the orders."[246] The importance of this rhetoric for van der Veer's argument is that "the idea that Hindus would be religiously prevented by a doctrine of "nonviolence" from pursuing their interests by violent means is Gandhi's construction of Hindu spirituality."[247] In contrast to Gandhi's novel reconstructions, van der Veer suggests the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a militant Hindu nationalist organization founded in 1925 by K.B. Hedgewar, has managed to build upon and 'perpetuate' already existent frameworks of Indian warfare.[248] The implication of van der Veer's theory of "Hindu non-violence" is that the RSS provide a more accurate description of Hindu character than does Gandhi. One could argue that the RSS subvert Orientalist truisms.

To further appreciate the contributions of Gandhi's novel constructions, van der Veer proceeds to analyze the dialectical tension between femininity and masculinity in Indian religious nationalism in the light of socio-historic manifestations of this binary opposition.[249] Van der Veer notes that Gandhi's campaign was grounded in the rhetoric

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[244] van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 21.

[245] As van der Veer notes, "Hindu monks, in particular, have a long and interesting history of warfare related to trading, which continues to the present day. There is also considerable historical evidence of violent struggle between different Hindu religious groups as well as between Hindus and Buddhists, Hindus and Jains, and Hindus and Muslims." van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 71.

[246] van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 45.

[247] van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 71.

[248] Cf. "The considerable martial tradition of Hindu India is in fact perpetuated in one of the most important organizations of Hindu nationalism, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)." van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 71.

[249] Van der Veer reminds us that "on the one hand, there is the idea that Hindus are like women, since they have been conquered, raped, and enslaved—first by Muslims and then by the British. On the other hand,

of spiritual transformation and he correctly highlights the fact that Gandhi consistently "tested" his detachment by inviting naked young women, especially his grandniece Manu, into his bed in order to monitor and increase his powers. The relationship between Gandhi's political reform and Hindu effeminacy is well-known, but van der Veer's analysis of the inevitable element of the 'dialectic' he has constructed fails to provide any significant insight into this Indian trait. Though no doubt interesting from a psychoanalytic (or even Marxist) perspective, rather than focus upon Gandhi's power struggles with his semen, one might rather benefit by analyzing the politician's perverted appropriation of effeminate Orientalist constructions. Let alone agency, the saint's resistance to this tension even inverts the direction of colonial power.[250]

While refusing to follow indices of perversion, to reroute the hybrid path upon which I have trod, an 'active/passive' struggle stimulated with a two-pronged penetration of imperialism is thereby allowed to climax under the auspices of an institution whose neo-colonial constructions are displaced for a subaltern mode of production, the unilateral authority of which fuels an extra-literary epistemic excursion generated with a theoretical model of postcolonial subversion. En route, the discursive and non-discursive formation of British India serves to recalibrate the structure of pre-colonial narratives as Indian resistance to Orientalist discourse of the *Upanisad*s creates a consensus of elitism whereby the internalization of Brahmanical imperialism is contested with bourgeois

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there is the idea that one can sublimate one's femininity, bring it to a higher plane by the retention of semen, and thereby attain supernatural power, which is seen as feminine." van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 97.

[250] As Richard King notes, "Gandhi, quite self-consciously it would seem, inverted colonial presuppositions about Bengali effeminacy, otherworldly spirituality and the passivity of the ascetic ethics of non-violence (*ahimsa*) and reapplied these cultural symbols in terms of organized, non-violent, social protest." King (1999b), ibid., p. 134. Offering one of the more penetrating critiques of the procedures whereby indigenous traditions have been reterritorialized (or reconstructed) in the aftermath of colonialism, King makes explicit the currents of Orientalist authority: "to agree with the colonial discourse is to accept one's subordination in terms of a hegemonic Western paradigm. However, in rejecting such discourses one often perpetuates the paradigm itself, even if the categories are now inverted, reversed or revalorized. This, for instance, is the situation with regard to Hindu nationalist movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In their quest for home rule (*swaraj*) and freedom from imperial control, Hindus tended to perpetuate the nationalistic, romantic and homogenizing presuppositions of their British rulers." (p. 112). While Gandhi's practices may have salvaged elitist Indian agency, his approach is nonetheless indebted to Orientalism in its very response to reigning hegemonic presuppositions of Indian effeminacy. Moreover, King argues that Gandhi's conceptualization and application of 'passive resistance' further feminized the nationalist discourse of Hinduism; indeed, the politician explicitly portrayed himself in feminine and domestic roles in order to serve this purpose.

variants of mysticism. I agree with van der Veer's concern about attributing hegemonic force to the discourse of Orientalism. Indeed Said fails to account for the procedures of hybridization generating neo-colonial regimes of Orientalist subjectivation.[251] Regardless of whether or not Orientalists 'produced' either nonviolence or effeminacy, moreover, upon uprooting pre-colonial conventions I wish to investigate a subaltern realm of power and thereby throw light on the wayward offspring of mystic Indians.[252]

Of course, it is not only Orientalist narrations of the *Upanisad*s, or even their colonially disciplined Indian counterparts, with which we are concerned. The colonial context has reconfigured the practice of Indian religion, but the discourse of Advaita cannot be calculated without the *rsi*-regimes of power whereby the myth of Vedanta reveals

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[251] In the foreword to a compendium of writings produced by the Subaltern Studies Collective it is significant that Said at least recognizes that hegemony operates through "socio-cultural interplay between ruler and ruled", but he nevertheless depicts a dominant class of ideological coercion: "the resonances of the word subaltern derive from Gramsci's usage in the *Prison Notebooks* in which, ever the astute political analyst and theoretical genius, he shows how wherever there is history, there is class, and that the essence of the historical is the long and extraordinarily various socio-cultural interplay between ruler and ruled, between the elite, dominant, or hegemonic class and the subaltern and, as Gramsci calls it, the emergent class of the much greater mass of people ruled by coercive or sometimes mainly ideological domination from above." See Guha and Spivak (1988), ibid., p. vi. As Christine Buci-Glucksmann notes, however, placing hegemony within the classical categories of "class-inculcation" serves to reduce this conceptual tool to a *mere* "ideology," in which case hegemony looses all possibility of being a political principle for strategic leadership. Christine Buci-Glukman, 'Hegemony and Consent', in Anne Showstack Sassoon, ed., *Approaches to Gramsci* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society Ltd., 1982) p. 117.

[252] If Indian effeminacy is an Orientalist construction, Gandhi may be schizoanalyzed as a 'pervert.' As Deleuze and Guattari explain: "the pervert is one who takes the artifice seriously and plays the game to the hilt…territorialities infinitely more artificial than the ones that society offers us." Deleuze and Guattari (1983), ibid., p. 38. While appropriating colonial discourse to his advantage Gandhi further perverted the Orientalist essentialism which served to invent his character. Turning the dialogical register up a notch, King adds: "the extent to which Gandhi's approach constituted an authentic and effective means of subaltern resistance remains a subject of considerable debate." King (1999b), ibid., p. 134. Settled from the micro-politics of power, we may emphasize Gandhi's failure to subvert the disciplinary production of effeminate Indians, the possibility of which is suggested by the queer theorist and feminist critic Judith Butler's explanation of 'reverse discourse' as a mode of resistance: "consider the inversions of "woman" and "woman", depending on the staging and address of their performance, of "queer" and "queer", depending on pathologizing or contestatory modes. Both examples concern, not an opposition between reactionary and progressive usage, but rather a progressive usage that requires and repeats the reactionary in order to effect a subversive reterritorialization." See Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 99-100. Of course, Gandhi's strategies are far from subversive, "but the perverted pole is equally opposed to the schizophrenic pole, just as the reconstitution of territorialities is opposed to the movement of deterritorialization." Deleuze and Guattari (1983/2004), ibid., p. 347. We are not concerned with this saint's perversion so we must broaden the scope of neo-colonial inversion. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, however, "if perversion in the narrowest sense of the word performs a certain very specific type of reterritorialization within the artifice, perversion in the broad sense comprises all the types of reterritorializations, not merely artificial, but also exotic, archaic, residual, private, etc" (p. 347).

knowledge or, rather, removes ignorance. The Upanisads have been fabricated, imagined, manufactured, laicized, and spiritualized with a variety of discourses, but the discursive and non-discursive formation within which they are now transmitted also serves as a storehouse for the power of Aryanism. Generated with "historical tributaries" of this apparatus, under the silent influence of disciplinary power, we approach the field of postcolonial studies, aware that "taking 'the postcolonial turn' must necessarily involve the transformation of Indology as a discipline and regime of knowledge."[253] Postcolonial studies do often "overvalue or privilege the colonial space at the expense of an awareness of precolonial and (so-called) postcolonial regimes of power,"[254] but the network in which this problem is implicated cannot be explained in realms regulated by Orientalists and the neo-colonies of British India. Semiotic exegesis of Advaita, therefore, must institutionalize authoritative lineages of Saivism while deterritorializing narratives of Indian chauvinism and neo-colonial discourse of mysticism.

[253] As King notes in reference to Indo-critical theory "questioning the seductive allure of modernity need not involve a nativist appropriation of 'tradition' if one is prepared to displace the binary opposition between tradition and modernity that has characterized post-Enlightenment thought in its modernist and postmodernist variations." For King, "accepting that the modern world is rooted in a variety of historical tributaries and that these traditions remain alive within and in spite of modernity is a first step in the displacement of this central post-Enlightenment dichotomy." King (1999b), ibid., pp. 213-214.

[254] King (1999b), ibid., p. 187.

Chapter Two

Fabricating Vedanta: Aryan Religion and Brahminization

> Traditions are not self-created: they are consciously chosen, and the choice from the past is enormous. We tend, therefore, to choose that which suits our present needs. If we are to understand the role of religion in the Indian society of earlier times we may have to move away from the paradigm of Hinduism and the other religions in India as projected in the colonial period.[255]

We will have an opportunity to problematize Romila Thapar's projection of 'religion' in the "Indian society of earlier times", as well as prune the branches of the now firmly rooted banyan tree of 'Hinduism'—the fruits of which constitute some of the most valuable colonial commodities currently being consumed in the modern world. If we shall appropriate the religion of Aryan nomads to de-individualize the reterritorialized cultural field where they now intervene, however, we must enter the Brahmanical structures they have founded. To circulate their power, I fabricate the taxonomic hierarchy authorizing the lineage in which they are grounded. Indigenous regimes of Braminization and Orientalist anxieties about managing the Indian tradition aside, of course, the fact that the Upanisads are now preached by Hindus is the embarrassing result of the modern Indian theologian's ignorance of the Orientalist presuppositions which configure the prototype 'world religion', his pride that Hinduism has successfully entered the ranks of this inter-religious arena, and his desire to be an elite representative of some pan-Indian religion presented as the universal religion of the Indian 'nation', if not the world. Thapar is correct to call for a new paradigm of Indian religion, but Brahmanical inventions, or 'traditions', are not sufficiently theorized by calling them 'consciously chosen'.

Now, obviously, one possible problem with conceptualizing Hinduism as an Orientalist invention proudly embraced and strengthened by Brahmanical theologians, non-brahmins, and the emergent Indian middle class in the nineteenth century is that such emphasis (especially if understood from any postmodern anti-representational perspective) could fail to consider Indian religiosity prior to this historical construction.

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[255] Romila Thapar, *Cultural Transaction and Early India: Tradition and Patronage* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 23

Rather than make that mistake, the Orientalist constructivist Robert Frykenberg persuasively argues that 'Hinduism,' "this jumble of inner contradictions which has existed at the nexus of history and religion for hardly 200 years," including all the ideologies and institutions which have consoled and distressed the Indians managed under it's banner, did not just naturally evolve, "nor did Hinduism simply spring, full-blown, into being. Rather, it was constructed, piece by piece...out of materials and precedents which had already existed for a long time."[256] Frykenberg points to the modification of the Aryan caste system in Indian society as evidence of pre-colonial supplies inevitably incorporated with the demand of those who constructed Hinduism as a universal world religion. Indeed, biological apartheid and primitive fears of racial pollution continue to create nightmares for the Indian nationalist's dream of Hindu unity.[257]

While Vedic *rsis* may not have performed 'priestly activities', placing the Upanisads with their transmission amongst ecumenical Brahmins may highlight Indian struggles for knowledge.[258] Our concern lies with the orthodox (i.e. normative) power relations whereby 'Vedanta' and the mimics of Sankara have come to occupy such an important role among the exports of India. While Paul Hacker is correct to note that Sankara could never become popular with his elitist thoughts, it is nonetheless true that caricatures of the sage are widely distributed for mass consumption. Perhaps local (i.e. 'Indian') carriers of this message were successful in the fourteenth century, when Hacker suggests the Brahmanical politicians Vidyaranya and Sayana established orthodox monasteries and

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[256] Robert Frykenberg, 'Constructions of Hinduism at the Nexus of History and Religion', in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, xxiii.3, 1993, pp. 523-550; p. 523.

[257] As Frykenberg explains, "no one knows exactly how many distinct communities India as a continent contains: there could be 2,000, 3,000, or more separate peoples. Strictly speaking, no two of these groups, on grounds of practical policy, cosmic principle, or ritual purity were ever supposed to intermarry or interdine with each other. Deep convictions about purity of birth (jat) and blood, and about preserving each birth-group or caste (jati) from pollution, have helped to make this so." Frykenberg (1993), ibid., pp. 523-525. In a trans-national context, of course, the Aryan bio-social conception of segregated society has no role or function, but as we shall see in chapter three colonial power of the democratic imaginary and ideology of egalitarianism have been harnessed by subjugated natives to invert this polity to their advantage. Presently, we must narrate the genealogy of Swami Dayananda's Vedanta myth, a task which requires Indo-critical construction of 'precedents' which the swami derives from the Upanisads, or Siva.

[258] Cf. "This was not the power of religion, since the *rsi* was not a religious functionary and was not concerned with priestly activities. At the root of his power lay the ability...to contravene the normative rules of social behaviour." Thapar (1987), ibid., p. 13.

spread the teachings of Sankara 'all over India' in an effort to "render the authoritative literature of the Aryan religion more intelligible and easier to apply",[259] however, Indians were systematically engaged in hybrid discourse of Aryanism long before these brothers, or even the 'divine folk-hero' himself.[260]

Discourse of Aryanism: Indology and Semiotics

Writing as an 'anthropological upstart' Peter van der Veer confides that, in their ethnographic study of contemporary religious practices, anthropologists often feel they are 'outsiders' and 'intruders' of other provincial disciplines involved in philological (re)construction of meaning.[261] Concerning the fruits of a previous generation of

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[259] Paul Hacker, 'On Sankara and Advaitism', in Wilhelm Halbfass (ed.) *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995) p.29.

[260] It is not only the case that Sankara, conditioned by pious Brahmins since birth, "gradually won the respect of Brahmins and feudal lords", as the Japanese Indologist Sengaku Mayeda suggests. It is also important to clarify the ways in which the saint also "made enthusiastic efforts to restore the orthodox Brahmanical tradition." See Sengaku Mayeda, *A Thousand Teachings: The Upadesasahasri of Sankara* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992) pp. 3-5; 7. For our purposes, we need not place this restoration in the contexts of either the Hun invasion of the subcontinent during the fifth and sixth centuries, subsequent to which India's classical culture and Gupta empire was overthrown, Harsa's seventh century reign of order or the chaotic events which followed in the wake of his death, let alone the near erasure (or exportation) of Buddhism during this time, the Buddhistic influence clearly discernable in the theology of Sankara's immediate orthodox predecessors, or the hegemonic devotional (*bhakti*) movements which had arisen during his time. The Brahmanical style, or school, of thought to which Sankara faithfully adhered was a form of Vedic exegesis and enquiry (*mimamsa*) into the meaning of the words of the Upanisads, as transmitted in an oral teaching lineage, and it is the paradigmatic axis of this discourse which the hermeneute reconfigures. Compared to Roland Barthes' defense of the avant-garde, "what is worthy of note in this operation is not so much that it sets up the old against the new." Rather, the importance lies in discourse reflecting upon discourse, at the object level of Brahmanism and the metalanguage of Aryanism, or theory. Roland Barthes, *Criticism and Truth* (London: Continuum, 1984) p. 2.

[261] "However," he claims, "when they concern themselves with civilizations, frequently qualified by adjectives such as 'high', 'great' and 'ancient', the problem becomes acute." Peter van der Veer, 'The Concept of the Ideal Brahman as an Indological Construct', in Gunther D. Sontheimer and Hermann Kulke (eds.), *Hinduism Reconsidered* (Delhi: Manohar, 1989) pp. 67-80. Given the dire methodological situation the moment an anthropologist encounters a cultural movement rooted in the mythic soil of archaic religions, it should be emphasized that this is precisely the configuration of power with which we are wired. Upon reminding us of the "relatively large migration of people from the west into the upper Indus valley", Patrick Olivelle provides a succinct historical timeline and two interchangeable adjectives for the cultural milieu we seek to problematize: "the Aryan civilization from the time of the composition of the earliest Rgvedic hymns, probably in the last few centuries of the second millennium BCE, until about the fifth century BCE is known as the Vedic Civilization." Patrick Olivelle, *Upanisads* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) pp. xxv-xxvi. Since the eighteenth century, the anglicized adjective *Vedic* has been used by

Indologists, van der Veer argues that their labour has simply resulted in narratives of a static Indian society guarded by Brahmanical ideology and their sacred timeless, spaceless, order of society. It is in the field of anthropology that he discovers the systematic maintenance of this myth. Against the Orientalist view that 'traditional' Hindu society was a 'frozen' social reality, as the Indological investigation of texts dating from about 1000 BC to 1200 AD would suggest, and that the model derived from these texts can be applied universally to Indian civilization, van der Veer urges an analysis of the role of power in the creation of religion and of the historical preconditions for particular practices and discourses.[262] In contrast to transnational discourse of Brahmanical ideology, van der Veer's understanding of Indian history also differs from emergent postcolonial narratives of Indian religion and Indology.

Although inevitably faced with recourse to Indological materials, van der Veer attempts to break away from the 'Orientalist perspective' with the intellectualist and theological assumptions which make it a more a type of 'theology' than an anthropological or social model of history. Understanding Indology as a theological enterprise necessitates a broad conception of philological practice whereby contemporary social arrangements are explained on the basis of scripturally derived interpretations of history. Of course, theologians may posit secular meta-theories to support their ideological derivation, but this theoretical analysis is nevertheless based upon reductionism, nostalgia, or the general belief that contemporary practices owe their explanation to theology or scriptural ideology.[263] While ethnographic observation of modern Indians continues the fact that the Upanisads serve as the Aryan genre *par excellence* of Orientalism, van der Veer is correct

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Indologists to qualify a host of nouns, including *tribes*, *literature*, *religion* and, indeed, *civilization*; in short, Vedic civilization signifies any elitist cultural practice of 'high,' 'great,' or 'ancient' Aryanism.

[262] Van der Veer (1989), ibid., pp. 67-68.

[263] Analyzing 'The Case of the Purusha Myth' and the 'politics of nostalgia' in religious studies, for example, Russell McCutcheon notes that the Indologist A. L. Basham felt no need to "theorize on the sociopolitical implications of, and uses for, such a story." Moreover, based upon a broad survey of textbooks discussing this hymn, McCutcheon even chose it to exemplify the hegemony of *sui generis* rhetoric in the discipline of religion. McCutcheon's point, of course, is that this myth legitimates the bio-social structure of Indian civilization. See Russell McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) p. 121. Indeed, while one may easily find sociopolitical evidence of the bio-social implications of *varna* polity in modern Indian society, they may face difficulty in substantiating Basham's claim that the hymn "represents the triumph of a sort of sacrificial mysticism." See A.L. Basham, *The Origins and Development of Classical Hinduism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 25.

to accept the 'emic' view of an unchanging, scriptural source for all practices in Hinduism is a methodological fallacy. Nevertheless, some practices have been institutionalized in India irrespective of Indological conceptions.

Sociopolitical variants of Aryanism influenced increasingly by non-Aryan beliefs and practices as Vedic civilization shifted further down the Gangetic valley coincided with the emergence of monarchial structures of authority and the rise of kingdoms and cities between the sixth and fourth century BCE. In spite of the changes, the politics of *varna* (lit. colour), for instance, has remained at the center of theological and theoretical conceptions of society in India. The prototype for this social construct is revealed in RV 10.90, a hymn which depicts the generic foundation of colour (*varna*) from the dismemberment and sacrifice of a primeval man (*purusha*), the institutionalization of which may be attributed to Brahmanical interpretations, or Indian legitimations ordaining the roots of Aryan civilization with rules of Vedic derivation.[264]

The discourse of Aryanism, on the other hand, stems from a lineage of Saivism and taxonomic variants resistant to Indological narratives of Hinduism. Discourse of Advaita instantiates a mythic variant of Vedanta, but narrating Brahmanical fabrications of Aryan revelations regulating the foundation of contemporary Indian religion should signal no great alarm. Indeed, as Thapar notes, "Historians have long looked at religions in India, whether indigenous or imported, from the perspective of the teachings of the text."[265] Upon doing so, we may appreciate the ingenious ways in which Indians have reversed philological (or anthropological) invasions (or perverted reterritorializations) of Aryan culture. Indological focus upon certain key Brahmanical texts has not only given rise to a

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[264] As Olivelle correctly notes, "the subjugated non-Aryans appear to have been by and large relegated to the lower class of an emerging quadripartite social structure: (1) the elite ruling cum military class generally referred to as the Ksatriya; (2) the hereditary priestly class of Brahmins; (3) the large group of peasants and artisans known as Vaisya; and finally (4) the Sudra group, which included a motley array of people, including subjugated non-Aryans, servants, and slaves. These four social groups were called *varna* (lit. 'colour'), the first three consisting at least in theory of Aryans." Olivelle (1986), ibid., p. xxvi. Olivelle's discussion of the social hierarchy of Aryan civilization is necessitated by his analysis of the 'literary structure' of the Upanisads in relation to various recensions within which they became embedded due to the repetitious and ritualistic activities of Indian theologians on the subcontinent, but RV 10.90 is thereby construed as a canonical byproduct of the sociopolitical institution of colour (*varna*).

[265] Thapar (1987), ibid., p. 22.

variety of Indian nationalist movements centered on the Vedas, for instance, but has also served to overshadow the power relations involved in the construction of Indian agency.

The importance of anthropological analysis of Indian religion may be emphasized with any brief examination of Indological narrations of the Upanisads,[266] but the point van der Veer wants to emphasize in reference to the so-called theological regime of Indology is that their hegemonic perspective is most apparent in attempts to combine the approach of textual scholars and anthropologists.[267] Van der Veer's intrusion underscores a basic theoretical premise: "to find some idea in the Sanskrit literature which is similar to what is found in actual practice is altogether different from explaining the actual practice."[268] Anthropologists unable to consult the texts of their informants should be cautious of the Indologists upon whom they are dependent and Van der Veer is correct to insist upon an approach to contemporary Indian religion that both moves beyond theological exegesis of ancient texts and includes analysis of sociopolitical practices; such advance, however, must not isolate historical discourses from the field of power whereby they are produced.

Since the nineteenth century, the Orientalist ideology of 'Hinduism' has been propagated by Indologists and neo-colonial Indians. Considering this imperial motif disciplines Indian beliefs and practices with signifiers of 'World Religion,' it is important to note

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[266] Patrick Olivelle, for instance, constructs these documents as the essence of 'Hinduism' and a plethora of practices, 'religious concepts', and 'new religious movements' constructed in the wake of the Upanisads, such as 'Buddhism' and 'Jainism,' are absorbed with the great Hindu sponge. Concerning the Upanisads, the essence of Hinduism, Olivelle notes: "It is in them that we note for the first time the emergence of central religious concepts of both Hinduism and of the new religious movements, such as Buddhism and Jainism, that emerged not long after the composition of the early Upanisads. Such concepts include the doctrine of rebirth, the law of karma that regulates the rebirth process, and the techniques of liberation from the cycle of rebirth, such as mental training associated with Yoga, ascetic self-denial and mortification, and the renunciation of sex, wealth and family life. Even though theoretically the whole of the vedic corpus is accepted as revealed truth, in reality it is the Upanisads that have continued to influence the life and thought of the various religions traditions that we have come to call Hindu. Upanisads are the vedic scriptures *par excellence* of Hinduism" Olivelle (1986), ibid., p. xxviii. It is not simply naïve, or nostalgic, to assume a stray verse enunciating "mental training associated with yoga" has any relation to contemporary practices governed by this scripturally sanctioned preoccupation. Conceptualizing the Upanisads as all-India ecumenical sourcebooks of Hinduism, moreover, rides roughshod over any attempt to understand these documents as a pre-colonial genre of discourse. Olivelle's ideological classification may seem absurd to those aware of the power struggles involved in Indian movements proclaiming allegiance to Vedic authority, but the Upanisads do serve a prestigious role in the taxonomy of his nineteenth century invention.

[267] Van der Veer (1989), ibid., p. 67.

[268] Van der Veer (1989), ibid., p. 79 n. 4.

that the entry of anthropologists into the domain of Indology strengthens ideological control by certain groups of Indians. As an investigation into recent texts of anthropology makes clear, there has been no substantial improvement in the theorization of Indian religion.[269] Van der Veer's legitimate concern with the overwhelming focus of Indology on Brahmanical strands of Indian religion, moreover, is not alleviated by merely enlarging ones scope to include non-Brahmanical, or even brahmanized, traditions.[270] While van der Veer is correct to turn his attention toward the consensus of power

[269] In an attempt to comprehend his initiatory fieldwork, van der Veer complained that anthropologists who adopt an Indological (or theological) position do so in spite of the fact that the texts against which they compare their ethnographic observations were produced before the reconfiguration of power and knowledge following the Muslim invasion of India, but later work makes explicit his belief that 'Hinduism' is a pre-colonial religious formation inscribed long before this domination of the subcontinent: he now locates this Orientalist truism amongst nomadic Aryans. Utilizing the fact that "South Indian Brahmans point to their North Indian origin, and all fair-skinned high castes claim an origin outside of India as an "Aryan" people that conquered South Asia and brought Hinduism with them" as an opportunity to enforce his perspective, van der Veer explains that appeal to foreign origin by bourgeois Indians creates a significant obstacle for elite nationalists who equate 'Hindu' with 'sacred Bharat' and the general "tacit assumption by almost everyone that Hinduism is a "natural given" on Indian soil." See Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 29. Surely any anthropologist dedicated to understanding contemporary Indian practices should not assume that comparison of textual parallels cited by Indologists will yield a sufficient theoretical model of analysis, but I suggest that anyone ('upstart' or otherwise) dealing with Indian saints who appeal to pre-colonial texts for validation of their authority should begin their endeavor by abandoning the most powerful category of analysis yet developed by otherwise respectable theologians: 'Hinduism.' The continued reign of this theological conception cannot be justified by the excuse that the anthropologist is unable to directly consult the theological treatises in question nor otherwise make sense of the curious nature of the phenomena she has taken upon herself to explain.

[270] The irony revealed with van der Veer's use of 'Hinduism' as an explanatory category for understanding pre-colonial Indian practices lies in his claim that "the ambiguity and confusion inherent in religious beliefs and actions, as found by the anthropologist in his field, are simplified by reducing them to a unifying ideology." It is at this point of critique, however, that we witness van der Veer's specific complaint concerning the alliance of Indologists and anthropologists: "History itself, these authors assert, can only be understood in terms of Hindu [Brahmanical] ideology." Van der Veer's primary concern lies with the hegemony of the particular "unifying ideology" of Indological interpretations of Brahmanical texts constructed as the basis of 'Indian' tradition which, he claims, leads to "an orientalist perspective which coincides, at least partly, with the perspective of the learned Brahmans who were the authors of these texts". This concern is reflected in his belief that the future study of Hindu society should be based upon texts culled from a number of different social groups and informed by a variety of "native ideologies, as found in these texts." The alternative is that anthropologists should choose from a range of texts in order to construct an "intra-cultural debate" by which suppressed voices may be resuscitated to speak on behalf of contemporary actors in Indian society. While this approach is ultimately rejected in favor of an analysis of the power relations of contemporary religious practitioners, van der Veer corroborates the opinion of J.A.B. van Buitenen who thought that "anthropologists who wished to collaborate with textual scholars in their endeavour to understand modern Hinduism, should take the study of much more recent (vernacular) texts as their starting point." He criticizes Louis Dumont and David Pocock for their construction of an elitist sociology of India "for which they relied upon the indological interpretation of those (Sanskrit) texts in which the Hindu 'system of meaning' was laid down." Van der Veer (1989), ibid., pp. 67-68. In this critique we interpret concern with the configuration of power and knowledge in the discipline of Indology.

surrounding Indian religion and its representation, this stance cannot be maintained without sufficient awareness of ones own disciplinary location.

More than thirty years ago Agehananda Bharati emphasized that 'pure' Indologists—as Sanskritists and historians of ancient Indian may have once regarded themselves—have lost much of their audience.[271] Whatever life may be expended from Indology it is inaccurate to claim "Asian [Indian] studies *per se*—without a disciplinary umbrella, appear to be a thing of the past."[272] Bharati's failure to conceptualize the cognitive foundations of Indology is not simply a semantic discrepancy. He is not highlighting the fact that broad conceptualizations of 'Asian' studies have been rendered obsolete by various 'area studies' specialists (i.e. Indologists), but rather his perception that those who wish to report seriously on Indian culture today must know the parlance of social scientists such as anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, or linguists. There can be no objection to any claim that Indology suffers a lack of method and theory, but given the extent to which their vision is aligned with imperial formations Indologists may need to reconsider the force of their discipline.

In his postcolonial transformation of Indology as a discipline of knowledge, rather, Richard King strives to 'anthropologize the West', that is, expose the 'exotic' nature of Western constructions and their violent suppression of Indian forms of knowledge and constructions of reality.[273] Focusing upon the power of Orientalism as a discipline of knowledge, moreover, King traces colonial discourse alongside nativist modes of imperialism. First of all, one must recognize that the very category 'religion' itself may be problematic when applied to non-Christian traditions. Secondly, one must reckon with the internal power struggle of elite Indian theologians and their appropriation of various regional, or local, customs, beliefs, and practices. Finally, the fact that elite Indian hermeneutes confessing allegiance to the Vedas may in fact have very little debt to these texts must be taken into account. Similarly, I conceptualize Brahmanical and Indological

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[271] Agehananda Bharati, 'The Hindu Renaissance and Its Apologetic Patterns', in *Journal of Asian Studies* 29.2, 1989, p. 267.
[272] Bharati (1989), ibid., p.267
[273] King (1999b), ibid., p. 187.

regimes of homogenization as consensual elements of disciplinary fabrication.

Brahmanical discourse of the Upanisads may be analyzed in a way similar to Michel de Certeau, who has historicized the Semitic tradition of some Christian 'mystical' fabrication and the way in which 'mystic speech' was subjected to ecclesiastical domestication.[274] As Certeau explains, throughout Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries "a new literary and epistemological "form" appeared with texts labeled "mystic" in order to distinguish them from other past or contemporary texts", such as biblical commentaries and theological sermons. The Brahmanical fabrication of Vedanta is problematized along the lines of Certeau's analysis of the procedures whereby texts produced prior to this mystical discourse are incorporated by orthodox authorities of the Christian Church.[275] In the context of Indian procedures governing the organization of knowledge we may understand the Brahmanical fabrication and Indian legitimation of 'rules' encoded in pre-colonial discourse of Vedanta. The operation of Brahminization surrounding the transmission of the Vedas is detected toward the last centuries BCE.

Though it is important to stress the interests served by theologians of Indian religion, both Brahmanical and Indological, we also need to take account of the influence on Western Orientalist discourse of already existing and indigenous forms of colonization (such as brahmanization of Indian religions in the precolonial era). Thus one can avoid the tendency to deny agency to the colonial subject, as well as the tendency to see colonialism as a peculiarly Western disease (a view that is itself a form of Occidentalism).[276] The colonizing practice of Brahminization refers specifically to the role of the *brahmana* castes in the more general process of Sanskritization. Concerning this distinction, Richard King notes that "the confutation of the two stems from a

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[274] Michel de Certeau, 'Mystic Speech', in Graham Ward (ed), *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000) pp. 188-206.

[275] c.f. "The problem is not to determine whether an exegetical treatise by Gregory of Nyssa, for example, is a product of the same experience as a discourse later termed "mystic," [Vedanta] or whether both are constructed following roughly analogous rhetorical processes; it is, rather, to understand what happens inside the field delimited by a proper name ("mystic") [Vedanta], in which an operation [Brahminization] regulated by an applicable set of rules is undertaken." Michel de Certeau, 'Mystic Speech', in Graham Ward (ed), *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 190.

[276] King (1999b), ibid., p. 158-159.

mistaken association of Sanskritic culture exclusively with the *brahmana* castes". Noting the procedures whereby "non-Brahmanical forms of Indian religion were colonized and transformed by hegemonic Brahmanical discourses", King explains:

> Brahminization, viz., the process whereby the Sanskritic, 'high' culture of the brahmins, absorbed non-Brahmanical (sometimes called 'popular,' or even 'tribal') religious forms, was an effective means of assimilating diverse cultural strands within one's locality, and of maintaining social and political authority. The process works both ways, of course, and many of the features of Sanskritic religion initially derived from a particular, localized context.[277]

An example of Sanskritization colonizing local 'tribal' deities, on the other hand, is witnessed in the *ksatriya* appropriation of Krishna. As Heather Elgood notes, "the seizing of a tribal deity by a powerful monarch is common practice and one that transfers authority to the king, who has earned the right of power over the tribal region by his courage and possession of the icon."[278] The aftershock of this practice is demonstrated in Vaishnava temples occasionally "renewing" images of Krishna, a custom still carried out in association with Jagannath, a figure originally worshiped by Orissa jungle tribes. Of course, Brahminization is also involved in this process since Brahmanical theologians understand Krishna to be an incarnation (*avatara*) of the Vedic god Vishnu.

Further development of Indo-critical theory, that is, concomitant engagement with Indian epistemic traditions and interrogation of Western epistemic hegemony, is no doubt necessary for the comparative study of 'religion' to move into a postcolonial space. In comparison to Indian studies which do no more than provide philological analysis of ancient Brahmanical texts in an attempt to generate models of 'traditional' and 'modern' Vedanta, King's postcolonial approach to Indology, or 'Indo-critical' theory, is enlivening. King's contributions are diversified with a call for the fruition of an Indo-critical perspective of postcolonial theory and subaltern agency in post-Orientalist historiography, the seeds of which are scarcely planted in the body of his work:

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[277] King (1999b), ibid., pp 233-234 n. 23; 103.
[278] Heather Elgood, *Hinduism and the Religious Arts* (London: Cassell, 1999), p. 63.

> The introduction of a variety of indigenous epistemic traditions is, in my view, the single most important step that postcolonial studies can take if it is to look beyond the Eurocentric foundations of its theories and contest the epistemic violence of the colonial encounter. This challenge requires engagement with the knowledge-forms and histories of those cultures that have been colonized by the West and, somewhat ironically, provides a role for disciplines such as Indology in the questioning of Western hegemonies and regimes of epistemic violence.[279]

In a self-reflexive attempt to reconfigure the hermeneutically naïve approach of naturalism and classical philologists in religious studies and Indology King notes that Orientalists once believed that knowledge of the language and culture under consideration would yield the true import of the text.[280] While King's contributions to religious studies are discerned in the sub-field of 'mysticism', his specific concerns emerge with an Indo-critical perspective of constructivism. Correctly noting that the 'literary bias' adhered to by post-Enlightenment cognitive disciplines are derived from cultural presuppositions following the Protestant Reformation, King pleads that we should not dismiss the approach of classical Indology as a fictitious account of Indian religion which merely functions at an ideological or ideal level. While Indologists should remain aware of the distorting 'textualist' presuppositions of religious studies, exclaims King, anthropologists may have much to learn from this alliance:

> There is much of practical significance that can be gleaned from religious texts as one of many potential source materials for the study of religion. Attempts to establish a polarized opposition between 'ideal' religious texts and 'actual' religious beliefs drive a false wedge between two facets of the total religious phenomena, which, in practice, interact with one another in a dynamic fashion. One cannot claim to provide a fully comprehensive account of a religion if one focuses only upon the scriptures of that tradition, but equally one cannot hope to understand the actual religious beliefs and practices of the so-called world religions without a grounding in the literature of those traditions.[281]

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[279] King (1999b), ibid., p. 199.
[280] King (1999b), ibid., p. 80.
[281] King (1999b), ibid., p. 71. In the case of van der Veer, to be fair, he does not so much reject textual contributions, though this too is occasioned, as he does a particular bias in the history of philological investigations.

Exploding the 'myth of objectivity' in the study of Indian religion King infuses Indology with a central tenet of literary criticism, noting the meaning that one finds in a text is also derived from the reader and his or her methods of interpretations. Accepting the 'thick description' coined by the philosopher Gilbert Ryle and further developed by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, that is, the necessity of gaining a good understanding of the cultural environment of the text and the contemporary phenomenon under consideration, King calls for a second type of 'thick description': one able to appreciate the context of both the text and interpreter and manifest an awareness of the factors which impinge upon the interpreters conceptions.[282] To this end, I bring our ethnographic observations to the field of Indology and late capitalist discourse of 'religion'

Just as Tim Murphy aimed at an anti-mentalist theory of Semitic constructions, that is, not just a theological understanding of doctrine but insight into how this religion works and the procedures involved in its production of meanings, I analyze contemporary Saivite discourse of 'Advaita Vedanta' as a semiotic religious system.[283] Following Murphy's preliminary model of semiotic systems, we may agree that 'religion' is best understood on the model of language and the study of language behaviors. It is important to understand the implications of this analysis in relation to the procedures whereby strands of Aryanism are analyzed. In his semiotic approach to religion, it is only due to the fact that the science of religious studies takes the Vedas as a body of data worthy of objective analysis that Murphy has even had occasion to exemplify the structure of these Aryan revelations.[284] In this context we may note that just as the interests reflected in the

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[282] King (1999b), ibid., p. 80.

[283] Tim Murphy, 'Elements of a Semiotic Theory of Religion', in *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, 15, 2003, pp. 48-67; 65.

[284] Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 48. Murphy states his position in no uncertain terms: "Thus I use the term 'religion' in a purely conventional sense (as if there were others): to designate that which the practitioners of the science of religion have historically studied as religion. This is not so much a definition of a substance in the world nor the deployment of a technical term as a name for a research tradition and its associated body of data. I have nothing to say about whatever 'religion' (or religion) may be beyond that. It is this research tradition and its body of data alone about which I wish to theorize. Others may believe they have more direct access to religion, and perhaps they do. I do not." We will have further opportunity to outline the specifics of Murphy's approach, but as he concludes: "The application and/or extension of these theoretical elements to specific area studies is, of course, the work of specialists, and I leave such work to them, both in "raw" application, as well as in the reflexive modification of those elements which is an inescapable (and welcomed) result of such application" (pp. 51 n. 5; 63).

ideology of Hinduism are magnified in the scope of Orientalist narrations, the discourse of Aryanism is dependent upon variants of Indology and thick interpretations.[285]

Encouraging disciplinary shift away from narratives of origins in the history of religious studies, Murphy encourages theoretical elaboration of the discourse of religion and its various scenes of transformation. As social objectivities, which 'originate' through the transformation, combination, or inversion of pre-existing cultural materials, or taxonomies, religion is constituted with instances of signification and scenes of their provocation.[286] Whether told from the ontogenetic perspective of the 'individual's coming-to-be' or the systematic preservation of myths and religious formations, it is important to analyze *a priori* taxonomies, or categories, which underlie their narration. The nature of this pre-existent material is semiotic, a system of signifiers whose internal relations are understood with the structuralist concept of *langue et parole*. Further extending this notion to include the discourse of religion, a paradigmatic canon of signifiers and hermeneutes who form either orthodox or illicit interpretations, or syntagms, give rise to the structural elements of analysis by means of addressivity, that is, participation/observation in an ensemble of speech acts. The relationship between one hermeneute and the 'speech of the other' generates an act of signification.

Once settled in the upper Indus tributaries (present-day Punjab), Aryan tribes soon migrated throughout India, particularly farther east into the valleys and plains surrounding the *Ganga*. However, what a semiotician may find significant is their pre-Indic adventures. As semiotic *agons*, for Murphy, the fact that Vedic *deva*s and *asura*s are variously ranked as deities or demons in India and Persia provides opportunity to analyze an elementary structure in the discourse of religion. These 'pre-Vedic examples' of Indo-European and Indo-Iranian semiotica is representative of religious formations and

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[285] As Bruce Lincoln explains, "if we are to treat myth as an ideological and not simply taxonomic discourse, we will need a more dialectic, eminently political theory of narration, one that recognizes the capacity of narrators to modify details of the stories that pass through them, introducing changes in the classificatory order as they do so, most often in ways that reflect their subject position and advance their interests." See Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) p. 149. Location of the Upanisads in the discourse of 'Hinduism' warrants a mythic variant in the classification of these documents.

[286] Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 50.

their development as contestations of hermeneutical canonization. Contrasting signs in various Vedic recensions, Murphy detects agonistic features in the discourse of Aryans:

> It would be hard to understand the very meaning of the word "god" here other than as the product of a long, probably bitter, semiotic agon. By any scientific norm of the process, it would be impossible to give a strict definition of either asura or deva....In a very real way, each is just its history, and this history is clearly not the history of integral substance, "deity", "culture", or "religion", but the history of a dynamic interaction, even enmity. [287]

Drawing upon Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the structural 'addresivity' of discourse and signification, Murphy defines the speech of the 'other' in terms of contests for meaning and submits that this relationship is a basic feature of religious enunciation. The internal structure of the Upanisads serves to illustrate the Aryan prototype of authority for which struggling theologians of Vedanta aspire, as revealed in the 'social behaviour' of contemporary Indian ascetics, but the pedagogical procedures thereby revealed are not limited to agonistic enunciations. More important, perhaps, is an understanding of the ways in which authorized personnel attempt to gain the devotion of their audience.[288] Paraphernalia signifying the dramatic act of Indian renunciation substantiates Romila Thapar's discovery that "even the concept of *parampara*, which at one level appears to be frozen knowledge, reveals on investigation variations and change."[289] Of course, Indian

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[287] Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 62. Nevertheless, Indo-critical exegesis of Advaita cannot limit itself to dialogical enunciation of such volatile situations.

[288] For instance, Bruce Lincoln suggests that one analyze "the myriad trappings that serve this purpose...the seemingly endless variety of uniforms and insignia (badges, diplomas, special seats, vehicles, headgear etc.) that are used to mark certain people as distinguished for their rank, status, office, lineage, special training, etc., and which thereby help them lay claim to an audience's attention, respect, and trust." See Bruce Lincoln, *Authority: Construction and Corrosion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) p. 7.

[289] Thapar (1987), ibid., p. 8. Indeed, Agehananda Bharati's experience of "thumbing through primary school texts" may illustrate the changing emblems of Indian monastics: "the monastic culture hero makes an early debut. In a second year elementary school Hindi primer there was a drawing of [a] loin-cloth clad, bald-headed, sturdy man holding back a horse and cart with his right arm..." Clearly, for our purposes, this portrait signifies differences in both 'headgear', or lack thereof, and additions of 'uniforms', or loin coverings. The importance for Bharati, however, is discovered in a caption beneath this salient picture, which reads: "the power of brahmacarya made him strong. It will make you boys strong too." Described as an "all-India syndrome, shared by Hindus and non-Hindus alike, but no doubt derived from a Hindu matrix", Bharati persuasively theorizes this perverse strategy of social control as a 'restraint' which India imposes upon the individual (p. 285). Bharati is probably correct that "it is unlikely that children come to hear about the importance of the retention of semen before they are much older" but the social order upon

saints would balk at any suggestion that knowledge transmitted within their fraternity had ever varied, but the point that authoritative trappings no doubt change over time may be explicitly illustrated if the social role of *rsis* is placed in relation to the contemporary *samnyasi* and the Brahmanical *asrama* system.[290]

As the French Indologist Louis Renou argues, moreover, the Vedas were systematically organized as paradigmatic canons of Aryanism well before entering great *Bharata*:

> The Aryan tribes which invaded India during the second millennium before our era brought with them a body of religious belief which was already well organized and which survived in classical Hinduism—at the cost of many modifications. This "Aryan" religion (that is, Indo-European on Indian soil) had already been sifted out during the so-called Indo-Iranian intermediary period. It was at the end of this period that a separation occurred between the original religion of Iran (pre-Zoroastrian) and what was to become the Vedic religion of northwestern India.[291]

In his detailed analysis of 'Aryan religion,' that is, "Indo-European on Indian soil," Renou tells us that "the Upanishads take us to the very brink of Hinduism."[292] For Renou, the orthodox Brahmanical acceptance of *smrti* literature as part of the Vedic heritage provides the surest indication that Aryan religion had been totally reconfigured and transformed. Renou suggests that due to later developments, particularly the

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which I wish to focus is usually initiated in the later stages of life, the authority of which has recently been degraded with the perverse language of Indian nationalists. See Bharati (1970), ibid., pp. 280; 285.

[290] In an effort to account for the neologism "*asrama*," Patrick Olivelle has more specifically discussed the authorized insignia of the *rsi*s surrounding Siva in RV 10.136, a hymn which signifies diachronic variants in the paradigmatic construction of Indian authority. See Patrick Olivelle, *The Asrama System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 12-14. For instance, this hymn has even been translated as 'The Long-haired Ascetic' by Wendy O'Flaherty. See Wendy O'Flaherty, *The Rig Veda* (London: Penguin, 1981), pp. 137-138. In the seventh stanza of this hymn the long-haired sage (*kesin*) is explicitly connected to Siva, but while this lyric seven times refers to the long matted locks once worn by the *kesin* there are a number of other epithets which also render this epigone of Siva authoritative. The *kesin* is celebrated as a *muni*, an enigmatic term or, according to Olivelle, "a title applied in later literature to any holy or ascetic person, but whose original meaning is far from clear." Notice also the 'uniforms', or lack thereof, worn by this Aryan elite. As Olivelle observes, though again his understanding is obscure, "in the second verse the *munis* (now in plural) are called *vatarasanah* ("girdled with the wind")." Olivelle (1993), ibid., p. 12. Concerning the use of the term *vatarasanah* to describe these sky-clad *muni*s, O'Flaherty clarifies the matter succinctly: "that is, they are naked." O'Flaherty (1981), ibid., p. 138 n. 2. Of course, in contrast to modern bald-headed saffron-robe wearing saints, the adjective 'ithyphallic' (*urdhvamanthin*) is also applied. Indeed, for O'Flaherty the taxonomizer 'ithyphallic yogi' provides an 'iconic resolution' of Saiva motifs. See Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, Siva: *The Erotic Ascetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 8-11.

[291] Louis Renou, (ed.), *Hinduism* (New York: George Braziller, 1961), p. 16-17.

[292] Louis Renou, *Indian Literature* (New York: Walker and Company, 1964), p. 8.

emergence of religious practices surrounding the composition of new texts, specifically *smrti* literature such as the Bhagavad Gita near the beginning of the Common Era, 'Aryan religion' was transformed into 'Hinduism.' At the cost of transformation and the change of some traditions and practices beyond recognition, proclaims Renou, a few generic elements of Aryan religion survived the onslaught of these Indian developments. Renou distinguishes Aryan religion from 'Hinduism' on the basis of the radical doctrinal transformations that occurred when the Aryan's mixed their theologies with indigenous institutions and ideologies on the subcontinent, but there are important reasons why one should not construct Aryan religion in this manner. As Ronald Inden notes before turning "to a discussion of Hinduism, the religion of the laity or the people, to those urbane Hindu sects and to those vulgar village cults which have disturbed the Indologist's dream of a pure unchanging Aryan tradition", there is reason to problematize the work of Renou: "for Renou and most other Indologists, the knowledges of those whom they studied were, thus, what Foucault refers to as 'subjugated knowledges'...'a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition."[293] Indians simply did not preserve, or distinguish, Aryan religion in the manner of Renou's hierarchical classification and Inden is correct to call for an appreciation of Indian practices and self-understanding. Indeed, memorization of the Vedas is a direct result of Indian agency.

As is widely known, the Vedas were transmitted orally long before the Aryans entered northern India over 3,500 years ago, but were only transcribed during the past few hundred years. The memorization of the Vedas is a direct result of the mnemonic duties and recitation techniques assigned to the Brahmin class by Aryan bio-social politicians.[294]

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[293] See Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990/2000), pp. 108; 40.

[294] A.L. Basham indeed recalls one of the more ironic methods which also assisted in this preservation, as discovered by the first Orientalists in Calcutta when Brahmins decided to reveal the Veda to their British colonizers. The Rgveda recited in Kashmir, says Basham, was scarcely different from that transmitted in Tamil Nadu, but the meaning had been nearly lost: "The Rg-veda had been passed on orally for nearly three thousand years, with hardly an error. Yet most of the brahmans who had memorized it had only the very vaguest notions of its meaning...Perhaps the fact that the Rg-Veda was so imperfectly understood helped to preserve the purity of its transmission" See A.L. Basham (1989), ibid., p. 7. Categorizing the corpus of Vedic hymns with various incongruous descriptions, such as "sounded text" and "oral scripture par

Of course, while Indians did manage to memorize the authoritative canon, or revelations, of Renou's Aryan religion, they also added their own beliefs and sociopolitical practices to the mix. While Renou is correct to locate the Upanisads prior to the development of 'Hinduism,' just as certain is the fact that his conceptualization of 'Aryan religion' has no counterpart in Indian history. Strategies employed by Vaisnava hermeneutes excluded from Renou's Aryan tribes led 'Hindus' to believe that the Indian new religious movements thereby institutionalized were actually 'extensions' of the Veda, or remembered (*smrti*) traditions, which were, if somehow not as authoritative, part and parcel of so-called Aryan religion.[295] In order to understand the Upanisads as a genre of discourse in the myth of Vedanta, we must problematize Renou's effort to short-circuit the power dispersed at the root of his religious overgrowth.

For the Aryans, nomadic warriors who entered the Indus valley around 2000 BCE, the Upanisads provide knowledge of a reality referenced therein as '*brahman*.' The identification of the individual (*atman*), or "essential I", with *brahman*, or the "ultimate real", occupies such a prestigious position in these documents that Patrick Olivelle describes this formulation as the Upanisad itself.[296] In his survey of the Upanisads, Olivelle states that the identity between *atman* and *brahman* is the "final upanisad or equation," but he denies the assumption that all these documents are designed to enunciate this "simple truth." Of course, to regard the enunciation of the identity of Atman and Brahman as the sole aim of the Upanisads is a mistake, regardless of its role as cornerstone of the Advaita Vedanta tradition. Olivelle believes that various rites and goals discussed in the Upanisads, such as the pursuit of power and fame, including "rites

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excellence," Walter A. Graham correctly notes that "still today, although much diminished, the traditional recitative practice (*svadhyaya*) has been kept alive". As he explains, "together with strict traditions of accentuation and melodic rendering, the base text is mastered literally backward and forward in fully acoustic fashion as a hedge against faulty transmission of any word or syllable." See Walter A. Graham, Beyond the *Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) p. 72. As a result of mnemonic practices assigned to priestly *brahmana* castes by Aryan bio-social politicians the Vedas have been recited in India since the second millennium BCE, but we are not concerned with the practice of *svadhyaya*.

[295] The relationship between Aryanism and Hinduism, with additional reference to Renou, will be further discussed in chapter three.

[296] As Olivelle correctly notes, "Brahman thus stands at the summit of the hierarchical scheme, or at the bottom as the ultimate foundation of all things, although it is important to remember that the concept always retains its verbal character as 'the sound expression' or truth or reality. The final *upanisad* or equation is between *Atman*, the essential I, and Brahman, the ultimate real." Olivelle (1996), ibid., p lvi.

to secure greatness, to win a woman's love, to harm the lover of ones wife, to ensure pregnancy," are as "important to uncovering the religious history of the period as the passages proclaiming the oneness of Atman and Brahman": "even though this equation played a significant role in later developments of religion and theology in India and is the cornerstone of one of its major theological traditions, the Advaita Vedanta, it is incorrect to think that the single aim of the Upanisads is to enunciate this simple truth". As a 'prudent translator', Olivelle has left such exegesis to 'pious readers.'[297]

Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that the verbal equations which posit *brahman* and *atman* as non-dual (*advaita*) are widely considered the most profound (*maha*) sentences (*vakyas*) of the Upanisads. It is in this context that Wilhelm Halbfass describes the ambiguous hermeneutical framework of the Vedas in India: "in one sense, the Veda is the sum total of its words and sounds. In another sense, it can be summarized in a few 'great sayings' (*mahavakya*), or fundamental ideas."[298] Indeed, Sankara himself reduced the entire Veda to this one sentence.[299] There can be no doubt that *brahman* is a privileged category of the Upanisads, but it is just this category that is central to our study.[300] With legitimate ideology, we understand 'Arsha Vidya' as an ancestor lineage whose genealogy is rooted in the power of Aryan *rsi*s and yet molded by the authoritative

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[297] (Olivelle: lvi). It is a matter for theologians to determine how the Hindu practices Olivelle traces to the Upanisads relate to his assertion that the correlation of two categories encoded in this genre, *atman* and *brahman*, is the "final *upanisad*," but such attempts may be best understood as 'ideological'. As Tzevetan Todorov explains, "*ideological* narrative establishes no direct relation between the units that constitute it; but these appear to our eyes as so many manifestations of one and the same idea, of a single law." See Tzevetan Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981/1987), p. 44.

[298] See Wilhelm Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 3.

[299] The verse in question is *Upadesasahasri* I.17.9. See Sengaku Mayeda (1992), ibid., p. 161.

[300] Pursuing Bruce Lincoln's attempt to introduce a "sharper critical edge" to the study of myth may lead us to Brahmanical constructions of this 'higher' knowledge, but as he explains "taxonomy is hardly a neutral process, since the order established among all that is classified…including items treated only by allusion or implication…is hierarchic as well as categoric." Lincoln (1999), ibid., p.147. Clarifying his stance in contrast to Levi-Strauss who understood myth as a "logical structure that essentially writes itself, variants being the product of an impersonal process whereby that structure explores its own variables until exhausting the available possibilities", Lincoln explains: "such a view alleviates the frustration of those who seek authors and "original versions" of mythical texts, but the price for this is unacceptably high, since it drains agency from the act of narration." See Lincoln (1999), ibid., pp. 147-149. The mythic agents of our narration are traced to anthropological participation in a discourse of primordial enunciation.

brahmana castes who had the task of memorizing the canonical utterances of these paradigmatic characters and who systematized the corpus of 'Vedanta'.

Roots of Power: Brahminization and the Structure of Rsi-Regimes

According to Peter van der Veer, while attempting to explain their ethnographic observation of contemporary social practices rooted in ancient civilizations, anthropologists naively perpetuate static images of the 'Hochkultur' handed to them by philologists. Rather than compare field notes with some textual "ideal Brahmin" invented by Indologists, van der Veer suggests that anthropologists of South Asia pay attention to power structures and relations involved in the local production of meaning. In contrast to Indological narratives wherein Indian clerics appear as the "purest being on earth", van der Veer reminds us that priesthood is an optional occupation for *brahmins*.[301] The importance of this reminder becomes obvious when looking for explanation of contemporary practices on the basis of textual studies. Without doubt, the ritual practices and priestly activities of Indian day laborers cannot be explained in relation to pious Indological reconstructions of Vedic myths, or nostalgic theological interpretations of Brahmanical fabrications. Contemporary Indian religious movements demand classification far beyond the scope of any Orientalist observation.

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[301] Van der Veer's orientation is emphasized in relation to the central problem of social anthropologists who rely upon textual studies for explanation of contemporary Indian practices, an issue made clear in reference to the power relations at Ayodhya. In his observation of those who have decided to work among the priestly elite, van der Veer concludes that "the status of the profession does not entirely depend on ideological factors, such as its relative purity or impurity, but also on economical considerations, such as the income one derives from it." Concerning his study of Brahmin specialists classified as Pandas, van der Veer notes that there are two separate communities of these religious laborers in the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, where their priestly center is located, in constant conflict regarding the right to practice the Panda trade, but it is the details of their resume which render the hiring process most complex: "both communities claim to be ancient endogamous castes of Brahman stock which have been exclusively devoted to the Panda profession from the times of Lord Ram, in a different world period (*yug*)." As van der Veer explains, "from interviews and participant observation I have never been able to discern anything having the faintest connection with the cultural model of the 'ideal Brahman'. The Pandas are engaged in a daily struggle for livelihood and their actions and orientations are connected with that struggle…When the pilgrimage market expanded and the British started to define the rights of participants in the system, the actions of the Pandas were directed at getting as large a share as possible…Its attraction grew with its increasing market value." See Van der Veer (1989), ibid., pp. 69-71; 77. At the end of the day, economic power factors prove explanatory for van der Veer.

In particular, as van der Veer starkly discovered, too much significance is attributed to ancient texts in contemporary India. Texts regarded as important by Indologists are often unknown or disregarded by present day Indians.[302] Nevertheless, textual analysis and interpretation is important for gaining an understanding of the historical context of contemporary religious traditions. For our purposes this is particularly important for analyzing the Upanisads as an epistemic genre of performance. This approach may provide a more systematic classification of these documents than that currently provided by modern Indians and naturalist approaches in the discipline of Indology. As we have already had occasion to notice, there are problems obtaining in previous Indological conceptions of the Upanisads in the discourse of Aryanism, or Vedism, none of which are resolved with the imperial formation of Hinduism. Semiotic exegesis of these narratives, moreover, may move beyond nativist theological conceptions. In our study of Aryan revelations (i.e. Vedas) the school of 'Advaita Vedanta' provides not orthodox interpretations of these documents but rather operates the rules of Brahminization.

In the most recent Indological study of the Upanisads, Patrick Olivelle notes that this genre of discourse serves to "document the transition from the archaic ritualism of the Veda into new religious ideas and institutions".[303] In spite of this 'transition', however, he institutionalizes the Upanisads with Brahmanical modifications of archaic sacrificial regulations. Offering no clue as to why, or indeed how, ancient Brahmins were

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[302] As van der Veer explains, "the social significance of texts in contemporary India seems to be too easily assumed. Those texts which are designated by Indologists as important are often disregarded or are insufficiently known by the contemporary actors…Most remarkable is the plasticity of the past in a literate society such as India….which might be even more variable than the oral history of some African societies. 'Ancient' texts can be made by the day as I actually observed in Ayodhya, while traditions can be transformed in accordance with changing social configurations." Van der Veer (1989), ibid., p. 68. Similar sentiment has been expressed by Wilhelm Halbfass in relation to the Vedas and Indian self-understanding. Recalling Renou's characterization of orthodox authority as "un simple 'coup de chapeau," a "tipping of the hat," Halbfass explains that "[i]ndeed, the role the Veda has played in Indian tradition appears paradoxical, ambiguous, and no less elusive then the "teachings" of the Veda itself. There seems to be a blatant contradiction between the proclamations of its sacredness and authority, and its factual neglect by the Hindu tradition. While it is often invoked as the criterion of Hindu "orthodoxy," its actual presence in Indian thought and life seems to be quite limited" Halbfass (1991), ibid., p.1. Moreover, as Richard King notes "when studying Sanskrit and Pali texts for sources of Hindu and Buddhist religious expression we are, of course, focusing on the literary expressions of an elite. Neither Sanskrit nor Pali are vernacular languages, thus they cannot reflect the religious opinions of the non-literate masses in anything other than an indirect manner" (King 1999b: 66).

[303] Olivelle (1996), ibid., p. xxiii.

systematically disciplined with ritual sacrifices, he notes that these practices were of such overwhelming concern that "the literary structure of the vedic corpus, therefore, mirrors the division of the priestly community into branches specializing in different aspects of the complex sacrificial ritual."[304] In his analysis of the 'literary structure' of the Upanisads, Olivelle notes that these texts were initially produced and transmitted orally by families of Brahmins. More specifically, Olivelle structures the transmission of the Upanisads in relation to various "branches" (*sakhas*) of the Vedas institutionalized with the social control of sacrificial rituals dominating the lives of Brahmanical lineages.[305] Without explaining the ways in which Brahmanical families, or even their mythic ancestors, elitist foundational figures categorized as *rsis*, purportedly produced the Vedas, Olivelle clarifies the procedures which eventually led to their transmission on the Indian subcontinent across 'branches' of the Brahmanical family tree. The custodianship of different families eventually comprised four branches (*sakhas*): Rg, Sama, Yajur and Atharva. Vedic branches, moreover, are divided by way of verse (*mantra*) collections (*samhitas*) used in liturgy and prose texts (*brahmana*) of liturgical exegesis. Further division occurs with 'forest treatises' (*aranyakas*), and culminates with the *Upanisads*.

Introducing his recent translation of twelve *Upanisads*, Olivelle argues that the Vedic corpus is structured according to the hermeneutics of ancient Brahmins. Relating the literary structure of the Upanisads to the hierarchical stratification of Aryan society, he claims that "the literature of the Veda was produced by and largely intended for Brahmins."[306] In a more rigorous exploration of 'origins', however, Olivelle reconstructs the sociopolitical background of Aryan mythology and even pinpoints an "elite class of Brahmanical ancestors", a tribe of Aryan *rsis* described as the very "founding fathers" of Brahmanical discourse[307] Concerning the use of the elitist title *rsi* to describe these original foundational figures, Olivelle notes that they "were not only regarded as

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[304] Olivelle (1996), ibid., p. xxx.

[305] Cf. "Different families of Brahmins became specialists in different aspects of the many and complicated sacrifices that dominated their lives and thought. These specialized family traditions developed into the vedic 'branches' (*sakha*, sometimes also translated as 'school') within which specialized ritual texts were produced and transmitted" (Olivelle 1996: xxx).

[306] Olivelle (1996), ibid., p. xxx.

[307] Olivelle (1993), ibid., p. 13.

Brahmins but also part of the elite group of mythical ancestors who were the founders of the Brahmanical tradition."[308] No longer are the Vedas structured according to *varna* polity or sacrificial rituals, but now located as a regime of power, indeed a generator, within the realm of class superiority produced by the "founding fathers" who govern Brahmanical ideology. The foundations of this Vedic corpus must be problematized for analysis of the internal structure of the Upanisads and referential discourse of *rsis* therein.

In Olivelle's attempt to date the *Upanisads*, although admitting their initial oral transmission, it should be emphasized that he fails to account for this phenomenon in relation to any 'literary structure'. Olivelle traces the Upanisads to an editor or series of editors who "drew upon a common stock of episodes and teachings" and although he thinks the dating of these 'dialogues' and 'debates' cannot be attempted with any precision "closer than a few centuries," it is significant that he understands the participants involved to be those inscribed in these documents.[309] Rather than hypothesize any dates for the Upanisads, to avoid epistemic violence, it is safer to accept their oral structure and follow an approach similar to Renou's taxonomic variant of Aryanism:

> We do not know when or by whom they were composed. But as they came into being among the "Aryans"- that is, among people of Indo-European origin who had invaded northwest India probably about 2000 B.C.- we must conclude that the most ancient of the Vedic texts go back to that period; they may have been written down rather later.[310]

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[308] Olivelle (1993), ibid., p. 13.

[309] For Olivelle, "This source material consists of dialogues, debates, and formal teachings by famous teachers of the time, who are identified. Prominent among these are Yajnavalkya (in the BU), Uddalaka Aruni (in the CU), Janaka, Pravahana, Jaivali, Ajatasatru, Sandilya, and Satyakama Jabala. Many of these are, of course, Brahmins, who were not only priests but also the theologians and teachers within the social hierarchy of the time." Olivelle (1998), ibid., p. xxxiv. Upon asserting that any attempt to date the Upanisads is "as stable as a house of cards," Olivelle nevertheless proceeds to offer a chronology that ranges from the Brhadaranyaka and the Chandogya, noting that "placing them in the seventh to sixth centuries BCE may be reasonable, give or take a century or so," along with three other prose Upanisads—Taittiriya, Aitareya, and Kausitaki—which date from the same time, more or less, to a couple of latecomers, the Prasna and the Mandukya, "which cannot be much older than the beginning of the common era." Of the remaining five verse Upanisads, Olivelle thinks the Kena is the oldest, followed by the Katha, Isa, Svetasvatara, and Mundaka, all of which he places in the "last few centuries BCE" (p. xxxvi-xxxvii).

[310] Renou (1964), ibid., p. 3.

What appears contradictory in this classification of the Upanisads, which Renou accepts as part of the Veda and the religion he constructs before Aryan nomads entered India, is that he places their appearance toward the end of what is generally called the "Vedic period", an era which came to an end around the fifth century BCE.[311] It appears that some stenographers were rather reluctant, moreover, for in another survey Renou states that the Upanisads continued to be produced from the end of the Vedic period to the sixteenth century.[312] While it is important to emphasize that so-called 'later' Upanisads contain distinct doctrines, it is also significant that most belong to the *Atharvaveda*, a *sakha* not even warranting canonical authority according to Brahmanical classification.[313]

What this points to, then, is a problem of taxonomy in narratives of 'origin.' Unlike their Brahmanical purveyors, of course, Indologists find it difficult to accept the Vedas, or even the Upanishads, as a single body of revealed knowledge. As we have seen in the case of Olivelle, the best he can do is admit a sort of master blueprint of teaching episodes edited by later Brahmins who compiled the Upanishads. From a different perspective Renou claims "it is important to remember that the source of Vedic inspiration is a single fountain-head, from which many streams flowed out in course of time," but the Vedas as we hear them today are thought to incorporate various rituals and mythic variants that had "arisen in the original Vedic community of clans and families."[314] Renou is constantly drawn back to this "idea of the Veda existing before the schools'" but he is sober enough to recognize that this 'Ur-Veda' cannot be constructed on the basis of the conglomerate that we now find before us.

On the one hand, accepting nativist classifications of the Vedic corpus is itself problematic.[315] For instance, the *Taittiriya 'Upanishad'* actually constitutes three chapters of the Taittiriya Aranyaka, while the *Aitareya* is contained in the *Rg Veda* and forms part

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[311] Renou (1961), ibid., p. 24.
[312] Louis Renou, *Religions of Ancient India* (New York: Schocken, 1968), p. 50.
[313] As Paul Deussen notes concerning a host of 'late' Upanishads, "all of these Upanishads were received into the Atharvaveda, but met with no recognition from the leading theologians of Vedanta." Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1906/1979), p. 26.
[314] Renou (1968), ibid., p. 5.
[315] For a critique of this see Daya Krishna, 'The Vedic Corpus: Some Questions' and 'The Upanishad's—What are They?' in *Indian Philosophy: A Counter Perspective* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991).

of the *Aitareya Aranyaka*. Understanding the matter, however, is not as simple as taking the word Upanisad itself to define this genre of discourse as a search or explication for 'correspondences' or 'equivalences' of *Atman* and *Brahman*. Distinguishing adherents of this religion as Aupanisadah (one who relies upon the authority of the *Upanisads*) is also useless for analyzing the transmission of *brahmavidya*.[316] Neither may one take as canonically enshrined some selection of 'principle' Upanisads based on the fact that they were dignified with the commentary of Sankara. An Indian theologian, Sankara also composed a commentary of the Bhagavad Gita and even suggested that slaves have Indian epics read to them so they may obtain knowledge of *brahman*.[317]

While attempting to understand the Vedic corpus one should also bear in mind Renou's observation that "Vedism is a religion, but is even more a technique."[318] One might be tempted to theorize the paradigmatic axis of Aryanism with the methodological elements underlying this discourse. Specific to this study, moreover, are the procedures whereby the corpus of Vedanta is fabricated, as well as the disciplinary power circulated by Brahmanical theologians and the discourse of Indian mimics thereby subjectivated. Normally conceptualized as collections (*samhitas*) institutionalized in 'branches' (*sakhas*) of the Vedas scrutinized by later hermeneutes (*uttara mimamsakas*) of the Vedanta school (*darsana*), it is the pedagogical regulations, or 'rules', governing narratives of Aryan mythology that allow us to decode the discourse of Advaita with the 'proper name', or genre, *Upanisad*. Moreover, it is in this context that we delimit the corpus of 'Vedanta', paradigmatic elements of which are rooted in the discourse of Aryanism and syntagmatic networks of Brahmanical domination.

Although contemporary transmissions of the Upanisads are largely independent of the Vedic hymns or, indeed, Brahmanical purveyors with which they are fabricated, Patrick Olivelle argues that affiliation with this corpus was much more pronounced in Aryan

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[316] For a discussion of Vedic authority see 'Three Myths about Indian Philosophy' in Krishna (1991), ibid.
[317] See Sankara, *Brahma-Sutra Bhasya of Sri Sankaracarya*, trans. Swami Gambhirananda. (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1965) pp. 233-234. The point is revealed in Sankara's commentary on B.S. 1.3.38.
[318] Renou (1968), ibid., p. 42.

society.[319] As a result of Aryan bio-social polity, specialized families were assigned to the recitation and preservation of particular sections of the Vedas. By the first centuries of the Common Era, we are told, the role and preservation of the Vedic branches had become less significant. What was previously transmitted by local lineages became controlled by schools of Brahmanic learning related to *sastric* knowledge.[320] One initially discovers this practice in systems of law (*Dharamasastra*) and political science (*Arthasastra*), but it soon dominated the entire Vedic canon and we then witness the formation of 'Vedanta' as a genre of Brahmanical discourse.[321] During a second phase the Upanisads were annexed in provincial collections of theological treatises concerning renunciation and the practice of yoga, as well as sectarian sermons.[322] The array of narratives governed by the 'proper name' *Upanisad* is typical of Indian inclusivism and, despite regional variation in structure, suggests proto-national expansion of Brahmanical ideology.[323] Since Sankara hailed from the Dravidian south, it appears that by the eighth century Brahmanical specialists had conquered the entirety of the subcontinent, if not circumscribed the discourse of Aryanism and the utterances of Vedic *rsis*.

In an effort to deconstruct the school of Vedanta, the contemporary Indian philosopher Daya Krishna is torn between accepting the orthodoxy of various 'Vedantins' and

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[319] This structural change no doubt reflects the laicization of Vedanta in Indian society, but also signifies generic elements of the Upanisads in contrast to other recensions of Vedic ideology.

[320] As Richard King notes, "The ideological constructs and colonial nature of brahmanical discourses, as represented in distinctions between vaidik (i.e. derived from the Vedas), [and] shastrik (derived from the sastras)...forms of knowledge clearly demonstrate the sense in which the imperialist thrust of Orientalism is not an isolated historical or even an exclusively Western phenomenon." King (1999b) ibid., p. 234 n. 24.

[321] Cf. "Even within ritual and religious practice, Brahmanical thought came to consider the literature of all vedic branches, that is, the totality of the Veda, as authoritative over individuals in every vedic branch. The Upanisads themselves became somewhat detached from their respective vedic branches and became the common property of all Brahmins under the generic title 'Vedanta', meaning the end or conclusion and, in an extended sense, the essence of the Veda." Olivelle (1996), ibid., pp. xxxii-xxxiii. Of course, spurious mention of 'Vedanta' in the Upanisads themselves indicates a degree of inter-textuality.

[322] Brahmanical discourse of the Upanisads, it would seem, follows precisely Semitic patterns of ecclesiastical struggles for power and authority. As Certeau explains in relation to the corpus produced, or colonized, by orthodox Christian fabrications of mysticism: "a corpus can be considered the effect of this relation between a name [Vedanta] (which symbolizes a circumscription) and rules (which specify a mode of production) [Brahminization], even if, as is often the case, the name is used to add different or earlier productions to the constellation of texts it isolates." Certeau (2000), ibid., p. 190.

[323] Cf. "In the first half of the second millennium CE, furthermore, the early Upanisads were detached from the Brahmanas of which they were a part and, together with these later Upanisads, gathered into collections; the number of Upanisads included in these collections varied according to the region, 52 being a common number in the north and 108 in the south." Olivelle (1996), ibid., p. xxxiii.

defining 'Vedanta' on the textual basis of Brahmanical authority.[324] In spite of observing that Vedanta literally means 'the end of the Vedas' and the fact that this refers to the Upanisads which are supposed to be its concluding portion, given the 'authoritative' status of the Brahma-Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita Krishna refuses to limit 'Vedanta' to its etymological derivation. As he correctly suggests, however, combining these Indian texts with the Upanisads as the authoritative corpus for the Vedanta theologian makes nonsense of the literal meaning of the term Vedanta.[325] Struggling with the 'authority' of 'Vedantins', moreover, Krishna notes that not merely do the pre-Sankarites ignore the Bhagavad Gita, the post-Sankarites go so far as to ignore the Upanisads themselves.[326] Searching for an understanding of Vedanta in terms of doctrine, just as he failed to discover any underlying 'philosophy' of the Upanisads so, too, Krishna discovers none in the Indian classics of this triple-foundation (*prasthana-traya*). While characterizing the Upanisads as the semantic parallel of 'Vedanta', in spite of seeing the proclamation of Vedic authority as a mythic element of the Brahmanical tradition, Krishna succumbs to hegemonic agents of Brahmanism and spurious texts invested with orthodox authority.[327] In conclusion, that is, for Krishna 'Vedanta' signifies no Indian tradition.[328]

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[324] 'Vedanta—Does it Really Mean Anything?' in Krishna (1991), ibid., pp. 163-171.

[325] Krishna briefly contemplates 'Vedanta' as a signifier of the discourse discovered in the Upanisads, but then extends his conceptualization of the term in order to argue that "by stretching the meaning, it came to mean the philosophical position expounded in the Upanisads. Every Vedantist, thus, is supposed to expound the philosophy of the Upanisads, and the differences between different Vedantin may be understood as differences of interpretation with respect to what the Upanisads propound concerning philosophical matters." 'Vedanta—Does it Really Mean Anything?' in Krishna (1991), ibid., pp. 165-166.

[326] 'Vedanta—Does it Really Mean Anything?' in Krishna (1991), ibid., pp. 168.

[327] Krisha notes that "the Upansisads are certainly the authoritative texts for Vedanta, but not the only texts which enjoy that position. Besides them, as is well known, there are the Brahma-Sutras and the Gita which are treated as authoritative by the thinkers of this school. The *Brahma-Sutra*, and the Gita form the classical triumvirate on which the philosophy known as Vedanta is supposed to rest." 'Vedanta—Does it Really Mean Anything?' in Krishna (1991), ibid., pp. 165-166. In seeming despair, Krishna then notes: "has every thinker who is considered a Vedantin tried to show the concordance of his thoughts with any of the texts mentioned above? What shall we say of Padmapada, Prakasatman, Suresvara, Prakasanandada, Vacaspati Misra or Madhusudana Sarasvati, or the innumerable others who regard themselves and are regarded by others as Vedantins? It will be patently false to say that all of them have tried to argue the concordance of their philosophical thought with any or all of the traditional texts." (p. 170). While considering the construction of Vedic authority Krishna correctly explains that the implications of such allegiance "would be to maintain that the Vedas contain the ultimate philosophical truth, and that the test of the truth of a philosophical position is whether or not it is in accordance with what is written in the Veda." However, he asks: "Is it true to say that Samkhya or Yoga or Nyaya or Vaisesika...clash over what the Vedas really mean? This is obviously not the case. The classical texts of the various schools are not, even in form, a commentary upon the Vedic texts. The two schools which seem to be an obvious exception are Mimamsa and Vedanta" (p. 8). Though questioning Brahmanical power, Krishna's study is limited by analysis of Vedanta as one of six schools of Indian philosophy. Obviously exegetes of Mimamsa and Vedanta struggle

While the discursive formation of the school, or tradition, of Vedanta, as well as the authority of Sankara, may be seen as pre-colonial braids of discourse in the history of the Upanisads and their Indian propagation, we must also consider other forms of Brahminization. For instance sermons and medieval treatise produced in the school of Vedanta often display a variety of features which may be best explained in the light of what Louis Renou describes as "the Sankhya-Vedanta compromise." In this system of relations one witnesses the merging of a host of ancient texts with significant doctrinal distinctions. Such fusions are found at all periods of Indian history as Brahmanical schools once composed primers on Nyaya-Vaisesika and even today many teachers speak in terms of Yoga-Vedanta.[329] According to Renou, this *inclusivist* tendency extends beyond Vedic traditions and he argues that Sankara even 'brahmanizes the Great Vehicle.'[330] Aside from this, is there anyway of understanding the Upanisads as an epistemic genre of discourse, not simply offer another theological exegesis of 'Advaita Vedanta?' Along with Tzvetan Todorov, I am more concerned with the origin of genre; with what precedes it and how its transition takes place:

> The question of origin that I should like to raise, however, is not historical but systematic in nature; both questions seem to me equally legitimate, equally necessary. Not "what preceded the genres in time?" but "what presides over the birth of a genre at any time?" More precisely, is there such a thing, in language (since we are dealing here with genres within discourse) as forms which, while they may foreshadow genres, are not yet included within them? And if so, how does the passage from the one to the other come about?[331]

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to validate their debt to Vedic authority, but we must understand the ways in which the Upanisads have been fabricated as an element in the corpus of these six and, indeed, taxonomized scholastically.

[328] Cf. "The whole thing vanishes into thin air. The search for the meaning of Vedanta leads nowhere. ...The most haloed term of Indian philosophical thought connotes nothing...mere verbiage, an absolute nothing. It needs to be banished from the realms of thought, if we are to be serious about thinking. Let us be serious. Let us banish it" 'Vedanta—Does it Really Mean Anything?' in Krishna (1991), ibid., p. 170. To be fair, Krishna prefaces his collection of articles by explicitly noting that they are designed to generate further thought in the field of Indian philosophy. Referring to the outcome of his deconstructions, Krishna notes that "the reader has to be satisfied with the demolition of the currently accepted picture. In case he agrees with the argument and the evidence he hopefully may try to build his or her own picture in its place" (p. ix). I agree with Krishna on many levels, but I nevertheless gather meaning from the discourse of Vedanta and the historical procedures of Brahmanization which, if not a useful knowledge in itself, may allow one to further theorize the implications of the Upanisads.

[329] Renou (1968), ibid., pp. 56-57.

[330] Renou (1968), ibid., p. 58.

[331] Tzevetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 16.

The word *Veda*, widely employed as a signifier of at least three, sometimes four, fabricated canons of Aryanism as well as the 'revelations', or authoritative 'scriptures', of one of the 'world religions,' is derived from the Sanskrit √*vid* which means 'to know.' In its nominal form, therefore, *Veda* signifies knowledge. *Advaita*, due to the particle *–a*, negates duality (*dvaita*). The correlation of non-duality and knowledge (*veda*) is made explicit in the final verse of the *Mandukya Upanisad* where ones self (*atma*) is narrated as *advaita*. This verse also ranks *siva* as an 'auspicious' element of non-duality, but on the subcontinent the term refers to a destructive Vedic deity around whom a number of Indian cults are devoted.[332] While no more than three hymns of the ancient Rg are addressed to Siva, this canonical ensemble may serve to highlight methodological obstacles encountered by contemporary mythologists of Aryanism.

For instance, Wendy O'Flaherty's general survey of the Rg starkly illustrates the urgency of method and theory in the study of Aryan mythology. O'Flaherty's initial desire to analyze these hymns as either 'mythological' or 'philosophical' tropes in the corpus of Indo-European thought is further disoriented with her final reconstruction: "the Rig Veda has no true mythology; it is written out of a mythology that we can only try to reconstruct from the Rig Vedic jumble of paradoxes heaped on paradoxes, tropes heaped on tropes."[333] Of course, the Rg was transmitted orally for many centuries before being 'written out' and in a more self-reflexive critique O'Flaherty correctly notes that the orality of Aryan mythology, as well as later Indian epics produced in concordance with Indo-European motifs, renders impossible her desire to trace chronological variants of Vedism, that is, "a passage actually composed in the twelfth century A.D. may represent a surprisingly accurate preservation of a myth handed down since the twelfth century B.C.—or a completely original retelling of that myth."[334] Problematizing such quests for origin, our vision of Vedism is derived from a mere image of Siva, the implications of which codify gurus thereby located in the lineage of Advaita.

As the primordial guru of Arsa Vidya, Siva is characterized as Daksinamurti, a youthful

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[332] *Mandukya Upanisad*, v. 12.
[333] O'Flaherty (1981), ibid., pp. 13, 18.
[334] Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths* (London: Penguin, 1975), p. 16.

and silent form of this otherwise unruly God, a mythic depiction of whom is illustrated by Swami Dayananda: "The first guru is the Lord…We know the *parampara* only up to the Rishis and then we simply connect it to Lord Sadasiva or to Lord Daksinamurti".[335] Clearly, Arsa Vidya is an ancestral lineage of truth and transmission: "Our Rishis were blessed with this knowledge. It is said they were given this knowledge by the Lord Himself."[336] The knowledge thereby communicated, moreover, is located in the Vedas. Categorizing the Upanisads as utterances of the *risi*s, Dayananda affirms that the vision of the *risi*s and the vision of the Vedas are one and the same.

For semiotic analysis of Swami Dayanananda's religious system, I wish to delineate the paradigmatic elements of canonical enunciation. In this context, Tim Murphy's analysis of the relationship between canon, paradigm, syntagm and hermeneute may prove insightful. To further clarify his semiotic theory of religion, Murphy notes that religion is "…a 'system' or 'structure' only in that the elements (concepts, images, etc.) which constitute it are defined in relation to one another. There is no mystery behind the meanings of 'system' or 'structure'; it is important that these notions not be reified."[337] The Saussurean concepts of *langue et parole*, or the rules of language and the articulations generating the speech circuit (*circuit de la parole*), have normally been used by linguists who study various speech acts, or acts of parole, which constitute the available data for discovering the underlying structure of language. In the study of myth, structuralists such as Levi-Strauss have sought to analyze taxonomic versions of mythology in a similar attempt to arrive at some 'deep structure.'[338] To apply these concepts beyond the study of language and to signifying systems in general it is useful to think in terms of the neo-Saussurean model of 'paradigms', or the field of associative relations, and syntagmatic chains of selection and combination.

The structural context of syntagms and paradigms provides the set of relations through which signs are organized into codes. It is to Murphy's credit that he has realized the

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[335] Swami Dayananda, *Arsha Vidya: The Vision of the Rishis* (Rishikesh: Sri Gangadhareswar, 1991), p. 13.
[336] Dayananda (1991), ibid., p. 12.
[337] Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 55.
[338] C. Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked* (London: Cape, 1969).

theoretical imperative to move beyond any simple description of the relationship between the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes of language for a semiotic approach to religious stystems.[339] In this regard, Murphy has attempted to further develop the scholar of religion Jonathan Z. Smith's earlier notion of 'sacred persistence' and the dynamic interplay between a canon of signs and the hermeneutical appropriation and persistent application of canonical elements in the range of sacred communities.[340] While Smith had suggested the isomorphism between the canon-hermeneute relationship and langue/parole, Murphy reframes the discussion in terms of structuralist semiotics and argues that the canon is related to the hermeneute in much the same way the paradigm and the field of association stands in relation to the syntagm, or process of combination.[341]

The importance of organizing the hermeneutical selection and combination of signs into systems of relation is that this process will eventually allow for structuralist analysis of codes, messages, and modes of communication. There are two ways in which signs may be organized into codes. Paradigmatic relations may form codes among elements in the field of association. The formation of any syntagm, on the other hand, is dependent upon a paradigm of signs from which the signifying elements are selected. In this system of relations one finds messages which involve *selection* (from a paradigm) and *combination* (into a syntagm). Thus there may be two types of structural relationship: relations of choice (paradigmatic relations) and relations of combination (syntagmatic relations).[342] In the semiotic system of religion these relations are somewhat more restricted than in other forms of communication and cultural discourse.[343]

Above all, the fixed element is the canon. This does not mean, however, that the canon is preserved as a static or solitary paradigm. The importance of the canon is simply to recognize it as a necessary element in terms of religion as a semiotic system. The canon

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[339] Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 59.
[340] Jonathan Z. Smith, 'Sacred Persistence: Towards a Redescription of Canon ,' in *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
[341] Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 54.
[342] John Fiske, *Introduction to Communication Studies* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 56-58.
[343] Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 57.

for any religious system is a body of semiotic materials (obviously not limited to written scriptures) issuing from the past and transmitted through an ongoing process of interpretation. As we have seen, the *Upanisads* are themselves testament to the varieties of canonical transformation. Indeed it is through hermeneutical interpretation that the canon survives and participates in the history of religious formations. Reframing the canon/hermeneute relationship in terms of structuralist semiotics, Murphy suggests that paradigmatic elements are selected from an ensemble of signifiers to form syntagmatic combinations which, incidentally, may be conservative, innovative, or heretical. In any case, even illicit syntagms are derived from rules which govern the order of the canon. This theoretical observation has important implications for theologians who provide the discourse of Advaita with orthodox interpretations of scriptural declarations. More specifically, the structural lack of a solitary canonical element leads to its multiplicity of meaning or structural over-determination.[344] The formation of syntagms on the other hand is guided by the paradigmatic order of the canon.

Guiding the hermeneute's selection and combination of canonical relations are codes of cultural connotations. The bridge Murphy constructs for heremeneute's and their canon is also applicable to meta-language and the discourse of theory: "the multiplicity of codes surrounding both the canon and heremeneute...color, guide, and nuance the heremeneute's selections and emphasis of canonical elements and genres of objects of its application."[345] Codes provide a framework within which signifying systems of relations become intelligible. In communication theory codes function with mediums through which a message may be transmitted. A useful distinction is thus made between medium-specific codes and the channels through which codes may operate.[346] Channels are dictated by restraints of the medium through which a coded message is transmitted. Codification, of course, is the sociopolitical and historic procedures whereby the conventions or connotations of a particular code become institutionalized. For our

[344] Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 56.
[345] Elaborating the relationship between canon and heremeneute, Murphy explains: "if the notion of canon connotes a bounded field, the notion of code connotes a permeable membrane across which the micro-discourse of local flavor may enter and exit a broader religious system." Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 57-58.
[346] Fiske (1990), ibid., pp.20-21.

purposes we may focus upon codes which are transmitted along the aural channel through the medium of the *guru-sisya-parampara*.

One additional issue to be resolved in the discourse of Advaita concerns the fact that 'hermeneutes' are often individuals who might better be placed along the paradigmatic axis of canonical enunciation. To be sure, there is a long history of theologians, such as Sankaracharya and modern followers of his approach, who simply comment upon the Upanisads. As Agehananda Bharati explains, "the pandit views himself as continuing the commenting bhasyakara's line."[347] This practice is not contentious and fits seemingly well along the syntagmatic axis of Advaita. However, in order to understand this religious system it is also necessary to recognize that *rsis* and gurus are often viewed as embodiments of canonical authority. This fact is especially important for discourse of the Indian renaissance and is illustrated with Bharati's observation that the modern Indian swami is respected by even the pandit because the latter fits the *rsi*-model.[348] As we shall see, it is possible that this element of discourse, or '*rsi*-model,' may be bridged with the theoretical construct of codes, or interpretive devices in the system of Advaita.

At the moment, however, we must further account for a more basic act of signification: the cause for any act of enunciation. As Murphy explains, the structuralist concepts of the relations between paradigm and syntagm do not provide us with a sufficient model of understanding religion. While the notion of codes does seem to structure these systems of relation, it is the mode of address which sheds light upon the cause of signification. For Murphy, an instance of signification is brought about through the enunciation of an address, or speech act. The importance of the address is that it implies an addressee. With the addressive structure of the sign and signification Murphy further postulates generic

[347] Bharati (1970), ibid., pp. 268-269.

[348] Bharati (1970), ibid., pp. 268-269. For a good discussion of Swami Vivekananda's rhetoric about *rsis* and the necessity of 'becoming one' in order to understand the truths of the Vedas see Anantanand Rambachan, *The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Vedas* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), pp. 41-62. According to Vivekananda, the Vedas were a record of experiences documenting the *rsis* realization of truth. One must do spiritual practices to then understand this truth and understand the Vedas. The Vedas themselves are not accorded the power of granting knowledge.

forms of addressivity and enunciation. The cause or occasion for enunciation is discovered through an analysis of the internal structure of prior acts of signification.[349]

To understand the transmission of *brahmavidya*, then, we may benefit by analyzing Dayananda's description of the procedures whereby *Daksinamurti* initiated the *guru-sisya-parampara*. Indeed, I wish to construct the system of Arsa Vidya as a conjunction of paradigmatic elements encoded in the narratives surrounding Dayananda's explication of Daksinamurti's so-called "silent exposition" (*mauna vyakhya*). More specifically, in Dayananda's commentary of *mauna vyakhya*, the functions of negation (*neti neti*) and indication (*laksana*) are conjoined in the single method of *Arsha Vidya*, a means of truth and communication traced to Siva, or Daksinamurti, and located in the Upanisads. Providing an element of this pedagogy, Dayananda notes:

> The tradition (*sampradaya*) has always looked upon the words revealing the truth as *laksana*, which reveals by implication. In fact, the *Upanisad* does not leave us in any ambiguity about this two-fold fact that words have to be employed to reveal the truth, and that what is revealed is not the immediate meaning of the words. The later fact is also the reason why we say that it is beyond words. Where the immediate meaning of the word ends, the implied meaning begins. So the implied meaning is conveyed in silence. That does not mean the word has no role to play. Even to imply, the word is a must.[350]

In additional narratives elaborating the correlative procedure of *mauna vyakya* Dayananda retains the significance of *laksana* in revealing *brahman* and marks the function of negation (*neti neti*) for the removal of superimposition.[351] With Dayananda's

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[349] Cf. "Looking outside the enunciation, for a cause both anterior and external to it, the possible sources for its provocation are too myriad for there to be any kind of theorization at this crucial juncture—and, indeed, the nontheorizable factor of contingency looms large at precisely this point. The best we could do is come up with a catalogue of the kinds of reasons for such an act. However, if we examine the structure of the enunciation itself, it is at least arguable that prior enunciations form the immediate, if often extremely implicit, occasion/cause for any and all enunciations." Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 59.

[350] Swami Dayananda, *A Collection: Talks and Essays of Swami Dayananda* (Rishikesh: Sri Gangadhareswar, 1999), p. 52.

[351] Cf. "The idea is that *Brahman*, the truth, is beyond the reach of words and thoughts. Even though the teacher uses words to unfold *Brahman*, *Brahman* is not the direct meaning of any word. It is beyond all concepts, and still has to be communicated through words. What the words do is negate what is not *Brahman*. In technical language, it is said that *Brahman* is not the immediate meaning of the word (*vacyartha*). It is the implied meaning of the word (*laksyartha*). *Brahman*, which is the self that is self-

representation of Daksinamurti I decode the myth of Vedanta and the semiotic system of Arsha Vidya.[352] To answer the question of what causes, or instances, acts of signification, I suggest Dayananda's enunciation is provoked by a desire to remove one's ignorance of *brahman*.[353] Furthermore, the internal structure of Arsha Vidya is a paradigmatic element codifying the Upanisads. As Murphy explains: "If the canon declares, at least in its own view, the code merely alludes...Consequently, although the canon would seem the more powerful of the two, by its immediacy and silence, the code can, at times, invisibly master the canon."[354] We can go even further and codify the *Upanisad*s with utterances at the root of their power: the Vedic *rsis* of Arsha Vidya.

In an enunciation of *Mundaka*, a narrative of the *rsi* Angiras depicts an ideal prototype of *guru*s. With conservative models transmitted alongside the Upanisads, subjects de-individualized (perhaps *brahminized*) to identify with an object of knowledge (*brahman*) revealed in these texts are considered *brahmavid*s, knower's of *brahman*, but it is important to note that all *brahmavits* need not be *gurus*. As witnessed in variants of the Sanskrit lexicon, terms which describe "inferior" *guru*s (*adhamaguru*s), teachers who may be *brahmavit*s but lack the power to communicate their self-understanding to other eligible aspirants, suggest a long history of indigenous contestations and power-knowledge relations. In the discourse of Advaita, however, *rsi*-regimes of destruction index the generic medium channeling their method (*prakriyas*) of instruction.[355]

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effulgent, self-evident, is revealed when the veil of ignorance is removed by the words which negate what is not *Brahman*." Dayananda (1999), ibid., p. 266.

[352] Although as a guru, Dayananda is appropriately related to Siva and thus paradigmatic utterances, the fact that he is caught up in historical networks of power, a nationalist discourse of Hindutva for instance, also allows syntagmatic relations to Advaita. Taken together, we witness the system of Arsha Vidya.

[353] As we have already noted, for Murphy the relationship between religious address and addressee is understood though the concept of agon, antagonism and contest for meaning. Nevertheless, in the light of his suggestions we have arrived at a different interpretation of the structure of enunciation: "Because such an analysis is immanent to the structure of enunciation as such, the prospects for theorizing the occasion/cause of enunciation *as such* are very good. As immanent, it is always 'there', even when suppressed. Although no a priori concept of the content of the enunciative other should be maintained, and every specific instance of enunciation must be empirically substantiated, it is possible to talk about the general structure of the enunciation." Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 59.

[354] Murphy (2003), ibid., p. 58.

[355] Provisions for structuralist analysis of narrative may emphasize the ratification of *rsi*s and their paradigmatic function: "Indices, because of the, in some sort, vertical nature of their relations, are truly semantic units..The ratification of indices is 'higher up', sometimes even remaining virtual, outside any explicit syntagm (the 'character' of a narrative agent may well never be explicitly named while yet being

According to Dayananda, the teaching tradition of Advaita Vedanta is directed towards proving the truth of the *mahavakya tat tvam asi*. All other sentences in the Upanisads are purportedly attempts to prove the identity between the individual and *brahman*. In particular, there are a number of teaching methods (*prakriyas*) illustrated in the Upanisads and adopted by gurus in the tradition of Advaita which reveal this identity. A few of the more important *prakriyas* are outlined by Dayananda as means of proof for releasing the individual from any sense of limitation. There is the method which discusses *brahman* and the cause of the world (*karana-karya-prakriya*); from the Mandukya Upanisad is derived a method of analysis for the three states of experience: waking, dream, and deep sleep (*avasthatraya-prakriya*); and in the Taittiriya Upanisad we find the analysis of 'five sheaths' (*pancakosa-prakriya*). Importantly, a *guru* must handle the *prakriyas* properly in order for them to function as a means of knowledge.[356] I wish to suggest that these *prakriyas* operate in the same manner as does the internal structure of Advaita and generic forms conjoined in epistemic acts of enunciation.

This issue has also been discussed in reference to the theological method of various pre-colonial Indian exegetes, or so-called *acarya*s of traditional Advaita Vedanta. In his theological analysis of Sankara, Anantanand Rambachan delineates the functions of superimposition (*adhyaropa*) and denial (*apavada*), the method of negation (*neti neti*), and the method of indication (*laksana*).[357] In contrast, supplementing and somewhat revising Rambachan's analysis, Michael Comans argues for a single methodology. "Rather than three distinct methods," proclaims Comans, "I see superimposition and its removal (*adhyaropa-apavada*) and the way of negation (*neti neti*) as constituting a single technique that unites with indication: thus there is but one method, and it consists of negation cum indication."[358] Since we are not concerned with the hermeneutics of

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constantly indexed), is a paradigmatic ratification. That of functions, by contrast, is always 'further on', is a syntagmatic ratification. Functions and indices thus overlay another classic distinction...the former correspond to a functionality of doing, the later to a functionality of being" (Barthes 1977: 566-567). This issue is further discussed in chapter five with structuralist analysis of the phrase 'tat tvam asi'.

[356] Swami Dayananda, The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedanta (Saylorsburg, PA: Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, 1993), pp. 3-7.

[357] Anantanand Rambachan, *Accomplishing the Accomplished: The Vedas as a Source of Knowledge in Sankara* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991). See pp. 75-76.

[358] Michael Comans, *The Method of Early Advaita Vedanta: A Study of Gaudapada, Sankara, Suresvara and Padmapada* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2000), pp. 290-291.

Sankara, it may be emphasized that Comans also suggests that it is this pedagogical method which underlies the Upanisads and the teaching tradition of Advaita Vedanta.[359]

Now, while it is true that I have indeed been following a structuralist approach to arrive at the internal structure of Advaita and its forms of address and signification, it must also be recalled that as a semiotic system this discourse involves recognition of a broader set of relations than those illustrated with the enunciative technique of negation cum indication. Indigenous braids of discourse and the paradigmatic relations of Brahmanical fabrications are all conjoined in mythic variants of syntagmatic combinations. Another useful way of conceptualizing all of this may be gathered from Jose Casanova's analytic distinction between 'community cults' and 'religious communities.'[360] We must bear in mind however that while binary distinctions may prove useful as an analytic procedure, such strict bipolar classifications often prove unsatisfactory when applied to social realities. Such problems are illustrated in the typical conception of the evolutionary sequence which normally posits the development from primitive, collective religion to modern individual religion. This conception underlies recent distinctions between public and private religions, and as Casanova explains such models are only analytical ideal types:

> Since it seems that collective religions always needed to be appropriated—that is, internalized—individually, while individual religiosity today, as always, tends to form institutionalized expression through some kind of community, one may conclude that the rusk of drawing a clear analytical distinction between public and private religion at the level of individual religiosity turns out to be rather difficult.[361]

With the above in mind, I wish to argue that the distinction between public and private religion is best drawn not at the level of individual religiosity but at the level of their

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[359] Cf. "There is more than one technique (*prakriya*) in the Upanisads to reveal the acosmic (*nisprapanca*) Brahman: there is the discussion of Brahman as the cause of the world (*karana-karya-prakriya*); there is the analysis of the three states of experience, waking, dream, and deep sleep (*avasthatraya-prakriya*); and there is the analysis of 'five sheaths' (*pancakosa-prakriya*), as we see in the Taittiriya Upanisad. Yet there is a single method in the Upanisads, and it consists in negation coupled with the use of *laksana*: to negate the real and point to the real. Comans (2000), ibid., p. 300.

[360] Jose Casanova, 'Private and Public Religions,' in Social Research, 59.1, 1992, pp. 17-57.

[361] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 45.

institutional expression. In this context, I suggest that the *guru-sisya-parampara* and the addressive structure of signification provide the institutional structure for the discourse of Advaita. As this structure is instanced, occasioned, or provoked through speech acts and modes of enunciation, the public, communal, nature of this religion is obvious. In contrast, by far greater number are narratives of the *Upanisad*s which clearly display the privatization of Vedanta.[362] The plethora of redundant verses which attempt to persuade one to visualize or practice various forms of meditation (*upasanas*) may be seen as nothing more than individual appropriations, internalizations, and privatized forms of religious formation. The unique aspect of this phenomenon in relation to Advaita is that through Brahmanical procedures of fraternization there has been further progress towards institutionalization. As Casanova indicates in relation to the conceptual shortcomings of evolutionary models of religion, "there is enough evidence to indicate that some primitive religions also served rather well as the institutional vehicle for the most varied forms of individual religious experience."[363] The institutional structure of privatized religious formations of Advaita are supported by contemporary teachers who continue to view the role of these *upasanas* as inferior forms of instruction or intermediate routes of internalization for less than qualified students. In no way related to the internal structure of Advaita and the *guru-sisya-parampara*, these techniques are often posed as aids in the process of understanding the *mahavakyas* themselves.

Such conceptions do not merely undermine the teaching methodology of Advaita or represent hermeneutical attempts at 'exegetical totalization.' To insist upon such techniques would appear to indicate ones ignorance of the role of enunciation in the tradition of Advaita. In the light of the fact that the majority of such *upasanas* represent allegorical interpretations of Vedic sacrificial rituals, we may also understand the legitimation of such practices in the light of communal structures of Brahminization. As Casanova notes such transformations in religious and communal formations are common due to the dynamic nature of religion, "but in certain historical periods or stages of development as well as in particular cultures and religious traditions, one form may

[362] As will become apparent, I am currently only referring to the 'privatization' of Vedanta in the sociological sense noted below.
[363] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 45.

clearly predominate over the other."[364] The continued acceptance and appropriation of these structures in the rhetoric of contemporary forms of Advaita suggests that they have now been internalized and accepted as legitimate methods of instruction.

Following Max Weber, Casanova draws a distinction between the cult of communal association, organized in the interest of clans, tribes, confederation, kingdom, caste hierarchy etc., and religious arrangements which have emerged in response to a revealed message. The form of the religious community will primarily be determined "by the content and structure of the religious message itself and by the ...interests of those groups and strata to which the religious message is originally addressed."[365] At the moment of its inception, that is, the enunciation of its revelation, the religious community is separate from and not coextensive with the community cult. The narration of such episodes often takes on a mythic structure, such as we have seen above in the case of Aryan *rsis*. The religious community is formed through personal relationships with the savior, prophet, spiritual advisor, guru, etc., who transmits the revealed message, but such formations often very soon assume a communal structure through the process of fraternization.

With appropriate systemic levels of analysis, I believe a number of typological models of Brahminization could be discerned through structural interpretation of the Upanisads. The prospects of such research include insight into the forms of social control and moralizing found in many of the later Upanisads, but most explicitly found through the extension of Brahmanical authority in texts such as the Bhagavad Gita. The direction of our current analysis, however, is towards understanding the dynamic transformations of Vedanta in the light of the historic emergence of the nation-state as model of communal formation.[366] With the democratization of British India and the institutional differentiation of the religious and political spheres of Brahmanical authority, we witness the emergence of an all-India formation dependent not upon institutionalization but rather laicization.

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[364] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 45.
[365] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 46.
[366] Cf. "But the truly relevant dynamics historically emerge when the two forms—the dynamics of community cult formation and the dynamics of religious community formation—meet, fuse, interpenetrate, and repel each other in all kinds of combinations." Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 48.

Chapter Three

Laicizing Vedanta: Nationalism and Reverse Colonialism

> European expansion also encoded older justifications for travel and conquest. Colonial power sought not only natural resources and strategic positions, but also native souls.[367]

> To lose one's soul in order to save one's country or State is an element of absolute laicism, of positive and negative conception of the world (against religion, or the dominant conception).[368]

Expanding Aryanism in the range of democratization Indian discourse of national liberation repositions Brahmanical narratives of colonization. As a result, Hindu subjectivation is approached on the grounds that transnational Indians are thereby codifying narratives of Orientalism with mimetic procedures of reverse colonialism. In this chapter I continue my task of problematization for the genealogy of the 'Hindu' soul.[369] This is a hybrid domain of knowledge formed with post-Enlightenment regimes of secularization and Orientalist affirmation.[370] It would be incorrect, however, to believe that modern Hindu narrators of the Upanisads, produced as a result of the Indian reformation, have no relation to Aryan fabrications.[371] Indeed Indian agents of salvation

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[367] Nicholas B. Dirks, 'Introduction: Colonialism and Culture', in Nicholas B Dirks (ed), *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. 16.

[368] Antonio Gramsci, 'Religion, State, Party', in Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (eds and trans), *Selections From The Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (NY: International Publishers, 1971/2003), pp. 266-267. In this particular notebook Gramsci is refuting the duality of State and religion as outlined in Hitler's *Mein Kampf* while referring to their 'necessary homogeneity and interrelation'.

[369] Aptly describing traditional concepts of the 'soul' as an "illusion of the theologians", similar to Michel Foucault we are not presently concerned with scripturally derived systems of metaphysics. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977) pp. 27-30.

[370] As Foucault makes explicit in ontological explanation of this modern domain of incarceration, "it would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those...colonized..." With attention to Foucault's analysis of the normalizing and humanistic procedures effecting substantial domains of consciousness, "rather than seeing this soul as the reactivated remnants of an ideology, one would see it as the present correlative of a certain technology of power over the body." Foucault (1977), ibid., p. 29. That is, we envision this Hindu conglomeration as a surplus product of Orientalist mystification and the consent of Indian propagation.

[371] According to Indologists, that is, theologians of the Aryan soul, narratives of this illusion codify the discipline of 'Indian philosophy', as explained to Ronald Inden: "Indologists tell us that the Upanishads are the texts that contain the origins of Indian philosophy. They are the texts in which the 'soul' or 'self' (*atman*) appears as the essence of the person. In these also, we are told, the famous doctrines of metempsychosis or the transmigration of souls (*samsara*) and of emancipation or liberation from that process, synonymous with the soul's absorption into an 'impersonal' or 'neuter' Brahman, make their

are now sustained as paradigmatic elements in the administration of these revelations.[372] If freedom reigns the discourse of Aryanism may institutionalize the internal structure of Advaita, but Vedanta would then be neither forced nor coerced with the consensus whereby Hindu power-relations are now reversed.[373]

Hinduism: Brahmanical Hegemony and the Roots of Oppression

Since nineteenth century Orientalists and Christian missionaries could not understand the indigenous management of Vedic and Indian traditions, it appears that the failure of Indian elites to transcend a Semitic model of religion based upon the monotheistic exclusivism of Western Christianity thereby resulted in the construction of a 'world religion' called 'Hinduism.'[374] In the light of Brahmanical inclusivism and colonial universalism it is important that we move beyond disciplinary models of 'Orientalism. Branding Orientalism with an eclectic construct of 'discourse', Edward Said's focus is upon the 'Middle East' and the cultural landscape of Islam as controlled by British and French colonial administrators since the end of the eighteenth century, but the 'Orientalist mind-set', or reification of the distinction between 'East' and 'West,' he suggests,

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appearance." Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 101. The Upanisads initiate mythic adventures of liberation, but due to the Orientalist imagination native Indians now provide Hindu narrations of these Aryan revelations.

[372] We may as well place the Hindu myth of Vedanta in opposition to Sankara's exclusivist understanding of Vedism, or Aryanism, as derived from the ideology of Wilhelm Halbfass: "Any valid human orientation towards transworldly and transempirical goals must derive its legitimacy and its origin from the Veda, which is legitimately accessible to the community of the "twice-born" aryas only and allegiance to which, on the other hand, constitutes the identity of the "Aryan" community." See Wilhelm Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian Thought* (NY, State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 60. Of course, with his commentary of the Bhagavad Gita Sankara did not limit his self-orientation to Aryanism.

[373] The liberation of Hindus from the realms of power where they are now submerged cannot be accomplished by those who, "in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them" for the very specific reason that this resistance produces nothing more than an "inversion of the power relations". As Foucault explains, "the overthrow of these 'micro-powers' does not, then, obey the law of all or nothing; it is not acquired once and for all by a new control of the apparatuses nor by a new functioning or a destruction of the institutions; on the other hand, none of its localized episodes may be inscribed in history except by the effects that it induces on the entire network in which it is caught up." Foucault (1977), ibid., p. 27.

[374] King (1999b), ibid., p. 105. King argues that the nineteenth century construction of Hinduism derives from a Judeo-Christian explanation of the ways in which sectarian rivals managed to coexist in inter-tribal affiliation. Ignorant of Brahmanization, missionaries postulated a single God of Hinduism.

originates with the first extant Athenian drama.[375] To communicate the mythic encounter silenced with Orientalist discourse of India and Europe, we may infuse life into this despotic domain before Aeschylus celebrated victory at Salamis (480 BCE).

A predominant complex in Orientalist constructions of India, mystical projections of Europe can be ascertained in the first historical representations available in Western literature.[376] Reports of Scylax of Karyanda, the first recorded European in India who explored the Indus region between 519-516 BCE, and Ctesias of Knidos, both of whom were in service of Persia under the ruler Darius I (521-486 BCE), reveal miraculous stories sustained throughout the Middle Ages. Mystical images provided by Scylax and Ctesias exerted significant influence upon the European imagination, while other Orientalist truisms of India may also be located among the exploits of Darius. By 517 BCE Darius had expanded his power into the Indus and one product of his invasion is the presence of Old Persian cuneiform inscriptions of the word 'Hindu,' mystic India's twin.

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[375] Said traces this mind-set to Aeschylus's (525-456 BCE) *The Persians*, wherein "it is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries." Before Said approaches his primary point of departure, the eighteenth century, from where he is able to move backward and forward having established that pivotal moment, we should note that he has also discovered the scope of Orientalism in the last extant Athenian drama, *The Bacchae* of Euripides, where "Dionysus is explicitly connected with his Asian origins and with the strangely threatening excesses of Oriental mysteries." With the connection made, the Orient becomes a dangerous locale, "Rationality is undermined by Eastern excesses, those mysteriously attractive opposites to what seem to be normal values." Said (1979), ibid., pp. 21; 56-57. While we cannot problematize the Orientalist image of 'dangerous' Muslim's, it may very well be the case that the role played by Dionysus in Said's violent 'Middle East' has been just as complex and systematic as Richard King tells us his subordination has been for the sake of the mystic Hindu: "since the Enlightenment, it would seem, dominant representations of Western culture have tended to subordinate what one might call the 'Dionysian' (as opposed to the Apollonian) aspects of its own culture and traditions (that is, those trends that have been conceived as 'poetic', 'mystical', irrational, uncivilized and feminine). These characteristics represent precisely those qualities that have been 'discovered' in the imaginary realm of 'the Orient'. Of course, this is a grand narrative about a highly complex and contradictory set of cultural processes, but it involves the ascendancy of secular rationality as an ideal within Western intellectual thought, a concomitant marginalization of 'the mystical' and the projection of qualities associated with this concept onto a colonized and essentialized India." King (1999b), ibid., pp. 3-4.

[376] The contemporary portrayal of India has roots in the ancient world, grounded in descriptions of India before Alexander the Great. According to Halbfass, it should be noted that "as far as we can judge from the references in other works and the few extant fragments, the religion and philosophy of India did not yet play a distinctive part in the works of Scylax and Ctesias." Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 11.

The word Hindu, the mispronounced Persian variant of the Sanskrit *sindu*, the Indus River, however, was not yet a mystical construct. For the Persians, the word had a practical usage. 'Hindu' designated the population surrounding the area through which the Indus flows, the Indians. From the invasion of Darius until the next millennium when Muslims began to settle into the Indus region in 712 CE, the word Hindu, or Al-Hind, had no other distinct cultural, social, political, or unifying connotation.[377] While the word 'Hindu' was, from the beginning, a Persian superimposition, when the term entered the conceptual and linguistic vocabulary of Indians in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it did not signify anything beyond the general distinction between 'indigenous' or 'native' and foreign (*mleccha*). Earlier Muslim intruders had distinguished a number of 'religions' within the geographic area of the Indus, but these differentiations were not retained with Orientalist use of the term Hindoo to describe the non-Muslim masses of India.[378]

Not until this label began to attract theological and ideological connotations, provided by the Indologists and Orientalists who sought to classify South Asia in the late eighteenth century, do we witness the power of Orientalism: "knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense *creates* the Orient, the Oriental, and his world."[379] According to Said, the East was not academically conquered for Orientalism until Anquetil-Duperron and Sir William Jones were able to unlock the mysteries of Avestan

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[377] As Heinrich von Steintencron notes, "for more than 1000 years the word Hindu (plural) continued to denote the Indians in general." Concerning the early European misunderstanding of the Persian Al-Hind, von Steintencron notes: "Most people failed to realize that the term "Hindu" corresponded exactly to their own word "Indian" which is derived, like the name "India," from the same Indus river, the *indos* of the Greek. The Hindu, they knew, was distinct from the Muslim the Jew, the Christian, the Parsee and the Jain who were all present in the Indian coastal area known to western trade. Therefore they took the term "Hindu" to designate the follower of a particular Indian religion. This was a fundamental misunderstanding of the term. And from the Hindu the term "Hinduism" was derived by way of abstraction, denoting an imagined religion of the vast majority of the population—something that had never existed as a "religion" (in the Western sense) in the consciousness of the Indian people themselves." Heinrich von Steintencron, 'Hinduism: On the Proper Use of a Deceptive Term,' in Gunther D. Sontheimer and Hermann Kulke (eds.), *Hinduism Reconsidered* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1989), pp. 11-27; 12.

[378] As such, recall unabated medieval Christian attitudes: "the heathen, according to the dominant Christian world view in the middle ages and after, belong all to one and the same religion inspired by Satan, which raises its head in all continents in varying forms. Even as late as 1711 when Bartholomaus Ziegenbalg wrote his famous book on the religion of the Malabar heathens, he repeated the traditional view that the people of the entire earth are divided into four major religions: Jews, Christians, Mahometans and Heathen. Among the heathen who are all children of the devil, the Indian heathens were considered to form one sect out of many (e.g., American, African, etc.)." von Stietencron (1989), ibid., p. 12.

[379] Said (1979), ibid., p. 40.

and Sanskrit.[380] This is no doubt true, as discerned in the European approach to India prior to the discoveries of William Jones and his associates.[381] In an influential narrative of the 'dialogue' of India and Europe, Wilhelm Halbfass warns in advance that "we are not dealing with the question of the common Indo-European background of the Greek, Iranian, and Indian traditions," but whatever bonds may document the familial heritage of Indo-European tribes it is certain the Western Humanist tradition traced to hypothetical origins in ancient Greece reveals scant knowledge of this ancestry.[382]

When Europeans emerged from their medieval 'Dark Ages' and began to navigate Indian trade routes in the late fifteenth century they encountered the subcontinent in total ignorance of its thought and culture.[383] Furthermore, early European trading contacts with

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[380] Said (1979), ibid., p. 51.

[381] As P.J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams note, "seventeenth-century Europeans approached Hinduism with expectations based on classics and on the Bible. There was a small corpus of Greek writing on India, most of it said to have originated in Alexander's expedition, which had been much glossed by later writers. According to these texts the Greeks had encountered sects of 'Brachmanes' or 'Gymnosophists' who cultivated recondite learning and lived austere lives." However, we are told, "English readers who wanted a more solid fare could with some difficulty find it in the translations from European sources." P.J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: Perceptions of New Worlds in the Age of Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 19. In fact, English readers would not have fared much better with the sources of their European counterparts, especially if their source of interest was the Upanisads. While A.H. Anquetil Duperron (1731-1805) had published a French translation of the Old Persian Zend Avesta in Paris as early as 1771, his most significant achievement would not come until thirty years later with his production of the two-volume work *Oupnek'hat* (1801/1802). The importance of the *Oupnek'hat*, a Latin translation of Dara Shukoh's *Sirr-i Akbar* ("The Great Secret"), a Persian translation of fifty Sanskrit *Upanisad*s, lies in the fact that this work "...represents the culmination and at the same time the end of the Islamic mediation of Indian thought to the Occident." Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 35. Sir William Jones (1746-1794), widely known as the first European to learn Sanskrit, had already produced the first direct translation of an *Upanisad* into a Western language (Jones's English translation of *Isa Upanisad* was published posthumously in 1799), but Anquetil's voluminous Latin collection remained popular in Europe. For a comprehensive bibliography of translations of the Upanisads see Philip Renard, 'Historical Bibliography of Upanisads in Translation,' in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 23, 1995, pp. 223-246.

[382] Since no response to Orientalism surfaces for over two millennia of Euro-American monologue, on the other hand, India's cultural encounter is hardly subject to dialogical analysis. Conditions established by the British in the late eighteenth century finally motivated Indians to respond to their colonizers, as Halbfass himself notes, "there is no sign of active theoretical interest, no attempt to respond to the foreign challenge, to enter into a "dialogue"-up to the period around 1800." Halbfass (1988), ibid., pp. 437; 450-451, n. 10.

[383] In our attempt to trace the roots of 'Hinduism', since no significance may be derived from any reports of India prior to the age of exploration his journeys initiated, like Halbfass, "we can ignore the few, partly legendary, travel reports on India which reached Europe before Vasco da Gama's expedition (1497-1498)." Halbfass (1998), ibid., p. 11. We may briefly note, however, the fantasies which occupied the minds of Europeans shortly before they set out for the coast of Malabar (Kerala), upon which Vasco da Gama's four ships landed on May 27, 1498. As von Stietencron explains, "when medieval European writers from the 12th century onwards became increasingly interested in fabulous India they were strongly inspired by the idea that beyond the dangerous Muslim power in the East, beyond Persia, there was another Christian

India contributed little to their understanding.[384] Lacking legitimate knowledge, Europeans confronted the Indians with their Holy Bible in hand.[385] With this divine source of Semitic authority they variously categorized Indians as 'gentiles' or 'heathens'. The Portuguese variant of gentile, gentio, eventually became anglicized as 'gentoo' and replaced the Persian synonym, but during the eighteenth century the term "gentoo" was gradually supplanted with the term "Hindoo".[386] Still, all Indians were thought to belong to one and the same group of heathens, that is, they were simply 'children of the devil'.

Despite his discovery of the 'Orientalist mindset' in ancient Greece, Said declares that Orientalism did not commence its formal existence until the Church Council of Vienne in 1312 decided to establish a series of chairs in Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldean, and Syriac at various universities throughout Europe.[387] Learning the language of the infidels, it was correctly discovered, provided the best opportunity for their conversion. Nevertheless, linguistic barriers largely hindered the progression of Orientalism subsequent to this inauguration, as there remained few teachers of Oriental languages. Not until the 'birth of language' could Orientalism acquire hegemonic strength. Though codifying Indological displacement of Semitic divinity, however, Said fails to delineate any affirmative or anti-colonial genre in Orientalist discourse of the *Upanisad*s, documents of the Sanskrit-speaking families that debunked the Semites.

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community led by the legendary king John." Von Stietencron compares the zealous search for lost Christians to the European search for spices. Moreover, some were indeed discovered on the Malabar coast and severely punished for their deviant practice of Syrian rites. However, amongst and aside from this small group of backsliders, "the majority of the inhabitants of India were found to be heathens and designated by the current words for heathen: Latin *gentiles*, Portuguese *gentio*; and later by the latters anglicised form *gentoo*..." von Stietencron (1989), ibid., p. 12.

[384] As Marshall and Williams admit, "in spite of nearly a hundred years of continuous trading contact with India, English readers who were curious about the Hindus at the end of the seventeenth century would have found little of substance in their own language." Marshall and Williams (1982), ibid., p. 19.

[385] Cf. "An ancient Asian people who had not been converted to Islam presumably kept alive the heathen doctrines of the gentiles against whom the Jews of the Old Testament had battled. The idolatry which had fascinated and appalled the Jews seemed to be preserved in the Hindu pantheon so luxuriously portrayed in temples. An early seventeenth-century traveller saw Hindus as "naturally descended from the Gentiles." To a later writer they were "indeed the ancient Gentiles,...the seed of those who revolted from Moses, forgetting God to worship a molten calf." The common term for Hindu remained Gentile or sometimes Gentoo." Marshall and Williams (1982), ibid., p. 19.

[386] von Stietencron (1989), ibid., p. 13.

[387] Said (1979), ibid., pp. 49-50.

One of the more central arguments for Said, rather, is precisely this: "the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures."[388] Orientalist hegemony is thus primarily focused upon the dominant ideology of European superiority. In effect, Said has *essentialized* the 'West': "there is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European society over Oriental backwardness, usually overriding the possibility that a more independent, or more skeptical, thinker might have had different views on the matter."[389] This is an astonishing claim to make, especially in the light of the Romanticist origins of Indology. The founding fathers of this disciplinary branch of philology were convinced that an understanding of the Vedas would reveal knowledge of the 'original', or 'natural' religion practiced by Western man himself:

> The amazing thing about the earliest of the Vedas was the 'discovery' that they had been preserved and transmitted intact as oral texts since the time of Aryan settlement in India (1500 BC). They were not only the oldest texts from India and the most authoritative in its religious tradition—that would not have had too much appeal—they were the oldest religious texts of the Aryans, of both the Europeans and the Indians, older than the Bible itself. To edit and translate these texts using the methods of the new science of comparative philology would, thus, lay bare not simply the origins of Indian religion, but reveal the beliefs of man at his moment of origin, the 'natural' religion people practiced before they lived in cities.[390]

Though Ronald Inden is correct to stress the overwhelming results that philologists thought their scientific trade would yield, it is misleading to suggest that Indologists believed their discoveries would lead to knowledge of the origins of Indian religion. Concomitant with Orientalist translation of the Vedas, the 'scripture' of 'Aryanism' or 'Vedism', was the suspicion that any knowledge derived from these documents had been lost and that the origins of the Indian religion now stumbled upon, variously taxonomized as 'Hinduism' or 'Brahmanism', lie elsewhere, particularly in indigenous remnants of the pre-Aryan past and imaginative practices stemming from post-Vedic civilization.

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[388] Said (1979), ibid., p. 7.
[389] Said (1979), ibid., p. 7.
[390] Inden (1990), ibid., p. 98.

In his attempt to discover 'hegemonic texts' of Indology, Inden traces the binary opposition of 'high' speculative philosophy and 'low' village cults, an ideological conceptualization indebted to the Utilitarian journalist James Mill's (1773-1836) hegemonic periodization of Indian history, to Horace Hayman Wilson's (1789-1860) account of 'sects' within 'Hinduism.'[391] Wilson, a British Indologist installed as Great Britain's first university professor of Sanskrit in 1832, occupied a chair at Oxford which had been established by James Boden in 1827 in order to translate the Bible into Sanskrit.[392] According to Inden, Wilson established a hegemonic divide of pre-colonial Indian thought between sects which peddle 'practical and popular belief' and autonomous free-thinking individuals who reflect and contemplate upon 'speculative or philosophical doctrines.'[393] It is obvious that Wilson's conceptualization of Indian thought has exercised a considerable influence upon subsequent Indologists.

For instance, if we turn to Wilson's successor, or 'hegemonic heir', the Christian idealist Monier Monier-Williams, we discover similar conceptions. Distinguishing 'Brahmanism' from an array of cultural practices and beliefs discovered by Indologists in British India, Monier-Williams entered a debate which would be contested throughout the nineteenth century, until finally resolved with the assistance of new Indian reform movements. No doubt relying upon Wilson's characterization of the 'few' contemplatives credited as the founding fathers of the 'six schools' of 'orthodox' Indian philosophy, Monier-Williams went even further and forged a new class of autonomous Indians, a group of revolutionary rationalists who appear conspicuously similar to the free-thinking egalitarian and Christian idealists of his own era.

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[391] Inden (1999), ibid., p. 97.

[392] Thomas Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 188.

[393] As an example of Wilson's contributions, Inden quotes the Indological construction of Indian philosophers as an elite mystery cult of meditating rationalists who tried earnestly, if not fruitfully, to come to terms with 'man and nature': "whilst the common people addressed their hopes and fears to the stocks and stones, and multiplied by their credulity and superstition the grotesque objects of their veneration, some few, of deeper thought and wider contemplation, plunged into the mysteries of man and nature, endeavoured assiduously, if not successfully, to obtain just notions of the cause, character and consequence of existence." Horace Hayman Wilson, Sketch of the Religious Sects of Indian (Calcutta: Bishop's College Press, 1846), p. 1, cited in Inden (1990), ibid., p. 97. As Inden notes, "the 'few' were the adherents of the six 'schools of philosophy' (*darsana*), while the many were the worshippers of different divinities separated into distinct 'associations." (p. 97).

Concerning his ancient Indian counterparts, upon whose intuitions the philosophy of Vedanta is based, Monier-Williams notes, "besides the orthodox and besides the sectarian Hindu and besides the great demon-worshipping, idolatrous, and superstitious majority, another class of the Indian community must also be taken into account—the class of rationalists and free-thinkers."[394] Lest these free-thinkers appear as common stock of India, Monier-Williams offers an analysis which would need to be inverted and revalorized by Indian nationalists in the later parts of the nineteenth century:

> Then again it must always be borne in mind that the terms 'orthodox' and 'unorthodox' have really little or no application to the greater majority of the inhabitants of India, who in truth are wholly innocent of any theological opinions at all, and are far too apathetic to trouble themselves about any form of religion other than that which has belonged for centuries to their families and to the localities in which they live, and far too ignorant and dull of intellect to be capable of inquiring for themselves whether that religion is likely true or false.[395]

It is in this context that we may appreciate the power of Monier-Williams's free-thinkers. While these figures are not classified as either orthodox or heretical rationalists, they are certainly not considered 'ignorant' or 'dull of intellect.' Due to their curiosity concerning a range of metaphysical queries, they may even be credited with nothing less than the very establishment of Vedanta: "it was in the effort to solve such insoluble enigmas by their own unaided intuitions and in a manner not too subversive of traditional dogma, that the systems of philosophy founded on the Upanisads originated."[396] These men supposedly accomplished this feat entirely through their intuition and self-evolved knowledge, totally independent of Vedic rituals and priests.

These free-thinkers are all the more surprising, since "...the tendency to run into extremes has always been greater on Indian soil and beneath the glow and glamour of Eastern skies."[397] For instance, "...a far more unthinking respect than in any other country has been paid to the authority of priests, who have declared their supernatural

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[394] M. Monier-Williams, *Buddhism In its Connexion with Brahmanism and Hinduism and in its Contrast with Christianity* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1995), p. 5.
[395] Monier-Williams (1995), ibid., p. 5.
[396] Monier-Williams (1995), ibid., p. 6.
[397] Monier-Williams (1995), ibid., p. 7.

revelation to be the very breath of God..."[398] The Upanisads, emerging from God as effortlessly as the exhalation of one's breath, according to Sankara, are eternally composed in the same linguistic form and manifest in the mind of God before being revealed to *rsi*s of the current world-cycle in which they have been preserved.[399] Clearly, Sankara understood himself to be a participant in an uninterrupted teacher-student succession initiated with the Vedic revelation.[400] Once the Upanisads are colonized in the privatized sphere of modernity, however, one is faced with an ideological, even aesthetic, dilemma: the 'origins' of 'Vedanta'. For Monier-Williams the Vedas are a form of physiolatry, or ritualism and sacrifice of personified forms of nature whose creeds range from asceticism, polytheism, monotheism, to the lowest types of animism and fetishism. Vedanta, on the other hand, is a product of Indian free-thinkers and their unaided intuition. Origin quests preoccupied many in the aftermath of Indo-European philology, but since Indians view the Upanisads as revealed authority the adventure I wish to narrate is one that may imagine the transformation of Indology.

In order to more successfully manage the non-Muslim subcontinental heathens, Indologists focused their attention on the Veda, no doubt, but they also liked to translate and study random Indian texts, such as various heterodox doctrines and Brahmanical *smrti*s. This interest is reflected in Indological classifications of Indian religion

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[398] Monier-Williams (1995), ibid., p. 7.

[399] BR.U. 2.4.10., BR.U.B. 2.4.10, p. 251. B.S.B. 1.3.28. The late Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, Sankaracarya of Kanchipuram also holds this view: "The point to note here is that even God is not said to have brought the Vedas into existence. It would be incorrect to say that we created our own breath. It exists from the time we started existing. So are Iswara and the Vedas. Even He cannot be said to have created them. They have always existed together." Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, *The Vedas* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1991), p. 6.

[400] For Sankara, the Veda, projected as speech, commence the teaching tradition: "And even this projection of speech is to be understood in the sense of starting of a cycle of transmission through a line of teachers and students; for no other kind of projection is possible for the Vedas which are without any beginning and end." B.S.B. 1.3.28. See Sankaracarya, Brahma-Sutra-Bhasya of Sri Sankaracarya, Translated by Swami Gambhirananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1965), p. 210. As a yardstick with which to measure other spurious claims, historians of the 'authorship problem' suggest that we define Sankara as the historic figure who produced the *Brahmasutrabhasya*. From the first discovery and translation of Sankara's *Brahmasutrabhasya* into English, however, Indologists have understood this commentary as transcripts of an oral teaching tradition, as Max Mueller explains: "by the side of these Sutras, however, there must have always existed a body of oral teaching, and it was probably this traditional teaching which was gathered up at last by Sankara, the famous teacher of Vedanta, in his so-called commentary or Bhashya on the Sutras. That Bhashya, however, so far from being a mere commentary may in fact be regarded as the real body of the Vedanta doctrines, to which the Sutras form no more then a useful index" (Mueller). This method of transmission creates difficulty for philologists who explain the teaching tradition with textual analysis.

throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. It may be noted that during this time the rationalist and Eurocentric conceptions of Indology, as provided by scholars such as Wilson and Monier-Williams, were also contested by more sympathetic observers, Romantics, and philosophical idealists.[401] In the course of these debates there emerged a new model of Indian religion. Indologists soon distinguished a religion called 'Brahmanism' from within the larger mass of 'Hinduism:

> Vedic religion, when it came to be explored with great enthusiasm, was taken to be something different, more pure, less overgrown by the jungle of superstition. And between the Vedas and Hinduism some scholars placed "Brahmanism" as a religion marked by priestly speculation and priestly dominance, a religion that found expression in the Brahmanas, the Upanisads, the Sutras, and Smrtis.[402]

It is in the realm of this power struggle that we may appreciate the significance of Louis Renou's conceptualization of Aryanism, or Vedism. As may be recalled in reference to Renou's classificatory scheme, new religious movements following the Upanisads, specifically Vaisnava ideology and cultic practices surrounding the Bhagavad Gita, constitute 'Hinduism'. It is unclear why an earlier generation of Indologists constructed 'Brahmanism' with various *sutras* and *smrtis*. However, if we recall their "ideal Brahman" we may find a clue.[403] The overwhelming esteem with which Indologists and Indian reform movements of the 19th and 20th centuries held Sankara may help explain why 'Brahmanism' was constructed in such a way so as to include various Brahmanical *sutras*, as well as implicate a *smrti* text (the Bhagavad Gita) in the colonial episteme of British India.[404] While Renou's model of Aryanism allows for greater understanding of

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[401] Inden (1999), ibid., p. 97.
[402] von Stietencron (1989), ibid., p. 13.
[403] Inden (1999), ibid., pp. 105-108.
[404] Cf. "This new *episteme* created a conceptual space in the form of a rising perception that 'Hinduism' had become a corrupt shadow of its former self (which was now located in certain key sacred texts such as the Vedas, the Upanisads and the Bhagavad Gita—all taken to provide an unproblematic account of ancient Hindu religiosity). The perceived shortcomings of contemporary 'Hinduism' in comparison to the ideal form, as represented in the text, thus created the belief (among both Westerners and Indians) that Hindu religion had stagnated over the centuries and was therefore in need of reformation. The gap between original (ideal) 'Hinduism' and the contemporary beliefs and practices of Hindus was soon filled, of course, by the rise of what have become known as 'Hindu reform movements' in the nineteenth century—groups such as the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Ramakrsna Mission." King (1999b), ibid., pp. 105-106.

the structure and transformation of Indian religion than such Orientalist and indigenous Brahmanical conceptions, his contributions were soon forgotten.

Throughout the nineteenth century 'Hinduism' continued to be employed as a category of analysis which served to classify and subsume a diverse array of texts and practices including the Epics and Puranas, "sectarian" Agamas and Tantras, local traditions and customs, the devotional approach of *bhakti*, and the worship of sacred images in daily ritual. In contrast, scholars distinguished 'Brahmanism' as a philosophy, or religion, based upon the Brahmanas, Upanisads, Sutras, and Smrtis. Nevertheless, in spite of the disciplinary power of Indology and the desire to manage their Indian subjects differently, the bridge between Brahmanism and Hinduism was soon constructed:

> But the strong emphasis placed on the Vedic and Vedantic heritage by the Neo-Hinduistic reform movements in the second half of the 19th century and in the 20th century...could not remain without impact on the scholarly terminology. Therefore, in the 20th century, "Hinduism" gradually came to encompass Brahmanism and Vedic religion as well.[405]

What this points to, then, is the agency of colonized Indians and their power to reverse the disciplinary procedures of Orientalism. In their desire to liberate India from colonial rule and domination it was necessary for Indians to form some sort of consensus, the basis of which was provided through new religious movements which sought to unify the mass of belief systems on the subcontinent. What has emerged from this, however, is not scholarship focused upon discourse analysis of nationalism or power-knowledge relations, but submission to agents of the Indian renaissance.

The fact that modern Indians display such a variety of eclectic beliefs and superstitious practices led Indologists to incorporate their earlier analytic distinctions into the overarching framework of 'Hinduism.' The strength of Indian agency may be illustrated by the fact that contemporary scholarship of Indian religion has now totally abandoned earlier models such as Aryanism, Vedism, and Brahmanism. There is reason to argue for the intelligence of this approach, as there may seem little use for reconstructing ideal

[405] von Stietencron (1989), ibid., p. 13.

textual typologies in the light of the contrasts witnessed in contemporary Indian religion. The point I wish to argue, however, is that postcolonial studies of Indian religion which only recognize the colonial authority and power of the dominant apparatus fail to appreciate the fact that where there is power there is resistance.

While Said's analysis of Orientalism is limited to the 'Middle East', recent theorists have portrayed Indology as a discipline of knowledge violently imposed on Indians. The irony of such critiques is that they effectively subvert Indian self-understanding and depend upon imperial authority. For instance, Ronald Inden explores Said's thesis in relation to Indian studies and seeks to "open up the closed unitary world that academic discourses have helped to manufacture with their Eurocentric world histories."[406] In short, Inden is afraid that, through Indological (or Orientalist) studies and accounts of India (i.e. the 'Orient') since the post-Enlightenment age of imperialism, 'agency' has been stripped from Indians (Orientals) and their institutions. To focus his critique, Inden analyzes the 'Indological branch' of Orientalist discourse and explicitly states that he wants to make possible studies of 'ancient' India that serve to 'restore' the agency that previous histories have stripped from its peoples and institutions.[407]

It is to Inden's credit, however, that he recognizes an alternative discourse within Orientalism, one more sympathetic or affirmative, which he describes as the 'loyal opposition.'[408] Orientalism, now viewed as a 'discursive formation', is a regime of

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[406] Inden (1999), ibid., p. 1.

[407] Elsewhere Inden asserts that, thanks to the efforts of an elite 'Subaltern Studies Collective' of mostly diaspora Indians concerned with the history of the 'Indian people', "...Indians are, for perhaps the first time since colonization, showing sustained signs of reappropriating the capacity to represent themselves..." Ronald Inden, 'Orientalist Constructions of India,' in *Modern Asian Studies*, 20.3, 1986, pp. 401-446; 445. As such, it was left to a spokesman for the group to confess that this congratulation was "gratifying but premature." Inden's praise of this 'Indian' scholarship is no doubt problematic, as Dipesh Chakrabarty notes concerning the "messy problems of identity" inherent in our global transnational context, "...passports and commitments blur the distinctions of ethnicity in a manner that some would regard as characteristically postmodern." Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for "Indian" Pasts?' in Representations, 37, 1992, pp.1-26; 1. Clearly, the voice of bourgeois Indians is harmonized with the discourse of Orientalism. Inden's Orientalist conceptualization provides a corrective lens through which to view affirmative narratives undetected by Said, but in our attempt to analyze the discourses intermingling with the disciplinary societies wherein the Upanisads are reterritorialized we must move beyond his generalizations.

[408] This is Inden's name for the Romantic interpretations of India. See Inden (1999), ibid., pp. 66-69. As King notes, "simplistically speaking, we can speak of two forms of Orientalist discourse, the first, generally

"interrelating discourses, now converging, now diverging."[409] More striking, albeit ironic: "Indology was as a discipline not merely reflective but agentive; it actually fashioned the ontological space that a British Indian empire occupied. Its leaders would, as had others before them beginning with the Aryans, inject the rational intellect and world-ordering will that the Indians themselves could not provide."[410] The power of Indology codifies Orientalist hegemony, but in return Indian nationalists give rise to Hindu agency.

As such, while deploying Said's thesis in an Indian context we must further clarify Antonio Gramsci's formulation of 'consent'; it is only upon doing so that we may understand the 'passive revolution' of Orientalist hegemony and the discourse of Hinduism. In Said's understanding of hegemony as a configuration of force and domination, in fact, the indispensable novelty with which Gramsci employed this concept has been lost.[411] Hegemony functions precisely to the extent it creates national consensus

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antagonistic and confident in European superiority, the second, generally affirmative, enthusiastic and suggestive of Indian superiority in certain key areas. Both forms of Orientalism, however, make essentialist judgments that foster an overly simplistic and homogenous conception of Indian culture." King (1999b), ibid., p. 116. See also J.J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought* (NY: Routledge, 1997).

[409] Inden (1999), ibid., p. 20.

[410] Inden (1999), ibid., p. 128.

[411] This point may be illustrated with Said's analysis of the configuration of power, which he describes as 'force,' surrounding Gustave Flaubert's (1821-1880) possession of Kuchuk Hanem during his travels in Egypt. With Flaubert's encounter, Said detects a typical pattern of Orientalist discourse: "there is very little consent to be found, for example, in the fact that Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan produced a widely influential model of the Oriental woman; she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence or history. He spoke for and represented her…these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was "typically Oriental." Said's argument, moreover, is that "Flaubert's situation of strength in relation to Kuchuk Hanem was not an isolated instance. It fairly stands for the pattern of relative strength between East and West, and the discourse about the Orient that it enabled." It is remarkable that Said has found the Gramscian concept of hegemony expedient in his account of the analogues of Orientalism. The ambiguity of Said's argument cannot be resolved with his summary of the power relations of Flaubert and Kuchuk Hanem: "it is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and strength I have been speaking about so far." In Flaubert's domination of Kuchuk Hanem and the countless confrontations this narrative serves to represent, it is significant that Said has discovered "very little consent." Said (1979), ibid., p. 6. In contrast to the force of Orientalism, Feminist theorist Christine Buci-Glucksmann forcefully argues: "we must not be trapped by words: hegemony is not force, and the more the element of force dominates, the less hegemony there will be. In the strict sense, the hegemony of a class is not imposed: it is conquered through a specific intellectual and moral dimension, through a politics of alliances which must open up a national perspective to the whole of society." Buci-Glucksmann notes that all models of 'consent' or 'consensus' prior to Gramsci are limited to a dual struggle of laws and force reminiscent of the Centaur of Machiavelli's *Prince*: "in Western political thought consent is traditionally defined in two ways: either consent creates force and refers to a civil society made up of isolated individuals who 'give' their consent (mystifying the relations of exploitation and power in

in opposition to force and ideological coercion. More importantly, Said's preoccupation with the force of Orientalist ideology has ironically resulted in his failure to grasp the significance of Gramsci's analysis of subaltern power and bourgeoisie elitism.

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci describes hegemony as a political strategy capable of being exercised with 'active consent' for subaltern revolution. It is only in this sense that hegemony functions for the subaltern as a "war of position," as opposed to a "war of manoeuvre."[412] As Gramsci's primary political strategy, or *war of position*, hegemony requires both national unity and active consent of the populace.[413] Bourgeoisie hegemony is weakened during the epoch of imperialism and subalterns are placed in a strategic position, as Gramsci notes concerning the context created as a result of the colonial expansion of capitalism "cracks opened up everywhere in the hegemonic apparatus and the exercise of hegemony became permanently difficult and aleatory."[414] Indeed in British India hegemony is a gamble of revolution and reform.[415]

To set the stakes of this charade, it is important to understand that Gramsci theorized the reorganization of capitalism during the colonial era in terms of the bourgeoisie

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capitalist societies); or force creates consent by laws, norms, ideological values and forms of legitimation of power (leading to an underestimation of rights and liberties)." Christine Buci-Glucksmann, 'Hegemony and Consent" A Political Strategy,' in Anne Showstack Sassoon (ed) *Approaches to Gramsci* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society, 1982), pp. 116-126; 117; 120. Failure to recognize Gramsci's contributions and the tendency to place his ideas within either the context of Marxist views of consent as "false ideology" or Weberian ideas related to consent as the legitimation of pre-existing social orders, leads to a misunderstanding of hegemony and its use as a political strategy.

[412] Clearly, Said does not consider Orientalist hegemony in relation to any war of position which may have been assumed by his passive Orientals but, as Gramsci notes, "the war of position, in politics, is the concept of hegemony." See Giuseppe Vaca, 'Intellectuals and the Marxist Theory of the State,' in Anne Showstack Sassoon (ed) *Approaches to Gramsci* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society, 1982), pp. 37-70; 45.

[413] As Buci-Glucksmann explains, "Hegemony is primarily a strategy for the gaining of the active consent of the masses through their self-organization…in all the hegemonic apparatuses…[a]nd this has the aim of creating a collective political will, at once national and popular…" Buci-Glucksmann (1982), ibid., p. 119.

[414] Buci-Glucksmann (1982), ibid., p. 125.

[415] As Sassoon explains, it is just this imbalance of power that leads the bourgeoisie to commence their movements of reform: "As masses of people become organized economically and politically, as capitalism reorganizes itself in the period of imperialism, there is the potential for the first time in history of masses becoming the protagonists of a social transformation. Therefore…reforms which provide a concrete basis for the consent of the majority must be part of an attempt by the bourgeoisie to prevent its adversary…from developing an alternative hegemony." Anne Showstack Sassoon, 'Passive Revolution and the Politics of Reform,' in Anne Showstack Sassoon (ed) *Approaches to Gramsci* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society, 1982), pp. 127-148; 134

procedures of 'passive revolution', as derived from the conservative tradition of the British liberal Edmund Burke (1729-1797). Analyzing Gramsci's early pre-prison writings and his 1919-1920 editorials in *Ordine Nuovo*, a socialist newspaper which later became a daily of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), Anne Showstack Sassoon notes: "Gramsci develops the concept of passive revolution in order to take account of the phenomenon whereby a dominant class maintains its power by promoting its adversary's weakness."[416] The control of hegemony is dependent upon the exploitation of a rival societies inferior "character and way of life," as well as the preservation of this weakness.

If the significance of the colonial encounter lies in the fact that it is a network of power relations whereby bourgeoisie hegemony is thrown out of balance, then, it is more important to understand that "the passive revolution is in fact a technique which the bourgeoisie attempts to adopt when its hegemony is threatened in any way."[417] The importance of passive revolution for Gramsci is that bourgeoisie control 'reforms' society in a historic bloc of hegemonic and subaltern social relations that are non-threatening and insusceptible to revolutionary resistance.[418] In a colonial context, a pivotal moment when capitalist regimes confront severe crisis, 'reform' movements initiated by the bourgeoisie effectively silence would-be revolutionaries, as Sassoon notes of this so-called revolution, "the 'passive' aspect consists in preventing the development of a revolutionary adversary by 'decapitating' its revolutionary potential."[419] Passive revolutions indeed 'change' or, more specifically, 'reform' society, but what is important to note is that in this process bourgeoisie hegemony is preserved through a consensual alliance and exploitation of subaltern weakness, or passivity.

Once cultural conditions are reconfigured by a phase of colonial expansion, nationalism must cement consensus at a national level. What is needed for equilibrium, consensus, or

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[416] Sassoon (1982), ibid., p. 130.
[417] Sassoon (1982), ibid., p. 133.
[418] While passive revolution signifies a socio-cultural process which serves to maintain bourgeoisie ideology, it is also an analytical category or "...conceptual tool to differentiate between forms of politics which simply reproduce the traditional division between leaders and led...or, in Gramsci's terms, between reformist and revolutionary politics." Sassoon (1982), ibid., p. 130.
[419] Sassoon (1982), ibid., p. 133.

balance, Gramsci tells us, is a national feeling of nationhood.[420] Once this situation is created, relating hegemony to an analysis of the relationship between rulers and ruled, Gramsci notes that consent may be either *passive and indirect* or *active and direct*. Passive consent excludes any intervention from the base and the State "instrumentalizes consent and treats the masses as 'masses for manoeuvre.' Active consent, on the other hand, "requires a real interchange between rulers and ruled."[421] To relate this analysis to our concerns we must locate the politics of revolution and reform in British India. In this colonial context we may understand what appeared threatening to British rule, thus most susceptible to bourgeois reformation, or passive revolution.

In his *Speech on Fox's East India Bill* (1783), a bill executed by Burke himself and passed by the House of Commons as a draft of power leading the reformation of imperial policy and subordination of the East India Company to Parliamentary authority, the 'way of life' of the Indian masses are clearly defined in relation to the 'complicated nature' of successfully managing, or 'handling', these heathens: "all this vast mass, composed of so many orders and classes of men, is again infinitely diversified by manners, by religion, by hereditary employment, through all their possible combinations. This renders the handling of India a matter in a high degree critical and delicate."[422] What Burke's speech suggests is also what is widely known of the politics of empire in colonial India: the prospects for social unification were dependent upon consent and manipulation. In this context, Indians are rendered susceptible to colonial power-knowledge relations:

> The lack of an orthodoxy, of an ecclesiastical structure, or indeed of any distinctive feature that might point to the postulation of a single Hindu religion, was dismissed, and one consequence of this was the tendency to portray 'Hinduism' as a contradictory religion, which required some form of organization along ecclesiastical and doctrinal lines and a purging of 'superstitious' elements with the 'high' culture of 'Hinduism'[423]

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[420] Buci-Glucksmann (1982), ibid., p. 124.
[421] Buci-Glucksmann (1982), ibid., p. 118-119.
[422] Edmund Burke, 'Speech on Fox's East India Bill (1783),' in David Bromwich (ed), *On Empire, Liberty, and Reform: Speeches and Letters of Edmund Burke* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 296.
[423] King (1999b), ibid., p. 105.

Of course, it hardly needs mentioning that 'Vedanta' provided the necessary means to fortify the Indian nation. As is widely known, in their nationalist struggle for solidarity, Indians themselves sought to unify the mass array of beliefs and practices of the subcontinent, in the course of which, for various reasons, they found opportunity to appropriate the highly ingenious Orientalist discourse of Vedanta.[424] The matter of contention lies with the consent invested in this discursive formation.

An early analysis of this discourse provided by Niranjan Dhar (1977) argues that Vedanta was first codified as the essence of Indian thought based on Orientalist presuppositions of monotheism.[425] More recently, Richard King correctly disputes this thesis and argues that Dhar is misguided in his attempt to locate a single hegemonic authority, specifically the Indologist Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1765-1837), to account for a discourse that clearly has wider structural implications bound in a network of power generated well before the establishment of the College at Fort William, an institution founded in Bengal by Lord Wellesley in 1800, within whose Department of Sanskrit Vedanta was 'discovered'. Rather, Orientalist interest in Vedanta has reigned from the birth of Indology onwards, beginning with William Jones. Moreover, in terms of the politics of reverse colonialism and the maintenance of hegemony, it is important to understand the role played by Indians and the Hindu transmission of this bourgeoisie configuration.[426]

While raising the question of the inevitability of Orientalism ("the act of 'plundering' or 'colonization'") in light of the ideological nature of the academic study of Indian religion, King connects the 'post-structuralist agenda' of deconstructing the essentialist 'myth of homogeneity' to the field of power where claims of transcendence are offered. King's

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[424] Cf. "From the perspective of the Hindu intellectual, searching for a unifying banner in an anti-colonial struggle for home rule (*swaraj*), the discourse of Vedanta provided a centralizing ideology around which Hindus might rally as well as providing an established indigenous and highly intellectual Hindu theology which might aid, through a national system of education, in the promotion of a sense of a unified, national identity." King (1999b), ibid., p. 134.

[425] Niranjan Dhar, *Vedanta and the Bengal Renaissance* (Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1977).

[426] Cf. "It seems more appropriate, therefore, to point to a confluence of interests which allowed the 'discovery' of Vedanta to come to the fore and remain largely uncontested into the twentieth century. Hindu reformers such as Rammohun Roy followed Orientalists such as Jones and Colebrooke in identifying Vedanta as the central philosophy of the Hindus, seeing this as an overarching theological framework for organizing the confusing diversity of Hindu religiosity." King (1999b), ibid., p. 132.

critique is centered upon two interrelated regimes of power: one involves appropriation of 'religion' by adherents of Indian traditions, another disciplines religious studies with theoretical models of 'world religion'; both are charged with aiding and abetting universalism, an offense against the heterogeneity of human religiosity, but also credited as modes of resistance to the social control of religious institutions.

Though he points toward "Augustine's distinction between the historical Church and the timeless, 'true' Church" in *The City of God* as an early attempt to forge the "transcendental and ahistorical nature of the Christian message", King's main focus is upon the post-Enlightenment universalization of 'religion' and the way in which this discourse served to empower modern Indians.[427] Accordingly, Indian intellectuals influenced by the Christian message of universal salvation appropriated 'Hinduism' in a manner similar to the way in which Augustine manipulated the socio-historic foundation of the Christian Church, that is, as an attempt to promote their own "essentialistic and universalizing self-image."[428] The Orientalist construction of 'Hinduism' was appropriated for anti-colonial resistance and provided an effective means whereby the deeply engrained inferiority complex of Indians could be overthrown.[429] While I cannot displace the long established inferiority complex of Indians what should be emphasized is how 'Hinduism' could possibly provide any means of self-affirmation.

Of course, the fact that colonially enslaved Indians might have a wounded ego of sorts is understandable. Not only had their country been taken over by an imperial regime of Europeans, the administrators and scholars of this network of power were often derogatory in their assessment of Indian culture. As we have already witnessed with the work of early Indologists such as Monier-Williams, the Orientalist portrayal of Indian forms of life was oftentimes judgmental and hierarchical. Indeed for Said the idea of European superiority was the central element of Orientalist discourse. In such a context, the more interesting question becomes how, then, could Hinduism serve as a means of affirmation for nineteenth century Indians? Concerning the early European encounter

[427] King (1999b), ibid., p. 69.
[428] King (1999b), ibid., p. 69.
[429] King (1999b), ibid., p. 136.

with the raw materials of this construction, Peter Marshal correctly notes that "even if some intellectual curiosity about Hinduism was aroused, the attitude of the great mass of Europeans who came into contact with it was always either ridicule or disgust."[430] Later theologians looking for universal elements of some 'natural' religion were more sympathetic, but ever since Protestants began to project their prejudices onto the peoples they colonized Indians have been more than willing to fulfill their fantasies.[431]

Now, my point is not that Indians were passive recipients of colonial power which led them to be re-produced in the image of their colonizers. As I have suggested, the Indian appropriation of Hinduism provided a means of consensus which could be applied in their struggle for home rule (*swaraj*) and national freedom from imperial authority. On the other hand, it should also be emphasized that even when Orientalists exercised their superior judgments, these were often accompanied by important qualifications which recognized certain elite figures and aspects of Indian culture. Through projecting their own concerns onto an Indian context, Indologists such as Monier-Williams were able to praise, or affirm, rationalist and free-thinkers such as those speculative revolutionaries equated with the founders of Vedanta.

One of the more important factors to remember about the Orientalist affirmation of Indian culture is that in this process one witnesses both the projection of European domestic concerns onto Indian thought as well as the purging of 'superstitious' elements in a move towards the more respected 'high' culture of Brahmanical institutions. Of course, by virtue of their colonial status the Indian people *were* subaltern.[432] Nevertheless, through such colonial alliances as witnessed in Orientalist praise of Brahmanical thought one can more specifically analyze the power-knowledge relations that appear to be at work in the realms of British India. More specifically, the Indian response to these polemics provides

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[430] Peter Marshall, *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 20.

[431] Cf. "As Europeans have always tended to do, they created Hinduism in their own image…Their study of Hinduism confirmed their beliefs, and Hindus emerged from their work as adhering to something akin to undogmatic Protestantism. Later Europeans, interested themselves in mysticism, were able to portray the Hindus as mystics." Marshall (1970), ibid., pp. 43-44.

[432] Guha and Spivak (1988), ibid., p. vii.

us with a clear example of 'active-direct' consent.

Not simply organizing their subjects as *masses for manoeuvre*, in this context Indians were placed in a *war of position*, a strategic position that required both national unity and active consent of the populace. As a result, certain key figures of the rising middle-class Indian intelligentsia sought to strategically engage what would now seem to be important groups in the segmentation of Indian *subalterneity*.[433] If it was the Brahmanical strands of religion which Orientalists thought might best serve to preserve their control of hegemony, through rationalist and humanistic interpretations of certain Brahmanical texts, then this passive revolution would depend upon an exploitation of subaltern weakness, or Indian forms of religion engaged in superstitious animism, fetishism, etc., as practiced by the idolatrous demon-worshipping majority. The failure of middle-class Indian nationalists to garner the active consent of the subaltern is starkly demonstrated in spite of the achievement of India's independence from colonial control.

For example, without the guidance of their colonial masters, notice the reasons Swami Chinmayananda was propelled to conduct "sacrifices of learning" (*jnana-yajnas*) throughout India:

> The *jnana-yajna* movement was launched at a time when Hinduism was passing through a decadent phase. India had achieved independence in 1947 after a prolonged rule by a foreign power. This had left the masses without any sense of direction or goal. The ethical and moral fibre of the country had undergone severe strain. Conditions were thus ripe for a revivalist movement.[434]

According to Chinmayananda's hagiographers it was a five-month sojourn across the Indian subcontinent that convinced the saint that 'the people on the plains' were in dire

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[433] For instance, as King notes in reference to a twentieth century politician who struggled in vain to teach his fellow countrymen what he had read about Vedanta: "Radhakrishnan was well aware of the problems of reconciling the 'mystical core' of Vedantic Hinduism with the variegated realities of Hindu belief and practice, particularly at the 'popular' (or subaltern) level, and it is at this point that we see his underlying concern to educate the masses in the philosophy of Vedanta as a part of a national programme of 'consciousness-raising' within India." King (1999b), ibid., p. 135.

[434] Swami Chidananda and Rukmani Ramani, *Call of the Conch: The History of the Chinmaya Movement* (Mumbai: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 2001), p. 12.

need of knowledge of the rich Hindu scriptures.[435] In addition to the Utilitarian, Christian, and deist concepts imposed upon Indian thought, however, it is also important to understand the extent to which Orientalist discourse of Indian religion was guided by Romanticist and idealist interests in spirituality and 'mysticism.' It is true that stereotypes of 'mystic India' have not always been cast with sympathy,[436] but I wish to suggest that the therapeutic elements of Orientalism emerge as this affirmative discourse gains hegemonic strength through the ideological scope of Romanticism and perennialist approaches to philosophy and religion. Similar to the condemnation of Indian traditions and the complex of inferiority thereby entailed, the praise of Indian spirituality empowered and influenced the self-image of Indian revivalists.[437]

The importance of affirmative Orientalism is not simply that it provided a salve to the wounded Indian ego, tarnished by centuries of Christian polemic. We must understand that it was often the Upanisads that were focused upon for the mystical aspects of Indian religion.[438] This understanding also involves recognition of the fact that the translation and interpretation of the Vedas was central to the emerging discipline of religious studies.[439] The comparative approach expressed with the growth of the 'science of religion' creates another issue, as may be discerned in the work of Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900), the German philologist and Oxford professor who gave the name

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[435] Chidananda and Ramani (2001), p. 9.

[436] As King notes, "given Protestant distrust of the 'mystical' elements of Catholicism, it is also of little surprise to find a tendency to disentangle the 'mystical' from its particular Christian application and reapply this characterization in a pluralistic religious context." When European Romantics join this enterprise, however, we are able to see the ways in which "the association of Indian religion with the 'mystical' was by no means always intended as a critique." King (1999b), ibid., pp. 96-97.

[437] Cf. "What is interesting about the 'mystical' or 'spiritual' emphasis that predominates in the romanticist conception of India is not just that it has become a prevalent theme in contemporary Western images of India, but also that it has exerted a great deal of influence upon the self-awareness of the very Indians that it purports to describe." King (1999b), ibid., pp. 92.

[438] Cf. "There is an increasing tendency, however, from the late eighteenth century onwards to emphasize the 'mystical' nature of Hindu religion by reference to the 'esoteric' literature known as the Vedanta, the end of the Vedas—namely the Upanisads." King (1999b), p. 119.

[439] Cf. "With the possible exception of Jones, they did not try to understand what Hinduism meant to millions of Indians. They invariably made a distinction between 'popular' Hinduism, which they did not deem worthy of study, and 'philosophical' Hinduism, which they tried to define as a set of hard and fast doctrinal propositions and to place in current theories about the nature and history of religion…they believed that certain basic truths and moral principles were common to all religions, although present in their most refined form in Protestant Christianity." Marshall (1970), ibid., p. 43.

Religionswissenschaft to the field of religious studies.[440] For instance, it was Muller's comparative method which led to his failure to gain position as the Boden chair of Sanskrit at Oxford, which as we have noted was reserved in favor of the approach offered by Monier Monier-Williams. Outside the politics of Oxford and the particular bias towards one involved in translating the Bible into Sanskrit, we have already noted the sympathy with which Europeans anticipated the results of Muller's thirty year labor in translating the Rg Veda. While there was lingering resistance to the comparative approach to the study of religion, the success of this emergent discipline is highlighted with the greater acceptance of its liberal, enlightened task of discovering the 'natural' elements purported to be found in all religions of the world.

It is important to understand that this comparative approach to natural religion is merely one factor in the overall hegemony of bourgeois ideology and the search for natural laws, rights, and principles based upon natural reason. With their idea of 'secular' society undergoing enormous change as Euro-Americans dislocated themselves from the totality of Christendom, Orientalists constructed a private realm of religion from which their public markets could be distinguished.[441] Clearly, I am not suggesting that the comparative approach to religion and natural rights were necessarily guided by Romantic or idealist ideology. Nor do I argue that sympathetic feelings underlie Orientalist focus upon Brahmanical strands of Indian religion. With affirmation of the rationalist and intuitive expressions discerned in the free-thinking narratives of autonomous philosophers of Vedanta, Orientalists were preoccupied with many of the same cultural

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[440] Cf. "In the manner of the enlightened liberal intellectuals generally, Muller believed in the universality of religious truth, in the ubiquity of the most somber awareness of 'the Infinite' among all humans." Tomoko Masuzawa, *In Search of Dreamtime: The Quest for the Origin of Religion* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), p. 8.

[441] Concerning the post-Enlightenment transformation of 'religion' from its "traditional" meaning of "something like faith in God or faith in Jesus Christ and in the church and priesthood who serve him", Timothy Fitzgerald notes: "the transformation of meaning has to be understood in the more general context of modern bourgeois ideology and the creation of a world market. Religion was one pole of the religion-secular dichotomy, an old distinction but given quite a different nuance, and the search for (or the invention of) religions in all societies by colonizing Europeans and Americans was proceeding hand in hand with the search for principles of natural rights, laws, and markets. The discovery of religion as either the special repository of traditional values or alternatively a private realm of individual, non-political, otherworldly commitment made possible the construction of a sphere of this-worldly individual freedoms, laws, and markets that were assumed to correspond to natural reason." Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

concerns which were indeed subject to liberal and idealist interpretation. At the moment, however, I simply wish to highlight the extent to which even more critical interpretations of the Upanisads were grounded in the liberal ideology of individualism and the European idea of the enlightened intellectual. The Orientalist value for the role of the mind and natural reason is clearly demonstrated with officer of the East India Company Alexander Dow's critical assessment of Brahmanical hermemeneutics:

> That in any age or country, human reason was ever so depraved as to worship the work of hands, for the creator of the universe, we believe to be an absolute deception, which arose from the vanity of the abettors of particular religious systems. To attentive inquirers into the human mind, it will appear, that common sense, upon the affairs of religion, is pretty equally divided among all nations.[442]

Of course, Dow affirms Orientalist interest in natural religion and the bourgeois idea of egalitarianism and the commonality of human nature. More important, perhaps, is his means of discerning natural religion, namely inquiry into the human mind. It is this path of inquiry that Michel Foucault describes as the European 'adventure.' The European adventure has been traced as a path of individualization generated in the Middle Ages and more recently guided by a range of mental practitioners. Theologians of the 'modern soul' of autonomous individuals are not priestly castes involved in interpretation of Holy Scripture, but those tangled up in "the effects of a certain type of power" and who articulate and wield their "certain type of knowledge" upon a specific field of mental reference, the so-called soul itself: "on this reality-reference, various concepts have been constructed and domains of analysis carved out: psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness, etc."[443] Experts who have as their natural concern the normalization of 'Human Nature' are allied with disciplinary regimes which preside over the human body while investigating the mind and offering reasonable and liberal means of enlightenment for this non-corporeal soul. The relevance of this European cultural debate must be

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[442] Alexander Dow, 'A Dissertation Concerning the Customs, Manners, Language, Religion, and Philosophy of the Hindoos,' in P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 107-139; 139.
[443] Foucault (1977), ibid., pp. 29-30.

placed in the context of the Upanisads and the ways in which they were interpreted and understood, as well as the effects of this approach for Vedanta and bourgeois hegemony.

With the course of this European adventure born in mind we may better understand the implications of bourgeois ideology in the light of later interpreters of the Upanisads who were indeed more interested in investigating this path of internalization but who may not have been caught up in Dow's same critical concerns. The critique offered by Dow is fundamentally concerned with Brahmanical hermeneutics and indigenous ways of interpreting the Vedic traditions. Dow's critique concerns the Brahmanical explanation of what he describes as 'gross idolatry.' Maintaining the common Orientalist distinction between the Brahmanical high culture of philosophical speculation and natural reason, Dow reframes the low culture of superstition and legend in terms of the allegorical inventions of Brahmins. In his study of Brahmanism, Dow remarks that authorities of this religion claim that its two distinct systems of worship arises from the gross ideas of some weak Indian minds. Dow claims that Brahmin priests recognize the existence of one Supreme Being infinite, formless and immaterial in nature, but since weak minds cannot contemplate such a being then Brahmin's have devised and invented all sorts of emblems, symbols, and attributes with which to qualify the one supreme divinity. The vulgar and common Indian is said to revere all the elements and common objects as containing a portion of the one formless 'Brimh.' The Brahmin priests have even invented a thousand names and forms under which to worship this Brimh. Dow says these holy allegories have been transmitted down from antiquity.[444]

While the purifying discrimination of human reason and natural philosophy have served to rid such notions from the minds of many nations, Dow doubts the unaided human mind "...ever involved any nation in gross idolatry, as many ignorant zealots have pretended."[445] It is not that the human mind needs allegorical symbols and attributes to worship the one Brimh. Rather, the Brahmins are accused of abetting their own idolatrous system of religion. It should be emphasized, however, that many Orientalists did not view

[444] Dow (1970), ibid., pp. 137-139.
[445] Dow (1970), ibid., p. 139.

Brahmanical allegorizations as forms of idolatry. Whereas Dow's critique may provide insight into his own feelings about pantheism, animism, etc., it was the allegorical aspects of Indian religion which more sympathetic observers embraced. This is particularly important in the context of meditations and allegories (*upasanas*) of Vedic rituals found in the Upanisads. In a variety of different ways and for a number of reasons, these allegories often served to display either examples or reasons for growing interest in 'spirituality' and non-institutional forms of religion.[446]

As one early example of the idealist wing of Indology we may draw attention to the German philosopher Paul Deussen (1845-1919), whose primary interest in Indian religion lie with the Upanisads. An immediate issue arising from Deussen's approach to the Upanisads concerns the ways in which he sought to classify their philosophical and psychological doctrines as distinct elements abstracted from their narrative style and structure. Deussen's interest in the psychology of the Upanisads demonstrates a unique development from earlier Indological focus upon these texts as examples of philosophical speculation. In his analysis Deussen often uses the phrase 'psychology, or the doctrine of the soul,' and for him these terms are interchangeable.[447] As we shall see, the importance Deussen attributes to psychological investigation and doctrines of the soul (as Deussen translates *atman*) is witnessed in the value and methodology he attributes to the Upanisadic equation of *atman* and *brahman*.

In his discussion of emancipation Deussen declares that when the individual soul knows its identity with Brahman then by that concept the soul becomes the universal spirit. Deussen states that this knowledge of the soul, however, is difficult to obtain since it is not an object that can be placed before us and examined. Scripture, in this regard, is especially useless and is not enough to attain knowledge but may only serve to remove

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[446] Cf. "The texts appealed to the anti-clerical and anti-ritualistic sentiments of many Western intellectuals and proved amenable to abstraction from their own context via an emphasis upon interiority. The allegorization of Vedic ritual found in the Upanisads could be applied to all religious practices and institutions, proving amenable to the growing interest in non-institutionalized forms of 'spirituality.'" King (1999b), ibid., p.

[447] Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanisads* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1979), p. 257. Also see Paul Deussen, *Outline Of The Vedanta System of Philosophy According to Shankara* (London: Luzac & Co., 1906), pp. 27-33.

some of our obstacles. For Deussen, the path of knowledge consists of performing moral ethical works and also practicing meditation.[448] He does not distinguish nor give explanation for the range of terms he uses in this context, such as 'pious meditation,' 'contemplation,' 'sitting meditation,' 'standing meditation' etc. In any case, joint practice of meditations connected with ethical works should be continued until ones death.[449]

In his discussion of the psychology of the Upanisads, Deussen describes Brahman as the cosmical principle and atman is the psychical principle. Taken together, their equation represents the fundamental philosophy of all of the Upanisads.[450] While knowledge of the psychical principle is difficult to obtain, Deussen emphasizes elsewhere, the key may only be found by journeying inward to our innermost self. He asserts that it was only through plunging inward to their inmost individual being that the original thinkers of the Upanisads first discovered the truth of this equation.[451] For our purposes, however, two of the more important points to be noted in reference to Deussen's approach concern his attempt to extract these doctrines from the Upanisads and reapply them in a universal context as a model for mankind, as well as his praise for Indian thought. These issues share a peculiar relation in that his, often sharp, criticism of the allegories and symbolism surrounding the 'psychology' of the *mahavakyas* also praises their universal significance:

> If we strip this thought of the various forms, figurative to the highest degree and not seldom extravagant, under which it appears in the Vedanta texts, and fix our attention upon it solely in its philosophical simplicity as the identity of God and the soul, the Brahman and the atman, it will be found to possess a significance reaching far beyond the Upanishads, their time and country; nay, we claim for it an inestimable value for the whole race of mankind.[452]

[448] Deussen (1906), pp. 40-42.
[449] Deussen (1906), pp. 42.
[450] Deussen (1979), p. 39.
[451] Cf. "...the key can only be found where alone the secret of nature lies open to us from within, that is to say, in our innermost self. It was here that for the first time the original thinkers of the Upanishads, to their immortal honour, found it when they recognized our atman, our inmost individual being, as the Brahman, the inmost beingof universal nature and of all her phenomena." Deussen (1979), p. 40.
[452] Deussen (1979), p. 39.

At this point it may be useful to recall our earlier discussion of religious communities and communal formation. In the previous chapter I too suggested a different way of understanding Vedic allegories of myth and ritual in terms of the Brahmanical procedures operating the privatization of Vedanta. It was argued that the privatization of religion can be aided and developed throughout certain historical periods and contexts. Clearly, Western interest in privatized forms of spirituality, or universal religion, would assist in this regard. It is also important to recall our suggestion that focus upon the allegorization of Vedic rituals as a way of interpreting and understanding the Upanisads primarily represents a failure to comprehend these documents as a means of knowledge, as well as a lack of awareness of the teaching methodologies (*prakriyas*) contained therein. The Orientalist interpretation of the Upanisads as mere allegory further enforces the subalterneity of traditional Advaita pedagogy in pre-colonial India. Indeed one additional factor of great importance in the case of Deussen specifically states the narratives which reveal the *mahavakyas* themselves are figurative and extravagant forms of expression. This is a novel transformation from traditional interpretations which assert that the teaching dialogues in which the identity of *atman* and *brahman* is revealed illustrate important elements of the pedagogy of Advaita.

Though Orientalist interest in non-institutional forms of spirituality is important, it is not only their interest in allegories that strengthens the hegemony underlying the privatization of Vedanta. The idealist and Romantic braids of Orientalist discourse, only hinted at above by Deussen, must be considered as a significant regime of power in the network of colonial relations. Indology in particular may be accused for its effort in praising the spiritual and mystical elements of Indian thought. The Romantic impulse of Indology is no minority perspective and has been operational since the origins of the discipline.[453] The exercise of hegemony in British India has been debated from a number of different perspectives. A common feature of such debates is that they recognize the interplay of power and knowledge between rulers and ruled, or a sphere of relations that cannot be reduced to the motives and intentions of individuals.

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[453] Cf. Inden (1990), ibid. pp. 66-69.

The German Indologist Paul Hacker has painstakingly sought to link the personal influence of Deussen upon Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902).[454] Researching the collected works of the *swami* and the letters and writings of Deussen, with particular emphasis upon details of their meetings and travels in Germany and England, Hacker emphasizes points where Vivekananda expresses an eager desire to learn from Indology about the 'defects' and 'later corruptions' of Indian religion.[455] In particular, Deussen is credited as the culprit of Vivekananda's belief that the *mahavakya tat tvam asi* was really a doctrine about ethics and the foundation of ethical codes.[456] I do not wish to suggest that the power of individual Indologists was enough to alter the entire missionary campaigns of nineteenth century Indian nationalists. Nor do I doubt that the discipline did exercise a significant effect upon the maintenance of bourgeois ideology. In this context one should simply note the confluence of interests and power-relations of Orientalists and middle-class Indians. In the case of Vivekananda, for instance, one may discover a synthesis of relations with ideological impingements of colonization:

> There are those who teach that this can be gained by the mumbling of words. But no great master ever taught that external forms were necessary for salvation. The power of attaining it is within ourselves. We live and move in God. Creeds and sects have their parts to play, but they are for children, they last but temporarily. Books never make religions, but religions make books. We must not forget that...And no book ever created a soul. We must never forget that.[457]

In his sermon on universal 'Real Religion,' (i.e. 'spirituality) Vivekananda emphasizes that the end of all religions is realization of God in the soul. There are many sects and creeds but they all converge at one center: the realization of God. Ceremonies, rituals, symbols are all condemned as the playground of weak minded children. Vivekananda is

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[454] Paul Hacker, 'Schopenhaur and Hindu Ethics,' in Wilhelm Halbfass, *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 273-318.

[455] Cf. "Deussen, for his part, indicates in his memoirs that he found nothing of significance in Vivekananda." Paul Hacker, 'Schopenhaur and Hindu Ethics,' in Wilhelm Halbfass, *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 273-318; 295.

[456] Paul Hacker, 'Schopenhaur and Hindu Ethics,' in Wilhelm Halbfass, *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 273-318; 291-298.

[457] Swami Vivekananda, 'Real Religion,' in Pravrajika Vrajaprana (ed), *Living Wisdom: Vedanta in the West* (Hollywood, CA: Vedanta Press), pp. 38-41; 38.

particularly critical of those who follow the scriptures of religion. He says a man may carry in his head all the sacred books ever written but if he hasn't experienced God realization then he is no more than a rank atheist. Vivekananda admits that a variety of religions are to be accepted as external forms of cultural expression, but Real Religion is experienced from within. Of course, it is widely known that Vivekananda confessed to being a Hindu and even propagated societies of Vedanta abroad. In this context, it has been pointed out that even though Vivekananda claimed to support the universal truth of Real Religion, closer inspection actually reveals his attempt to understand and transmit the teachings of Advaita Vedanta.[458] Vivekananda's transmission of Vedanta as Real Religion warrants a radical transformation of the tradition.

One of the more significant problems with universalism and the universalization of religion is that it serves to remove, or extract, particular local beliefs and practices from their socio-historic context. As such, it is little wonder that this approach appeals to individuals who resent certain forms of institutional authority and control. As we shall see the universalization of religion has proved particularly strategic in an Indian context for those seeking freedom from Brahmanical restrictions. As Jose Casanova explains, the most important factor in the restructuring of religious formations and privatization involves the nature of the community membership entry rules.[459] In contrast to all previous pre-colonial religious and communal formations of Vedanta, Vivekananda's transnational mission takes no heed to traditional ancestral lineages. For Vivekananda, all the world's scriptures merely record the experiences of those who attained the realization of God.[460] As illustrated with Siva's revelation, the institutional structure of Advaita is codified with the *guru-sisya-parampara* and epistemic acts of enunciation. At such, it

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[458] King (1999b), ibid., pp. 138-140.
[459] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 47.
[460] For further critique of the hermeneutics of Vivekananda see Anantanand Rambachan, 'Where Words Fail: The Limits of Scriptural Authority in the hermeneutics of a contemporary Advaitin,' in *Philosophy East and West*, 37.4, 1987, pp. 361-371. Also see Anantanand Rambachan, 'Swami Vivekananda's Use of Science as an Analogy for the Attainment of Moksa,'in *Philosophy East and West*, 40.3, 1990, pp. 331-342. Also Anantanand Rambachan, *The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Vedas* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

should be understandable if we recall this moment for better insight to the introduction of Indian agency and the role of Orientalist authority in colonial discourse of Vedanta.[461]

Due to intermingling with the colonized, or 'subaltern,' subjects over whom they ruled, colonial authorities on the subcontinent drew forth a disciplinary relation of 'active-direct consent' for an important element of colonial discourse: the modern Indian soul. In the context of British India, however, Hindu consent did not produce an alternative hegemony diametrically opposed to colonial authority, as Gramsci predicted it could, but served to legitimate colonial control and manipulation of the Upanisads. The commodification of Vedanta, I wish to suggest, is a product of the Euro-American passive revolution and the prevailing cultural hegemony which functions to privatize religion. Hindu discourse of Vedanta provides the necessary element for the reformation of this network of power: the de-institutionalization of the *guru-sisya-parampara*.

Calculating the 'physics' of power which led to the spiritual affirmation and corporeal gestation (diaspora) of Hindus, to borrow Said's construction of the ideological procedures whereby the disciplinary force of philology codified the hegemony of Orientalism in the late eighteenth century, it is perhaps "no exaggeration to say that these accomplishments were a more or less direct consequence of the view that held language to be an entirely human phenomenon."[462] Following the 'micro-physics', or 'micro-powers', of corporeal administration, I wish to argue that in their anti-colonial struggle to overthrow the force wielded upon their subjugated bodies colonized Indians managed to reroute the complex polemics of this adventure.[463] Somewhat ironically, the discourse of

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[461] Cf. "Understandably, the foundational myth of any charismatic community has a special paradigmatic power in the historical transmission of human traditions, particularly when the foundational myth can avail itself of the force of God's revelation. Rebellions, reformations, revolutions, and all kinds of historical changes can be introduced in the name of the foundational myth, while claiming to be reverting to the pristine purity of origins, to a time before any accommodation to the world has taken place." Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 50.

[462] Said (1979), ibid., p. 135.

[463] We must understand that the modern Indian soul is regulated by disciplinary procedures different than those imagined by Said, for whom colonial authority forms a discourse whereby "...a political master-slave relation produce the Orientalized Orient." Said (1979), ibid., p. 96. Said is clearly indebted to Foucault's conceptualization of power-knowledge relations, but he fails to account for the ways in which Orientals resisted, contested, and intervened in the disciplinary procedures of colonial subjection. To reverse the hegemony of *Orientalism*, we heed Foucault's adamant refusal to conceive of disciplinary power as a

affirmative Orientalism provided a tool in the hands of Indian agents of resistance, specifically nineteenth century nationalists desirous of liberating their countrymen from foreign rule and domination, and sustaining souls subjected to their mystic narration.

Bengali Dreaming: Inferiority and the Deployment of Surplus Power

As a response to historical processes to which Said was subjected as a student educated in British colonies throughout Palestine and Egypt, his humanistic plea is largely concerned with colonial aggression and the 'hegemony' of anti-Arab racism as witnessed through various Western accounts of the 'Middle,' or 'Near East.'[464] Though sympathetic to Said's plea for attention to the politics of knowledge and representation in the context of Euro-American cognitive imperialism and anti-Islamic prejudice, I wish to explore the effect of the democratic imaginary of egalitarianism as distributed throughout the 'Far East,' specifically the Indian subcontinent of South Asia. In this context, it is important to

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regime of repressive force dictated by bipolar master/slave relations: "we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals.'" In British India power no longer subordinates as in the juridical realm of law and order, but creates and regulates resistance: "in fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth." Foucault (1977), ibid., p. 194. With the corpus of this disciplinary formation "...the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge" generate the discourse of modern Indians and narratives produced as an "effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated" (p. 177). Following the production of renaissance Indians, saints individualized with "surplus power exercised on the subjected body", colonial subjects were then regulated with the disciplinary regimes which led to their formation, as Foucault notes in reference to penal normalization: "it is this whole technology of power over the body that the technology of the 'soul'—that of the educationalists, psychologists and psychiatrists—fails either to conceal or to compensate, for the simple reason that it is one of its tools" (pp. 29-30). For those subjected to the imperial surveillance of mystic Hindus, moreover, anti-colonial resistance "...extends and reinforces the effects of this power." (p. 29). The Orientalist stereotype of 'mystic India' is not displaced with nationalist discourse of Indian spirituality, but is rather reinforced.

[464] Said's understanding of hegemony, however, is rendered ambiguous with his appropriation of this "indispensable concept" as an explanatory device limited to "any society not totalitarian." Said (1979) ibid., p. 7. In his analysis of the hegemonic discourse of post-Enlightenment Euro-America, it is clear that Said is largely concerned with a consensus of totalitarianism. Indeed even for intellectuals of the so-called "New Right" who argue that the decline of Western civilization began with Christianity, the 'Bolshevism of Antiquity' (Alain de Benoist), and reached its destructive culmination in the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man, the hegemonic apparatus of democracy is one of the most prejudiced regimes of the modern world: "In attributing a fundamental role to universal suffrage, democracy places all individuals on the same level and fails to recognize the important differences among them. Thence derives a uniformization and massification of the citizenry, upon whom is imposed a single norm which shows the necessarily totalitarian character of democracy." Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Social Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 174.

note that democratic ideology of universal suffrage has been uprooted from its context of subordination and imagined as a discourse of oppression.[465]

On the other hand, Said's failure to register the inversion of his racist hegemony may very well stem from the fact that in his focus upon the 'force' of Orientalist discourse he has insufficiently theorized the power of the Indian imagination.[466] Reconfiguring this stance is especially important for any analysis of Indian religion in America, a country where the ideology of middle-class mendicants was first planted in 1893 when Swami Vivekananda articulated his vision and subsequently forged the self-identity of future diaspora Indians. The Indian saint's imagination provides a fertile ground for self-confessed Hindus and displaces the colonial *hegemon* required for their production.

It may seem paradoxical that in a land where citizenship itself was once prohibited the maintenance of Indian autonomy would depend upon a national identity reconfigured with the politics of racial superiority, but Vivekananda, "an imaginative man" indeed, went even further and confessed a valiant desire for the Hindu race to colonize the earth: "My idea is the conquest of the whole world by the Hindu race."[467] For Vivekananda, a student at Presidency College and the Scottish Church College in Calcutta where he received an undergraduate degree in 1884, the Hindu race is a spiritual one and, thus, all that is needed in this conquest is for Hindus to mobilize and migrate throughout the world, taking along their expertise in all things religious. When Indian nationalists construct their identity with racial superiority, let alone mystical insight, the trafficking of

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[465] Cf. "But in order to be mobilized in this way, the democratic principle of liberty and equality first had to impose itself as the new matrix of the social imaginary...This decisive mutation in the political imaginary of Western societies took place two hundred years ago and can be defined in these terms: the logic of equivalence was transformed into the fundamental instrument of production of the social." Laclau and Mouffe (1989), ibid., p. 155.

[466] Said, moreover, conceives of colonial power in terms of force: "ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied. To believe that the Orient was created—or, as I call it, "Orientalized"—and to believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of the imagination, is to be disingenuous." Said (1979), ibid., p. 5. While an "Orientalized" Orient, that is, one "created" or, even more specifically, a passive one "tacitly acknowledged", could only be dominated, however 'disingenuous' it may seem, I wish to argue that greater attention should be given to the premise that wherever there is power there is resistance.

[467] For further insight into the fervor of Vivekananda's mission see Paul Hacker, 'Vivekananda's Religious Nationalism,' in Wilhelm Halbfass (ed) *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 319-336; 327.

Indian religion in the United States no doubt signals an alarm for intervention, but so should the affirmative discourse empowering Vivekananda's saintly mission.

Prior to Vivekananda's visit to America in 1893 one can sense a more condemnatory tone in his speeches and writings. Vivekananda would often chastise his fellow countrymen as being weak and lazy in an effort to incite them to national solidarity. As Paul Hacker points out, however, the saint learned important lessons during his stay in the United States. After his return to India there is a more noticeable fervor with such statements about the Hindu conquest of the world. Vivekananda asserted that America itself could be conquered in ten years time. These feelings were all generated due to the enthusiasm with which the saint was received in America.[468]

The influence of Vivekananda upon contemporary Indian self-understanding may be best understood within the context of Gramsci's scheme of socio-religious stratification and the role of elite nationalist intellectuals. According to Gramsci, "negro intellectuals who absorb American culture and technology" are the predominant social class who could very well exercise indirect, and even direct, influence upon "the backward masses of Africa." In order for their efforts to be directly effective, their would need to be a revolution which would "provoke a negro exodus and the return to Africa of the most independent and energetic intellectual elements" in an attempt to form an intellectual base which "could have sufficient assimilating and organizing capacity to give a "national" character to the present primitive sentiment of being a despised race, thus giving the African continent a mythic function as the common fatherland of all the negro peoples."[469] In the light of Vivekananda's global apartheid, based upon his social construction of the Hindu race as one which has cornered the market on Aryan truth, we should identify a central problem which arises from this characterization. The phenomenon to be problematized is not so much that modern Hindus are proud of the fact that Aryan revelations, or recitations of the Upanisads, have been preserved in India, but rather the events whereby they have been led to narrate these mythic texts in America. An

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[468] Paul Hacker, 'Vivekananda's Religious Nationalism,' in Wilhelm Halbfass (1995), ibid., pp. 319-336.
[469] Antonio Gramsci, 'The Intellectuals: The Different Position of Urban and Rural-Type Intellectuals', in Hoare and Smith (1971/2003), ibid., pp. 14-23; 21.

examination of the self-complex of middle class Indian nationalists may provide insight into the ideological presuppositions of Indian agency, or anti-colonial resistance.

As we have already noted, nineteenth century reform movements significantly influenced scholarly terminology describing Indian religion. In the course of this debate, both Aryanism and Brahmanism were inevitably subsumed by the hegemonic discourse of Hinduism. The extent to which modern Indians contributed to the construction of this discourse may be understood in the context of racial tensions in nineteenth century Bengal. Brief analysis of the terms 'Neo-Hinduism' and 'Neo-Vedanta, widely en vogue among scholars of Indian religion, may lead to the deployment of Indian mimics.

In exploration of the typologies surrounding 'traditional' and 'modern' Vedanta, Wilhelm Halbfass locates the origin of several significant terms, "Neo-Vedanta," "new Vedanta," and "Neo-Vedantism," within the immediate context of the writings of Rammohan Roy (1772-1833). The earliest reference to such a conceptualization appears in the *Vedantacandrika* (1817), an anonymous Bengali work circulated in Calcutta with an attached English translation (*An Apology for the Present System of Hindoo Worship*), where Roy's "pure and imageless monotheism" is characterized as a "new Vedanta."[470] Roy's doctrinal reconfiguration of Vedanta may indeed warrant exceptional classification, but the true novelty of this discourse lies with his distribution of the *Upanisad*s among the laity of India. Theological disputes are common but the laicization of Vedanta, first witnessed with the politics of Roy, has no parallel in Indian history.

In the conservative discourse of passive revolution, reform movements arise as a result of bourgeois ideology and historical changes initiated without widespread popular initiative, from 'on high.'[471] It is in this context that one should understand the laicization of Vedanta and the colonial authority witnessed in Roy's attempt to Brahminize subaltern

[470] Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 222.
[471] Sassoon (1982), ibid., p. 15.

Bengalis.[472] Preaching in Bengal, an area of diverse religious practices apparently lacking teachers of Vedanta, Roy decided to fill the void by defending Vedic "monotheism." In this context one might indeed wish to focus upon doctrinal difference as it was through an appeal to the sanctity and authority of Sankara and Vedanta that Roy launched his attempt to affirm the monotheism of the Veda.[473] Whatever the novelty of Roy's beliefs, one result of his campaign is the discourse of 'Neo-Vedanta'.

While current usage of 'Neo-Hinduism' is largely indebted to the German Indologist Paul Hacker, he is not the first person to appropriate this term as a category of analysis.[474] In a lecture delivered in 1970, Hacker claims he discovered the term in an article in which the Jesuit Indologist Robert Antoine described the Bengali writer Bankim Candra Cattopadhyaya (1838-1894) as "a pioneer of Neo-Hinduism."[475] For Hacker, Neo-Hindu literature begins in the 1870s. Prominent Neo-Hindu writers are Bankim Candra Cattopadhyaya (1838-1894), Vivekananda (1862-1902), Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950), Mohandas Karamcand Gandhi (1869-1947), and Radhakrishnan (1888-1975). Others such as Ram Mohan Roy are described as forerunners. What distinguishes Roy and his contemporaries from the writers of Neo-Hinduism proper is the fact that Indian nationalism was not yet developed at their time.[476]

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[472] T.N. Madan notes that Roy appears to be the first intellectual to have attempted a comprehensive analysis of the social backwardness of India and eradication of 'superstitions.' See T.N. Madan, Culture and Development (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 26.

[473] Cf. "No matter how slight the actual knowledge of his countrymen may have been, Rammohan was able to appeal to fundamental and widely familiar associations of authority and sanctity which were linked to the Veda, the Vedanta, and the name of Sankara." Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 215.

[474] 'Neo-Hinduism,' for Hacker, serves as a conceptual replacement of the terms 'reform' and 'renaissance'. Rejecting the Christian missionary J.N. Farquhar's (1915) conceptualization of 'reform', Hacker notes that "Farquhar judged phenomena in the Indian life of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the amount of reform they represented. His standards of evaluation were those of the European intellectual." In reference to the term 'renaissance', which indicates "the air of Hindu nationalism", D.S. Sarma's (1944) study was intended to supersede Farquhar's treatment of "reform" by demonstrating that "after a period of decay Hinduism had gradually recovered its vigor by its own resources". See Paul Hacker, 'Aspects of Neo-Hinduism as Contrasted with Surviving Traditional Hinduism,'in Wilhelm Halbfass (ed) *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 229-255; 229-230.

[475] In "Aspects of Neo-Hinduism as Contrasted with Surviving Traditional Hinduism," Hacker admits that he has no idea who invented the term 'Neo-Hinduism'. Halbfass tell us that the informative article in question was published by Antoine in Bombay in 1953. See Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 221.

[476] Prior to Paul Hacker's theorization of Neo-Hinduism, Louis Renou offered a significantly different interpretation of modern Indian thought, when he wrote that "we can watch this neo-Hinduism, which came to birth in the life and writings of Rammohan Ray, reaching its consummation and its end in the work of

Though employed less often, the term 'Neo-Vedanta' appears interchangeable with Hacker's predominant typology. In his attempt to deal with modern Indian saints, more importantly, for Hacker both 'Neo-Hinduism' and 'Neo-Vedanta' signify the discourse of Indian nationalism. Though usually limiting his analysis of modern Indian thought to a model of 'Neo-Hinduism', besides explicitly referring to Vivekananda as a 'Neo-Vedantin' the only other notable instance of Hacker using this later term to describe the ideology of modern English-speaking Indians demonstrates that he had grasped the central element in the rhetoric of these modern saints: "The ideal of nationalism, itself of European importation, had taken hold of their minds." Thus, in a rare usage of the term 'Neo-Vedanta,' Hacker correctly notes:

> The national objective and the requirements of the present time are primary; religion is made subservient to them. Similarly, Bankim Chandra strove to combat what he thought to be the effeminacy of his fellow countrymen, and thus to revivify their national pride and political efficiency. The means, however, by which he expected to accomplish this objective was again a modernization of the Hindu religion. Motivated by the same goals, Vivekananda presented his reinterpretation of the Vedanta, and even advocated the propagation of this Neo-Vedanta abroad, as a stimulus for reinvigorating the national feeling of the Hindus.[477]

While he has made no attempt to provide any typology of traditional Vedanta, concerning the discourse of "traditional Hinduism" and modern Indian religion Hacker believes "we should lose sight of the essentials if we were to try to find the decisive difference in the area of doctrine."[478] Irony transforms into conceptual despair with clarification of the reason one should not look towards doctrine for distinguishing characteristics of tradition

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Aurobindo Ghose, whose work is beginning to make itself felt in the West." Louis Renou, *Indian Literature* (NY: Walker and Co., 1964), p. 135. Renou does not clarify his stance and we may only speculate as to the reasons why he has chosen Roy and Aurobindo to mark the beginning and end points of Neo-Hinduism. While the laicization of Vedanta as well as the birth of 'Neo-Vedanta' may be traced to the tactics of Rammohan Roy, it is also true that the Indian yogi Aurobindo Ghose represents the advent of a new form of discourse surrounding Advaita. Indebted to the New Age movement emerging from Europe, Aurobindo's own unique brand of folk Vedanta is widely purported to 'integrate' the Advaita tradition.

[477] Paul Hacker, 'Aspects of Neo-Hinduism as Contrasted with Surviving Traditional Hinduism,'in Wilhelm Halbfass (ed) *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 229-255; 233.

[478] Paul Hacker, 'Aspects of Neo-Hinduism as Contrasted with Surviving Traditional Hinduism,'in Wilhelm Halbfass (ed) *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 229-255; 231-232.

and modernity: "traditional Hinduism," itself, is not a "unified and coherent doctrinal system".[479] The overriding problem with any attempt to conceptualize 'Neo-Hinduism' is that such comprehension must be framed in relation to an imaginary entity and derived from a futile search for some pre-colonial counterpart of this imperial motif.[480]

Significantly, however, Bankim Chandra serves as the common denominator of Antoine and Hacker's model of Neo-Hinduism, as well as the latter's Neo-Vedanta. Also important is Hacker's rejection of Rammohan Roy as a Neo-Hindu. While it is interesting to note that Roy was the first Indian to use the word 'Hinduism', in light of the historical procedures whereby the *brahmana* castes were located at the epicenter of this world religion, of course, it is not difficult to understand this Hindu self-confession.[481] As we have seen, the Brahmins have long been involved with the transmission of the Upanisads and it is these texts which are at the epicenter of Hinduism. Moreover, the variety of other 'local' customs and traditions subsumed with this all-India model would seem to support the trends of Brahminization. What does require further explanation, however, is Vivekananda's participation in the discourse of Vedanta.

Although Roy is no doubt the first Hindu Brahmin to have traveled to Europe and whose contact with the West provoked an attempt to reinvigorate the Indian tradition, it is more important that we currently understand the missionary activities of the first Indian slave

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[479] Paul Hacker, 'Aspects of Neo-Hinduism as Contrasted with Surviving Traditional Hinduism,'in Wilhelm Halbfass (ed) *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 229-255; 231-232.

[480] Cf. "Before the unification begun under imperial rule and consolidated by the Independence of 1947, it makes no sense to talk of an Indian 'nation', nor of a religion called 'Hinduism' that might be taken to represent the belief system of the Hindu people. Today, of course, the situation differs in so far as one can now point to a loosely defined cultural entity that might be labeled 'Hinduism' or, as some prefer, 'neo-Hinduism' (though this latter term implies that there was a unified cultural entity known as 'Hinduism' that can be pinpointed in the precolonial era)." As such, "...it remains an anachronism to project the notion of 'Hinduism'...into precolonial Indian history." King (1999b), ibid., p. 107.

[481] Cf. "if one asks who would most have benefited from the modern construction of a unified Hindu community focusing upon the Sanskritic and brahmanical forms of Indian religion, the answer would, of course, be those highly educated members of the *brahmana* castes, for whom the modern 'Hinduism' represents the triumph of universalized, brahmanical forms of religion over the 'tribal' and the 'local.'" King (1999b), ibid., pp. 103-104.

(*sudra*) to preach in America.[482] In this regard, however, it is rather necessary to further understand Roy's own apologetic tactics. Despite Vedic declarations, limitations in eligibility to even hear the Veda, which continue today, have been stringently imposed by the *brahmana* castes.[483] Like other reformers of the Indian tradition, Roy's greatest efforts were directed towards overturning and circumventing the Brahamanical rules and restrictions of caste hierarchy and the hereditary qualifications (*adhikara*) for access to the Vedas.[484] He accuses the Brahmins of being selfish and ignorant agents in the obscuration of the true meaning of the Vedas.[485]

Such ideology is clearly based upon democratic principles of liberty and equality. Through a reconfiguration of the concept of *adhikara*, colonial discourse of 'Hindu tolerance' produces a concomitant democratization of the Indian public sphere and reversal of the Brahmanical procedures of individualization.[486] Traditionally understood as a category of religious restriction (and this is true whether one understands the term in

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[482] See Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 195. Of course, Swami Vivekananda often rejected the claim that he was a *sudra*. See Paul Hacker, 'Aspects of Neo-Hinduism as Contrasted with Surviving Traditional Hinduism,'in Wilhelm Halbfass (ed) *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 229-255; 229.

[483] As K. S. Murty explains, "one of the great obstacles to the preservation and propagation of the Veda has been denial of universal access to it. For several centuries only the *traivarnika* men (men of the three upper castes) have been generally considered eligible to undertake Vedic study, but in effect it has been the exclusive privilege and prerogative of male Brahmins only. Even today most Brahmins who have learnt the Veda, either with or without meaning generally do not teach it to women, *sudras* and others." K. Satchidananda Murty, *Vedic Hermeneutics* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993), p. 14. As A.L. Basham explains, those outside this bio-social pale may not listen to the Veda lest they face dire consequences: "...according to tradition, these hymns are never to be taught to or learned by a woman or a member of the lower orders of society, a *sudra*, and according to the law book of Manu, if a *sudra* hears the Veda being recited, his ears are to be filled with molten lead." See A. L. Basham, *The Origins and Development of Classical Hinduism* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 10.

[484] Wilhelm Halbfass argues that *adhikara* is not associated with different "aptitudes" prior to the "Preliminary Discourse" of the pandits who compiled the *Vivadarnavasetu*, a collection of law texts that formed the basis of N.B. Halhed's *A Code of Gentoo Laws* (1776). This discourse, which Halbfass claims is not included in Sanskrit manuscripts, reinterprets *adhikara* as "appoint" and initiates the Orientalist theme of "Hindu tolerance": "the truly intelligent well know, that the differences and varieties of created things are a ray of his glorious essence, and that the contrarieties of constitution are a type of his wonderful attributes...He appointed to each tribe its own faith, and to every sect its own religion...He views in each particular place the mode of worship respectively appointed to it; sometimes he is employed with the attendants upon the Mosque, in counting the sacred beads; sometimes he is in the temple, at the adoration of idols; the intimate of the Mussulman, and the friend of the Hindoo; the companion of the Christian, and the confidant of the Jew." See Wilhelm Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian Thought* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 74; 85 n. 106.

[485] Halbfass (1988), ibid., pp. 205-206.

[486] As Halbfass notes, Roy was severely criticized by traditional pandits for attempting to introduce a 'market-place theology' into the institution of *varnasramadharma*. Halbfass (1988), ibid., pp. 210-211.

its traditional bio-social context or chooses to project upon it a humanistic concept of "religious" or "mental" qualification), in British India the concept of *adhikara* undergoes radical transformation and signifies Orientalist subjectivation.[487] In a more recent and chilling attempt to make the entire world Aryan (*krnvanto visvam aryam)* K. Satchidananda Murty's approach to the power struggles of Brahmins grants Vedic access to anyone who has sincere desire (*arthitva*) and the proper capacity (*samarthya*).[488]

While I reject their conceptual terminology, I agree that Antoine and Hacker are correct to begin their study of Indian nationalism with the writings of Bankim Chandra, a politician whose efforts were in stark contrast to Roy. The importance of Roy's distinction from Indian nationalists concerns the fact he was highly optimistic about the role of the British in India. A significant aspect of Indian nationalism lies with its resistance to Orientalist authority.[489] The 'Father of Modern India' betrays the nationalist ideology of middle class Indians. In similar spirit as other Bengali's of his time, Roy believed the British management of India and its educational system was nothing short of Divine Providence.[490] Unlike Roy, Bankim considered British rule neither Divine nor enlightening. As Thomas Trautmann observes, Bankim and like-minded Indians carried out their campaign with the belief that "racial superiority had led European Orientalists to

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[487] As Peter van der Veer correctly observes, the importance of the "Preliminary Discourse" of the pandits as an historical document lies in the fact that it is inextricably involved with an Orientalist history reflecting cultural changes and power struggles of Europe. Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 67.

[488] Going so far as to document Vedic narratives transmitting *brahmavidya* to women and slaves, Murty validates his agenda against the Veda and takes his place amongst a long history of Indian apologists for the Brahmanical tradition. See K. Satchidananda Murty (1993), ibid., pp. 16-17. The grammarian Patanjali's (200 BCE) tactic was to advise the study of the Sanskrit language in order not to be a *mleccha.* Unfortunately, the situation was a catch-22 for Sir William Jones, who struggled tirelessly due to his status as such before he could find anyone to teach him the language.

[489] Cf. "In ruling South Asia, the British made use of indigenous elites who were urbanized, often English-educated, and partly Westernized. These elites came to form a national middle class, owing to the growth of the population and the spread of education. But this was a class that resented British domination and resisted the attacks on indigenous culture and religion by Christian missionaries." Van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 56.

[490] Cf. "Rammohan greeted the British as instruments of Divine Providence and considered their rule over India and the introduction of a European educational system into India as both necessary and good." Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 221.

deprive India of its true place."[491] In light of recent philological discoveries, most Bengalis were proud to learn of the Indo-European roots of Vedic civilization:

> The belief that the white masters were not very distant cousins of their brown Aryan subjects provided a much needed salve to the wounded ego of the dependent elite. A spate of "Aryanism" was unleashed. The word "Aryan" began to feature in likely as well as unlikely places—from titles of periodicals to the names of street corner shops.[492]

Bankim, however, reacted differently and ceaselessly expressed his feelings about the Orientalist's racial superiority, "there is no study which does not yield its secrets to the European scholar when he takes it up," says Bankim, but he also felt that the Orientalist displayed a certain racial arrogance.[493] Bankim went so far as to suggest that the entire Indological view of Indian history could be explained in the light of his self-complex.[494] It is in this context that Bengali intellectuals would reverse Orientalist discourse.

The point I wish to introduce to this debate concerns a new model of power-relations in British India. Originally put forth in the work of Richard King, the novel conception of 'reverse colonialism' is derived from post-structuralist analysis of discourse and power-knowledge relations. King's insight is born from the unique situation of Orientalist discourse and Indian nationalism. The first and most obvious factor to recognize for reverse colonialism is the role of Indian agency. Contrary to Said's beliefs about Orientalist discourse, in an Indian context it is clearly not the case that Indians were simply produced by the dominant apparatus of power in the image of their colonizers. Accepting that Indians were not passive recipients in the exercise of colonial hegemony, an additional point to be understood is that with anti-colonial resistance to Orientalism certain key figures actually reinforced the essentializing and homogenizing elements of

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[491] Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California, 1997), p. 221.

[492] Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Europe Reconsidered: Perceptions of the West in nineteenth-century Bengal* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 8. (quoted in Trautmann 1997: 219).

[493] Trautmann (1997), ibid., p. 220.

[494] As Trautmann notes concerning the complex of Bankim and his successors: "a new Bengali word—*jati-vairita*—had been coined (from Sanskrit) in the nineteenth century to name the new feeling of racial hatred that kept intruding between the ruler and ruled, and it became for Bankim and others the explanatory principle that accounted for the tension between European and Indian views of India's history and India's place in the history of the world." Trautmann (1997), ibid., p. 220-221.

discourse which had initially rendered them susceptible to management and control.[495] For our purposes it is also important to note that reverse colonialism depends upon Western inspired notions of superiority generated with the discourse of affirmative Orientalism.[496] The point may be made explicit in the context of the ways in which Indians dealt with their newly found kinship with Europe.

As we have noted above, for many Bengali Indians of the nineteenth century the race science and philological discovery of 'Aryanism' provided a much needed affirmation in the light of centuries of ideological oppression and colonial domination. Most Indians embraced this discovery, but there was also always present the tendency for the word 'Aryan' to be used synonymously with 'Hindu,' in which case the affirmative salve could no longer be applied.[497] As such, the extent to which this debate was about the politics of race becomes evident. In fact, for Vivekananda the consistency between the discourses of Hinduism and Aryanism appears to be that they are both contrived on the basis of race. It should also be noted that some nineteenth century Bengali Indians who equated Aryan with Hindu often went so far as to claim an Indian antiquity, or original homeland, for their Vedic forebears.[498] In any case, it is now clear that narratives of Aryanism were eventually overpowered by the discourse of Hinduism. Vivekananda often equivocated

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[495] Cf. "The anti-colonial discourses of Vivekananda, of course, did wonders to invigorate Hindus and restore their sense of self-worth. We can admire the ways in which Vivekananda, like an expert in judo, used the essentialist classification of India in Western Orientalist discourses to undermine claims of the superiority of the West. The result of this dialogical and mimetic process, however, has not been to displace or overthrow prevailing Orientalist stereotypes about 'India' but to further reinforce them." King (1999b), ibid., p. 207. Cf. "This dilemma is reflected in the catch-22 situation in which the Indian colonial subject is placed. To agree with the colonial discourse is to accept one's subordination in terms of a hegemonic Western paradigm. However, in rejecting such discourses one often perpetuates the paradigm itself, even if the categories are now inverted, reversed or revalorized. This, for instance, is the situation with regard to Hindu nationalist movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In their quest for home rule (swaraj) and freedom from imperial control, Hindus tended to perpetuate the nationalistic, romantic and homogenizing presuppositions of their British rulers." King (1999b), ibid., p. 112.

[496] Cf. "We can see how this emphasis upon the spirituality of India and the material superiority of the West allowed Hindus to turn Western colonial discourses to their own advantage. The West may have material prosperity and power, but it lacks the inner spiritual life that is present in Indian culture. Clearly this is a tactical response to the Western, colonially inspired sence of superiority (though without questioning whether such stereotypes of 'East' and 'West' are appropriate." King (1999b), ibid., p. 142.

[497] Cf. "...I conclude that the Aryan idea had the same inclusive sense for Indians—or at least for Bengali writers of the nineteenth century—that it had for the British, that is, it stood as a sign of kinship between Indians and Europeans. I must immediately qualify this, taking note of the tendency for the word Aryan to slip back to its Indian orbit and become a synonym for Hindu, in which case the kinship with Europe is lost." Trautmann (1997), ibid., p. 221.

[498] Trautmann (1997), ibid., p. 220-221. Also see Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 237.

on his use of the term Aryanism in different contexts, but the extent to which it was appropriated as means of affirmation is witnessed in his reinterpretation of the *Arya* as one who has realized the true nature of the soul.[499] If nineteenth century Bengali Indians felt wounded by their perception of European superiority, on the other hand, it appears that saints such as Swami Vivekananda subsequently carried out anti-colonial mimetic strategies of undoing by overdoing, or parody:

> Although the suprasensuous vision of truths is to be met with in some measure in the Puranas and Itihasas and in the religious scriptures of other races, still the fourfold scriptures known among the Aryan race as the Vedas being the first, the most complete, and the most undistorted collection of spiritual truths, deserve to occupy the highest place among all scriptures, command the respect of all nations of the earth, and furnish the rationale of all their respective scriptures.[500]

Clearly, Vivekananda conceived himself as a Hindu but his Real Religion is far from synonymous with Aryan. This, then, brings us to a better understanding of reverse colonialism. As we have illustrated with Vivekananda's concept of Real Religion, the defining factor of this spirituality is its culmination in the realization of God which is discovered by journeying within oneself etc., and external forms of religion are merely harmless individual expressions or either childish hindrances in this regard. As Richard King explains, however, upon closer examination of Vivekananda's univeralisation of religion one discovers the *swami*'s method of subverting all other religions as supplementary truths subsumed by the truth of Advaita Vedanta.[501]

Reverse colonialism also involves a form of inter-cultural mimesis that is subject to being misinterpreted with Orientalist hegemony.[502] Indeed in spite of over a century of criticism directed towards Vivekananda's appropriation of Vedanta by both indigenous pandits and

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[499] Also see Halbfass (1988), ibid., p. 237.

[500] Quoted in Swami Satprakashananda, *Methods of Knowledge: Perceptual, Non-perceptual, and Transcendental According to Advaita Vedanta* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974), p. 207.

[501] Cf. "The 'reverse-colonialism' of the West at work in the essentialism of neo-Vedanta is clearly an attempt to establish a modern form of Advaita not only as the central philosophy of Hinduism but also as the primary candidate for the 'Universal Religion' of the future." King (1999b), ibid., p. 140.

[502] Cf. "Undoing by overdoing has a place as a subversive practice but it is a dangerous strategy, particularly if it is seen as the *primary* means of contestation, since overdoing can so easily be misread and subsumed by hegemonic perspectives." King (1999b), ibid., p. 204.

Western Indologists alike, the legacy of the saint is sustained through ongoing perceptions of mysticism and Advaita. In fact one of the more prominent achievements of the *swami* involves the success with which he has been able to exploit Western ignorance about Advaita Vedanta and Indian religion:[503]

> In this sense at least, however, Swami Vivekananda was a great visionary and prophet, for it is precisely the lure of the exotic and 'mystical' nature of the East and the belief that it can provide Westerners with some much-needed spirituality that underlies the contemporary interest of many Western new religious movement and New Age groups in the religions of the East.[504]

The problem with such hegemonic representations of Vedanta is that they tend to efface any authentic subaltern voice.[505] Even more surprising is the fact that Vivekananda's legacy has now been internalized and accepted by orthodox Brahmanical authorities of Vedanta. For an illustration of the ways in which the hegemony of bourgeois ideology now further legitimates the discourse of Advaita we must understand contemporary forms of Indian nationalism and the laicization of Vedanta in the wake of Vivekananda.

The "modern reincarnation of Hindu nationalism" has recently been characterized as the 'second wave' of the movement.[506] For Brian K. Smith, the late twentieth century 'Hindutva' movement, in the form of 'Sang Parivar' activists, is foreshadowed by the nineteenth century 'Hindu Renaissance' due to the fact that both movements have embraced the inclusivism of Hinduism and the idea of 'Hindu-ness' for Indian national identity.[507] Described by Smith as the creation of 'Neo-Hinduism', the renaissance

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[503] Cf. "The extent to which figures like Vivekananda and Daisetz Suzuki were able to exploit the relative ignorance of Westerners about the traditions of the East can be seen by the uncritical manner in which their own idiosyncratic versions of Hinduism and Buddhism were adopted by Western scholars of religion, particularly in the emerging discipline of the comparative study of mysticism. Vivekananda, for instance, was a crucial source for William James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and is praised as 'that paragon of Vedantists.'" King (1999b), ibid., p. 157.

[504] King (1999b), ibid., p. 142.

[505] Cf. "What is lost in this mimetic process, however, is a critique of the politics of representation as a whole. More specifically, what is lost is any truly subaltern response to the struggle to represent India." King (1999b), ibid., p. 160.

[506] Brian K. Smith, 'Re-envisioning Hinduism and Evaluating the Hindutva Movement,' in *Religion* 26, 1996, pp. 119-128; 121.

[507] Smith (1996), ibid., p. 121.

constituents of his first wave are well-known in India and abroad, the most famous spokesman for whom is undoubtedly Swami Vivekananda. The Sangh Parivar and Hindutva movement, while less influential beyond the subcontinent, have found transnational expression through Swami Chinmayananda, a Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) politician, who brought his mission to America in 1975.

To understand the rise of contemporary Hindu nationalism, Smith says we must recall the two predominant effects flowing from nineteenth century Indologists and Indian nationalists. The scholarly claim that 'Hinduism' is not a religion or that it has no unifying characteristics capable of defining it as such has purportedly been appropriated by Indian nationalists and has allowed the Hindutva movement to continue to exploit the idea of 'traditional Hinduism,' as there appears to be no consensus for contesting such notions by scholars. The failure of scholars of Indian religion to theorize any model of 'traditional Hinduism,' or indeed 'Hinduism,' has allowed right-wing politicians to put forth their own mythical claims about the history of Indian traditions.[508] The second element of the second wave of Hindu nationalism is also one inherited from nineteenth century Indologists and Indian nationalists and involves the claim that Indian religion is

[508] Connecting a paradigmatic element of neo-colonialism to the discourse of Aryan Urheimat, Brian Smith asserts that it is an "...inconvenient fact that the ancient forebears of Hinduism, the Aryans, originally came as invaders of the subcontinent" from the steppes of Europe, but the modern Indians faced with this reality are now on a journey of self-affirmation the attempted forgery of which is far more startling. Preoccupied with concerns which certainly cannot be located in the history of Aryan cultural production, "at a conference held in January of 1993, right-wing historians introduced a more 'politically correct' version of the archaic past. The Aryans, it is now asserted, were native to India all along, and their successors are therefore the rightful inheritors of the land." Smith (1996), ibid., p. 123. Smith's Aryan 'forebears' represent the extent to which Orientalists strive to legitimate their constructions, but he is correct to emphasize this invention of tradition. Of course, this is nothing new, as Gyan Prakash notes, such rhetoric has been regnant since "...the 1920s and the 1930s, when nationalism became a mass phenomenon, [and] a professional Indian historiography emerged to contest British interpretations." For these bourgeois Indians, "...it was important for this historiography to claim that everything good in India—spirituality, Aryan origins, political ideas, art—had completely indigenous origins." See Gyan Prakash, 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Indian Historiography is Good to Think,' in Nicholas Dirks (ed), *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 353-388; 358-359. In terms of contemporary academic hegemony, if we avoid the a-historical transcendence of his lofty ideology, the Indian philosopher K. Satchidananda Murty's nostalgic assessment of the bewildering fact that Vedic "...traditions are considered Indian by almost all Indian scholars" indeed provides a corrective analysis of this dilemma: "The Vedic Aryans were not 'natives' of India. The Upanisadic, Buddhist and Jaina philosophies spread to Kashmir, Gadua, Gurjara, Andhra, Karnataka and Dravida desas from 'outside'. Is not now Buddhism the national philosophy and religion of Bhutan, Burma, Thailand, and Sri Lanka; and Hinduism of Nepal? Yet they were not 'indigenous' or 'native' to those countries at one time. In the realm of ideas these are relative terms." See K. Satchidananda Murty, *Philosophy in India: Traditions, Teaching and Research* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985), p. 160.

essentially 'spiritual,' which also suggests that Indian religion supersedes and transcends all other religions. Smith laments the fact that the reluctance on behalf of Indologists to delimit their object of study has led to gross consequences in contemporary India.

From another perspective, James G. Lochtefeld has also sought to highlight what he describes as the 'Semiticization' of Indian religion in contemporary Hindu nationalist discourse.[509] For Lochtefeld, the ecclesiastical and hierarchical organization of the VHP, its imposition of uniformity upon the fluidity of Indian religion, its claim to speak for all Hindus, its adoption of a single sacred book (the Bhagavad Gita) as a symbol or Bible of Hinduism, and its focus upon Ayodhya (the 'New Jerusalem') as the birthplace of the Indian God Rama, all represent trends towards the Semitification of Indian religion.[510] Lochtefeld notes that at the grass-roots level the Sangh's message is spread through Indian villages by more than twenty-five thousand ascetics affiliated with the VHP.[511] Moreover, the VHP-America currently has over thirty-six branches and student outreach programs on most major American college campuses.[512]

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[509] James G. Lochtefeld, 'New Wine, Old Skins: The Sangh Parivar and the Transformation of Hinduism,' in *Religion* 26, 1996, pp. 101-118.

[510] The Semitification of Indian religion is also made explicit with Romila Thapar's analysis of the segregation of pre-colonial Indian society, where the Aryan bio-social politics of color (*varna*) illustrate "...a perspective different from that of the Semitic model." In her attempt to resist the "... incorporation of what we call Hindu sects into a homogenous, uniform, clearly identifiable and ecclesiastically organized religious entity", Thapar provides a striking example of this process within the context of the ecumenical sphere of Vaisnavas, an assimilative cult whose hegemonic authority is represented by the benevolence of Krishna (lit. black), an ecclesiastic realm where the adventures of contemporary practitioners who "...seek to find birth-places and historicity for the *avataras* of *Visnu* and even drag in archaeology in the attempt to prove this..." display more than a hint of colonial subjection. Thapar claims that "...such searches were of little concern to the majority of the Vaisnavas in the past," but it is nevertheless important to note that history itself is fabricated in the process of such productions. Thapar (1987), ibid., p. 10. It should also be emphasized that discourse of *avatara-vada* fuels the regnant apparatus generating the Semitification of 'India'; as Thapar explains, "the underlying strength of this religious induction was that the avatara was a-historical, in other words, the historicity of the avatara and his being located in space and time was irrelevant to the religious process" (Thapar 1987: 20). Also see Romila Thapar, *The Penguin History of Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300* (London: Penguin, 2002), pp. 15-22. In his analysis of Indian "'nationalist' strands that focus upon the historicity of human incarnations of Visnu, such as Rama and Krshna, [and] the sacrality of their purported birthplaces", Richard King also correctly suggests that "one hardly need point to the sense in which these developments mimic traits usually associated in the West with the Judaeo-Christian traditions." King (1999b), ibid., p. 105. More urgent, perhaps, one should point out the ways in which Indian 'right-wing historians' mock German National Socialists.

[511] Lochtefeld (1996), ibid., p. 107.

[512] Lochtefeld (1996), ibid., p. 112.

In a recent study of the VHP, a transnational movement dependent upon the militant Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) for its success, Peter van der Veer focuses his analysis upon Chinmayananda, the nationalist who guided this organization from its inception in 1964 until his death in 1993.[513] The VHP was founded at Chinmayananda's Sandeepany Sadhanalya, a missionary center established by the swami in Bombay, during a conference of politicians over which he presided. Before noting the significance of van der Veer's analysis of Chinmayananda, it is important to understand his overall approach to Hindu nationalism. Van der Veer's theory of religious nationalism is based upon an analysis of the expansion and migration of holy men and their sacred networks and assumes "striking parallels at particular moments in history between the expansion of religious organizations and state formation, and between the formation of religious communities and nation building."[514] Explaining that precolonial states were not nations and that it is only in the nineteenth century that the discourse of nationalism influences 'protonational' discourses on community, van der Veer utilizes the pilgrimage routes of pre-colonial religious formations to argue for the expansion of religious communities through the networks of families of gurus and ascetic orders. In short, van der Veer tries to demonstrate that Indian nationalists and reform movements of the nineteenth century simply modified already existent religious frameworks.[515]

In his analysis of pre-colonial religious formations as discursive traditions which religious reform movements appropriate for nationalist discourse, van der Veer claims

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[513] In the light of his overwhelming preoccupation with Ayodhya, one can see the importance of the VHP for van der Veer when he complains that "the temple-mosque controversy did not evoke strong feelings between 1949, when the image of Rama was installed, and 1984, when the VHP started its agitations". van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 7.

[514] van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 33.

[515] Van der Veer states his thesis succinctly: "Theories of nationalism often assume a sharp opposition between the traditional, parochial community and the modern, larger framework of the nation. What I want to show is the extent to which larger frameworks than that of the locality were already available in India before the colonial era, and the extent to which religious nationalism builds upon these earlier frameworks and transforms them." van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. xii. While "religious reform makes certain religious discursive traditions available for nationalist discourse…reform movements do not have to replace earlier forms of religious organization and discourse to do so." (p. 25). For instance, upon considering the fact that "coupled with trade and migration, pilgrimage must have contributed to a precolonial sense of the "sacred geography" of Hindu India", van der Veer concludes (no doubt correctly) that "the tendency of mostly middle-class Hindus to make an all-India pilgrimage in special buses and trains is probably rather recent." (p. 122). An interesting thesis, the problem is this observation is an overly simplistic construction.

that among them a common denominator can be found in the discourse and practice of devotionalism. In substantiation of this thesis he analyzes 'myth-models' of Siva and Vishnu. Providing a model which "shows Krishna as a spoiled, male child, doted on by his mother", van der Veer theorizes this myth as a blanket of consolation which "deals with the mother-son symbiosis that is so important in Hindu culture."[516] On the other hand, "Shiva can be seen as the grandiose self-sufficient ascetic, whose erect phallus (*linga*) is the ambiguous symbol of ascetic chastity and erotic life-giving power."[517] While one may certainly argue for the dominance of the myth-model of Krishna in contemporary India, if upon no other basis than the overwhelming popularity of the Bhagavad Gita in nationalist discourse, I wish to highlight the ways in which Siva has been modeled by pre-colonial regimes of religious formation and reconfigured by nineteenth century rhetoricians of religious reform.

The relationship between the reformist religion of the bourgeoisie and the religion of the 'other half' is characterized with ideological consensus of 'popular' and 'elite' forms of religion. According to van der Veer, the bourgeois discourse of 'our threatened religion' is an extension of the recurring Orientalist theme of "Hindu weakness" that pervaded nineteenth century reformist literature.[518] Thus, "Hindu society has to be defended against "external" weakness, caused by conversions to "foreign" religion, and against its "internal" weakness, caused by differences and conflicts among Hindus."[519] In spite of discovering that 'Hinduism' is not an integrated system of ideas or practices, van der Veer proceeds to construct this colonial motif along the lines of devotional cults spread by ascetics and monastic orders across migratory networks. In an attempt to demonstrate the "internal coherence" of this so-called 'tradition', which he claims "justifies its identification as 'Hinduism,'" van der Veer focuses upon the orthodox regulation and organization of contemporary Saivite ascetics, the authoritative power of which is

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[516] van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 50.
[517] van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 50.
[518] Cf. "Similarly, nationalism may at certain points be promoted by bourgeois elements, its success depends on the extent to which it can motivate large sections of the population. Therefore, more important than reformism's direct success in terms of, for example, recruitment of members or attendance at meetings seems to be their indirect success in creating a political discourse in defense of "our threatened religion."" van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 58.
[519] van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 64.

exemplified by the Brahmanical legacy of Sankara.[520]

Analyzing narratives from Kanchipuram which highlight the threatened nature of Hindu weakness and offer proclamations for the 'uplift' of untouchables, Van der Veer is surprised that the Sankaracharyas also participate in the reformist religion of the bourgeoisie.[521] There can be no doubt that Brahmins have historically had little regard for uplifting untouchables or conducting campaigns of social transformation and van der Veer is correct to see this as a novel distinction of bourgeois reformism. However, the rhetoric of "our threatened religion" has long been a strategy of Saivite politicians and may indeed be noted as an instance of precolonial formations reconstructed with nationalist discourse of religious reformation. In the scope of van der Veer's anthropological analysis, traditional elements of pre-colonial Indian religion are framed as novel aspects of nineteenth century reformations. As such, he is rightly shocked when he discovers that the orthodox Sankaracaryas have 'started using' the bourgeois discourse of Vedanta. As Paul Hacker notes, the contemporary management of ascetics devoted to Sankara was initiated by a cultural politician named Vidyaranya who sought to cast the sage as a "divine folk-hero" for Indians suffering the Muslim domination of Vijayanagara.[522] Rather than note the authority of the contemporary Sankaracaryas as unifying elements of 'Hinduism,' we may note the similarities between the political goals of modern Saivite nationalist's and their 'traditional' counterparts.[523] The rhetoric of

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[520] Van der Veer notes that "one feature of Hindu ascetic organization is its resistance to centralization. Every guru has his own followers and is not, in principle, subject to a higher authority. Nevertheless, important historical attempts at centralization have occurred. A majority of Shaivite ascetics accept the authority of four leaders who have their monasteries in four different parts of India." van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 48.

[521] Cf. "For example, the influential Shankarcharya of Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu makes extensive tours throughout India to express the need for the renewal of the Hindu spirit, which he feels is threatened from all sides. He is involved in the "uplift" of untouchables and in the construction of Hindu mission hospitals—social matters that were of no concern at all to his immediate predecessor." van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 137.

[522] Paul Hacker, 'On Sankara and Advaitism,' in Wilhelm Halbfass (ed) *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York, 1995), pp. 27-32; 29.

[523] Vidyaranya is claimed to have instigated his political program six centuries after Sankara's death, but even he did not strive for any Hindu centralization: "'Hindu unity' is something that lay completely outside Sankara's field of vision. Such a tendency can be ascribed to the cultural politician Vidyaranya, but in his case, too, not without qualification, for he also fought really not for any unity, but for the dominance of his system, the Advaitavada, above others." Paul Hacker, 'On Sankara and Advaitism,' in Wilhelm Halbfass

'defense' is preached by both Vidyaranya and Vivekananda.[524]

Van der Veer claims that Vivekananda's primary achievement was a firm grounding of "Hindu spirituality in a systematic interpretation of the Vedanta (the Upanishads and the tradition of their interpretation)," but he does not discuss the politician in relation to traditional theologians.[525] As a leader of religious reform, Vivekananda rendered the Upanisads available for nationalist discourse, but one is left wondering whether he silenced pre-colonial exegetes in order to do so. According to van der Veer, Vivekananda created a foundational discourse that became fundamental to subsequent versions of Hindu nationalism; however, this fundamentalism is rendered hegemonic with the bourgeois consensus activated by Chinmayananda.[526] In a work published the year following Chinmayananda's death, van der Veer writes:

> What I find striking in the VHP is the extent to which the leadership of a modern guru like Chinmayananda, who has a following among middle-class Indians in urban India and the United States, has become generally more accepted. As a disciple of Shivananda, the founder of the Divine Life Society, and a codisciple of Chidananda, Shivananda's successor, he belongs squarely to modern Hinduism. After spending a period in the Himalayas with his second guru, Tapovanam, Chinmayananda started in the 1950s to give lectures that he called "sacrifices of learning" (*jnanayajna*). At that time he was very much opposed by the "orthodox" because of his opposition to caste and gender differentiation in spiritual education. Gradually, though, he made his way up and now has a schedule that includes every year places in India, Malaysia, Africa, and even summer camps in the United States.[527]

(ed) *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 27-32; 30.

[524] Cf. "If my description of the figure of Vidyaranya is correct, he might be considered in some sense a predecessor of Vivekananda. For he, too, has made of Sankara something quite different from what he was earlier, and that again for the purposes of defence, this time against Christianity." Paul Hacker, 'On Sankara and Advaitism,' in Wilhelm Halbfass (ed) *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 27-32; 29-30.

[525] van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 70.

[526] Observe the startling difference of Chinmayananda's mission: "His movement is very similar to the Ramakrishna Mission, and one can see a direct link between the teachings of Vivekananda and those of Chinmayananda. What I see as very important is the extent to which this kind of teaching has moved from the margin to the center of "monastic" Hinduism. Even gurus with a much longer pedigree and a firm footing in established high-caste communities, like some of the Shankaracharyas, have started using the discourse of modern Hinduism." van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 137.

[527] van der Veer (1994), ibid., pp. 136-137.

With this process, we witness what van der Veer describes as "...a kind of Protestant reformation in Indian religion that entails a 'laicization' of organization and leadership..."[528] The laicization of Indian religion, particularly Saivism, involves the 'orthodox' appropriation of bourgeois elements of nationalist discourse. The significance of this phenomenon is that bourgeois nationalist discourse is no longer confined to the middle-class Indian intelligentsia. With the conglomeration of political power signaled by the VHP, the Sankaracharyas themselves now display similar rhetoric to the middle-class gurus who have joined their orders since the nineteenth century.[529]

If we are to benefit from van der Veer's analysis it is necessary to further investigate the laicization of Vedanta, or de-institutionalization of the *guru-sisya-parampara*, in the context of Chinmayananda's disciple, Swami Dayananda. Our theorization of Dayananda's reformation of bourgeois ideology and Vedanta shares broad assumptions similar to van der Veer's analysis of the Hindu elements of Indian nationalism.[530] As van der Veer suggests, moreover, understanding Hindu nationalism requires both an analysis of 'tradition' that is not prejudiced by 'modernity' and a theory that recognizes the

[528] van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. xiii.

[529] As we have mentioned, the late Candrasekharendra Saraswati of Kanchipuram starkly demonstrates several paradigmatic elements of bourgeois ideology. For instance, see his comments against caste-difference in education in Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati Svami, *The Guru Tradition* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1991), pp. 78-82. His comments in defense of the onslaught of missionary conversion are also relevant: "Those who carry our religious conversions are highly skilled in propaganda. By giving money or through some other clever means they induce ignorant people to embrace their faith and annex village after village to their religion." (p. 184). For a good critical summary of the sage see Andrew O. Fort, *Jivanmukti in Transformation: Embodied Liberation in Advaita and Neo-Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), pp. 152-171.

[530] Cf. "To study these aspects—movements, discourses, practices—we need a shift in emphasis from the political scientist's study of political parties and voting behaviour to the anthropologist's study of religious movements and ritual action as part of historical practice." van der Veer (1994), ibid., ix. Of course, Indian politics is directly informed by religious movements, as van der Veer notes, "except for those of the Marxist left, Indian dreams of the nation always take religion as one of the main aspects of national identity." Discourse of the Indian Congress party, for instance, even "...imagines a common ethnic culture of India in terms of religious pluralism." The plurality of languages and cultures imagined in the sphere of the Indian nation are then represented with the protection and arbitration of the state, but conflicting 'subnationalities' are consequently moderated with epistemic violence, that is: "the state must promote the idea of religious tolerance in a pluralist society, which it can only do by emphasizing the commonality of spiritual pursuits. Thus the state is not secular. Rather, it promotes a specific view of "religion" as a universal characteristic of Indian ethnicity. The different religions are only refractions of one great Indian spirituality, which the state provides equally for in its education system." (p. 23). Thus one hardly needs to emphasize the extent to which the Congress party depends on the ideology of the Hindu renaissance.

agency of colonial subjects.[531] Van der Veer correctly calls for a study of religious nationalism and the problematic category of 'tradition' for theorizing the impact of colonialism without effectively erasing the Indian subject, but his analysis is limited by comparisons of contemporary religious movements with some pre-colonial 'Hinduism'. Consequently, his approach prevents any significant analysis of 'tradition.'

In chapter five we will have an opportunity to analyze variants of traditional discourse, but at the moment I would like to conclude with a brief analysis of the background of Swami Dayananda's nationalist discourse. Traditional elements of Dayananda's discourse of Vedanta stem from his understanding of the Upanisads as a verbal means of knowledge (*sabda pramana*) as revealed in his encounter with one Swami Pranavananda. Little is known about Pranavananda and even less about his *guru*, an adept (*avadhuta*) with whom he kept good company (*satsang*), but this influence is best understood in relation to Dayananda's introduction to the *Upanisads* in 1952 during a series of sermons delivered on the *Mundaka* by Chinmayananda at a *jnanayajna* in Madras.

To understand the laicization of Vedanta it is necessary to first get an idea of Chinmayananda's salvific motivations. Prior to the realization of Chinmayananda's *jnanayajnas* campaign, his agenda was simply called the 'Gangotri Plan,' or, in the saints own words, an 'afternoon dream.'[532] Sitting on the banks of the Ganga, the swami's hagiographers declare that 'Mother Ganga' herself spoke to Chinmayananda and insisted that he should likewise let his knowledge flow across the plains of India. Chinmayananda's plan was based upon his realization that he must impart his knowledge to the common people of India, without bias towards caste or creed. With only the barest outlines of his mission, Chinmayananda was immediately certain that he must take the Upanisads, or the 'rich Hindu scriptures,' along with practices for developing the mind and concentration, all over India.[533] Chinmayananda constructs the role, or social control, of Indian ascetics as masters of internalization who discipline the mind for the mutual

[531] van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. x.
[532] Chindananda and Ramani (2001), ibid., pp. 6-8.
[533] Chindananda and Ramani (2001), ibid., pp. 9-10.

benefit of individualization and national integration, however, at the center of his fantasies one may discern the hegemonic implications of his saintly enunciations.[534]

The extent of Chinmayananda's imagination is revealed with his belief that the original vision of the Upanisads was a nationalist one.[535] Nevertheless, says Chinmayananda, the great saints of the past have had little lasting effect because they have failed to relate the knowledge of the Upanisads to the historical, political, and artistic conditions of Indian society. As expected, this is the job of contemporary saints: the VHP and its affiliated 'Mahatmas' must provide convincing interpretations of the *Upanisads* while inspiring Indians to come together as a nation.[536] It is perhaps otherwise inconceivable why Indians believe an Aryan tradition rooted in *rsi*-regimes of elitism may be dispersed in mass sermons but from Roy onwards renaissance saints have struggled to this very end.

Chinmayananda was initiated in the *saraswati dasanami* in 1949 by the Indian yogi and former physician Swami Sivananda Saraswati (1887-1963), founder of the Divine Life Society (1936) and the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy (1948). Shortly after returning to India from a medical career in Malaysia (1913-1923), during which time he had become fascinated with the writings of Vivekananda, a wandering Saivite ascetic recorded as

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[534] Preaching as an ecumenical representative of Hinduism and confessing that "the great masters have provided us with certain ideals and goals", in a brief sermon on the *Role of Mahatmas in National Integration* Chinmayananda valiantly rides the crest of Orientalist subjectivation. Chinmayananda frames the individual as inherently evil in order to construct a mediating and salvific role for religious saints: "a mental discipline is necessary, because the mind is really the animal in everyone, there is a wolf in everyone of us. It is lying low at this moment, but at the smallest provocation the wolf will come out. This is human nature…Now when the wolf comes out, if there's no training given to us to control the wolf, and redirect that wolfish energy, those negative tendencies into positive channels of love and tenderness, and mercy and forgiveness, how can there be integration?" See Swami Chinmayananda, *Role of Mahatmas in National Integration* (Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 1988), p. 5. The special role of 'mahatmas' in the institutionalization of this unification lies in their ability to 'discipline' the tendencies of 'human nature' with authoritative methods of manipulation. With Saivite ascetics atop his hierarchy, others are construed as regulators of subservient ideals, such as "…international problems, national problems, social problems, and the security of the community", but nationalist experts who conduct their affairs in the public sphere are thereby "…thinking only in terms of the larger soul, and they neglect the individual." (p. 6). Of course, in spite of this rhetorical condemnation, Chinmayananda struggles to save the Indian nation, as exemplified by the fact that his undergraduate study of law at Lucknow University in 1940 was interrupted when his political activities became so extreme that they warranted an issue for his arrest. Rather than submitting himself to the proper authorities, however, the mahatma chose to stake out until his eventual capture and incarceration in 1942. Following a brief imprisonment, Chinmayananda eventually finished his studies at Lucknow and assumed a career as a journalist writing on various nationalist issues.

[535] Chinmayananda (1988), ibid., p. 19.

[536] Chinmayananda (1988), ibid., pp. 19-20.

Swami Visvananda Saraswati happened to require the assistance of the doctor, whereupon, after a few brief words, the patient was requested to initiate Sivananada into the mendicant (*samnyasa*) mode of life (*asrama*).[537] Chinmayananda came into contact with the sermons of Sivananda in 1947 and instantly became so impressed with the *swami* that within a year of their first meeting he had quit his job in Delhi and relocated to Rishikesh to join the saint's bourgeois Society.

Sivananada, the model of a renaissance Indian and the founder of a new religious movement labeled "the Yoga of Synthesis," is widely known for his defamation of scriptural study and the Sanskrit language.[538] As such, the *swami* soon discovered that he was incapable of providing Chinmayananda with the education he so desired. Upon Chinmayananda's insistence that he wanted to study Sanskrit and the *Upanisads* like other archaic *acaryas* of pre-colonial India, Sivananda recommended that the persistent student should visit a reclusive *swami* named Tapovan Maharaj (1889-1957) who was practicing austerities and preaching in the Himalaya Mountains of Uttarkashi. Similar to Vivekananda and subsequent agents of the Hindu Renaissance, Swami Sivananda maintains that the Upanisads contain the "direct intuitive experiences of Rishis or Seers who attained Brahma Sakshatkara or Self-Realization."[539] More specifically, "the Rishis and sages of yore have made experiments and researches in meditation and given to the world their spiritual experiences...You will simply have to follow their instructions..."[540] Moreover, Brahman is beyond the reach of the mind and intellect. Tendencies (*vasanas*) inside the mind are the root cause of birth, death, and all suffering. As we shall see, this aspect of Sivananda's teaching methodology, in particular, is clearly discernible in the pedagogy of his student, Swami Chinmayananda.

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[537] Hagiographers of the Divine Life Society like to summarize the affair by carefully adding that the newly initiated *swami* also hired one Swami Vishnudevananda to perform a celebratory ritual at the historic Kailas Ashram in Rishikesh.

[538] Cf. Bharati (1970), ibid., p. 272.

[539] See Sivananda's commentary on Brahma Sutra 1.1.2. Swam Sivananda, *Brahma Sutras: Text, Word-To-Word Meaning, Translation and Commentary* (Tehri-Garhwal, U.P.: The Divine Life Society, 1949), p. 17.

[540] Swami Sivananda, *Vedanta For Beginners* (Tehri-Garhwal, U.P.: The Divine Life Society, 1941), p. 7.

Knowledge of Brahman is attained by eradicating *vasanas* and annihilating the mind.[541] As for the role of the guru in this process, it is a 'hidden mystic science.'[542] The guru, only a bit more specifically, transmits knowledge through a spiritual power termed 'Sanki-Sanchara.'[543] Apparently, there is 'a certain spiritual vibration' transferred from the guru to the mind of the disciple. It is recounted that this was also the way Swami Vivekananda was directed towards his internal path towards attaining perfection.[544] In any case, the role of the guru, like that of scripture, is simply to show one the right path towards knowledge or the direct intuitive insight provided by *Anubhava* (experience). Any man with an itching for knowledge will have to scratch for himself.[545]

Similarly for Swami Tapovan, knowledge of *brahman* is attained through destroying the mind and eradicating all its thought modifications (*vrittis*).[546] Moreover, the *mahvakya tat tvam asi* "generates a force of meditation which culminates in the 'experience' of the Lord."[547] Whatever influence Tapovan may have exercised upon Chinmayananda, his Himalayan retreat provided the opportunity to distance himself from the explicit congregationalism of Sivananda and subsequently portray a more traditional image. Upon receiving the title of a *swami* and practiced yoga in the Himalayas, Chinmayananda was ready to preach throughout India, however, it should be noted that Tapovan did not agree with his self-assessment and kindly asked the student to continue various yoga practices and then just live simply amongst the good people (*sadhus*) of India:

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[541] Swami Sivananda, *Practice of Vedanta* (Tehri-Garhwal, U.P.: The Divine Life Society, 1934), p. 89. Desires of the tongue and genitals are the cause for most suffering. See Swami Sivananda, *Vedanta For Beginners* (Tehri-Garhwal, U.P.: The Divine Life Society, 1941), p. 10. Sivananda was not always clear about how the eradication of desires is achieved. In general, he was fond of a range of spiritual experiences. See Swami Sivananada, *Spiritual Experiences* (Tehri-Garhwal, U.P.: The Divine Life Society, 1957).

[542] Swami Sivananda, *Guru Tattva* (Tehri-Garhwal, U.P.: The Divine Life Society, 1998).

[543] Sivananda (1998), ibid., p. 17.

[544] Cf. "Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa touched Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda had super conscious experience. He struggled hard for seven years more, even after the touch, for attaining perfection. Sivananda (1998), ibid., p. 18.

[545] Cf. "Guru and Sastras can show you the path and remove your doubts. Anubhava of Aparoksha kind or direct intuitive knowledge is left for your own experience. A hungry man will have to eat for himself. He who has a severe itching will have to scratch for himself." Sivananda (1998), ibid., p. 19.

[546] Cf. "So, the experience of Brahman is when the mind is fully merged in the contemplation of Brahman, and all other thoughts (Vritties) have been totally eliminated." See Swami Tapovan Maharaj, *Glory of Brahma Vidya* (Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 1987), pp. 10-11.

[547] Tapovan (1987), ibid., p. 25.

> Swami Tapovan Maharaj, however, was a person who had very orthodox views on how to spread the knowledge of the Upanishads and other scriptures. He felt that it 'is useless to carry Vedanta to the market place. Some may understand it. Many may not even listen to it. A few alone will be converted by it.' He was of the firm view that the Almighty Himself would guide true seekers of knowledge to a guru and help them in acquiring the knowledge of truth and reality.[548]

Nevertheless, within six months of his retreat amongst Indian *sadhus*, Chinmayananda returned to Tapovan again seeking permission to spread the gospel of the Upanisads throughout the subcontinent. Finally, in 1951, Tapovan acceded to Chinmayananda's plea and allowed the saint to embark on his national mission. In 1952 Chinmayananda's ecumenical campaign reached Madras.

As we have mentioned, Chinmayananda, like his nineteenth century predecessors, perceived himself as a revolutionary teacher of Vedanta who was destined to rescue the Upanisads from Brahmanical authority and distribute *brahmavidya* among the masses of the Indian market.[549] In this context, moreover, Chinmayananda believed he was simply repaying his debts to the ancient Aryan *risis*.[550] If not for the more direct debts to his own personal teachers, then, it may come as a surprise that Chinmayananda dismissed the Upanisads as a means of knowledge of *brahman*: "Scriptures and Sastra-s only give us a road-map. However much you may study the road map, you will never reach the pilgrim centre. You study the map, roll it up and keep it handy by your side, as it may be useful enroute during the journey."[551] Neither Upanisads nor gurus reveal knowledge of

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[548] Chindananda and Ramani (2001), ibid., p. 8.

[549] Cf. "A good example of Vivekananda's impact on Hindu nationalism is his effort to systematize disparate notions of ascetic practice in an 'ancient system of yoga,' which is now India's main export article on the 'spirituality market.' van der Veer (1994), ibid., p. 70.

[550] Cf. "Hindu revival is our goal; this is the sole purpose of the Chinmaya Mission. In striving to bring about it around us in life, we are also paying up our Rsi-debts (Rsi Rna). We are taught by our teachers: we owe them a debt of gratitude. We pay it up as much as we can by imparting this knowledge to others and by constantly living the life as taught to us by our teachers and Acarya-s." Swami Chinmayananda, *Practice of Vedanta* (Mumbai: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 1991), pp. 13-14.

[551] Chinmayananda (1991), ibid., pp. 7-8. Moreover, as Chinmayananda states elsewhere, the Upanisads are 'the inspired declarations of several Rishis from the height of their intuitive experience. When the Rishis were absorbed in the transcendental experience, they had gone beyond the realm of 'I' amd 'Mine.' Furthermore, "the field of enquiry for the Rishis was the 'experiencer.'" See Swami Chinmayananda, *The Art of Living* (Mumbai: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 2002), pp. 76-78.

brahman, but may only remove obstacles on our meditative path to truth.[552] For Chinmayananda, training and taming the mind and transcending tendencies (*vasanas*) may discipline our psychological equipments to reach knowledge of *brahman*.[553]

The paradigmatic significance of the de-institutionalization of the *guru-sisya-parampara* concerns the *mahatmas* loss of disciplinary control of the very soul liberated in the lineage through which he transmits his new religious movement, as evidenced in anthropological investigation of one subjected to his authority. The irony of Chinmayananda's salvation is that the Hindu soul still transmigrates. Relocating to Madras from the small village of Manjakudi in the Thanjavur District of Tamil Nadu, the young Natarajan Iyer could not foretell that he would become the world-renowned and highly revered Swami Dayananda Saraswati. In Madras, Dayananda was only concerned with earning a living and he was able to obtain various jobs as a typist, stenographer, and editor of local newspapers. After a brief stint as the manager of a theatre company, Dayananda suddenly decided to join the Indian Air Force as a regular combatant at the Bangalore Ground Training Station.[554] Nevertheless, before even completing basic ground training, Dayananda returned to Madras; Dayananda sensed that the Air Force were trying to control his mind and he didn't care for such mind control.[555] It was in the midst of one of his occupations as some sort of clerk that Dayananda come upon Swami Chinmayananda's sermon on the *Mundaka Upanisad* during a *jnanayajna* campaign in Madras in 1952. Following a series of influential events, the majority of which we are not presently interested, Dayananda was initiated as a renunciate (*sannyasin*) in the *saraswati* religious order (*dasanami*) of Advaita and the lineage of Sankarcharya by

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[552] Cf. "The grace of the scriptures and the masters can not only guide and lead us when we are confused, but support us en route when we are weary and tired, and remove all obstacles, to make it a pleasant pilgrimage to the Higher, the Timeless and therefore, changeless, birthless, deathless undecaying, eternal, immortal, imperishable, etc., A purified mind, at its seat of meditation, rides along these thoughts in the early states of contemplation, and when it gets soaked with these thoughts, it gathers greater meditative poise and in those moments of inner peace and knowledge, the mind disappears into the vision—the Infinite, the Non-dual Brahman." Swami Chinmayananda, *Vakya Vritti of Adi Sankara: Text with Translation and Commentary* (Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 1985), p. 4.

[553] Chinmayananda (1991), ibid., p. 3.

[554] Padma Narasimhan, *Swami Dayananda Saraswati: The Traditional Teacher of Brahma Vidya* (Madras: TT. Maps & Publications LTD., No Date), p. 32.

[555] Narasimhan (No Date), ibid., pp. 33-34.

Chinmayananda in 1962.[556] In the course of this decade, however, there emerges at least one significant event worth noting.

Though he had spent several years under the tutelage of Chinmayananda since first hearing the very word Upanisad at the *jnanayajna* in Madras, Dayananda was still having vagueness, doubt, and error in reference to the attainment of *brahmavidya*. In his ardent search for knowledge, Dayananda happened to come in contact with Swami Pranavananda and he was instantly struck with the realization that the *swami* knew something more than what was being taught elsewhere in Madras. As such, Dayananda decided to go stay with Pranavananda in Gudivada at his monastery (*ashram*) in an attempt to further understand his teachings about *sabda pramana* and the verbal authority of the Upanisads. Significantly, for Dayananda, Pranavananda "...dismissed the theory of *Vasana Ksayah*—the negation of *vasanas*—as a means to *Moksah*."[557] No doubt, this theory had been source of Dayananda's earlier doubts. Pranavananda 'unfolded' the words of the Upanisads as a means of knowledge (*pramana*). The words were used to 'unfold' the truth and remove the conditions and limitations of their usual referents. With this understanding and teaching methodology, Dayananda's ignorance was resolved.

Nevertheless, the early influence of Chinmayananda's bourgeois ideology has exerted a lasting impact upon the teachings of Dayananda. The teaching tradition of Advaita Vedanta had once been maintained through familial ancestor lineages, but in contemporary India the parents have no knowledge of this tradition so Dayananda maintains that it is necessary to establish Vedic educational institutions. Clearly, however, the *swami's* mission extends far beyond the *Upanisadic* tradition. Indeed, it was Dayananda who composed the founding constitution for the VHP and this organization continues to hold regular meetings at the swami's Gurukulam in Saylorsburg, PA, in the United States.[558] Residing over one such meeting on August 22, 1998, Dayananda proposed that the VHP should commence preparation for a 'Hindu Handbook' which

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[556] Additional details of Dayananda's activities during this time are further elaborated in chapter five.

[557] Narasimhan (No Date), ibid., p. 60. In chapter five, we shall discuss several other modern teaching methodologies Dayananda has dismissed in the wake of understanding Vedanta as a *pramana*.

[558] See Kalyani Johnson, 'VHP at AVG, Saylorsburg,' in *Arsha Vidya Bharati*, 3.2, 1998, Coimbatore, Sruti Seva Trust, pp. 11-14.

defines basic beliefs, practices, precepts, values, and duties of Hinduism. It was recommended that this Hindu Handbook should then be distributed to every Hindu home in Indian and abroad.[559] Moreover, the VHP were charged with the task of writing a proper history of Hindu culture to counter the demoralizing views of Indian history written by foreign scholars. Dayananda furthermore urged VHP members to assemble in a unified voice to represent Hindu culture under the umbrella term of 'Hinduism.'[560]

Not simply limited to nationalist discourse of the VHP, Dayananda has since instigated many bourgeois initiatives on behalf of Arsha Vidya. For instance, delivering the Key Note Address for a seminar on 'Violence to Hindu Heritage' spearheaded by the Citizen's Committee for Dharma Rakshana Sammelan in Madras on July 17, 1999, Dayananda spoke outright about the many supposed 'threats' to Hindu culture and religion.[561] Dayananda even senses that missionary attempts to convert Hindus represents a belittling of Indian culture and creates further shame among Indians.[562] Noting that Hindu nationalism that can rebuild the Indian nation, Dayananda explains that preserving the unique culture of great *Bharat* might actually heal the emotional security of contemporary Indians:

> It has such a profundity which has to be recognized. Only then will the people feel that they belong to something very rich and profound. It is important. For one's emotional security, for emotional stability for the core person, for self-esteem culture plays a very big role. Modern psychology has proved that. Cultural disturbance is really the greatest form of disturbance to emotional stability and cultural uprooting is also dangerous to emotional stability. That is why conversion is violence.[563]

In a somewhat surprising admission, Dayananda has even began to plead to Muslim clerics for their acceptance of perverse Vaishnava ideology and awareness of Krishna and

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[559] Johnson (1998), ibid., p. 13.
[560] Johnson (1998), ibid., p. 14.
[561] Swami Dayananda, *Conversion is Violence* (Coimbatore: Sruti Seva Trust, No Date). A pamphlet entitled *Violence to Hindu Heritage* has also been produced without regard for publication details.
[562] See also Laurie Cozad, 'The United States' Imposition of Religious Freedom: The International Religious Freedom Act and India,' in *India Review* 4.1, 2005, pp. 59-83; 73-74.
[563] T.R. Jawahar, 'Don't Trample on a Sentiment, Warns Swami Dayananda,' NT Special Interview in *News Today*, July 01, 2003, (http://newstodaynet.com/swami/0107ss1.htm).

Rama's function in Hindu culture, and for the latter's birthplace at Ayodya.[564] In a valiant attempt to unify the voice of the Hindu nation, moreover, Dayananda has organized the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha whose mission statement and resolutions were passed in a formal gathering in Madras during November 29-December 1, 2003. Comprised of nearly seventy Acharyas from various Indian traditions (*sampradayas*), the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha is organized under the auspices of the single composite known from time immemorial as *Sanatana Dharma*. The ideological statement and resolutions of this assembly display a range of nineteenth century bourgeois elements in the discourse of Hindu nationalism. More recently, Dayananda has instigated a campaign against Christian missionary activities in the regions of Tirupati and Tirmula, Andhra Pradesh. The historic 'Tirupati Declaration' was launched at a meeting of the Tirumala Tirupati Samrakshana Samiti (TTSS) at Tirupati on July 15, 2006.[565] The document declares support for immediate deportation of all non-Hindu employees in the Seven Hills district of Tirmula, one of the most sacred areas for devout Vaishnava devotees of Venkateswara.

The politics of Dayananda's own Hindu mission further emerges with his understanding of divinity, or evangelical narratives of Indian identity. At times forthright about the heritage of his lineage, specifically the Saiva power invested therein, Dayananda's acceptance (or knowledge) of God certainly belies any concept of tolerance. The strategic significance of the Hindu pantheon lies in the fact that while acknowledging all Indian approaches to God as valid, the *swami* represents various local religious formations thereby legitimated through their transnational silence. In a clarion call to "go to every corner in the country and bring the message to each and every tribal", for instance, the irony of Dayananda's sermons is revealed in his declaration that the Hindu validated in the course of this all-India crusade "does not have to change his religion."[566] As a transnational Hindu, for Dayananda, "we do not say that there is one God. We do not say that there are many Gods. We say that there is only God."[567] Leaving aside his

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[564] T.R. Jawahar, 'Don't Trample on a Sentiment, Warns Swami Dayananda,' NT Special Interview in *News Today*, July 01, 2003, (http://newstodaynet.com/swami/0107ss1.htm).
[565] The Tirupati Declaration has been reproduced as 'Tirupati Declaration: Hindus of the World Unite,' in *Arsha Vidya Newsletter*, 7.7, July, 2006, Coimbatore, Sruti Seva Trust, pp. 2-4.
[566] Swami Dayananda, *Hinduism*, (Coimbatore: Arsha Vidya Kutteram, 2001), p. 20.
[567] Dayananda (2001), ibid., p. 15.

construction of 'religion' in India (tribal or urban), while ignoring Dayananda's belief that the Indian tribal form "of worship is perfectly in keeping with our wonderful heritage", we may locate the myth of Vedanta in the *swamis* Brahmanical imagination, or Hindu mission of universalist subjectivation and emotional affirmation.[568]

The subordinating procedures theorized by Paul Hacker as a "typically Indian" attempt to escape the "pressure of a concrete historical situation" should be qualified as a regimen for Brahminization, but we may well understand 'inclusivism' as a therapeutic system of passive confrontation.[569] Unfortunately, however, for those with no value for merging, synthesizing, even 'uplifting', integrating, and interacting with cults and lineages of oppositional needs and pursuits, in spite of Vaisnava politicians who strategically locate themselves in the sphere of Vedic authority, chauvinists may soon awaken from their dream of the Indian nation.[570] As Richard King explains, "critics of the Western colonial

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[568] Of course, the implications of Dayananda's crusade is that all-India Hindus are relegated to function as supplementary truths to the monistic conception of Advaita.

[569] Wilhelm Halbfass, (ed.), *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 11. See also Paul Hacker, Paul, 'A Prasthanatraya Commentary of Neo-Hinduism: Remarks on the Work of Radhakrishnan,' in Halbfass (1995), ibid., pp. 337-350; 346. Described as a strategic means of "...claiming for, and thus including in, one's own religion what really belongs to an alien sect", the Indian politician Tulsidas serves as a prototypical model of Vaisnava passivity: "in Banaras, a city in which the cult of Siva was predominant, he proclaimed devotion to Rama. His ingenious safeguard against possible hostility from the alien sect was his teaching that worship of Siva was all right, because Siva himself was the foremost and noblest worshipper of Rama. In this way Tulsidas did not encroach on the religion of Siva but claimed it in its entirety for his own. It seems that this method was employed especially by such religious groups as felt themselves inferior to their environment." Paul Hacker, 'Aspects of Neo-Hinduism as Contrasted with Surviving Traditional Hinduism,' in Halbfass (1995), pp. 229-255; 244-245. The persistence of this Vaisnava display of social conduct renders the response of Saiva Indians all the more shocking, as Hacker explains, "similarly, the sentence 'Visnu and Siva are one', which is so common in Saivite Puranas, is not only meant to be a theological statement, but also an appeal to the Vaisnavas." (p. 346). The audacity of this Saivite invitation, or seductive enunciation, is confounded with primitive elements of Vaisnava self-validation, that is, "...a staunch Vaisnava—who, as such, is *ekantin*—avoids using Siva as a proper name..." Paul Hacker, 'Relations of Early Advaitins to Vaisnavism,' in Halbfass (1995), ibid., pp. 33-39; 34. Of course, it is unclear what satisfaction is gained by Vaisnavas who refer to Siva by his Vedic name Rudra.

[570] As Bruce Lincoln explains, structural segmentation in lineages of ancestral invocation resist needless calls for mutual integration. Claiming common descent from the Vedas, it would seem, does not overcome the radical social and emotional differences of conflicting lineage systems: "it is when separate individuals recall their common descent from (and thus attachment to) a given ancestor that they reawaken their (latent) feelings of affinity for, and attachment to, one another. In that very moment and by that very act of memory, they (re-)define themselves as kin, that is, persons who are joined together in the same familial group. In this way the past shapes the present, invocation of an ancestor being simultaneously the evocation of a correlated social group. Conversely, the present also shapes the past that is recollected, for specific ancestral invocations, being stimulated by the needs of a present situation, must be appropriate to those needs: One cannot rally tribal-sized groups for clan-level conflicts, or vice versa." See Bruce Lincoln,

legacy should not allow themselves to be 'blackmailed' into thinking that there are only two alternatives—Western colonialism or Hindu nationalism—and that to repudiate the former is to align with the later."[571] Indian variants of Aryanism require neither universalist and nationalist models of Hinduism nor Orientalist affirmations of mysticism.

Recently, in an interview that ranged from communalism and secularism to 'pseudo secularism,' Swami Dayananda remarked that contemporary Indian nationalist movements are "...not really doing the propaganda of *Hindutva* perhaps properly...The emphasis has to be recast and redone properly. There is a national culture and it is from this land...Therefore, we need to talk about our *bharatiya* culture, *bharatiya* religion and *Bharat* as a nation."[572] The notion of redoing, in any reconstructed fashion, the discourse of *Hindutva* is no doubt alarming, but it is nevertheless recast as an absolute element of Dayananda's propaganda.[573] In this context, perhaps, Hindu nationalism enters its third reincarnation thanks to the *swami*'s narration of the Upanisads, theorized as a subaltern variant of 19th and 20th century (trans-) missions. Clarifying the American context of Dayananda's discourse is a prerequisite for our analysis of his religious system.

Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification (NY: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 20. Of course, the history of Brahmanical politics refutes this process.

[571] King (1999b), ibid., p. 213.

[572] T.R. Jawahar, 'Secular State has to Protect Every Religion—Including Hinduism,' NT Special Interview in *News Today*, Retrieved April, 10, 2004 (http://newstodaynet.com/swami/0608ss2.htm).

[573] Indeed Hindu discourse of the Indian nation provides the fabric with which we may unravel the braids of neo-colonial power: Brahminization, Orientalism, and reverse colonialism. As James G. Lochtefeld notes in reference to critics of the 'Hindu Right', "the past ten years have seen the rapid, sometimes explosive growth of Hindutva, and the equally vehement criticism of its opponents, some of whom have characterized it as a 'fascist' movement. Whether or not one agrees with Hindutva ideas and methods, its recent prominence makes it all the more important to examine and genuinely address. Labeling it 'fascism' (or any other name) may reflect the perception of these critics, and perhaps give them emotional satisfaction, but this does little to help us understand its recent success, after nearly fifty years of marginal force in India. Nor does this indicate its prospects for further success, or the ways that its influence is shaping modern Indian life and understandings of India's past." Lochtefeld (1996), ibid., p. 101. Theorizing the fascist discourse of Hindutva in light of the mythic past fabricated by right-wing historians who now wage their battle "...in the classrooms of the elementary and high schools" of the Indian nation in effort to reconfigure the direction of the Aryan invasion and invert political control of the textbooks whereby the self-complexes of the neo-colonial children of Bharat are conditioned, Brian Smith legitimately asks: "how far should we allow our professional open-mindedness regarding religion and religious claims to extend, especially when we are asked to be open-minded about those who are closed-minded?" Smith (1996), ibid., pp. 123-124. This question is not answered, however, through analysis of those factions labeled 'fascist' as provided by critics who fail to describe what they mean by this 'unsatisfactory' term.

Chapter Four

Imagining Vedanta: Neo-Colonialism and Privitization

> Ideology is now less a matter of reality becoming inverted in the mind, than of the mind reflecting a real inversion.[574]

In our analysis of Indian inversions of Orientalist affirmations we witnessed mimetic narratives of ideological legitimation. In particular, the nationalist discourse of Swami Vivekananda was shown as an example of laicization. While the saint proved therapeutic for colonial Indians, it is due to his consensual homogenization that the discourses of 'Vedanta', 'mystic India', and 'Hinduism' are integrally related in the American imagination. In this context, we emphasized the ways in which Indian resistance to colonial hegemony often reinforce Orientalist paradigms regulating the subordination and control of the Indian people. The discourse of neo-colonialism is therefore constructed with paradigmatic elements of Indian nationalism and affirmative Orientalism, inasmuch as Indian saints resistant to Orientalist presuppositions of European superiority simply adopt Romantic conceptions of Indian spirituality to displace hegemonic narratives of Hindu inferiority without questioning whether or not such homogenous judgments of Indian culture, or cultural icons, are likely true or false. The privatization of Vedanta by middle-class Indian mystics and American spiritualists serves to efface any subaltern response to New Age discourse of neo-colonialism. On the other hand, the American majority is not uniformly sympathetic to bourgeois rhetoric of Hinduism or naively committed to empowering Indian nationalists and mystical representations of Vedanta with affirmative narratives of Orientalism.

Of course, there is no dearth of historical accounts that describe Swami Vivekananda as "America's first Hindu" or, in other words, "the first heathen we had seen face to face."[575] The fact that Vivekananda arrived in Chicago without an invitation to the

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[574] Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991).

[575] Now, diary entries of New England xenophiles and ship merchants such as those reported by the Salem Congregationalist William Bentley in 1790 upon "seeing for the first time a native of the Indies from Madras" hardly need mentioning in our study. See Carl T. Jackson, *The Oriental Religions and American Thought: Nineteenth Century Explorations* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 9. Indian missionaries would not start preaching on American soil until over a hundred years later. Interest in Indian

Parliament he felt destined to attend and spent the night before the conference in an abandoned boxcar is symbolic of the dilemmas awaiting succeeding heathens. From the outset, transmigration of Indians to America has been a slow, struggling process. By 1907 organizations such as the Asiatic Exclusion League sought to eradicate the increased immigration of Indians to America. Though Indians had entered several major American cities by 1912, their plight reached its climax in 1917 when the Immigration Act banned South Asians from entering the United States.[576] The ingenious attempt by Hindus to cite their Aryan descent for racially identifying with Caucasians was denied by the Supreme Court and Justice Sutherland's proclamation that Indians were neither 'white people' nor 'Caucasians' inevitably led to the deportation of many naturalized Hindu citizens by 1926.[577] For those few Hindus who did remain in the country there awaited frequent trials of discrimination, harassment, and injustice. However, in line with the affirmative discourse portrayed by the Romantics of Europe and philosophical idealists of British India, America early developed its own camp of sympathetic observers with simplistic conceptions of India. The American response to Hinduism has provided the discourse of Orientalism with a range of conflicting images.

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thought had developed prior to Vivekananda's arrival in 1893, but the first representation of Vedanta in the West was that espoused by him, from his first oratory in Chicago on September 11th until his last sermon delivered in July, 1900, before finally departing the United States. Diana L. Eck notes that Ralph Waldo Emerson was one of the first American's to express fascination with the Hindu tradition, as discerned in his personal journals from 1820 onwards, however: "his early entries expressed his astonished disapproval of the "goddery" and the "ostentatious ritual of India." Rather, Emerson had a particular attraction to "the path of philosophical insight, or *jnana*." Indeed, according to Eck, it was through the insight derived from his reading of the Upanisads that Emerson managed to imagine the unity of this Hindu pantheon, that is, "it was the deeply speculative wisdom literature of the Upanisads and Vedanta philosophy that caught and carried the imagination of Emerson..." See Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a 'Christian Country' Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (San Francisco: Harper, 2001), pp. 94-96. In reference to other work dedicated to the early presence of Vedanta in America, it should be noted that J.P. Rao Rayapati constructs violent comparisons between Vedanta, Jonathan Edwards, Quakers, and American Transcendentalists. Searching for affinities between early American thought and Vedanta, Rayapati reinvents the concept of 'Vedantic literature' while applauding Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman for their assimilation of Indian and American ideas, and even compares these figures to Megasthanes' discovery of 'parallels' between Indian and Greek thought. Rayapati describes the 1840 publication of *The Dial* as a "practical means to propagate their recently reinforced transcendental-Vedantic ideas." See J.P. Rao Rayapati (1973) *Early American Interest In Vedanta: Pre-Emersonian Interest in Vedic Literature and Vedantic Philosophy*. For a discussion of academic interest in Indian philosophy in America see Dale Riepe, *The Philosophy of India and its Impact on American Thought* (Springfield, Ill.: Thomas Press, 1970).

[576] E. Allen Richardson, *East Comes West: Asian Religions and Cultures in North America* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1985), pp. 17-19. The series of legislation during this time culminated with the Johnson-Reed Act which was passed in 1924.

[577] Richardson (1985), ibid., p. 19.

Following the Luce-Cellar Bill in 1946 Indians were again granted the right to seek citizenship in America, but the allotted origins quota only allowed 100 Indians to be naturalized annually. If the number seems meager, one should recall that this legislation was passed at a time when the entire Indian population in the United States had been reduced to a mere 1,500 individuals.[578] Significant change would not come until July 4, 1965, when president Lyndon Baines Johnson signed a new immigration act which effectively eliminated the national quota system. One of the outcomes of this new policy, according to Diana L. Eck, is that the term 'guru' entered into the American vocabulary with the steady stream of Hindus migrating to the United States.[579] Somewhat oversimplifying Indian awareness of pre-colonial traditions on the subcontinent, Eck highlights the extent to which Hindu gurus have been able to exploit Western ignorance:

> In the Hindu tradition, becoming a teacher has traditionally meant receiving the blessing and authority to teach from one's own teacher. It is not a matter of academic degrees but of recognizing that the student has learned deeply the wisdom of the tradition and can teach it with authenticity. Hindus in India know, however, that there are all kinds of gurus, some more fully in possession of the insights of the tradition than others. And in India it is taken for granted that some alleged gurus are downright bogus. In America, however, who was to say? All had a chance to attract a following. In the past thirty-five years, gurus have come and stayed, and come and gone.[580]

The beliefs and practices of bogus Hindus have also led to their marginalization in the context of religion in America. To understand the normative ideology of the American majority, however, we must first clarify the nature of 'cults.' In a recent study of religion in America, Philip Jenkins emphasizes the socially constructed nature of cults and the difficulty in reaching any firm definition of the term.[581] Jenkins suggests we distinguish cults from mainstream bodies in terms of their tension, "which means how each is regarded by the society at large, not necessarily on any objective or rational grounds."[582]

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[578] Richardson (1985), ibid., p. 23.
[579] Eck, (2001), ibid., p. 112.
[580] Eck (2001), ibid., p. 112.
[581] Phillip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[582] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 17.

The acute tension between marginal religious groups and mainstream society is in fact the primary reason for studying American religion through the theoretical lens of cultic activity.[583] Analyses of these power relations are especially important since dominance and subservience are fluid categories which change throughout history.[584] As a result of their fluidity, moreover, combined with that of religious orthodoxy and bourgeois conceptions of normality in societies with no constitutionally ordained religious institution, "even if cults do not have roots in a society, they can develop them quite securely within only a few decades and give the impression that they have been there since time immemorial."[585] Of course, some cults have exerted their power more effectively than others. In terms of hegemony, the history of American religion has been led by cultic behavior and ideology.[586]

Puritan theology is fabricated with elements of Calvinism. To focus upon a dominant theme of this discourse one may isolate the cultic ideology of some doomsday theory which is traced, beyond John Calvin, to the Biblical scriptures themselves. The Revelations of John, which also refer to events prophesized by Daniel in the Hebrew *Tanakh*, is replete with such ideology, while Biblical commands to proselytize develop another significant strand of Puritan theology.[587] Aligned with the doomsday theme,

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[583] Cf. "It is just this relative quality that makes concern about cults such an important gauge for the state of American religion. Because cults are unpopular and unorthodox, by studying changing perceptions of these movements we can discover what the public thinks religious orthodoxy is, or ought to be: we cannot discuss deviancy without a standard of normality, and normality is a fluid concept." Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 18.

[584] Cf. "The cult problem as we observe it today is the product of cultural and political work, which has succeeded remarkably in defining popular attitudes towards the outer reaches of American spiritual life." Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 24.

[585] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 17.

[586] One of the more predominant features of cults is their leadership by authoritarians, often described as figures gifted with some charismatic personality, to whom members willingly submit. This characteristic of 'cults' is perhaps best illustrated in the figure of Jesus Christ, a purported messiah who demanded the utmost respect of ancient Semites. Indeed, this Middle Eastern Jew instructed that no one who did not "hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yea, and even his own life," could be his disciple". See Luke 14:26; Mark 3:34; Matt 10:34-37. Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 225. It is also in this context that New England Puritans were justly branded 'fanatics' by the Church authorities of Great Britian. Cf. "Well into the eighteenth century, "fanatic" was the normal word for describing those Protestant sects and preachers who lay outside the established Anglican Church, including Presbyterians, Baptists, and Congregationalists." Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 27. While the *prophetas* was a sort of charismatic enthusiast who claimed direct revelation from God, the fanatic is discussed in terms of 'mindless devotion' of lunatics and their enthusiastic adherence to the temple.

[587] These ideologies are strikingly combined in the synoptic narrative of Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel

conversion of heathens is a continuous feature of American religious thought and it is in this context that Indians were first acknowledged in the United States.[588] When the American Constitution was composed four decades later, moreover, it ensured the maintenance of this cult.[589] When early American colonialists began to plant their peculiar Semitic beliefs, to be sure, 'others' were uprooted.[590] Indeed between 1659 and 1661 no less than four members of the Quaker movement were hanged on Boston Commons for their heretical belief that Christ is found in some 'Inner Light' guiding

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of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Indeed, as Jenkins admits, "Christianity may be the oldest extant doomsday cult, and it has never lost that strand of belief." Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 225. While this Semitic ideology has been underplayed in other places, it is in America that this cult has flourished among the majority. As Jenkins notes, "to speak of a fringe implies a mainstream, but in terms of numbers, perhaps the largest component of the religious spectrum in contemporary America remains what it has been since colonial times: a fundamentalist evangelicalism with powerful millenarian strands. The doomsday theme has never been far from the center of American religious thought." (p. 5).

[588] Indeed it is no surprise that the American discovery of India is rooted in conversion narratives of New England Puritans. These essays, outlining tactics for converting the "Hindoos" to Christianity, pervaded American missionary literature as early as 1721 when Cotton Mather (1663-1728) published his letters *India Christiana.* While one could choose any sermon of colonial New England to demonstrate the millenarian rhetoric of early Puritan theologians, preaching in seventeenth century Boston, Mather starkly conveys the point. c.f. "The Day is at Hand, when the Turkish Empire, instead of being any longer a Wo to Christendome, shall it self become a Part of Christendome. The Day is at Hand, when the Vail that ha's been upon the Hearts of the Jewish Nation, shall be taken off, and that Nation shall Fear the Lord, and His Good Thing, the Messiah. Concerning the Day of the Lord, wherein these Things will be done, I do with all Freedome say unto you, That Great Day of the Lord, it is Near, it is Near, and it hasteth greatly! Yea, if I could speak with a Voice as loud, as that of the Seventh Trumpet, which we are certain will Sound Quickly, I would Sound this Alarm to all mankind, The Kingdom of God is at Hand! The Kingdom of God is at Hand!" See Cotton Mather, *Days of Humiliation, Times of Affliction and Disaster: Nine Sermons or Restoring Favor with an Angry God, 1696-1727* (Gainesville, Fla: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1970). Of course, "There is no evidence that Mather knew anything or cared to know anything about the Oriental religions or that he looked upon Asia in a positive way." Mather's published Indian letters, designed as missionary guidelines, were also insubstantial. According to Jackson, "Nothing came of these events; when the first American missionaries sailed for India a hundred years later, they proceeded in apparent ignorance of Mather's earlier contacts." Mather's correspondence with August Hermann Francke, a German Pietist and professor of divinity and Oriental languages at the University of Halle who kept Mather's informed of missionary work by Danes in Southern India, also inaugurated the migration of Indian texts to America. From Francke, Mather's "received several religious tracts and a New Testament printed in Tamil, perhaps the first Asian publications to reach America." Jackson (1981), ibid., p. 4. See also Riepe (1970), ibid., p. 3.

[589] As Diana Eck observes in the language of her own tradition, "the Southern Baptists who pray for Hindus who are "lost" are perfectly free to do so." Eck (2001), ibid., p. 24. But Baptists not only pray for Hindus. The British Baptist William Carey (1761-1834) spent forty-one years uprooting indigenous traditions in India. Carey's Serampore Mission established in 1792 led to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in 1810, which dispatched the first American missionaries to India two years later. Jackson (1981), ibid., pp. 86-87.

[590] As Jenkins explains, "From earliest times, the English colonies in America likewise saw themselves as imperiled by subversive religious doctrines and sects of dubious sanity. The most alarming was the Quaker, or Friends, movement of the 1650s, the spiritual kin of James Nayler: the Friends argued that Christ was found in the Inner Light that guided each believer." Jenkins (2000), ibid., pp. 27-28.

believers.[591] It is not just those from within the Abrahamic covenant who have been targeted.

In the context of a loosely organized 'anti-cult movement,' Diana L. Eck distinguishes several characteristics in the image of 'New Age' Hinduism as perceived by Americans.[592] As Eck explains, the one thing the anti-cult movement has successfully accomplished is classifying the great variety of Hindu movements flourishing in America subsequent to 1965 as 'cults.' While these 'new' religious movements sometimes reject this classification, it is nevertheless the critical portrayal of their cultic ideology and practices that remains influential in the minds of most Americans.[593] Following the post-1965 'cult explosion' and alongside the emergence of Hindu influenced new religious movements in the 1970s, the anti-cult campaign gathered momentum particularly during the period 1976-1981.[594] The reasons behind this upsurge of resistance are worth further exploration. It is important, moreover, to understand the historical procedures of this development.

In the Anglican context of colonial New England and the once newly revealed gospel of Jesus Christ, a seminal figure of the Semitic religions who purportedly spent his childhood in Western Asia and the North District of Israel in the city of Nazareth, Christianity was less about systematic theology as it was the struggles of Pilgrims to provide a literalist interpretation of the Holy Bible and distance themselves from the Church of England. First landing at Plymouth Rock in 1620, the Pilgrims were nevertheless of the same religious persuasions as moved the earliest settlers of Virginia

[591] Jenkins (2000), ibid., pp. 27-28.
[592] Diana L. Eck, '"New Age" Hinduism in America,' in Sulochana Raghavan Glazer and Nathan Glazer (eds.), *Conflicting Images: India and the United States* (Glenndale, MD: Riverdale, 1990), pp. 111-142.
[593] Cf. "The Krishna Consciousness movement, for example, objects to the term 'cult' because it is vague and indiscriminately links ISKCON with groups with whom they have many more differences than similarities. They also object to the term 'new religions' because the Krishna devotional tradition of Chaitanya in which they stand is clearly not new, but dates back to the sixteenth century in India. This matter of nomenclature has disturbed the Hare Krishna movement so much that in 1978 it produced a booklet for the media called *Please Don't Lump Us In*, aimed at countering the tendency to speak of a whole spectrum of groups from the Unification Church to Scientology, The Way International, and ISKCON in one breath. All Hindu groups, whether they follow a new charismatic guru or are part of an old established tradition, are also lumped together as if they were virtually the same." Eck (1990), ibid., p. 120.
[594] See Jenkins (2000), ibid., pp. 187-207.

and the first organized colony chartered by the king of England in 1606. The sinfulness of the flesh, the dualism of spirit and matter and the separation between the individual and God, the innate sinfulness of human nature, the doctrine of predestination and the belief that all souls were eternally condemned to either heaven or hell, the belief that the grace of Jesus the only Son of the God of the United Kingdom of Israel and Judah was the only way of salvation, and faith in the infallible word of God as revealed in the Holy Bible, were all part of the ideological consensus and Puritanical high culture of early America.

It would take less than 100 years before the emergence of American spirituality could be defined with the same fervent emotionalism and mindless enthusiasm which had once led orthodox Anglicans to dismiss as fanatics the entire gamut of Protestant sects, including Presbyterians, Baptists, and Congregationalists, which lay outside the established Church of England. With good reason, scholars of religion in America often characterize the years 1720-1750 as a time of 'Great Awakening.' Starting with the Yale graduate and charismatic Protestant theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), the decentralized and individualistic trends of evangelical Christianity contributed to the rise of American nationalism and the liberal sociopolitical ideology leading to the American Revolution. Within another 100 years the Protestant ethos of revivalism would bravely culminate in a decade long campaign (1864-1874) to amend the federal United States Constitution of 1787 sponsored by evangelicals who fought to officially declare America a Christian nation, one spiritual nation under one Semitic God.[595]

Religious revivals and cult booms are subsequently accompanied by notions of oddity and orthodoxy.[596] Such outbreaks are far from new and may even be discerned in the writings of the Church Fathers who were faced with various heresies in the early formation of Christianity.[597] The truth of the matter, however, is that the oddities of one era may be orthodoxies of the future. One example of these shifting power relations may be illustrated with the debates of Christian liberals and modernists during the early nineteenth century. With the rise of theological seminaries and Biblical criticism

[595] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 34.
[596] Jenkins (2000), ibid., pp. 230-231
[597] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 27.

modernists began to make rapid advances though mainstream denominations between 1890 and 1930.[598] Much of their success may be attributed to the ways in which modernists attempted to reconcile scientific discoveries such as evolution with the faith of Christianity. In response, however, conservative Christians produced a series of *Fundamentals* (1910-1915) and the first congress of 'fundamentalists' was held in 1920. Attacking modernist and historical developments, conservatives were also dismissing and confronting the cultural strength of their liberal rivals.[599] A more striking example may be witnessed with the Holiness revival and the rise to power of Pentecostalism. Emerging during the 1890s and grounding their beliefs and practices in the Biblical Book of Acts, Pentecostals were severely criticized by both evangelicals and popular culture at large and were taunted as 'illiterate snake handlers,' 'degenerate white trash,' 'hysterical saints,' 'bizarre primitives,' and religious freaks 'filled with spirit.'[600] Nevertheless a number of Pentecostal denominations were founded during this time, such as the Assemblies of God and the Church of God in Christ, but their surprising success in the face of such odds could not prepare one for the exponential growth of 'megachurches' and their attendance by the 'born again' generation of the twenty-first century.[601]

As there was no distinction recognized between immigrants from the East and peoples of South Asia, of course, cultural concerns leading to the Oriental Exclusion Acts passed during the 1880s and ratified in 1902 are also reflected in the emergence of criticism surrounding Hindu cults transplanted from India. As Jenkins notes, around the turn of the nineteenth century the term 'cult' began to replace older polemical language which had described dubious sects as delusional, fanatical, authoritarian, charismatic etc.[602] The novel and more hostile implications of the term cult were derived from the increase in Western contact with peoples from non-Christian regions where rampant polytheism, superstition, and primitive savagery were seen to be the religious and societal norm. Nevertheless, in spite of this new usage, up until the 1960s discussion and criticism of cults remained almost entirely limited to evangelical Christian attacks on other less

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[598] Jenkins (2000), ibid., pp. 52-53.
[599] Jenkins (2000), ibid., pp. 52-53.
[600] Jenkins (2000), ibid., pp. 64-65; 133-135; 159-160.
[601] Jenkins (2000), ibid., pp. 185-186.
[602] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 48.

conservative Christian or liberal Christian-derived movements.[603]

The literature and campaigns of 'orthodox' Christians during the first half of the twentieth century were primarily aimed at fighting 'heretical' movements which would later be respected as Christian denominations, such as Christian Science, Latter-Day Saints, Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses. The parameters of this debate may also be understood on the basis of common sense, or simple logic. Falsely posing as orthodoxy, it was odd Christian movements that were most likely to pose a threat to gathering church members, as any potential recruit could surely see the striking differences of belief as offered by more esoteric adepts of Theosophy, Order of the Golden Dawn, Brothers of the Rose Cross, etc.[604] Contrary to scholars of religion who suggest the counter-cultural nature of the post-1965 spiritual revolution, as Jenkins correctly suggests "if there was a new spiritual awakening in the 1970s, it was predominantly a Christian and evangelical event..."[605] Any notions created otherwise may be more correctly understood in the context of media sensations rather than 'anti-cult movements.'[606] Nevertheless, any Christian polemicist today describing the oddities of their brethren might surely be instantly marked as an 'unreconstructed fundamentalist.'[607]

The baby boom generation was just coming of age in the late 1960s. The widespread and widely acknowledged disaffection and disillusionment of this youth market may have led to a Christian revival in the historical conditions of another era. As Jenkins notes, however, this option was hardly viable for spiritual seekers of the 1960s.[608] During this

[603] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 51.
[604] Cf. "Among the many sins of the new sects was their deceptive claim to orthodoxy. While no potential recruit was likely to confuse Theosophy or an occult group for a Christian denomination, other sects explicitly presented themselves as Christian. This aroused the fury of orthodox commentators, who pointed out exactly how sects deviated from traditional norms. Cults were to be feared because they sailed under false colors, and their misrepresentations threatened to mislead the unwary. The very name of *Christian* Science asserted its claim to the inheritance of Jesus, as did that of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Explicit anti-Christian polemic or violence could be dealt with overtly, but the cults were threatening subversion from within." Jenkins (2000), ibid., pp. 51-52.
[605] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 186.
[606] Cf. "Though sensational groups like the Hare Krishnas and the Unification Church attracted so many column-inches in the newspapers of the 1970s, these movements were numerically insignificant when set aside the thriving new Protestant sects." Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 186.
[607] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 68.
[608] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 177.

time mainline Protestant churches were dominated with 'social gospel' and liberal views promoting social action in contrast to narcissistic focus upon personal growth and spirituality. Conservative and evangelical movements, on the other hand, shunned all relations with the new youth culture which it identified with hippies, psychedelic drugs, sexual promiscuity, and rock music.[609] While anti-papacy trends had long been amongst the cultic milieu in America, the uncertainties reflected in the wake of the second Vatican council also meant that few baby boomers would turn towards the Catholic Church.[610] As we shall see, one of the more significant contenders of support systems would prove to be the therapy cult and the human potential movement of self-actualization. Nevertheless it is true that the influence and importation of Asian religion would inevitably manifest in the religious marketplace and lives of boomers. In this context, it may be useful to return to Eck's concept of 'New Age Hinduism' and its critique by the 'anti-cult movement.'

The strength of Eck's argument lies in her recognition that the critique of New Age Hinduism represents much more than what is normally implied with conceptual analysis of cults. The issues raised with this analysis extend far beyond heretical fringe movements, ephemeral mystical communities, or marginal ecstatic spiritualists confronted with slander, persecution, deprogramming, rehabilitation, and psychotherapy. What is at stake here is also why anti-cult critics have largely found little reason to cast their concern in this direction. Why would anyone who even vaguely entertained either faith or belief in the ontological distinction between spirit and matter or the epistemological limitations of knowledge in relation to the individual and God, as revealed in the Holy Bible and the infallible Word of God or interpreted by odd or orthodox Christian theologians, and who conceived of themselves as sinful creatures predestined for a heavenly afterlife graced by the intervention of a resurrected Jew or eternally damned to hell, possess the slightest interest in religious movements derived from the revelatory power of Aryanism? What is at stake here is also not any simple critique of particular Hindu movements or idiosyncrasies of specific Indian gurus:

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[609] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 177.
[610] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 177.

> Although it is cast in the anti-cult context, the attack is upon what is perceived, even dimly and in distorted form, as the power of the Hindu worldview per se. The attack is fueled, in these extreme cases, by those who see the new gurus as but the vanguard of a wider movement to subvert Western Judeo-Christian civilization...What they fear is that not only a few marginal youths are 'turning east,' but that an entire culture is in the process of 'turning east.'[611]

As I have briefly attempted to highlight and as Jenkins has convincingly argued, such claims made on behalf of anti-cult critics for the cultural and religious significance of Asian religion in America are grossly exaggerated and attributable to media interest in public and private spectacles of foreign or exotic beliefs and behavior.[612] The majority of the critics examined by Eck are surely less interested in Hindu movements than they are the heresies of their own direct competitors. Indeed Eck acknowledges that what these critics find more insidious are the secularizations of the human potential movement, the self-centered ethos of the New Age, and the inward turnings of secular humanism.[613] Nevertheless, two of the more important critiques noted by Eck in relation to New Age Hinduism may be summarized as follows: (1) It is a religion of world-negation promoting subjectivism and which views human potential as divine and whose primary spiritual task is self-realization. (2) It is a religion which accomplishes its ends through the means of mind-control and techniques of yoga based upon the belief that the mind is responsible for our reality. The admission of this second point also provides explanation for an additional critique which would otherwise take first priority: It is a religion which inculcates allegiance to god-men, authoritarian gurus, who exert disturbing forms of mind-control over their devotees and who are worshipped by their disciples.[614]

If New Age Hinduism is a religion whose goal is accomplished in the realization of the non-duality of the individual and God and which promotes the journey within and yoga techniques of mind-control as the means to arrive at this understanding, then anti-cult critics are correctly disturbed by the seemingly fanatical devotion and praise of the charismatic gurus who offer mechanisms to induce spiritual experiences for enthusiastic

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[611] Eck (1990), ibid., pp. 136-137.
[612] Jenkins (2000), ibid., pp. 181-186.
[613] Eck (1990), ibid., p. 124.
[614] Eck (1990), ibid., p. 134.

aspirants of such cults. In any case, without problematizing the ways in which these practices could or could not lead to such a realization, it is nevertheless true that the reality professed at the root of this doctrine remains threatening to Abrahamic religions. In the light (or shadow) of American dogma, however, it is not mere doctrine with which we are interested. While the category 'guru' is widely applied in India, in the United States these self-confessed New Age spiritual figures certainly do not function as purveyors of tradition, nor are they endowed with the power of truth and transmission, as discerned in the imaginative procedures ratifying neo-colonial discourse of Advaita.[615]

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[615] The Harvard Psychiatrist Eugene Taylor who has analyzed the role of the 'guru' in some American 'shadow culture' provides a portrayal of the guru-disciple relationship which serves to validate his ultimate conclusion: "With regard to the guru-disciple relationship, there can be mentors as well as direct teachers, although the entire concept is little understood in the West." Eugene Taylor, *Shadow Culture: Psychology and Spirituality in America* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1999), p. 58. This phenomenon is perhaps best demonstrated with reference to New Age Capitalism. Note for instance a popular New Age magazine marketed by the American prophet Andrew Cohen, a self-proclaimed guru struggling to understand Advaita Vedanta. Editors for the magazine often present eclectic characters as teachers of Advaita Vedanta. For example, in an article penned as "Close Encounters of the Advaita Kind," Ramesh Balsekar, a British educated disillusioned bank executive and disciple of the late illiterate cigarette salesman Nisargadatta Maharaj (1897-1981) is described as "one of the best known teachers of Advaita Vedanta alive today." Balsekar presents the essence of his teaching in response to the first query of the interview: "*WIE*: You are becoming increasingly well known as a teacher of Advaita Vedanta both in India and in the West. Could you describe for us what it is that you teach? Ramesh Balsekar: I can put that in one sentence, really. The one sentence on which my entire teaching is based is: "Thy will be done."" See Chris Parish, 'Close Encounters of the Advaita Kind,' in *What is Enlightenment?*, 14, 1998 (http://www.wie.org/j14/balsekar.asp). To be fair, Cohen himself readily considers a wide ranging corpus of beliefs in his tireless attempt to understand "Enlightenment." With production of the fourteenth issue, however, all aspirants had apparently developed a more legitimate approach. As the editors explain, "given that our own exploration of Advaita for this issue of *WIE* had exposed us to such a diverse array of contemporary teachers and teachings, we had grown increasingly curious about what someone classically trained in the traditional methods and doctrine would have to say in response to our questions. It was our quest for such a traditionalist that ultimately landed us in the jungle of the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, at the ashram of Swami Dayananda Saraswati" In retrospect, their choice was a good one: "throughout the sessions, Swami Dayananda revealed himself to be every bit the traditionalist we had expected, sharing in his answers to our questions his comprehensive understanding of both the tradition itself and the subtleties of Advaita philosophy." Nevertheless, for these seekers, lingering questions concerning the role of the guru were left unresolved. It should be noted that a predominant concern throughout this issue is the query of what Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950) would think, or say, in answer to the various questions posed to each of the interviewees. New Agers often filter what they hear about Advaita Vedanta through various translations, excerpts, dialogues etc., which they have read about Ramana Marharsi, a south Indian sage who incarcerated himself in a mosquito infested dungeon where he underwent a range of austerities and practices in an effort to recall some prior temporary experience with which he had been momentarily overcome before he was finally rescued and taught by exegetes of the Veda. Moreover, the sage soon relocated himself from this austere abode and began to teach students who were now asking him various questions. Unfortunately, when Ramana began to teach it was simply to suggest that aspirants reflect upon the one asking the question, as Dayananda tried to explain to Cohen: "He [Ramana] discovered this way of speaking with people that did not require him to answer any questions. One fellow comes and asks, "What is God?" And he will say, "Why do you want to know? Who are you who wants to know? Find out who you are."..."Who are you that is asking this question?" This is a way of answering questions that he

Detraditionalization and Spirituality

The image sketched above, while certainly remaining factual, admittedly reflects my own ideology, interests, desires, and resistance. Following this approach, one may understand what I describe as mystical, or spiritual, genres in neo-colonial discourse of Advaita. In this analysis I wish to imply that psychologically nuanced narratives of spirituality form one of many braids of discourse in the privatization of religion in America.

Now, while it is true to say that the religious marketplace of the 1960s proved to be in shortage of Christian support systems for disaffected baby boomers, it is also important to understand that some aging seekers would eventually find a home in one or another of the many churches growing across the United States. While liberal mainstream bodies such as the Episcopalians, United Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and United Church of Christ would eventually find themselves in a state of irreversible decline, evangelical and fundamentalist movements retained strength through mid-century and beyond the 1960s. The ongoing crusades of Billy Graham, for instance, were first launched in Los Angeles in 1949.[616] The failure of the Church Union proposal is indicative of these changes.

Sponsored by Eugene Carson Blake, clerk of the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A, and endorsed by Episcopal bishop of California the Reverend James A. Pike, the document proposed further bureaucratic consolidation similar to the reunion scheme of the United Church of Christ whereby Unitarian-Universalist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran church

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adopted as an attempt to turn the person toward himself." See Andrew Cohen, 'Advaita 101: An Interview with Swami Dayananda Saraswati,' in *What is Enlightenment?*, 14, 1998, (http://www.wie.org/j14/dayananda.asp). A cursory examination of *What is Enligtenment?* reflects both the founders location in the New Age and his fascination with Advaita. Cohen's attempt to fathom Advaita Vedanta in terms of 'Christ Consciousness' and 'Love' is exemplary: "If in fact Shankara and the Vedantic philosophers are correct in their declaration that that which is ultimate, and therefore absolute, is fullness or pure consciousness, then should this lead us to conclude that enlightenment is the experiential discovery of what is referred to in the West as 'God' or 'Love' or 'Christ Consciousness?'" See Andrew Cohen, 'Introduction: Does Anybody Know What They're Talking About?,' in *What is Enlightenment?*, 14, 1998, (http://www.wie.org/j14/andrew.asp). To answer this question, and similar ones, Cohen seeks out various characters and persuades them to participate in interviews where such queries are posed. For further discussion of 'New Age Capitalism' see Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (NY: Routledge, 2004). For further clarification of self-enquiry and the teachings of Ramana Maharshi see Swami Dayananda, *Talks on Upadesa Saram (Essence of the Teaching) of Ramana Maharshi* (Rishikesh: Sri Gangadhareswar Trust, 1987).

[616] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 185.

bodies had merged both institutionally and doctrinally. With the Blake-Pike proposal the Great Church hierarchy would join Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, Evangelical, Catholic, and Reformed traditions, all along with the UCC, in a progressive institutional church reunion based on consensus of scriptural interpretation, ministry, sacraments, etc. Representatives of these faiths gathered in Washington for the Consultation on Church Union in 1962, but the fate of their proposal reflects countertrends of modernism which had remained strong throughout the previous decade.[617]

Reexamining the conceptual distinction between public and private religions, Jose Casanova attempts to understand the paradox that while religion in the modern world is becoming increasingly privatized one is also evermore confronted with what seems to be a process of 'deprivatization' of religion.[618] Casanova admits that structural historical trends tend to locate religion in the private sphere, but his primary task lies with understanding the historical significance of more recent countertrends reasserting old and new formations of 'public' religion.[619] The public outbreak of religion was truly unexpected, as may be discerned in the dumbfounded response of the media following the American president Jimmy Carter's announcement that he had been 'born again,' in spite of the fact that tens of millions in the United States were avidly claiming the same experience throughout the 1970s and 1980s.[620] Before interpreting the public function and significance of recent trends toward deprivatization, it is necessary to understand the historical trends of modernity directing the privatization of religion.

Analyzing the erosion of institutional authority evident everywhere from eighteenth

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[617] Robert S. Ellwood argues that this failure also represents a 'sea change' in the 1960s of the character of 'denominationalism' in American, "...a religious polity, of which the United States is no doubt the world's premier example, in which it is tacitly understood that the spiritual function is shared by several independent coequal organizations or denominations. Each has its own unique history and emphases and is chiefly devoted to the care of its own people, at the same time acknowledging through both competition and cooperation the existence of others of broadly comparable strength and secular standing." See Robert S. Ellwood, *The Sixties Spiritual Awakening: American Religion Moving from Modern to Postmodern* (NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), pp. 52-57; 54.

[618] Jose Casanova, 'Private and Public Religions,' in *Social Research*, 59.1, 1992, pp. 17-57; 19.

[619] Casanova investigates a "variety of public religions" to understand "...the truly unexpected novelty of the public outbreak of "religion" in the '70s and '80s on a global scale", for instance "...the emergence of Protestant Fundamentalism as a factor in American electoral politics." Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 19.

[620] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 185.

century Europe to the commonwealths of New England, Casanova claims that Protestantism has been responsible for generating and shaping the current form and procedures of institutionalized differentiation of the spheres.[621] The logic of this cultural production is connected to a pious and individualistic turn discovered in the history of Christianity, specifically the 'innerworldly' attitude of Protestant theologians which served to liberate Europeans "...from the external, ritual and sacramental control of the church."[622] This is not to deny the significant and corollary relations between Protestantism and the nation-state or capitalist models of market economy. Casanova merely hints at the broader implications of this transformation but he grasps the codification of this hegemonic sociopolitical religious formation:

> Irrespective of whether one sees the joint rise of the modern state and modern capitalism as being codetermined by this new Christian attitude, or whether one sees the new Protestant innerworldly attitude as being determined by the emergence of the modern world system, there is no doubt that it marks a new axial shift in the relation between religion and world. Eventually, the world forced religion to withdraw to a newly created and for the first time in history "institutionalized" private sphere.[623]

The axial shift in question involves the birth of the modern individual. Though a global arrival, this bourgeois fabrication would possess peculiar traits and fascination with individual and personal experience. The countertrends currently under analysis no doubt gained hegemonic strength during the narcissistic 'counterculture' of baby boomers in the 1960s, but the formation of this discourse is witnessed in the Great Awakening on the frontiers of American religion.[624] In the twenty years between 1965 and 1985 the movement of millions of Americans into strict evangelical and ultraconservative Pentecostal sects occurred with the rapid growth of local parish churches, extra-denominational organizations, and decentralized denominations. The endurance of this phenomenon distinguishes it from passing new religious movements in America.

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[621] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 55.
[622] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 55.
[623] Casanova (1992), ibid., pp. 54-55.
[624] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 28.

It is widely known that a characteristic feature of modernity is the institutional differentiation of the sociopolitical sphere necessitated by the emergent secularization of Europe; less understood are the ways in which hegemonic cultural movements serve to "legitimize ideologically a particular historical form of institutionalization of modernity."[625] In his attempt to understand the reasons behind the failure of the Church Union proposal cited above, Robert S. Ellwood attributes this to the thoroughly modernist nature of the proposal which came at a time when religion in America was in the midst of transforming to postmodern, the 1960s.[626] In the 1960s the idea of institutional church reunion found no audience, at least not among the emerging generation of radicals who were leading the historical changes of this decade. When Ellwood says that the Sixties were more interested in reassessing religious institutions 'from the ground up' in order to take account of their relationship to spiritual experience and the mission of religion in society, we are led directly to the grass roots of these baby boomers. Ellwood is furthermore suggestive when he describes the 1960s reversion of religion to its ultimate base, localism, as a style of 'folk religion' in opposition to a 'great tradition.'[627]

In the introduction to this study we noted at least two elements of the New Age movement which should now be recalled, specifically the *lingua franca* of self-spirituality and the self-ethic of epistemological individualism, or what may be described as individual mysticism. The focus upon ones 'inner voice' as a source of authority and the concomitant rejection of external authority, of course, occupies a prominent position in the European adventure. Renaissance humanism and Enlightenment rationalism both in their own way value ones individual autonomy, or atomistic utilitarian individualism, and distinctly human role as a freethinker (*les libertines*). Romantics, too, embody this notion

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[625] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 20.

[626] Cf. "But institutional church reunion did not excite the Sixties, even the churchly Sixties, as an important spiritual ideal in the way it might have the preceding generation. It was not an imperative for the same reason that the various renewed traditionalisms of Merton, Watts, and Huxley in the Forties and Fifties did not entirely suit the self-consciously new world of the Sixties. The Sixties did not simply want bigger and better religious institutions, however streamlined in administration and inclusive in creed. Rather, they wanted to take a new look at religious institutions from the ground up, so to speak, not necessarily to jettison them altogether, but certainly to reassess their precise relation to spiritual experience, to valid religious leadership, and to the mission of religion in society." Ellwood (1994), ibid. pp. 53-54.

[627] Ellwood (1994), ibid., p. 55. See Robert S. Ellwood, *History and Future of Faith* (NY: Crossroad, 1988).

through the artistic and creative merits of expressive individualism. On the other hand, a number of sociologists of religion, since Durkheim, have in various ways summarized the religion of modernity as giving rise to the 'cult of the individual.' Inspired by an interview with a respondent named 'Shelia' who confessed to having her own private religion, Robert Bellah aptly describes modern religion as 'Sheilaism.' This same idea is also expressed in the language of Thomas Paine's 'My mind is my church,' and Thomas Jefferson's 'I am a sect to myself.'[628] Casanova describes these modern forms of individual religiosity as the paradigmatic language of American 'high culture,' just as Sheilaism may be its contemporary 'low culture' expression.[629] To be sure, there is nothing at all countercultural about these democratizing bourgeois expressions of the self.

The obvious implication of this phenomenon, for Casanova, is that "the cultic form of modern polytheism is not idolatry but human narcissism."[630] Bearing in mind the thoroughly European, Judeo-Christian, or Semitic, nature of debate surrounding Renaissance humanism, we should note the epistemic violence entailed by anti-cult critics such as those to whom Diana L. Eck refers: "Christian critics of what they call Hindu 'monism,' from Vivekananda's day to the present, see the rejection of original sin as contributing to narcissistic preoccupation with the self in the modern secular West."[631] For these critics, the 'cosmic humanism' of the East joins forces with 'secular humanism' of the West to provide a stage for New Age self-oriented 'narcissistic secularism.' As the new orthodoxy for our age, then, giving faith to the divine potential lying within—if only waiting to be discovered—God is displaced for the deification of Human Nature.

The significance of this modern celebration is nicely phrased by Paul Heelas in his description of the New Age movement: the sacralization of modernity.[632] The same phenomenon is expressed by Thomas Luckmann in reference to the privatization of

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[628] Casanova (1992), ibid., pp. 27-28.
[629] Casanova (1992), ibid., pp. 27-28.
[630] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 28.
[631] Eck (1990), ibid., p. 123.
[632] Paul Heelas, *The New Age Movement: The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

religion.[633] Following the de-institutionalization of religion in the wake of the Protestant reformation and the erosion of external, ritualistic, and papal authority, the modern form of 'invisible religion' celebrated the 'sacralization of subjectivisms.'[634] As Eck explains, the self-centered ethos of this movement is expressed with humanistic psychology and the human potential movement drawing upon Indian religions for actively engaging more than 80 percent of adult Americans in some form of psychotherapy of self-realization.[635] As Philip Jenkins notes, moreover, following the widespread sampling of experiment-minded youth in the religious (not to mention psychedelic) market place of the 1960s, by the early 1970s many baby boomers were left in need of a support system.[636]

Narrating the ethic of the therapeutic school, John Steadman Rice correctly notes that the core assumption of liberation psychotherapy, following seminal figures such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, is that the true nature of the self is inherently benevolent, positive, and trustworthy.[637] Like psychoanalytic theory, moreover, it sees the cause of all psychological sickness in terms of cultural and societal repression of the self. As Rice notes, however, given the basic premise that by nature and under non-repressive good conditions the human will be seen to perform instinctively good actions and intuitively arrive at good choices, unlike psychoanalytic theory, liberation therapy does not see social and cultural repression as a predestined condemnation of modern civilization.[638] Upon closer analysis, this does not imply that the development of this universal 'everyman' figure should be simply left to ones own devices.

Providing a synopsis of 'therapeutic hegemony' in the context of postmodern reforms of the complex social and cultural conditions of America, Alan Woolfolk intelligently

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[633] Thomas Luckmann, 'The Privatization of Religion and Morality,' in Paul Heelas, Scott Lash, and Paul Morris (eds), *Detraditionalization: Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 72-86.
[634] Luckmann (1996), ibid., p. 73.
[635] Eck (1990), ibid., p. 124.
[636] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 176.
[637] John Steadman Rice, 'The Therapeutic School: Its Origins, Nature, and Consequences,' in Jonathan B. Imber (ed), *Therapeutic Culture: Triumph and Defeat* (NJ: Transaction, 2004), pp. 111-136;
[638] Rice (2004), ibid., pp. 112-113.

describes the consent of 'co-dependency' and the 'dubious triumph of the therapeutic.'[639] As a 'discourse of reform' operating within an idealized 'discourse of revolution,' similar to Rice, Woolfolk grants the benevolence of human nature to liberation therapy:

> Consequently, according to this revolutionary discourse, a release from inhibiting cultural controls and institutional forms is the secret to achieving personal well-being and curing our social pathologies. But if total liberation is not possible, then the anti-cultural and anti-institutional impulses of therapeutic culture need to be either mitigated or repressed.[640]

Now, clearly, therapeutic discourse does not intend to simply leave Americans in their own depressed, repressed, soul searching, perhaps suicidal condition, for that is the very problem created for the role of the therapist. As a set of 'control mechanisms' which regulate the excesses of the therapeutic generation of baby boomers and limit the transcendent narcissism of their self-expression by committing them to 'mediating' or 'secondary' institutions, I wish to suggest that the therapeutic discourse of co-dependency is a paradigmatic element of the discourse of spirituality in America. As Woolfolk notes, more importantly, these controls are not really what they appear to be: "in the end, they subserve the liberationist assumptions of the prevailing therapeutic discourse *and* offer a way to stabilize social relationships and personal identity, providing one does not interrogate them too closely."[641] It may be worth briefly understanding this process in the 'mass-cultural sea' of late capitalist American 'subjectivity-cults.'[642]

To further explain the functions of co-dependency, it is important to understand the sociological distinctions between degrees of commitment surrounding cultic activity. As Jenkins explains, we may distinguish these commitments in terms of *audience cults*,

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[639] Alan Woolfolk, 'The Dubious Triumph of the Therapeutic,' in Jonathan B. Imber (ed), *Therapeutic Culture: Triumph and Defeat* (NJ: Transaction, 2004), pp. 69-88.
[640] Woolfolk (2004), ibid., p. 82.
[641] Woolfolk (2004), ibid., pp. 82-83.
[642] Cf. "Co-dependency epitomizes, then, the complete democratization of the modernist intellectual-artistic attack upon the repressive function of culture *per se* carried out under the shibboleth of *epater la bourgeoisie*. With the triumph of the therapeutic, that attack has been rendered superfluous as earlier character ideals have failed and an ambivalent bourgeois ethos has given way to a radical anesthetization of reality under the rubric of *lifestyles*." Woolfolk (2004), ibid., p. 82-83. Cf. Luckmann (1996), ibid., p. 73.

client cults, and *cult movements*. With the highest degree of commitment, cult movements have formal memberships and members may even live communally on cult-owned properties, but in any case regular meetings are common. Exercising less commitment, client cults allow consumer interaction in ways similar to traditionally defined roles of patients and therapists. At the lowest level of commitment, Jenkins exemplifies audience cults with the defining features and participating followers of the New Age. Lacking a formal structure and perhaps even no actual meetings, audience cults are serviced through books, magazines, mail-order courses, videos, etc, and consumers often move across a variety of distinct traditional or subcultural genres picking and choosing the best ideas and practices which suit their needs. As such, Jenkins notes that while unorthodox ideas, such as beliefs in reincarnation, astrology, crystal healing, channeling, etc., may be widely spread through the population of audience cults, their participation or affiliation as a movement is often unmeasurable, thus rendering them 'invisible.'[643] The cult of the New Age is therefore packaged as a set of lifestyles, beliefs, and private practices which are often so syncretistic that members may even claim to be affiliates of orthodox religions while holding many New Age ideas, or just as well profess to be following their very own religion.

In more specific terms of the modern form of invisible religion, Thomas Luckmann has also described the New Age as the social form of this manifestation. Luckmann furthermore suggests that modern individuals are notoriously concerned with the cultivation of immediate sensations and emotions, desires which are supposedly not easily expressed through institutionalization. A variety of mystical beliefs, magical practices, occult phenomenon etc., said to exist on the periphery of contemporary society—which may be taken up in a cultic milieu by subinstitutional groups, movements, communities around minor charismatics, secondary institutions of low-level transcendence, commercialized consciousness-expanding enterprises, networks of subjectivisms, etc.—but their chance for firm institutionalization through sectarian models are very slim.[644] Similarly, Paul Heelas describes the New Age in terms of

[643] Jenkins (2000), ibid., pp. 9-10.
[644] Luckmann (1996), ibid., pp. 74-75.

'secondary institutions' which provide identity provisions, workshops, seminars, and lectures for those who had been 'adrift' in the counter-culture.[645]

Moving beyond the New Age as a model and to more generally understand the broader process of the privatization of religion, we should also recall the process of co-dependency as a discourse of reform for the postmodern 'spirituality of seeking,' particularly in regard to the role of the therapist (spirit guide, shaman, workshop leader, conference organizer, guru, counselor, pastor, mentor, friend, etc.) and the provision that ones client (consumer, disciple, student, devotee, patient) must not be interrogated too closely. Given the hegemony of therapeutic discourse it is not surprising to find this same model at work in the New Age self-ethic. As Heelas notes, related to this ethos is the realization of self-responsibility, that is, as knowledge lies within it is only ones own self who is responsible for self-knowledge.[646] New Age participants believe that external voices of authority have inevitably been internalized as the 'ego' through a process of socialization and individualization. Their commitment to the self as an autonomous locus of authority also implies the possibility of liberation from social conditioning. Those 'working' towards this liberation should not interfere with the practices and beliefs of others who are responsible for generating and cultivating their own unique personal experiences and expressions. In what would appear to be a complete reversal of co-dependency, New Age practitioners go so far as to believe that to dictate the lives of others through doctrines, symbols, myths, allegories, etc., would merely obstruct the process of liberation and simply encourage ego-driven dependency habits.[647] Upon closer analysis, of course, we do find guides and masters who offer a few suggestions.

Considering the uncertainties of modernity in terms of detraditionalization of established orders of authority and de-institutionalization of hierarchies of authority, Heelas poses the issue of whether this inward turn to the self is due to the experience of modernity as an 'iron cage' of social, moral, and religious ordering or a response to a cage which is

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[645] New Age, detraditionalized religion, is also described as 'spirituality for baby boomers.' Heelas (1996), ibid., pp. 143-144; 171-173.
[646] Heelas (1996), ibid., pp. 23-24.
[647] Heelas (1996), ibid., pp. 25.

crumbling.[648] In other words, have modern individuals turned to the self because the modern world offers nothing left to believe in, or do they believe in themselves because they are interested in what the self has to offer? Immediately noting that he does not wish to overstate this issue, Heelas admits that established traditions and regulated forms of authority have not entirely diminished from modern life. With well over 60 million Fundamentalist Christians in the United States alone, Heelas is no doubt well aware of the ongoing significance of conventional institutions.[649] Nevertheless, there are many among the Judeo-Christian tradition who nowadays admit to certain errors and faults of their scriptures and ministers and who may even interpret these issues through the inter-religious framework of other readily available religious traditions.

To illustrate the undying spirit of basic, orthodox, hometown American Christianity, one would be hard pressed indeed to find a better example than James A. Herrick, professor of Communication at Hope College. Published by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship campus ministry, a home-grown branch established in America prior to the Second World War as an active student movement at hundreds of universities and colleges in America with a mission to equip and encourage people to follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in all of Life, with sister movements in Great Britain and an affiliate of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, Herrick's *The Making of the New Spirituality: The Eclipse of the Western Religious Tradition* laments the modern 'New Religious Synthesis,' or the 'Other Spirituality'[650] Standing in total opposition to a mystical movement he traces to spiritual communities as far back as the Middle Ages is the 'Revealed Word.' Herrick warns that one must make no doubt about it, "Christianity *requires* a unique claim to truth."[651] Furthermore, the saving grace of Christianity is purported to save people from every tongue, tribe, and nation.

So why, Herrick asks, would any devout lamb of God follow the pluralistic path into the new millennium as good faith partners in a quest for the transcendent unity of all

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[648] Heelas (1996), ibid., pp. 144.
[649] Heelas (1996), ibid., pp. 144.
[650] James A. Herrick, *The Making of the New Spirituality: The Eclipse of the Western Religious Tradition* (Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2003).
[651] Herrick (2003), ibid., p. 278.

spirituality and, thus, reduce the Messiah as God in human form to one among many participants in the mystic vision, a prophet among prophets?[652] The choice is a stark one: "Jesus Christ as the single divine redeemer of a lost human race or Jesus as one among many spirit people seeking to express the inexpressible."[653] We are valuable, but we are nevertheless 'fallen creatures.' Herrick's most important point, however, may be emphasized in terms of the fact that if ones true nature is limited and finite then there is no amount of action which could change this fact. Change implies limitation on both sides of the preceding and succeeding conditions, and there is certainly no mystical experience that could accommodate this realization. Christians, on the other hand, accept that they are limited, but are able to be saved through God's sacrifice of his son Jesus:

> The Other Spirituality presents itself as refurbishing the primordial human religious view, the first human spirituality. Mysticism is inherent to this ancient religious view, the core, it is argued, of all important subsequent religious experience and speculation. This notion clashes with the Revealed Word's account of early human spiritual experience. On the Revealed Word view, the very earliest encounter between humans and the supernatural was, indeed, pure and enriching. A sovereign God created human beings, called them good and entered a relationship with them. Humanity encountered the sovereign creator God and knew him intimately. That intimate relationship was, however, ruined through a disastrous fall into sin, a possibility that mystical experience cannot accommodate.[654]

God entered human history in the human flesh of Jesus Christ, an event incapable of duplication and logically restrained from ever having an equivalent event, even if the logic cannot presently be comprehended: "Why would God recognize another universal and ultimately sufficient sacrifice for human sin having recognized this one?"[655] Put differently from another equally valid perspective, why wouldn't he? As a matter of fact, how could the blood of any 'sacrifice' absolve one from 'sin?' Similarly, the logic of Herrick's additional proposals may be questioned. As Herrick notes, a foundational claim of Christianity is that the first human temptation was to obtain a 'forbidden knowledge'

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[652] Herrick (2003), ibid., pp. 277-278.
[653] Herrick (2003), ibid., p. 279.
[654] Herrick (2003), ibid., p. 279.
[655] Herrick (2003), ibid., pp. 278-279.

that would make them 'like God.' Left to our own devices along the mystical path of the new way, he says, we are again tempted to proclaim our own divinity. Herrick finds the absurdity of this notion to be obvious and suggests the spiritual destruction of this path will be quickly learnt when one discovers the undeniable facts of human limitations. Aside from such rhetorical ploys, however, Herrick does have a legitimate argument: "Christ's redemptive life and death must remain unique for Christianity to substantiate its foundational claims."[656] Ones means of knowledge must be appropriate to their object of knowledge. Satisfied with the limited nature of his existence and his distant relationship with Jesus, Herrick's reluctance to join up with the pilgrims searching together along a mystical path for something they cant even express is also perfectly understandable. Given the dualistic revelation of Christ, moreover, Herrick is correct that it would be totally inappropriate to count the Messiah as one among many 'gurus.'[657]

To understand the legitimation of this cultural formation we could center upon the discourse of Protestant Fundamentalism, a variant of American Protestantism, but as Casanova explains, the internal structure of this cult is codified as a corporation of 'denominationalism.' Moreover, the institutional framework of denominationalism subverts Semitic doctrinal significance.[658] For Casanova, the privatization of literalistic Fundamentalism provides an example of the ways in which public religions exist in harmony with democratic trends of individualism. Already in the 1960s, Robert Ellwood notes, most college-aged Christians of that era cared less about denominations, doctrines, or beliefs than the secular values, ethics, and family guidance espoused by churches to

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[656] Herrick (2003), ibid., pp. 278-279.

[657] For instance, see Brian Hutchinson's attempt to compare Jesus with Indian gurus through Jungian concepts and psychic experience. Brian Hutchinson, 'The Divine-Human Figure in the Transmission of Religious Tradition,' in Raymond Brady Williams (ed), *A Sacred Thread: Modern Transmission of Hindu Traditions in India and Abroad* (Chambersburg, PA: Anima, 1992), pp. 92-124.

[658] As Casanova explains in relation to the hegemony of Protestantism in American politics: "the myriad "independent" Fundamentalist churches and preachers, each and every one of them holier and more Fundamentalist than the other, proclaiming "their own" literalist interpretation of the same fundamentals of the same Christian faith, that are contained in the same text, the Holy Bible, attest to the power of modern individualism. Individual, private reading of any text forms a very shaky ground for doctrinal Fundamentalism. When those myriad Fundamentalist atoms leave their self-imposed private sectarian seclusion in order to organize themselves publicly into a Moral Majority; or, in what amounts to the same, when those individual resources are skillfully mobilized by political entrepreneurs for collective action, then Fundamentalism becomes just another denomination." Casanova (1992), ibid., pp. 30-31.

which they could 'personally adjust.'[659] Ellwood notes that "only the theme of recovering the romantic past might favor religious systems and hierarchies with an evocative aura of ancient wisdom almost lost and now once more found."[660] This sort of yearning nostalgia might express the needs of an earlier generation of traditionalists and perennialists, but the sixties, we are often told, obtain a *sui generis* status in reference to the revolution of spirituality. There are at least two specific points worth noting in Ellwood's argument. One, again citing the failure of the Church Union proposal, he suggests if trends following the 1960s continue to reflect 'denominationalism shifting into reverse,' that is, religion reverting to its ultimate base, the historical importance of this event will signal a reversal of the dominant trends of almost all of the religious traditions over the past 2,000 years. In the least, these trends indicate a reversal of the last 150 years leading up to 1960. Additionally, denominationalism must go even further and revert to localism.

In the sixties Ellwood detects the decentralization of church authority in America, but denominationalism still retained the idea of a local outpost or branch "for the dissemination of a great tradition, rather than primarily a place for the independent creation or definition of local-level spirituality."[661] In other words, a typical denominational church functions as an institutionalized religion with local branches of authoritative traditions. Also noticeable, and seemingly related as an ultimate goal, the 'spirit' of the 1960s suggests that religion would serve as a "refuge from homogenization rather than another arena for it."[662] It is in this context that Ellwood understands the emergence of local prayer groups, meditation circles, charismatic communities, new religious movements, church houses, etc., as indicators of religion in America moving from modern to postmodern during the 1960s. We can further speculate about the outcome of Ellwood's postmodern marketplace of spirituality, but this phenomenon cannot be described as the birth of a 'post-Protestant era' in America.[663] Indeed in reverting to local-level spirituality one is merely conforming to the denominational structure which has always determined the structure of religion in America:

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[659] Ellwood (1994), ibid., p. 55.
[660] Ellwood (1994), ibid., p. 56.
[661] Ellwood (1994), ibid., p. 56.
[662] Ellwood (1994), ibid., p. 56.
[663] See Ellwood (1994), ibid., p. 70.

> Those "born again" souls who have "experienced" individually the redeeming power of the "New Light" have always tended to feel closer fellowship with kindred spirits in other denominations than with "Old Lights" in their own. Once the denominations become particular vehicles for individual religious experience, the external organization form and the doctrinal content of the particular denomination become ever more secondary. This is why people do not need to switch denominations to find their own faith. This does not indicate the declining significance of denominationalism, but rather the triumph of its principle.[664]

Whether it is shown through 'old lights,' 'new lights,' or 'born again' lights, the individual mysticism of evangelical piety and public performance may cast insight upon the 'shadow culture' of religion in America. Drawing on the term 'folk psychology' (*voelkerpsychologie*) to understand what he describes as the shadow culture or visionary tradition of American spirituality, Eugene Taylor describes the origins of this tradition:

> The essence of the First Great Awakening was that it elevated emotional experience and mystical revelation to the level of public consciousness. Trance states, ecstatic whirling, automatic utterances, falling down in the spirit, joyful exuberance, and spiritual happiness were all common occurrences, and all were fully sanctioned by the very governing church bodies that had forbade such behavior in public in the past. And the fervor was by no means confined to New England.[665]

Even at this early stage of American spirituality such obsession with personal experience could not be restrained by the governing power of the English Crown. While the history of the ascendancy of this pious system is traced throughout the Western world, it is important to note that the most radical form of individualism could only be institutionalized in America. Locating the origins of denominationalism in the United States, Casanova notes that even in the highly pluralistic context of Europe sectarian struggles with the structural establishment of church authority would not allow the power of this movement to crystallize. In America, however, individual mysticism was

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[664] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 30.

[665] Eugene Taylor, *Shadow Culture: Psychology and Spirituality in America* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1999), p. 18.

organized through denominationalism and spread through the 'religion of the heart.'[666] Whether or not this American institution, like others, has since been exported is of little concern, but we must resist the power of its domestication. According to Casanova, all religion in the United States is "externally constrained and, more importantly, internally induced to function as denominations."[667] The internal structure of religions in America, regardless of their origins, is transformed into denominations.[668]

To understand this cultural and religious hegemony, we may highlight Eugene Taylor's prototype of the 'shadow culture' of the United States. It is true that the various movements generating this eclectic regime of cultic narcissism share a few differing characteristics, but all reject the letter of the law:

> All, however, seem to be suggestive of an interior vision that has been discovered and rediscovered over and over again as individuals, groups, and sometimes whole cultures turned inward...this alternative reality tradition has been inner, contemplative, ascetic, and mystical, believing itself to be the true aristocracy of the spirit from which the letter of the law was derived.[669]

While Taylor's overcast of these narcissists presents alternative visionaries in the shadow of some ill-defined dominant religion, he 'prophesizes' about the outcome of a current "cross-cultural exchange of ideas between East and West unprecedented in the history of Western thought."[670] Similar to the practitioners he investigates Taylor is excited to note that we are currently facing 'another Great Awakening'. Taylor's typology of American spirituality is not limited to scriptural transcendence, indeed, the correlative element of the shadow culture is expressed in conjunction with psychological experience; how else could this cult manifest in the presence of such doctrinally diverse revolutionary saints as Jonathan Edwards and Swami Vivekananda? Humanistic psychology or, better yet,

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[666] Cf. "In America, however, individual mysticism found a fertile soil. Evangelical pietism, "the religion of the heart," was the vehicle which served to spread individual mysticism, democratizing and popularizing it, as it were, throughout American Protestantism; while denominationalism, the great American religious invention, became its organizational form." Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 28.
[667] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 30.
[668] Casanova (1992), ibid., p. 29.
[669] Taylor (1999), ibid., p. 12.
[670] Taylor (1999), ibid., p. 290.

transpersonal psychology is the vanguard of this East-West revolution.[671]

The contemporary Indian philosopher Daya Krishna introduces his recent study of the 'past philosophical traditions of India' with an explicit noble intention: to rescue those traditions from the long spiritual quest of India with which they have become entangled since the late eighteenth century[672] Perhaps overstating his case, however, Krishna faces

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[671] Narrating the hegemony of 'today's variants' of the loyal opposition, Ronald Inden also traces "descendants of the philosophical idealists of the nineteenth century" to the contemporary discourse of 'Jungians' and psychotherapists. Notice the psychotherapists' role in this revolutionary discourse: "Whereas the West has developed the conscious scientific rationality of man, the East in India (equated by sleight of hand now with the 'primitives', then with the 'archaic', here with the pre-Christian, there with the pre-Enlightenment) has developed its unconscious, mystical, symbolical side. The 'material' values of the West and the 'spiritual' values of the East are not, however, quite complementary in their Jungian rendering; they are, separated from one another, extreme. Properly integrated in the individual, however, an uplifted and balanced 'new' Western man emerges. The guide in this personal quest is the discourse of the Jungian analyst and historian of religion, both in print and in expensive, authoritative treatment or education. The 'primitive' or 'archaic' man does not know he is continually being drawn toward 'archetypal man', while the 'modern' can, by signing up with the Jungians or other gurus of the New Age movement, come to know this and, as a result, fine-tune his psyche. Not only can the harassed corporate executive adjust to the stress he suffers, he can cultivate a part of his self that stands outside the modern world, expressing itself in those exotic anti-commodities, the vacation to the Orient or the Tibetan sculpture on the coffee table." See Inden (2000), ibid., pp. 122-124.

[672] Explaining the nature of 'spirituality', Krishna notes: "the term, in the ontological context, means that the nature of ultimate reality is held to be the same or similar to that of mind or spirit. Its distinctive feature lies in the assertion of the primacy of consciousness..." See Daya Krishna, *Indian Philosophy: A Counter Perspective* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 4. By limiting 'spirituality' to orthodox Brahmanical traditions which recognize a single underlying consciousness as the nature of ultimate reality, the hegemonic classification of Indian philosophy as spiritual certainly proves to be an imaginative myth. Krishna demonstrates the error of this conception in reference to Buddhism, Jainism, and the so-called six schools of orthodox (*astika*) Indian philosophy, Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisesika, Mimamsa, and Vedanta. Concerning those systems of thought which recognize the ultimate reality of matter, Krishna correctly observes, "The Jainas, the *Vaisesikas* and the *Samkhyans* recognize it so openly that it can hardly be missed by even the most starry-eyed student of the subject." Indeed, Sankhya takes the dualism of spirit (*purusa*) and matter (*prakrti*) as its fundamental basis and, though Krishna thinks Yoga has been accorded a position among the schools of Indian philosophy as a matter of courtesy, he admits that "no one contends that it has any distinctive philosophical views of its own except the Samkhya view of the independent reality of *prakrti*." As for the Nyaya thinkers and the Mimamsakas, "Anyone who contends for the ultimate reality of earth, water, fire and air among other things, can hardly be considered to believe in the reality of spirit *alone*." Buddhists, of course, would seem to be outside the scope of Krishna's critique, as he mentions, "their fundamental denial is of substantiality, whether it be that of spirit or matter" Of course, "the Carvakas need not be mentioned in this connection, as they are regarded as 'unmentionable' for this very reason" (pp. 4-5). There is, moreover, another important reason Indian heretics are unlikely to be included in the myth of Indian spirituality, as Richard King explains in a post-colonial context: "Indian materialism has clear resonances with contemporary cultural and philosophical trends in modern, urban, western culture. In this context one might expect to see a renaissance of interest in *Carvaka* philosophy. This has not occurred, however, since the representation of Indian philosophy in the west has generally functioned as an example of the 'exotic other' that helps define the 'modernity' and normativity of Euro-American culture. There are also many resources for materialist perspectives within the west and many westerners remain so deeply attached to the romantic conception of Indian philosophy as essentially spiritual or mystical in nature that the *Carvakas* are unlikely to be seen as sufficiently interesting to warrant greater

considerable difficulty in his attempt to characterize Sankara's Advaita Vedanta as a tradition which rejects non-dual awareness as the ultimate substratum of existence.[673] In his monistic conceptualization of spirituality, moreover, Krishna identifies the mind with consciousness and substantiates his subjection to the Western myth of philosophy.[674] Clearly, the hegemony Krishna seeks to demythologize is better approached with discourse analysis of reverse colonialism.[675] Locating Krishna at the center of an "increasingly popular trend" which seeks to "reject the conventional picture of Indian thought as profoundly soteriological in intent", Richard King suggests such work "can be seen as a clear example of a post-colonial attempt to displace the popular image of India as mystical and otherworldly in nature."[676] In spite of this recognition, however, in his

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attention." See Richard King, *Indian Philosophy: An Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1999a), p. 22.

[673] Now ignoring the "ultimate nature of reality" (*brahman*), Krishna dismisses Sankara on the grounds that "for him, the individual soul and God are as unreal as *prakrti* or matter," and then quickly turns toward those 'schools' which do withstand his critique. In this context, Krishna notes that "Vedanta, of course, is not only Samkara-Vedanta. It is merely a name to suggest that the philosopher who chose to call himself by that name consciously assumed the added responsibility of showing that that is exactly what the Upanisads really meant. Any doctrine, therefore, can call itself Vedanta, provided that it is prepared to sustain that it alone expresses the true and authentic meaning of the Upanisads. There are frank dualists such as Madhva who regard *prakrti* as an eternal, independent principle in its own right, who call themselves Vedantins. There is Ramanuja, who believes in the ultimate distinction in the nature of matter from God, but denies its independence in the sense of its not being subordinate to him." By focusing upon *Dvaita* and *Visistadvaita*, Krishna is able to declare that "matter, thus, is not unreal for Vedanta either. It is clearly asserted to be ultimately real by the two major schools, those of Madhva and Ramanuja." Krishna (1991), ibid., pp. 5-6.

[674] As Ramakrishna Puligandla notes: "Rarely, if ever, does a Western philosopher, either in the past or in the present, clearly understand that mind (the mental) is a phenomenon, and much less does he discern that mind is not to be identified with consciousness. A cursory look at the writings of any Western philosopher is enough to abundantly show that for him the terms 'mind,' 'self,' 'consciousness,' and 'I' are all synonymous." Ramakrishna Puligandla, 'Is the Central Upanishadic Teaching a Reductionist Thesis?,' in *Asian Philosophy*, 1.1, 1991, pp. 15-20; 16.

[675] The spiritualist conception of 'eastern philosophy' in general is largely a product of Vivekananda's nationalism: "In the west the popular image of 'eastern philosophy' is that it is world-denying, mystical, and monistic in nature. Broadly speaking, this image is a caricature of one particular school of Hindu philosophy—the Advaita tradition of Sankara (c. 700 CE). The reasons for this cultural association are complex but they reflect the interest shown by European and American intellectuals in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During this time the non-dualist (advaita) philosophy of Vedanta also became a focal point for certain key figures in the rise of Indian nationalism…Vivekananda, in particular, embarked on extensive lecture tours in Europe and North America and established organizations such as the Vedanta Society and the Ramakrishna Mission. He, more than any other figure, was probably the most responsible for promoting the idea that Advaita Vedanta was the 'essence of Hinduism' and the culmination of Indian philosophical development. Such a view is highly misleading and homogenises the rich diversity of Indian culture under a single Neo-Vedantic banner." King (1999a), ibid., p. 42.

[676] King (1999a), ibid., p. 28.

attempt to deconstruct the 'myth of Indian spirituality' Krishna accedes to the hegemonic strength of affirmative Orientalism and the discourse of Indian nationalism.[677]

An Indo-critical approach is especially important in an American context, as there have been no studies dedicated to problematizing the ways in which this discourse continues through contemporary forms of neo-colonialism. Vivekananda's arrival in 1893 has provided psychologists with a wealth of insight into the psychology of Hinduism. Historians of religion in America, too, have made no effort to 'de-mythologize' the *swami*.[678] Since the Parliament offered the novel opportunity of hearing native informants such as Vivekananda expound their beliefs on American soil, Carl Jackson goes so far as to describe it as the opening of a new era.[679] Events in Chicago during the late nineteenth century are widely characterized as an occasion which marks the arrival of 'Advaita Vedanta', or 'Hinduism', in America and it is even no surprise to see modern saints explicitly compared to seventh century Indians. The relative ignorance of American's concerning Indian religion is often exploited for modern interpretations of tradition.

One of the more important elements of traditional discourse concerns the notion that truth is transmitted and legitimated through authoritative ancestor lineages.[680] This

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[677] Krishna merely notes that "the interests of western Indological studies combined with the search for a spiritual self-identity in the face of overwhelming western superiority in all fields of knowledge seemed to have led to the creation of a certain picture of India's philosophical past which has become fixed in the minds of successive generations of students and teachers, both in India and abroad, through innumerable text-books which render it almost impossible to question the picture or build a different one." Krishna (1991), ibid., p.vii. As we have witnessed in chapter two, moreover, his approach is simply one of deconstruction. Other scholars have also made an attempt to correct the misleading portrayals of Indian philosophy, particularly in regards to modern saints who represent Vedanta as the essence of Hinduism. For instance, see Jonardon Ganeri, 'The Hindu Syllogism: Nineteenth-Century Perceptions of Indian Logical Thought,' in *Philosophy East & West*, 46.1, 1996, pp. 1-16.

[678] See Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (NY, State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 228.

[679] For Jackson, "the appearance of Asians at the parliament heralded the twentieth-century situation in which Asian spokesmen and Asian movements have increasingly taken the lead in bringing Oriental religion to Americans. In this sense, the Parliament of Religions marked the closing of one era but also the opening of another." Jackson (1981), ibid., pp. 257-258.

[680] In this analysis I decode the elements of discourse which "derive from the claim that traditional societies are informed by belief in established, timeless, orders." As Paul Heelas explains, ancestor lineages are thereby derived in contrast to modern disciplinary procedures of internalism: "Such overarching orders, rooted in past events—or simply 'the past'—and legitimated by such association, are highly authoritative. Existing over-and-above the individual, they are 'sacred' in the Durkheimian sense of the term…Persons think in terms of 'external' (supra-individual) voices of authority, control and destiny." See Paul Heelas,

rudimentary distinction creates its own complications for authorities involved in the maintenance of tradition. Following Paul Heelas, I refer to 'detraditionalization' as the structural segmentations of modernity involving a shift of authority from 'without' to 'within': "Individual subjects are themselves called upon to exercise authority...'Voice' is displaced from established sources, coming to rest with the self."[681] This shift is also important for understanding the ways in which contemporary agents are involved in the construction of new traditions and modern modes of re-traditionalization.

In British India it was not only common for Indian mimics to align themselves with pre-colonial theologians. For instance, in his creative attempt to integrate the errors of pre-colonial Indians, the Indian nationalist Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950) may best be described as a New Age guru, or 'folk Vedantin.' Sent to England as a young man to receive a proper European 'style' of education, Aurobindo excelled in Latin, Greek, and classical studies at Cambridge and after fourteen years abroad returned to Inida. Aurobindo was later visited by the spirit of both Lord Vishnu, in the benevolent form of Krishna, and Vivekananda while he was imprisoned in Alipore jail by the British government on suspicion of planning covert revolutionary activities.[682] Aurobindo was clearly inspired by Vishnu and Vivekananda, and believed that the role of the Indian nation was to enlighten the world with Hindu spirituality, or to bring down upon the earth the supermind of divine higher consciousness.[683] As a result of persistent profound visionary experiences arising from his yoga practices, Aurobindo eventually established a monastery in Pondicherry where he was worshipped by a range of devotees.

Noting the yogi as one of the most important figures for understanding the contemporary influence of the New Age, Paul Heelas notes that Auroville is today one of the best known New Age centres.[684] Aurobindo's wife, the Paris born Mirra Alfassa (1878-1973 who later came to recognized as simply 'the Mother,' became influential in her own right

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'Introduction: Detraditionalization and its Rivals', in Paul Heelas, Scot Lash, and Paul Morris (eds.), *Detraditionalization: Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) p. 3.

[681] Heelas (1996), ibid., p. 2.

[682] For a brief account of the life of Aurobindo see Haridas Chaudhuri, *Sri Aurobindo: The Prophet of Life Divine* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1960), pp. 1-17.

[683] Sri Aurobindo, *The Renaissance in India* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1920), p.1.

[684] Heelas (1996), ibid., pp. 43; 122; 207-208.

through her early studies with Max Theon, 'the Supreme God' and Grand Master of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor or Light in Egypt, and later as a result of her relationship with Aurobindo. Auroville has become one of the best examples of the New Age in India, or the 'Westernized East.' With Aurobindo, however, it should be emphasized that the yogi did not simply wish to return to the ancient teachings of India in some Romantic fashion. Nor did he think Indians should become monks of any ancient lineage as Vivekananda had suggested.[685] Rather, influenced by the Enlightenment ideals of Europe, Aurobindo believed more in his own creative and revolutionary potential.

While Aurobindo's revolution had long been rippling across the beat generation of America, it would take less than a year following his death that an entire institution would be opened for academic study of his teachings about cultivating mystical experiences through 'integral yoga.' In 1951 Frederick Spiegelberg, professor of comparative religion at Stanford University, founded the California Institute of Asian Studies for further study of Aurobindo's East-West synthesis. Former Episcopalian minister Alan Watts was soon conducting research and teaching at the Institute and today the schools library is in possession of Watts' personal collection. As time went on other beatniks and baby boomers would come to study at the Institute, including former residents of Auroville such as Michael Murphy, founder of Esalen Institute and disciple of Aurobindo. Another important faculty member to join the Institute was Haridas Chaudhuri, educational minister for the government of West Bengal who had completed his thesis on the work of Aurobindo at the University of Calcutta. Spiegelberg had wanted an Indian master to join the faculty, one who would naturally have experienced the truths of Aurobindo's mystic philosophy.[686] Upon arriving in America, Chaudhuri taught 'traditional' Indian thought through classes at the Cultural Integration Fellowship in San Francisco that he founded in 1955 and then expanded his teaching through the American Academy of Asian Studies. In 1974 Chaudhuri was instrumental in the revival of the AAS in the California Institute of Asian Studies, renamed the California Institute of Integral Studies in 1981 where today Aurobindo is regarded as an Indian *rsi* and God

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[685] Aurobindo (1920), ibid., p. 43.

[686] See Spiegelberg's Forward in Haridas Chaudhuri, *Being, Evolution & Immortality: An Outline of Integral Philosophy* (Ill: Theosophical Publishing, 1974), pp. vii-ix.

who descended to earth to restore spiritual order (*avatar*).[687] Together, Aurobindo and Chaudhuri have managed to exert a major influence upon the New Age field of transpersonal psychology, a branch which combines the study of Indian religion with psychological analysis of altered states of consciousness, meditation, and yoga.[688]

An overriding theme for those who look to India and Aurobindo's mystic vision for a way beyond the limited, destructive, materialistic, and dualistic hegemony of the Western world is the widespread belief and rhetoric that we are currently on the verge of a world transforming evolution of spirituality.[689] Aurobindo's basic tenet that his form of Indian yoga should be practiced across the world to bring down the supermind is partly responsible for this, but so is Western assumptions about the significance of Hinduism and the inward transformation of superconsciousness. Aurobindo himself would speak in stark terms explaining that when Indian Spirituality was finished with Europe there would be recognized an awakening comparable to the brutal experienced of Germany.[690] Of course, the belief in an impending awakening is also a common factor of the New Age, Fundamentalist Christianity, and millenarianism. Narcissistic baby boomers of the 1960s also often overrate the impact of their doings upon American culture.

By the 1980s, Jenkins explains, most baby boomers of the hippie culture were settled down with families of their own and it was unlikely that they would defect to a commune or cult movement.[691] Following upon Ellwood's prophecy of American religion reverting to localism, I wish to suggest that spokesman Robert Forman provides the best model yet

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[687] Chaudhuri (1960), ibid., p. 1.

[688] For instance, following Aurobindo's integral philosophy, the American novelist and folk psychologist Ken Wilber concludes that with Saint Augustine we witness the first flowering of a 'Western Vedanta.' See Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution*, The Collected Works of Ken Wilber, Volume Six (Boston: Shambhala, 2000), pp. 366-372.

[689] Cf. "He is a prophet of supermanhood, and an architect of life divine on earth. The vision had come to him of the inevitable dawn of a new era of peace, harmony and progress as the crowning fulfillment of our human evolution. Sri Aurobindo is regarded as an Avatar who came to fulfill the divine purpose in the world by preparing the ground for fuller manifestation of the transforming power of the Divine in the sphere of evolution. He has given to humanity a new creative idea, and a dynamic world-force." Chaudhuri (1960), ibid., p. 1.

[690] Aurobindo (1920), ibid., pp. 5-6.

[691] Jenkins (2000), ibid., p. 207.

for understanding the influence of his baby boom generation.[692] Rather than models of the New Age, cults, alternative religions or new religious movements, shadow culture, seeking generation, denominationalism, invisible, or silent religion, I believe Forman's aging hippies are best understood in the old, simple, distinction of religion and spirituality.[693] This distinction usually just means that one is interested in non-institutional forms of spiritual experiences, transforming or integrating states of consciousness etc., as opposed to institutional forms of traditional religion. Forman's study of 'Grassroots Spirituality, what it is, why it is here, and where it is going, demonstrates no awareness of the ways in which this 'movement' continues the Protestant discourse of denominationalism to its ultimate base, but it is clear that this is the structural process of at its roots. Casting a final exciting prediction, Casanova leaves room for one of the more critical awakening's now imaginable:

> We do not yet know whether other religions will be forced eventually to adopt the Protestant model of privatization and differentiation in order to survive as 'religious communities' in the modern world, or whether they will find their own ways of institutionalization of religion in modern differentiated societies. They could still find a way of functioning both as religions with some institutionalized place in a revitalized public sphere. In any case, the tension between religion's private and public roles is likely to endure as long as there remains some tension between religion and world.[694]

As we have noted, one of the more important aspects in the legacy of religion in contemporary America is its wholesale resistance to institutionalization. Starting with Protestantism in Europe and continuing through the Great Awakening, down through

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[692] Robert Forman, *Grassroots Spirituality: What It Is Why It Is Here Where It Is Going* (Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic, 2004).

[693] Transpersonal psychologist Charles Tart provides a typical, if tireless, example with his pressing description of transpersonal psychology as spiritual psychology: "I use the term 'spiritual' in preference to 'religious' because I feel the former term implies more directly the *experiences* that people have about the meaning of life, God, ways to live, etc., while 'religious' implies too strongly the enormous social structures that embrace so many more things than direct spiritual experience, and which have often become hostile to and inhibiting of direct experience. When I hear 'religious,' I get all sorts of associations of priests, dogmas, doctrines, churches, institutions, political meddling, and social organizations. Thus I shall always use the term 'spiritual' in preference to 'religious,' as we generally are not dealing with the socialization and institutionalization of spiritual experience in this book. On those rare occasions when I use 'religious,' I do mean the more institutionalized version of spirituality." See Charles Tart (ed), *Transpersonal Psychologies* (NY: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 4.

[694] Casanova (1992), ibid., pp. 56-57.

denominationalism, the New Age counterculture and localism, resistance to institutional authority has indeed remained a significant challenge. In this context, of course we may distinguish between those who do indeed still withhold respect for traditional authority, such as Fundamentalist interpretations of scripture, and those who resist hierarchical bureaucracy. Fundamentalists understandably and respectfully follow the word of their Christian revelation, as far as they can interpret it, but as the idea of denominationalism and the growth of megachurches in the twenty-first century demonstrate, they are resistant to serving as local outposts for heavy-handed administrators. As Casanova has argued, moreover, Fundamentalist privatization of Christianity through individualist interpretation of scripture at the same time functions as a public religion in electoral politics and representation of the moral majority.

The generation of the 1960s counterculture, both those who either did or didn't eventually fall back into Christian denominations, on the other hand, has recently expressed more interest in formal organization. Their belief in the impact they have rendered upon American spirituality is most likely accountable for this fact. As we have seen, even though the underlying structure of denominationalism has remained hegemonic in the history of religion in America, the strength of this process has been gathered directly by means of ongoing periods of 'revival.' As odd looking cults gain a more mainstream audience, Jenkins says, they in turn become the new orthodoxy. For example, the 1950s Church Union proposal exemplifies the striking tendencies towards centralization on behalf of mainstream church bodies that had gradually risen to power.

In the context of Great Britain, though the ascendancy of the New Age therapeutic ethic has no doubt been silent, Frank Furedi clearly demonstrates the public visibility of this discourse.[695] Deeply entrenched in the therapeutic imperatives of the British State, therapeutic management of social problems in the Welfare State, rehabilitation models of the British criminal justice system, Jack Straw's 'seamless sentence' approach to the Sex Offender Treatment Program, cognitive-behavioral tactics for anger and stress

[695] Frank Furedi, 'The Silent Ascendancy of Therapeutic Culture in Britain,' in Jonathan B. Imber (ed), *Therapeutic Culture: Triumph and Defeat* (NJ: Transaction, 2004), pp. 19-15.

management, drug and alcohol addiction, and sex therapy, even infiltrating Fundamentalist Christianity in the form of 'pastoral counseling, liberation therapy and humanistic psychology are indeed hegemonic in Great Britain. As Furedi claims in the U.K., the expanding role of self-help service providers into the public sphere represents an invitation for therapeutic authority to arrogate for itself the management of intimate, personal relationships, regulation of the self. The management of the self is migrating from the domain of the private to the sphere of state authority. Moreover, with access to the intimate lives of others the therapeutic retains its claim of authority in the private sphere.[696] In short, the privatization of religion is in the process of being institutionalized in the public sphere. If met with no resistance, the results of this process are devastating.

As we have seen in America, educational institutions have also been established for awarding degrees in New Age religion and psychology. Moreover, Robert Forman has produced a handbook on how to 'spiritualize the institutions,' from the workplace of the corporate executive, to the doctors office, all the way to the public school system, there are suggestions in this direction.[697] With more time allowed and further opportunity, one could continue to explore the ways in which spirituality is now undergoing a process of de-privatization. More importantly, perhaps, we should note that the implications of spiritual discourse do indeed resist institutionalization in terms of traditional authority. In this sense, one should think in terms of the inward focus and mentalism which continues to enforce the privatization of religion. The organization and institutionalization of spirituality is modeled on a basic structure: the internal dialogue must be 'trans-traditional.'[698] In this sense, it does appear to be a postmodern cultural production.[699] One

[696] Furedi (2004), ibid., pp. 42-43.
[697] Forman (2004), ibid., pp. 137-157.
[698] Forman (2004), ibid., pp. 173-177.
[699] There is also a striking parallel to the general nature of the youth market for 'democratic consumer culture.' The 'new antagonisms' created as a result of their awareness of hierarchal subordination and homogenization has had extreme results for the demands of autonomy. Cf. "The fact that these 'new antagonisms' are the expressions of forms of resistance to the commodification, beureaucratization, and increasing homogenization of social life itself explains why they should frequently manifest themselves through a proliferation of particularisms, and crystallize into a demand for autonomy itself. It is also for this reason that there is an identifiable tendency towards the valorization of 'differences' and the creation of new identities which tend to privilege 'cultural' criteria (clothes, music, language, regional traditions, and so on). Insofar as of the two great themes of the democratic imaginary—equality and liberty—it was that of equality which was traditionally predominant, the demands for autonomy bestow an increasingly central

dictum is provided: "It is not the seeking after God that divides, but the claim to have found God."[700] The principle of trans-traditional organization is that no one path can profess the truth. Self-help groups must be set up and facilitators may guide dialogue and processes of inner exploration and together everyone's beliefs may be shared and contribute to a better understanding of ones self.

Baby boomers "have had it with dogma...there can be no dictated beliefs...no hierarchical authorities telling them what to believe or feel."[701] In short, there are no teachers, but only friendly guides who can help us cultivate and understand our mental experiences. Teachers and students are all on the same path, all learning together.[702] Perhaps one of the more striking features of spirituality is that folks can join this path while still remaining members of their own orthodox traditions. It would appear remarkable that members who clearly affirm, and are even inspired by, Aryan traditions of non-dualism could still claim to be Christians, Jews, Muslims, etc. Of course, most of these members were born into their parent's religion and perhaps just find it too difficult to leave these dualistic Semitic religions. Since no one tradition dictates the market on truth, moreover, spirituality creates a homogenous context where all perspectives on truth may be sorted out for a more self-exalted feeling. In this sense Elwood's description of localism as heterogeneous postmodern religion resistant to homogenous centralization of authority is totally reversed in a chance that baby boomers might finally be able to assert their own self-help brand of authority. Grassroots Spirituality is predominantly an upper to middle-class phenomenon guided by mature elders of the counterculture. To put this in their own words: "Grassroots Spirituality may represent the maturation of the naïve, zealous spirituality of the sixties...its attempt to integrate well-grounded spiritual

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role upon liberty. For this reason many of these forms of resistance are made manifest not in the form of collective struggles, but through an increasingly affirmed individualism." See Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, (London: Verson, 1985), p. 164. The similarities of postmodern religion and consumer society are undeniable.

[700] Forman (2004), ibid., p. 175.

[701] Forman (2004), ibid., p. 175.

[702] Cf. "They are all helping people develop spiritual experiences...Many of these folks object to being called a 'leader.' They prefer 'facilitators,' 'spiritual mentors,' 'spiritual friend,' or the like. This is an expression of the egalitarian and anti-hierarchical mindset that runs through this movement. The logic here is that 'unlike the priestly hierarchy, I don't claim to be spiritually higher or more privileged than those I teach.' We're all on the path, learning together." Forman (2004), ibid., p. 27.

principles into our society and institutions, represents the maturation of the guru movements."[703] This appears at odds with their understanding of the role of the teacher, but they have simply reinterpreted the term guru in their own orthodox terminology:

> Grassroots Spirituality expresses the maturing of the baby boomer generation in another way. Many boomers never stopped their spiritual practices. Many of the folks we spoke with have never missed a day of meditation or prayer in 20 or 30 years. Any many of them have by now risen to positions of leadership...on their respective paths for decades and are now mature leaders in their own right. This status has allowed them to speak up. "*No longer the lieutenants of some shyster gurus, many of this generation are now the leaders. They are saying now I'm ready to enact this vision responsibly*".[704]

Predominantly a movement of the aging baby boom generation, it is unfortunate that Forman's handbook fails to discuss their relationship with Genration's X, Y, Z, and other members of today's youth. Nevertheless, it appears that this movement is more likely one of co-dependency, such as we have outlined above, mostly just baby boomers in dialogue with themselves and still searching for a truth that no one can claim: thou shalt not judge. Nevertheless, while memberships remain low in such small private institutes it is clear that schools like the one founded for Aurobindo's legacy do draw upon certain youth markets. Many are still interested in 'Asian religion' and due to the lack of critique in this area on behalf of scholars they are simply led in one or another direction. On the other hand, Forman notes a trend which may be more disturbing. He claims that part of the reason why the baby boom generation has remained disorganized is that they have been embarrassed to speak publicly about their beliefs and mystical experiences. Forman attributes this to the media as well as the general cultural attitude towards spiritual seekers. For example, he notes, many boomers have been called 'flakes,' 'hippy dippy,' 'kooks,' 'airy fairy,' 'in la la land,' and flat-out 'weirdo's' by their friends and colleagues.[705] For some inexplicable reason, however, this is no longer the case. Forman suggests the revival of interest in Buddhism in the 1990s may be accountable.[706]

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[703] Forman (2004), ibid., p. 117.
[704] Forman (2004), ibid., p. 117.
[705] Forman (2004), ibid., p. 13.
[706] Forman (2004), ibid., pp. 13-14.

An important task of Indo-critical theory remains for further investigation in the representation of Vedanta and other Indian religions as narrated in the discourse of spirituality. An approach to this task may be exemplified with the transpersonal psychologist Haridas Chaudhuri. Expressed with his slogan 'the Great Reconciler,' Chaudhuri's most important mission was to demonstrate how Aurobindo had integrated and synthesized the grounds for a striking revolution.[707] Not simply integrating the bulk of Indian and European philosophy or ordering a wholesale synthesis of East-West psychology, Aurobindo's vision also reconciled the spiritual impulse of the Indian renaissance. Fusing the contributions of Rammohan Roy, Tagore, Vivekananda, Ramakrishna, etc., this mode of hybridization, which is itself "...a characteristic feature of the spiritual renaissance of India reaches its consummation in Sri Aurobindo, the great reconciler."[708] As we have discussed, the *inclusivist* and univeralist method of transcending, including, integrating, and appropriating other traditions is a characteristic approach in the confrontation of Indian religions.

While Aurobindo was obviously interested in manuals of yoga techniques, Chaudhuri himself viewed the Upanisads and Vedanta as the culmination of Hindu spirituality.[709] In this context, Chaudhuri describes Aurobindo's work as *purnadvaitavada*, which he translates as 'integral non-dualism' and often refers to as integral philosophy or integral Vedanta. Integral non-dualism blends the four paths of yoga, knowledge, works, devotion, and physical postures. Integral Vedanta harmoniously blends all the traditional schools of interpretation, including Sankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva, and Ramanuja. Integral Vedanta, moreover, is simply the real Truth-vision of the Upanisads.[710] The supermind, which Aurobindo had evolved and was in the process of 'bringing down' upon the earth before he died, is considered the highest means of knowledge available to

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[707] Chaudhuri (1960), ibid., pp. 214-255.
[708] Chaudhuri (1960), ibid., p. 237.
[709] Cf. "Yes, Vedanta is indeed the most precious gem in India's cultural heritage...Swami Vivekananda did therefore the right thing in preaching to the West the message of Vedanta as India's most precious gift to the world." Chaudhuri (1960), ibid., p. 196.
[710] Cf. "In modern times, Sri Aurobindo, the greatest exponent of Indian culture, has given us an interpretation of Vedanta in a spirit of all-comprehensive synthesis. He has tried to restore the original teaching of the Upanisads and the Gita in such a way that the apparently conflicting truths of all the traditional interpretations of Vedanta are harmoniously blended in an integrated Truth-vision." Chaudhuri (1960), ibid., p. 198.

the modern world.[711] The Truth-vision of the supermind provided Aurobindo with the true understanding of the Upanisads, but that is not all:

> Traditional Vedanta lays stress upon the triune essence of the Supreme Spirit such as existence (*Sat*), consciousness (*Cit*), and bliss (*Ananda*)—Saccidananda. The supermind as the vast truth-consciousness is the fourth intrinsic characteristic of the Supreme. It is not only the fourth (*turiya*) from above, but also the fourth from below. It is above the cosmic triplicity of matter, life, and mind. It is the creative medium of manifestation of the infinite and eternal Spirit into the space-tie world of matter, life, and mind. It is also the uplifting medium through which man can rise to attain comprehensive realization of the Supreme in its integral fullness, i.e. as the undivided unity of eternal perfection and perpetual evolution.[712]

Now, one of the main arguments of Ronald Inden's thesis in *Imagining India* is that Indologists have imposed the monistic philosophy of the Upanisads and Advaita Vedanta as the essence of the Indian mind.[713] The Brahmanical theologian Sankara, according to Inden, has been presented as the hero of the Indian imagination. Sankara's interpretation of *maya*, the power of appearance, has led Indologist's to construe the essence of Indian thought as a world-negating philosophy which views creation as a mere illusion, a dream, an image or mirage, unreal, a figment of the imagination. As the Upanisads were

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[711] The supermind, moreover, is what allowed Aurobindo to assert that the world of matter was just as real as the world of spirit, and that still yet reality was non-dual. Whereas traditional Advaita and the Upanisads take the subject/object distinction as a basic fact of our ignorant perception of ourselves in relation to the world etc. as a part of its teaching methodology to eventually arrive at the truth of non-duality, Aurobindo and Chaudhuri simply want to claim that creation is just as real as spirit and this was discovered by the prophet Aurobindo through the intuitive vision-logic of his supermind. No logic is provided for the fact that in the transformation and evolution involved in the creation of the world, these changes are bordered on the limits of duality. Through the supermind, change itself is the nature of spirit. Cf. "Pivotal to the integral philosophy of Sri Aurobindo is the concept of the supermind. It provides the basis for his contention that such apparent opposites as matter and mind, nature, and spirit, world and God, the many and the One, are two inseparable poles of the same indivisible and all-comprehensive reality. It also enables him to affirm that normal sense perception on the one hand and the most exalted supersensous mystic experience on the other are two termini of the same wide spectrum of multi-colored human experience." Chaudhuri (1974), ibid., p. 170 This is Aurobindo's contribution to the 'materialistic' West. As for his final days at Auroville: "In the midst of absolute silence he was engaged with sustained concentration in bringing down into the flux of human evolution the creative light and transmutive power of the higher divine consciousness,—the Supermind. He was also in close contact with the major cultural and ideological movements of the world, working upon them from higher planes of consciousness, in order to prepare the ground for an increasing transformation of the collective consciousness of mankind." Chaudhuri (1960), ibid., p. 16.

[712] Chaudhuri (1974), ibid., pp. 179-180.

[713] See Inden (2000), ibid., pp. 101-108.

considered to provide insight into the Aryan mind, to understand the ways in which Indologists construe Indian agency Inden must turn to "...the religion of the laity or the people, to those urbane Hindu sects and to those vulgar village cults which have disturbed the Indologist's dream of a pure unchanging Aryan tradition, yet have been necessary as a foil to it."[714] In the imagination of Indologist's, the Upanisads stand firmly above an illusory world, preserving a perennial Aryan religion in a changeless world-negating lineage of Brahmanical theologians.[715]

On closer inspection, claims Inden as he restores the voice of the Indians silenced by Indology, things may not be as clear-cut as Indologist's pretend. Inden cites Indians such as S. Radhakrishnan, and M. Hiriyanna who argue for a 'phenomenal' rather than an 'illusionist' interpretation of *maya* and the world of Advaita Vedanta. Inden admits to being no expert on Sankara and leaves it to philosopher's to settle this dispute, but he feels entitled to conclude that, based upon careful reading of their scriptures, Sankara may not have treated the world as an illusion after all. In which case, the very core of the Indological construction of Hinduism as a world-renouncing, world-negating, religion is severely weakened. Inden concludes by further noting that an understanding of Hinduism as world-accepting, then, would help explain how the world-ordering Saiva saints could have embraced Advaita Vedanta as their religion.[716]

In contrast, there are a few different ways I wish to suggest for an approach to this issue in terms of Indo-critical theory. One could take up Inden's offer, for instance, and dispute Chaudhuri's interpretation of 'traditional Vedanta.' Throughout Chaudhuri's apologetics one constantly encounters his rejection of traditional Vedanta due to its world-negating belief system and he tirelessly tries to challenge this overwhelming conception of Indian thought. Chaudhuri does not once consider that this notion is an Orientalist interpretation, but he claims that it was indeed a fatal error committed by traditional Vedantins. Above all, it should be emphasized that Chaudhuri's own reading of the Upanisads appears to

[714] Inden (2000), ibid., p. 108.
[715] Inden (2000), ibid., p. 108.
[716] Inden (2000), ibid., p. 108.

result from a misunderstanding, or mishandling, of the *avastha-traya-prakriya*, the method of analysis for the three states of experience: waking, dream, and sleep.

In his commentary on the *Mandukya Upanisad*, Sankara's teacher Gaudapada employs this method to prove the non-duality of the self (*turiya*) and *brahman* while demonstrating that the world is an incidental attribute dependent upon *brahman* for its reality.[717] In verse twelve of the second chapter of Gaudapada's treatise on 'unreality' (*vaitathya-prakarana*), the reasoning of positive and negative concomitance (*anvaya-vyatireka*) negates the duality of *atman* and creation.[718] The self is purported to be the material and efficient cause for creation. As the changeless self could not undergo any transformation to manifest in the world, Gaudapada explains that the self creates the world (lit. itself) through the power of *maya*. In fact, *maya*, as the cause of an apparent effect (*mithya*), is just as unreal as the world. The changeless self, one without a second, is the only reality. As the invariable awareness of all three states of experience, the *turiya* (fourth) is the substratum of the entire world. Neither the *Mandukya Upanisad* nor Gaudapada's *karikas* anywhere suggest any transcendent fourth state of consciousness beyond the experience of waking, dream, and sleep.[719]

In Chaudhuri's revolutionary, creative, model of *turiya* the entire world is imagined as the supermind of Aurobindo. An additional approach for Indo-critical theory might in fact choose to problematize the many ways in which Chaudhuri misinterprets the Upanisads and traditional Vedanta. For my part, I have no inclinations in this direction. While it may be an important task, I believe Chaudhuri's psychologized language and models of the evolutions of consciousness are so far removed from the Upanisads that it warrants little reason to contrast his philosophy with Vedanta. More importantly, one should be aware of the politics of representation. From British India to the anti-cult campaigns of America

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[717] In GK 1.10 Gaudapada refers to the self as *turiya*, the fourth: nivṛtteḥ sarvaduḥkhānāmīśānaḥ prabhuravyayaḥ advaitaḥ sarvabhāvānāṁ devasturyo vibhuḥ smṛtaḥ See Swami Gambhirananda, *Eight Upanisads with the Commentary of Sankaracarya*, Volume Two (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1996), pp. 206-207.

[718] kalpayatyātmanā'tmānamātmā devaḥ svamāyayā sa eva budhyate bhedāniti vedāntaniścayaḥ GK 2.12. Gambhirananda (1996), ibid., p. 237.

[719] See Michael Comans, *The Method of Early Advaita Vedanta: A Study of Gaudapada, Sankara, Suresvara, and Padmapada* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000), pp. 30-31.

the ongoing attack against Indian culture as world-negating remains a challenge for modern Indian apologists. As we have mentioned, however, Chaudhuri's approach was not to suggest that Orientalists had misrepresented the Indian tradition. Taking as primary sources the writings of Aurobindo, Chaudhuri could only imagine that his master integrated all traditional schools of Vedanta.

In this regard, we may take the first and last opportunity to ever suggest the merits of Aurobindo's supermind. As the central issue in the philosophy of Aurobindo, he was well aware of Orientalist manipulation of India as a land of mystical illusion. As the central role he felt destined to play, Aurobindo would eventually exhaust volumes of poetic writings in an attempt to come to terms with *maya*. The point I wish to emphasize is Aurobindo challenged this notion by going directly to the Upanisads, and with his supermind forging the evolution of spirit, mind, and consciousness through matter. Writing the journals *Arya* in 1918, Aurobindo's renaissance approach to his colonial situation may be suggested as an authentic Indian representation:

> European writers, struck by the general metaphysical bent of the Indian mind, by its strong religious instincts and religious idealism, by its other-worldliness, are inclined to write as if this were all the Indian spirit. An abstract, metaphysical, religious mind overpowered by the sense of the infinite, not apt for life, dreamy, unpractical, turning away from life and action as Maya, this, they said, is India; and for a time Indian in this, as in other matters, submissively echoed their new Western teachers and masters...But meanwhile the Indian mind began to emancipate itself and to look upon its past with a clear and self-discerning eye, and it very soon discovered that it had been misled into an entirely false self-view. All such one-sided appreciations indeed almost invariably turn out to be false.[720]

Though guided by resistance to Orientalist presuppositions, Aurobindo's own mystic approach to the Upanisads could very well be described as some sort of modern hybridization of Vedanta. The same cannot be said of Chaudhuri, who simply dismissed a range of traditional Indian theologians for not having the supermind to understand the

[720] Aurobindo (1920), ibid., p. 5.

Truth-vision of reality.[721] Rather than engage in theological dispute with Chaudhuri's claims, one task for Indo-critical theory might also point to the ways in which such narratives are constructed in the discourse of Orientalism and neo-colonialism. Moreover, it cannot be claimed that Chaudhuri's narratives are the product of Indology and the disciplinary control of powerless Indians. In this case, one does not even need to demonstrate the ways in which Indian agency has never been stripped from Hindu saints. One of the more important aspects of Chaudhuri's mission is to blend Eastern and Western thought, to integrate the evolutionary science, rationalism, and insights of parapsychology with the mystic vision of Indian spirituality. Critics may rightly charge with labels of solipsism, cosmic-humanism, distorted psychologized interpretations of Indian mysticism, or discourse of neo-colonialism, but this is the highly anticipated revolution the American baby boomers have on offer.

Clearly, the discourse of spirituality is nothing short of movements of the privatization of religion. Also, I have suggested, American spirituality is finding its own ways of institutionalization in the modern world. In chapter two we witnessed the Brahmanical fabrication of Vedanta as a genre of discourse for Indian theologians, while chapter three provided the necessary hegemony for the laicization of Advaita. In each case, the implications of the historical work of Brahmanical politicians and Indian nationalists have been appropriated as narratives to construct the discourse of Vedanta. This analysis emphasizes the strategies whereby modern Indians are fabricated with the Brahmanical ancestry of Aryan *rsi*-lineages. At this point I would like to suggest that narratives of spirituality in America signify the emergence of mystic genres in neo-colonial discourse of Advaita.[722] Generic elements of discourse are codified with sociopolitical ideology,

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[721] Cf. "In medieval interpretations of Vedanta, the supermind was ignored in metaphysical construction as well as in yogic discipline. As a result, the organic and essential relationship between the infinite, eternal, indeterminable Spirit on the one hand and the space-time world of variation and evolution on the other was not adequately grasped. This gave rise to varying degrees of world-and-life-negating tendencies and the consequent exaltation of asceticism, monasticism, and mystical indifference to social, economic, scientific, and political values of existence." Chaudhuri (1974), ibid., pp. 180.

[722] As Tzvetan Todorov explains, "in a given society, the recurrence of certain discursive properties is institutionalized, and individual texts are produced and perceived in relation to the norm constituted by that codification". Where do genres come from? Without hesitation, Todorov provides an answer: "Quite simply from other genres." See Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 15. Retaining Todorov's premise that "a new genre is always the transformation of an

moreover, as Tzvetan Todorov emphasizes "...any aspect of discourse can be made obligatory."[723] Correctly noting "this aspect of genre study is the one that most interests the ethnologist or the historian," Todorov argues:

> In fact, the former will see in a genre system first of all the categories that differentiate it from that of the neighboring peoples; correlations will have to be established between these categories and other elements of the same culture. The same is true for the historian: each epoch has its own system of genres, which stands in some relation to the dominant ideology, and so on. Like any other institution, genres bring to light the constitutive features of the society to which they belong.[724]

In regard to the discourse of spirituality and the Aryan *system of genres*, specifically the ideological, methodological, pedagogical, and phonological properties codified at the level of discourse, it is important to note that "the genres of discourse, as we see, depend quite as much on a society's raw material as on its historically circumscribed ideology."[725] The universalizing, integrating, synthesizing, and homogenous trends of spirituality may be imagined as Eurocentric, cross-cultural, or multicultural extensions of the ideology and practice of *inclusivism*. While the arrival of Indian movements do warrant a novel revelation in the context of religion in the United States, the circumscribed ideology of denominationalism as well as the gurus themselves certainly restrict the power to establish Vedanta as a constitutive feature of American society. The predominant ideology of spirituality, that is, the ideas of consciousness evolving or expanding, creative spirit evolving in matter, creation as real manifestations, changes, or 'poises' of being, as well as the inward focus on self-development all signify Eurocentric categories for determining American genres of mysticism.[726] In the context of spiritual

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earlier one, or of several: by inversion, by displacement, by combination", for Tim Murphy "the various strategies of such acts of transformation are ripe fodder for analysis. The collection of historical instances of such acts, the formation of a catalogue of their types, and an analysis of their formal properties would be of great service to the science of religion." See Tim Murphy, 'Elements of a Semiotic Theory of Religion,' in *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 15, 2003, pp. 48-67; 50.

[723] Todorov (1990), ibid., p. 18

[724] Todorov (1990), ibid., pp. 17-19.

[725] Todorov (1990), ibid., p. 10.

[726] As another promising approach, with further opportunity one could analyze spirituality as American 'folk religion' in terms of Antonio Gramsci's understanding of the generic quality of folklore and how it becomes hegemonic through official and popular culture. See Alberto Maria Cirese, 'Gramsci's

narratives of the Upanisads, braids in the fabric of Vedanta are transformed into mystic genres codified in the discourse of neo-colonialism. Despite the ideology, spiritual discourse lacks the raw material of traditional Advaita: a *guru*.[727] It is to traditional discourse of Vedanta that we shall now turn for knowledge of *brahman*, the truth.

Observations on Folklore,' in Anne Showstack Sassoon (ed), *Approaches to Gramsci* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Ltd., 1982), pp. 212-247.

[727] Cf. "Any guru for Grassroots Spirituality must always remain an unguru." Forman (2004), ibid., p. 63.

Chapter Five

Institutionalizing Vedanta: Cognition and Communication

> The Hindu mind, directed by a sensuous imagination that cannot properly relate subject and object, lurches first from one extreme to the other, from a bonkers ritualism to a solipsistic mysticism...then to the schizophrenic religion of Siva...[728]

> Even the most powerful positions are vulnerable to the skillful and subtle manipulation of symbols...An order twice inverted is an order restored, perhaps even strengthened in the process.[729]

While bearing the burden of Swami Dayananda's Vedanta myth, immediate problems lie with the 'conjunction of elements' codifying his novel religious system.[730] Furthermore, semiotic exegesis must not reify this regime of power.[731] At the outset, we face a difficult task. Although his canon is threaded with national pride, stress management, yoga,

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[728] Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) p. 129. Summarizing the entire 'degenerative psychohistory' of 'Hinduism', Inden's statement captures well the agentive function of hegemonic elements in the discourse of Indology.

[729] Bruce Lincoln, 'The Dialectics of Symbolic Inversion,' in *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 159.

[730] In the course of this study the teaching tradition of Advaita Vedanta has been broadly theorized in the context of historiography along the lines of Michel Foucault's mission to problematize the 'history of the present.' Analyzing disciplinary procedures of modernity in opposition to power-knowledge relations of antiquity, for instance, Foucault takes as his concern the "birth of the prison" in the French penal system, not due to any interest in the past or misguided attempt to write the historical forms of punishment "in terms of the present," but to understand the discourse of this contemporary institution. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: Birth of the Prison* (NY: Random House, 1977), ibid., pp. 30-31. The underlying assumption of Foucault's approach is that "the present reflects a conjunction of elements inherited from the past and current innovations. In other words, the present bears a burden, a weight that comes from the past, and the task of the present is to bring this burden up to date in order to understand its current ramifications." See Robert Castel, 'Problematization as a Mode of Reading History,' in Jan Goldstein (ed), *Foucault and the Writing of History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 237-252; 238.

[731] As Tim Murphy explains, "the scholar trying to understand any individual element of a religion (and, *mutatis mutandis*, a "culture") is faced with the problem of delimiting a series of paradigmatic, or associative fields, from a rambling, often incongruent series of such fields." Moreover, our position demands that we account for the 'intertexuality,' or hermeneutics, of this agonistic production: "the semiologist's job is to delineate the common, intertextual discourses with historical and linguistic specificity. Once the diachronic exegesis of a discourse, or a "braid" of discourses is delimited, then the semiotician must analyze the internal structure of each particular braid of discourse. Finally, the semiotician must trace out the effects of the movement of an object of discourse between specific, bounded discursive formations, making an a priori assumption neither of continuity nor of complete difference, but analyzing the specific structuring events in each movement, and consequently, the specific effects of specific discourses. We must ask, Does the same signifier mean the same thing in each of the various scenes of its deployment?" (Murphy 2003: 55; 64). Of course, a neo-colonial Hindu *brahmavit* is somewhat different than a postcolonial analyst of *brahman* as a generic category of traditional discourse and the Indo-critical employment of methods distinguishing the truth of indigenous epistemic traditions.

"purity of mind," meditation, psychotherapy and "mind management," prayer, anti-Christian proselytization, *sanatana dharma*, and "cultural validation" of untouchables, etc., yet,-for him these braids are all branches of an all-India 'world religion,-' however nowhere does Dayananda's self-understanding appear more salient than in narratives of 'traditional Vedanta' which for him define the very essence of 'Hinduism.'

Without doubt, carrying the weight of any 'tradition,' let alone a fabricated one transmitted to another culture in the 'modern' world, is very demanding, but theorizing such matters is apparently no less troubling. As Pascal Boyer has discovered, "although the bulk of anthropological literature is about traditions and traditional societies, there is no such thing as a *theory* of tradition in social anthropology."[732] While sorting through Dayananda's rambling narratives of 'tradition', nevertheless, Boyer's empiricist approach to 'traditional discourse' as 'truth and communication' transmitted through repeated social interaction may help systematize our Indo-critical theory of the traditional role of modern English-speaking *gurus*. To register the 'truth' discovered with empirical observation of Dayananda's religious system, I put forward a few general hypotheses which may provide the basis for our ethnographic description.

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[732] Pascal Boyer, *Tradition as Truth and Communication: A Cognitive Description of Traditional Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. vii. Our failure to discover additional insight from social or cognitive anthropology, disciplines long preoccupied with traditional institutions, is a direct result of the fact that the theorist's themselves often lack proper theoretical claims, but the psychologization of the discipline also prohibits our engagement. This same cultural process also hinders our attempt to incorporate cognitive models developed by theorists in the discipline of religious studies, with whom anthropologists are increasingly allied. For an interesting review of recent "second generation studies" in this direction see Lawrence Hirschfield's attempt to problematize anthropology's "long history of aversion to things psychological." According to Hirschfield, this history is rendered ironic in the present: "Even more curious is the fact that much of contemporary anthropology now is focused on themes especially amenable to, indeed that even demand, psychological investigation." Lawrence Hirschfield, 'The Inside Story' in *American Anthropologist*, 2000, 102. 3. pp. 620-629; 620. For even more explicit praise of the marriage of psychology and anthropology see Patricia M. Greenfield's 'What Psychology Can Do For Anthropology, or Why Anthropology took Postmodernism on the Chin' in *American Anthropologist*, 2000, 102.3, pp. 564-575. Greenfield argues that psychology has weathered the interrogations of postmodernism better than anthropology and, thus, the later may stand to gain by analyzing the contemporary integrity of the empiricist models sustained by psychology in spite of the postmodern critique of the "empirical enterprise." Greenfield congratulates theorists within various subfields of anthropology, such as psychological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, biological anthropology, and applied anthropology, who have begun to incorporate into their research various "inputs and insights from the field of psychology" (p. 564). Of course, postmodern critique of empiricism in anthropology was largely initiated by Clifford Geertz's (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. NY: Basic Books. Geertz remains influential in cultural anthropology and the field of religious studies.

In this context, I reconfigure strategic principles of Boyer's cognitive description of traditional institutions, specifically as a model of traditional *events* and the series of empirical hypotheses which account for the surface properties of repetitive salient utterances and traditional categories of discourse. As Boyer explains, moreover, "there is no theory of what happens in cultural interaction without some strong hypotheses about what is happening in the actors' minds."[733] As such, we theorize paradigmatic narratives where *gurus* believe they are able to impart knowledge which, in effect, ostensibly releases the soul (*jiva*) of a qualified student (*adhikari*) from cycles of death and rebirth (*samsara*) and thus leads to knowledge (*jnana*), recognition of oneself as limitless (*sarvatmabhava*), union with God (*isvara*), and liberation while living (*jivanmukta*). Souls regulated by Dayananda, however, are never separate from *isvara*; rather, due to the particulars (*visesas*) of self-ignorance, they are unaware of their true identity. Where the subtlety of Dayananda's narrative is revealed, is with methods (*prakriyas*) of demonstration, or 'proofs,' that the individual is always already liberated from *samsara* and transmigration. In this context, I examine the underlying procedures, or causal relations, of the removal of ignorance (*avidya*) and cognitive constraints of liberation (*moksa*). This process of 'attaining the attained' is important for understanding traditional discourse and general properties of the conservation of tradition.

Empirical observation of traditional institutions inevitably involves some degree of understanding the local categories and social interaction of participants involved in traditional discourse of truth-statements. Following general trends of anthropological theory which take the analysis of local categories as an approach for description of traditional interaction, Boyer rejects the common belief that traditional categories are an object of shared definition. A central problem for Boyer concerns the limitations of contemporary anthropological theory, specifically structuralist or functionalist interpretations of myth and ritual and inadequate descriptions of ethnographic observation of the acquisition, repetition, and reiteration of conceptual categories and traditional social interaction. Most biological, scientific, semiotic, and neo-intellectualist

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[733] Irrelevant to this analysis, however, is Boyer's suggestion that any valid theory of tradition must be compatible "with what psychologists know about mental processes." Boyer (1990), ibid., p. viii.

a priori prototypes of semantic categories too easily lead to significant misunderstandings about traditional and, even common sense taxonomies of language and cognition.

A common concern of anthropological theory lies with the representation of local knowledge, which is often assumed to consist of a set of mental definitions related to traditional concepts. Some of the more important contributions provided by Boyer are the sets of specific hypotheses about the processes involved in the repetition of traditional interaction, claims which are compared to precise contemporary findings in experimental and cognitive psychology. In this process Boyer avoids the *ad hoc* approach of anthropological theories of tradition, which continue to represent tradition in cohesive terms of 'symbols,' 'cultural models,' 'socialization,' 'authority,' 'world views,' 'conceptual worlds,' etc.[734] This 'black box' approach to tradition is rejected by Boyer as an attempt to make claims about what are in fact seen to be the results of cognition, rather than an actual examination of the cognitive procedures involved in generating traditional institutions, such as licensed speakers involved in the production of truth. In this regard Boyer admits that since the 'domain of symbolism' and cognitive interaction has only recently emerged as a distinct field of cognitive anthropology, the inevitable outcome is that his claims involve a great deal of speculation.[735] Still, this insight provides the outlines for an escape from anthropology's black box of tradition.

At this point, I would like to introduce some of Boyer's hypotheses which may have significant implications for our own theory of tradition. For this discussion we must briefly mention the specific observances of Boyer's ethnographic descriptions. The descriptions of Boyer's ethnographic research is limited to his observations of the Fang people of Gabon, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, a tradition which has emerged from

[734] Cf. "The question of cohesiveness is answered in a way which reflects pervasive anthropological assumptions about culture and society in general. The idea is that utterances, actions and more generally bits and pieces of behaviour anthropologists observe and record, are in fact held together by some underlying intellectual objects. These are called 'world views,' 'cultural models,' 'local theories,' 'collective representations,' etc. There is a considerable ambiguity in anthropological literature about: (i) what part of these objects is supposed to be in people's minds and what part is the combination of what different actors know and think; (ii) how implicit and unconscious they are; and (iii) to what extent they are a reality or a model of it." Boyer (1990), ibid., pp. 3-4.

[735] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. viiii.

some obscurity due to previous anthropological research in the common Fang genre of *mvet*, an oral transmission of epic story-telling. Boyer, however, has focused mainly upon the Fang category of *evur*, a powerful term used among the Fang divinatory specialists *ngengang* ('witch-doctor') which is usually represented by anthropologists as a mystical notion, 'witchcraft substance,' or 'witchcraft organ.'[736] Boyer's description of *ngengang* 'customized speech,' or 'ritual speech,' which we may relate to our model of traditional discourse, must, of course, be distinguished from that of gurus of *brahmavidya*.

The seemingly ambiguous ways in which the Fang people employ such notions as *evur* is precisely why the term has been defined as 'mystical energy,' 'vital force,' etc. by anthropologists. Nevertheless, this characterization is also a result of the methodological procedures involved with anthropological theories of tradition and local categories. Boyer distinguishes two approaches in the history of anthropological theory which may account for this fact. In both cases, it is maintained that despite their ambiguity the terms are indeed the object of shared definition. One attempt to deal with this issue has been to suggest that the local categories are simply an exceptional case, or perhaps a *sui generis* phenomenon related to traditional institutions. The primary representative for this anthropological trend of theorizing is associated with the structuralist Levi-Strauss and the analysis of the Melanesian concept of *mana*, which has long provided anthropologists with a paradigm of magical thought. Based on the general structuralist grid of signification, such terms are viewed as empty 'zero value' signifiers which simply account for the fact that language and linguistic categorization do not fit with human knowledge of the world.[737] All purpose signifiers such as 'mana' provide a 'joker card' for traditional categorization of the world and may be used to denote anything for which traditional people have no corresponding word of expression, hence they are empty notions. Similarly, Boyer suggests that it is due to the apparent semantic vacuity of such notions that anthropologists have also employed these categories as expressions of 'cultural symbols,' traditional 'world views,' etc.

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[736] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 25.
[737] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 27.

When applied to particular contexts of empirical observation, however, Boyer claims that such rendering of traditional categories simply flies in the face of facts. Clarification of the reasons for this rejection will provide us with a central hypothesis for understanding the cognitive procedures of traditional communication. Analyzing the general properties of social interaction surrounding traditional institutions, Boyer explains:

> Traditional categories are precisely not used in that way. They are not used as the joker in cards. First, the languages in which they occur generally have some other means to cope with 'signifieds without signifiers', for things one has no word for...Conversely, it is obvious that traditional categories are used in a very precise way...rules govern the use of such terms, and the ethnographer's job is to make them explicit. If such rules did not exist, if the categories actually denoted anything, then it would be in principle impossible to tell a serious use of the term from mere gibberish. But the ethnographer's informants are usually able to make such a distinction, which suggests that there must be some limits to the use of the categories.[738]

The result of anthropological theories about the mystical qualities of terms such as *evur* is the production of a range of cultural symbols and interrelated models of tradition. This analytic process itself is based upon the belief that local categories should be based upon the abstract system of language as a set of linguistic symbols. Boyer's empirical objections to this approach stem from the fact that the representation of traditional categories must focus upon their use, actual utterances, not just in terms of their position in a vocabulary of language.[739] The problems involved with anthropological theories about such notions as 'mystical substances' are complimented with different approaches to traditional categories which display the overall anti-traditionalistic consensus of Western science and social beliefs about tradition, such as some attempt to convey beliefs and conceptions under illusions of an unchanging lineage of transmission.

In contrast to previous anthropological interpretations of tradition, Boyer's cognitive approach attempts to uncover the rules governing seemingly vacuous terms such as

[738] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 28.
[739] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 28.

evur.[740] It is just this quality of traditional categories which suggests their importance for cognitive anthropology. Boyer's tenet that this focus must be directed towards the use of traditional categories as discovered in the instantiation of an utterance leads to our first hypothesis for traditional discourse of Vedanta: there are principled differences between the ways in which traditional categories are used, and these differences must be distinguished in terms of more common and specialist registers of discourse. The two distinct registers I wish to delimit for traditional discourse of Vedanta are:

1. Qualified Students (*adhikari*)

2. Competent Gurus (*srotriya* and *brahmanishta*)

These registers of discourse will need further description, but let us first see how they compare or contrast with Boyer's registers of discourse about *evur*. For this notion, Boyer has delineated between registers of 'common wisdom,' 'gossip,' and 'experts.' Common wisdom is that which passes in a culture for folklore. Common knowledge is generally vague, abstract, generalizing, usually expressed in the form 'this is what the witch-doctors say,' etc. Gossip, on the other hand, is of no use for contexts in which truth is supposed to be expressed. It is normally rejected outright on formal grounds, such as dismissing the content of the discourse as ignorant and misleading.[741] Neither of these registers are under consideration in the present context of traditional discourse of Vedanta. While I suggest that gossip about Vedanta may be registered with the discourse of New Age spirituality, as outlined in the previous chapter, this type of communication is not important for understanding the truth of Vedanta.

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[740] Cf. "There is a common point in the structuralist and 'intellectualist' approaches. Instead of considering actual uses of a notion, these approaches focus on abstract objects, either the system of 'signified' or the traditional 'theory.' As a result, it is implied that the use of terms like 'evur' is simple, and can be derived from the abstract objects considered. In the structuralist approach, making an utterance about 'evur' only involves some knowledge about the language. In the intellectualist model, it only involves knowing the relevant theory. In order to go beyond these problematic hypotheses, it may be necessary to examine the way such terms as 'evur' are used in actual communication. Against the models presented here, I would claim that we must distinguish between several interrelated 'registers' or 'styles' of discourse." Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 30.

[741] Boyer (1990), ibid., pp. 30-31.

Common wisdom, likewise, is irrelevant to cognition and communication of traditional Vedanta. Common discourse of Vedanta would be mostly limited to the Indian context and may be discovered amongst nearly all middle-class discussions about Hinduism and Indian spirituality. The idea of the non-duality of *brahman* and *atman*, for instance, is generally acknowledged as a part of the Indian culture alongside other forms of cultural expression such as cults dedicated to *Visnu*. Such beliefs do not concern any criteria of truth and often are very far from the acquisition of traditional categories of Vedanta. Common discourse in a Hindu context may be best understood in terms of Boyer's distinction between the communal procedures of 'truth-ascription,' which is vague, general, and unrelated to cognitive procedures governing the criteria of truth and the acquisition of traditional categories. Common discourse may even be attributed to the common student of Vedanta, the predominant member-type living among *ashrams*, *gurukulams*, etc. This distinction will be further clarified in terms of criteria of the qualified student, but at the moment we must consider the register of expert discourse.

The criteria for *gurus* differ significantly from Boyer's expert registers of *evur*. Before making these distinctions, however, I wish to emphasize some of the more important similarities. The most obvious similarities concern the fact that expert discourse is supposed to convey truth, or statements held to be true among members involved in the acquisition of traditional categories of knowledge. In analysis of the discursive properties of *evur* and the ways in which its use is distributed among different registers of discourse, Boyer discerns a general property of traditional interaction, namely the fact that traditional institutions are ordered in such a way as to focus attention in terms of cognitive salience, utterances expressed and represented as guaranteed truth. This idea may be applied to traditional discourse of Vedanta, as can Boyer's assertion that these properties are themselves guaranteed through special rites of initiation. The analysis of initiation narratives, however, leads Boyer to further clarification of the actual 'full acquisition of *evur*.' Specifically, Boyer distinguishes between two parallel processes which involve the attainment of technological knowledge and ritual contacts with the domain of *evur*.[742] This, in turn, leads to additional issues which we must now consider.

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[742] Boyer (1990), ibid., pp. 31-36.

As we have mentioned, the representation of truth is considered more or less reliable based upon the registers of discourse in which knowledge is distributed. Now, Boyer has made an additional distinction within the register of expert discourse between technical knowledge and experience with the domain of *evur*. This specific point is used to emphasize the fact that traditional interaction cannot be concerned with the mental definition of traditional categories. For Boyer, cognitive analysis of traditional categories is no doubt important, but this approach must focus upon ordering principles of discourse registers. The very recognition that there exists three, at the least, different ways of discussing *evur*, for instance, is said to verify the fact that one cannot study traditional categories in terms of their shared definitions. The study of tradition in terms of truth and transmission must necessarily limit itself to the domain of experts, where guarantees of truth are available.[743] As such, upon distinguishing the registers of discourse, we may center more specifically upon the domain of truth. Boyer's focus upon initiation narratives and his subsequent distinction between technical knowledge and experience with the domain of *evur* in the register of expert discourse leads to additional hypotheses about the cognitive properties of traditional discourse. To understand the traditional interactions underlying these cognitive properties it is important to understand the relations between traditional categories, on the one hand, and on the other *natural kind terms*. Boyer relates traditional categories to natural kind terms in a general, albeit significant, manner and it is thus necessary to understand the underlying conceptions provided by this model of cognitive development. Boyer claims to rely upon 'experimental' and cognitive psychology and I do not wish to restrict his frame of reference, but it may be useful to simply provide the minimal basis for this discussion.

The minimal hypothesis of psychological essentialism simply does not go far enough for distribution to traditional registers. One general assumption in the field of cognitive psychology is that mental concepts tend to display 'essential' properties which are significant for shared categories and other conceptual features. Translated into hypothesis of non-defeasible causal laws, the observable properties of kind membership are connected through 'K-laws' (kind laws) in the form of 'something about being an A

[743] Boyer (1990), ibid., pp. 33-34.

causes B' (e.g. something about truth-statements of a *guru* causes knowledge).[744] The inferred outcome 'truth-statements of a *guru* cause knowledge' is a K-law which, therefore, distinguishes essential properties and surface features of kind concepts. The distinction between non-K-laws and K-laws based upon inferential logic of kind terms provides the minimal hypothesis for sufficient characterization of causal laws and category members. K-laws, moreover, are neutral in content and the underlying coherence of categories are independent of essentialist features and defining structures.

Psychological essentialism further refines the notion of K-laws through commitment to the representational assumption that 'surface features' are both caused and constrained by 'deeper' essentialist properties of concepts. Psychological essentialism requires no theoretical claim for intuition of the nature of essential properties of kind terms, but if such intuition is attained then the essence will prove sufficient to define ones belief or identity. It is crucial for psychological essentialism, moreover, to distinguish the properties of natural and non-natural relations for insight into the content of essentialist beliefs. There is no general attribute that serves to qualify or define any laws or relations of an essence, as well as no need for further details or hypothesis about the essence or its particular location: "an essence may be conceptualized as that which determines which sorts of causal relations may be constitutive of categories."[745] Beyond this, causal relations are either considered 'intuitive,' such as demonstrated through empirical observation of children at play, or one maintains an explanatory position of agnosticism.

The causal matrix may be either known or unknown to its participants and the linkages may take any form of analysis, from an essence to surface features, or the causal structures of common properties, to the single common-cause structure underlying the formation of category members. In contrast to natural causal relations, 'artifact' categories may display underlying causal-effect structures, or external features (e.g. functions) related to intentionality. In all of this, it may also be noted that empirical

[744] See M. Strevens, 'The Essentialist Aspect of Naïve Theories,' in *Cognition* 74, 2000, pp. 149-175. Also see Woo-kyoung Ahn, Charles Kalish, and Susan A. Gelman, et al., 'Why Essences are Essential in the Psychology of Concepts,' in *Cognition* 82, 2001, pp. 59-69.
[745] Ahn, Kalish, and Gelman et al. (2001), ibid., p. 62.

observation has been largely limited to statistical probability of associations between deep and surface features rather than essences and category members, and there is no guarantee that an essence will generate reliable properties to sufficiently define surface level features. Importantly, psychological essentialism admits the possibility of intervening variables for more complex beliefs and theories, or domains of knowledge, which may manipulate tripartite surface features, essences, and causal relations.[746]

One of the more important aspects of natural kind terms for Boyer concern their contrasts as emphasized in hypothesis for the cognitive acquisition of traditional categories. Without getting involved in broader discrepancies at this point, it is important to understand Boyer's acceptance of the cognitive distinction between *episodic* and *semantic* memory as separate features in the processes of transmitting knowledge. A general feature of natural kind concepts is that they are acquired through episodic representations of the species or natural substances denoted by the terms (i.e. Indians, saints, Hindus, etc.). Related to this process is the notion of a *stereotype* which provides general properties used to identify specific objects among a class of kind members. For example, while common representations or certain properties may enable one to locate Hindus in the world, it is only through specific observations that one successively gains knowledge of the object indicated by the stereotype. Of course, a better example might be a 'girl,' for instance, since we have seen that cultural stereotypes tend to convey a range of conflicting images. In any case, the only significance at this point is that knowledge of natural kind concepts is gained through one or more events whereby an already possessed stereotype provides the necessary properties to locate the object in question, towards which the mental representation is then transformed into knowledge.[747]

It is in contrast to this process that Boyer also reconfigures the standard 'anthropological theory of cognition.' In the full acquisition of *evur*, unlike the cognitive properties governing natural kind categories, the process of concept representation and its use in expert discourse is totally reversed. Describing the special features of traditional

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[746] Ahn, Kalish, and Gelman et al. (2001), ibid., pp. 63; 66-67.
[747] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 39.

categories, Boyer notes that "...the main hypothesis here is that in the process of acquisition of a traditional category, the definitional features are replaced with memories of specific situations, contrary to what happens in the acquisition of most ordinary terms."[748] Put another way, in the representation of natural kind terms, while a mental concept more or less *converges* toward the common stereotype: "The full acquisition of *evur*, on the other hand, starts from the stereotype and gradually *diverges* towards a series of memories of personal experiences."[749] These memories, of course, are experiences of contact with the domain of *evur* and are generated through rites of initiation.

All of this leads to Boyer's hypothesis that the acquisition of traditional expert discourse relies upon episodic knowledge and ostensive presentations of the domain of *evur*. Additionally, Boyer suggests that this knowledge may often be inconsistent with the stereotype. In fact, it would be surprising if this was not the case, as expert discourse depends upon initiations through which one obtains special knowledge otherwise absent among common registers of discourse. With this connection, Boyer validates his prior hypothesis that the acquisition of traditional categories cannot depend upon the notion of shared definitions, but is rather governed by properties of traditional interaction and the ways in which concepts are represented amongst members with limited access to different registers. This limited access to certain discourse registers, or guarantees of truth, leads to a logical and important conclusion for traditional interaction: "...people must build semantic memory data from the limited material presented in a series of singular situations; there is simply nothing else to build on. Therefore the processes through which episodic memories are used to generate knowledge are crucially important to anthropology."[750] The logical division of discourse registers which is distinguished in terms of truth-statements and common gossip, guarantee that episodic memory is in fact occasion-bound and limited to singular situations, or contacts with experts of *evur*.

Ethnographic description of traditional concepts, therefore, must devote itself to establishing taxonomic criteria of truth and mechanisms of 'truth-making,' as observed in

[748] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 42.
[749] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 39.
[750] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 43.

the salient utterances of traditional experts. In this task, however, the focus is upon the cognitive processes of specific traditions, not notions such as 'traditional belief systems,' 'traditional concepts of truth,' etc. Boyer seeks to challenge anthropological theories which simply rely upon a 'principle of authority' for explanation of traditional 'competence.' The point I wish to derive from Boyer in this context is that the possession of truth, by competent speakers, "...is represented in such a way that it is likely to result in the production of true utterances."[751] Truth criteria, arrangement of discourse registers, initiation narratives, and singular situations are all important in this regard. At this point we may also link the transmission of truth with causal criteria of traditional discourse. Adopting specific elements of Boyer's criteria of truth, as discerned through Fang divinatory rituals, I wish to suggest three interrelating causal factors in traditional discourse of Vedanta. The criteria consists of empirical hypotheses specific to certain domains of reality and registers of discourse which may be substantiated with analysis of the cognitive procedures of truth and transmission surrounding singular situations in the discursive and non-discursive formation of Arsha Vidya:

1. The Situation: *Advaita* (non-duality).

2. The Procedure: *Sravana* (listening).

3. The Diagnosis: Recognition of the fundamental problem will, through the recommended procedures, reveal the truth of the described situation.

Now, the important causal factor here depends upon the relation between the situation and the diagnosis. If we recall the idea that certain categories of traditional discourse have often acquired specific properties which have led to their characterization as mystical 'joker cards,' which are in fact played in the hands of those who have no knowledge or acquaintance with indigenous forms of knowledge and representation, it may now be explained that the causal factors of traditional Advaita serve to constrain these notions for the purposes of cognition and communication. In this chapter, I shall frame traditional Vedanta in opposition to anthropological models of cognition which suggest that

[751] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 59.

individuals deduce knowledge of traditional categories of representation from an already fabricated conceptual worldview. Rather, I wish to represent knowledge of *brahman* inductively, that is, traditional discourse of Advaita as a repetitive series of singular utterances of truth, starting with the observations of which individuals may modify preconceived notions about their relationship to the world. In this process, I will anchor the traditional category '*brahman*' in the discourse of Advaita and index the *guru-sisya-parampara* in reference to the transmission of *brahmavidya*.

To spell this out more clearly, it is important to understand Boyer's primary aims in reference to cognition and communication: "What we are aiming for is a description and explanation of the processes whereby past occurrences of an interaction are the reference of present occurrences."[752] Boyer's analysis of tradition is limited to the general properties of the *actual events* involved in the repetition of *psychologically salient* statements. An important claim offered by Boyer is that traditions are often misunderstood due to what he describes as the *literalism* of repetition. People believe that traditions are simply conservative ways of expressing cultural ideology, or even more starkly portrayed as attempts to transmit the formal properties of customized language at the expense of content and cognition. When placed in the referential context of the past and the observation of an actual event, the implications of this mistake signal the demand for reformed interpretations of cognitive anthropology: "people do not seem to consider that a description of a certain event, however faithful, can have the same cognitive effects as the original version."[753] Boyer's description of traditional discourse, however, is limited to oral communication and makes no claims in regard to literate societies and the interactions of textual conservation. This approach, moreover, is limited to a specific

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[752] Cf. "The phenomenon a theory of tradition must explain is why and how it seems so natural to people, in certain circumstances, to take last year's or last decade's version of some myth or ritual as the only relevant way of performing these actions. This, as we will see, is an important empirical question, which cannot be solved in the usual, question-begging way or with tautological hypotheses. The theory therefore focuses on the process of traditional repetition, and must leave aside the question whether the process leads to actual cultural permanence across many generations, because this result is only partly dependent upon the process. To take a distant analogy, a good theory of reproduction should explain the processes whereby living beings generate other living beings which are very similar to them. One cannot expect the theory to explain the evolution of species, because such factors as mutation and adaptation are outside its scope." Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 9. Of course, Boyer's approach to the cognitive process itself is indeed useful, but we have also tried to answer some of these more ideological and extraneous cultural matters in other chapters.

[753] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 11.

aspect of oral transmission, namely the formal properties for reiteration and transmission of traditional statements, customized speech-acts, and guarantees of truth. In the instantiation of an act of speech, more importantly, the emphasis for Boyer is upon singular utterances of truth-terms in specific local situations.[754]

In most theoretical arguments of representation it is generally acknowledged that there is no organic bond naturally existing between an object of signification and the medium of expression. In structuralist analysis, moreover, we have seen that signifiers may not only alter representation but actually construct through discourse both the subject and object of analysis. Semioticians, while contributing to this production, may also supplement the signified with inferential processes, denotations, connotations, and mental 'concepts' of reference.[755] In extreme cases 'dangling signifiers' or signifiers with lost signifieds have variously led to mystical or neurotic constructions, neither of which captures our interest.[756] Both lexical and conceptual fields also provide too little assistance for hypothesis of traditional discourse of Advaita. Empiricism and related notions of sense and meaning are also irrelevant to our analysis. The nominal or realist inherence of formal particulars and universals are simply limited and inapplicable to the local laws, properties, or categories of Advaita. The realist notion of causal laws, when extended to the cognitive psychology of concepts and the essential properties of 'natural kind terms,' similarly proves to be empirically unacceptable for anchoring, or institutionalizing, traditional variants of Vedanta and the transmission of *brahmavidya*.

The cognitive properties elicited with analysis of local categories of *Arsha Vidya*, however, appear related to the shared domain of discourse registers and epistemic

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[754] Cf. "The hypothesis of causal criteria has many implications for the study of traditional truths…In this account of divinatory truths, truth-terms are applied, not to sentences or propositions, but to singular *utterances*. I am referring here to the distinction between a sentence, i.e., an abstract reality generated by some grammar, and an utterance, a physical realization of that sentence." Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 78.

[755] Cf. "The model therefore cannot solve the question at hand, why the 'signs' produced by divinatory procedures are supposed to be more reliable than other, ordinary 'signs'…there is an important truth in the idea that the solution (the identification of the criterion of truth) lies in people's representations of the link between situation and diagnosis. The merit of the semiotic interpretation is that it lays stress on the fact that this link is represented as a direct connection; as it stands, however, the interpretation is not sufficiently accurate and general." Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 69.

[756] The structuralist model of representation as a 'grid' or 'chain' of signifiers will be further discussed in the conclusion of this study.

constraints of traditional competence. Participants in the lineage of Vedanta usually have some vague notion of *atman* (self), as revealed in the *Aitareya Upanisad*, for instance, or the nature of *brahman* defined in the *Taittiriya Upanisad*, but the entire cognitive process related to 'self-knowledge' makes explicit that this term does not signify its usual referents nor easily lend itself to conceptual membership or kind constructions. In religious studies, as well as among the common registers of 'folk religion,' rumor, and *emic* gossip, due to the seemingly vacuous nature traditional categories of Advaita they are usually thus translated as the 'Self,' 'the Big Self,' or similarly vague notions of the 'Absolute,' 'Awareness,' 'Ultimate Reality,' etc. As for the acquisition of knowledge, this is explained as an ineffable, mystical, and experiential phenomenon. Symbolist, imagistic, metaphorical, or abstract theories are all useless for empirical hypotheses of traditional interactions surrounding the *guru-sisya-parampara* of Advaita. In the context of problematization, we are less interested in the representation or creation of an object of discourse than the procedures through which participants are led to domains of knowledge. Ethnographic description is thus restricted to the register of *gurus* if definitive insight is to be obtained for the surface properties and acquisition of traditional categories, as well as analysis of the internal structure of discourse of Vedanta.

Anchoring Representation: Warrants of Veracity, Aberrant Codes of Negotiation

One of the more obvious intentions of this study has been focused upon the Upanisads and their narration as genres in discourse of Advaita. In this context, indigenous classifications of the Upanisads provide little assistance for distinguishing criteria of the Vedic canon in terms of generic properties of discourse. In chapter two we suggested the fabrication of Vedanta received initial impetus through branches (*sakhas*) of Brahmanical collections (*samhitas*), or Brahminization and pre-colonial procedures of communal formation. This observation is now worth further consideration in the context of our ethnographic description of cognition and communication. Our overall approach has been to provide empirically significant hypotheses for ethnographic description of *Arsha Vidya*. As a general rule of taxonomy I have focused upon the internal structure of the

Upanisads for analysis of the paradigmatic axis of Advaita. Even so, interpreting singular utterances of traditional discourse of Vedanta requires more specific exegetical criteria.

The word Vedanta quite simply refers to the end (*anta*) of the Veda.[757] For example, the *Mundaka* Upanisad makes reference at one point to those who have clearly discerned the goal presented through the knowledge of 'Vedanta.'[758] Additionally, this indication of canonical formation does not appear at odds with an earlier verse of the *Mundaka* metaphorically instructing one to grasp the mighty weapon as a bow of the Upanisads.[759] In the *Brhadaranyaka*, on the other hand, the Upanisad is described as the truth of truth.[760] Turning to the *Kena* Upanisad we hear one student requesting to be taught the Upanisad, while in the same verse the teacher replies that the Upanisad, the revelation of which was *brahman*, had been conclusively taught in the preceding portion.[761] In response, the following verse states that a range of disciplines and practices are, anthropomorphically speaking, the legs of knowledge, the Vedas are its limbs, and truth is its abode.[762] Clearly, the various ways the terms 'Upanisad' and 'Vedanta' are used and narrated internally suggests the necessity for clarification of this traditional category of discourse.

Our understanding of narratives of the Upanisads, or *vedanta vakyas*, will become apparent as we proceed, but this may become clearer through more explicit contrasts with Vedic classifications. For instance, in the very same *Mundaka* quoted above, it is said by the *rsi Angiras* that those who have knowledge of *brahman* say that there are two types of

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[757] As we have noted, however, narratives of the Upanisads are sometimes found embedded in other classificatory schemes such as *aranyakas* ('forest treaties').

[758] vedantavijñānasuniścitārthāḥ MU 3.2.6. See Swami Gambhirananda (trans), *Eight Upanisads with the Commentary of Sankara: Volume Two*, (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1996b), p. 158.

[759] dhanurgrahītvaupaniṣadaṁ mahastraṁ MU 2.2.3. Gambhirananda (1996b), ibid., p. 125.

[760] BU 2.1.20. See Swami Madhavananda (trans), The Brhadaranyaka Upanisad with the Commentary of Sankara (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1993), p. 202. tasyopaniṣat satyasya satyamiti

[761] upaniṣadaṁ bho brūhītyuktā ta upaniṣadbrāhmīṁ vāva ta upaniṣadamabrūmeti. KU 4.7. See Swami Gambhirananda (trans), *Eight Upanisads with the Commentary of Sankara: Volume One*, (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1996a), p. 88.

[762] tasyai tapo damaḥ karmeti pratiṣṭhā vedaḥ sarvāṅgani satyamāyatanam. KU 4.8. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 91.

knowledge, one higher (*paravidya*) and one lower (*aparavidya*).[763] Of the lower, *Angiras* places the earlier portions of the Vedas, along with a range of Vedic auxiliaries, while the Upanisads are implied to reveal the higher knowledge.[764] This sort of distinction, as we have witnessed, is a pre-colonial Indian practice traced back to Brahmanical formations, but it serves no purpose for cognitive description of traditional discourse of Vedanta. As I have explained, this description is not concerned with worldviews and cultural models. For whatever reason Brahmins wished to classify the Upanisads in the corpus of a variety of sciences and ritual texts, or for that matter distinguish between different levels of knowledge, our hypotheses of traditional discourse do not relate to such distinctions. Any science of *brahman* may represent an understanding different from the general recognition of oneself as a limited individual, but the cognitive procedures of *brahmavidya* do not imply such canonical distinctions or conceptual representations.

Similarly, the classification of Vedic knowledge provided in the *Kena*, also includes meditation and disciplines of mental concentration (*tapas*), mental alertness and self-control of ones body and senses (*dama*), and the performance of rituals (*karma*). Among these practices, it may be emphasized that *dama* is also a constituent of what is later described by theologians of Vedanta, such as Sankara, as the four-fold means (*sadhana-catustaya*), or endowments, of the qualified aspirant considered fit for knowledge (*adhikari*).[765] In fact, the limbs (*angani*) of the Vedas (i.e. phonetics, prosody, grammar, etymology, astrology, and liturgy) are outright suggested as prerequisites for knowledge of *brahman*, which resides with utterances of truth.[766] We will find opportunity to discuss concepts such as *viveka* and *mumuksutva*, but our present concerns surround the limbs of knowledge suggested in the *Kena* for the student who failed to attain knowledge of *brahman* at the time it was revealed.

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[763] tasmai sa hovāca dve vidye veditavye iti ha sma yadbrahmavido vadanti parā caivāparā ca MU 1.1.4. Gambhirananda (1996b), ibid., p. 79.

[764] MU 1.1.5. Gambhirananda (1996b), ibid., p. 80.

[765] Sankara's commentary on Brahma Sutra 1.1.1. See Swami Gambhirananda (trans), *Brahma Sutra Bhasya of Sri Sankaracarya* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1965), p. 9.

[766] Sankara translates satyam ayatanam in this context as truthful speech, or the abode where the secret teaching resides. KU 4.8. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 93.

Now, Sankara takes the opportunity for an insightful element of hermeneutical criteria at this point. More specifically, from the way in which Sankara employs the Advaita *sampradaya* (tradition), we may derive epistemic implications for cognition and communication, as well as highlight another contrasting mode of Brahmanical discourse. In the space of Sankara's commentary (*bhaysa*) between KU 4.7 and KU 4.8 an opponent raises an opposing view (*purva-paksa*) which questions the intelligence of the student who asked to be instructed in the knowledge of the Upanisad. Correctly emphasizing a point of Brahmanical hermeneutics proper, the opponent objects to the student's question on the basis that the Upanisad had already concluded with an earlier verse explaining the fruits (*phala*) of *brahmavidya*, that is, the caliber of students with such cognitive competence become immortal (*amrta*).[767] As already stated, it may be recalled that the cognitive procedures underlying this sort of diagnosis is precisely what we must describe for hypotheses of traditional discourse of Advaita.

For determining the correct purport of any scriptural passage Purva-Mimamsa exegetes as well as the Advaita tradition both accept a formula of six-fold criteria (*sadlinga*), of which one exegetical contention marks the purport (*tatparya*) of a passage as indicated by the independence of its result (*phala*).[768] In KU 2.5 the Upanisad clearly states the results of knowledge, in no uncertain terms: "The wise ones, having recognized (*brahman*) in all beings, turning away from this world, become immortal."[769] The development of Brahmanical hermeneutics surrounding the Veda relies upon conceptual representations of the Upanisads that are irrelevant to traditional discourse of Advaita. Similar to *Angiras*, later Indian hermeneutes attempting to understand the Upanisads as taxonomic variants of the Vedas were led to provide theological criteria justifying their analytic distinction that these narratives provide a different, even 'higher,' knowledge than that suggested with Vedic injunctions (*vidhi*) or prohibitions (*nisedha*) concerning law and order, or ethics and righteousness (*dharma*). In the classificatory and hermeneutical context of Brahmanical authority it was suggested by later schools of theologians

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[767] KU 2.5. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 71.

[768] This hermeneutical criteria is expressed nicely by the Indian hermeneute Sadananda (ca. 1450) in chapter five (v. 182-190) of his treatise Vedantasara. See Swami Nikhilananda (trans), *Vedantasara or the Essence of Vedanta of Sadananda Yogindra* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1987), pp. 104-108.

[769] KU 2.5. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 71.

(*uttara-mimamsa*), whether in terms of distinct subject matter of certain narratives or connections (*sambandha*) of *vedanta vakyas*, sentences of the Upanisads, to the entire Vedic corpus, the canon of Vedanta (*jnanakanda*) has an independent purport, the goal of which was knowledge (*jnana*). The distinct result of knowledge is liberation (*moksa*). As such, the *purva-paksa* of KU 4.7 notes that the purport had already been clearly determined and in this context, if the Upanisads are to be viewed as an independent means of knowledge (*sabda pramana*), then either the intentions of the student or the epistemic autonomy of the sruti and the validity of knowledge of *brahman* appear at risk of contention. Not so, says Sankara.

While Brahmanical criteria for theological exegesis cannot be retained for analysis of traditional Vedanta, it will prove useful to understand Sankara's reply on this occasion. The response put forth by Sankara is that in the narrative of the *Kena*, the student's request, 'Sir, please teach the Upanisad (*upanisadam bho bruhi iti ukta ta*),' is intended to invoke the clinching assertion of the teacher: 'The Upanisad was taught to you. I have imparted to you the Upanisad about brahman (*brahmin vava upanisadam abruma iti*).'[770] It is viewed by Sankara as a method of instruction inherent to the structure of the Upanisad. In other words, it is meant to lead the student to a proper understanding of *brahman*, a 'local' category clearly revealed by the *Kena* in a manner that might lead some theorists to consider it an empty or mystical notion. Translated into terms of traditional discourse of Vedanta, one can see how the pedagogical functions of the Upanisads serve to emphasize the purport, or internal structure, of Advaita. In fact, as one hypothesis of causal criteria, I wish to suggest that the teaching tradition located with the internal structure of Advaita provides explanation for the repetition of the tradition. The surface properties of this discourse may be described in terms of pedagogical methods derived from epistemic narratives of the Upanisads. As we shall see, however, in this specific case the surface properties themselves are dependent not only upon distinct registers of discourse, but also the causal criteria of defining utterances of truth.

[770] KU 4.7. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 88.

The importance of this point may be made more explicit with Boyer's reconfiguration of anthropological theories of cognition, as well as by emphasizing a further distinction between cognitive description and analysis of 'systems of belief.' As Boyer explains, this simple cognitive process is actually a feature of all models of concept acquisition:

> When anthropologists suppose that beliefs about *mana* or *evur* put some constraints on the semantic representation of the notion, they probably put the cart before the horse. People experience situations in which a term is used long before they have any beliefs concerning the corresponding concept. This process is all the more striking with seemingly 'empty' notions; here it is clear that, to a certain extent, the circumstances of acquisition constrain people's beliefs because nothing else is available to limit the extension of these terms.[771]

In addition, for Boyer, this seemingly trivial fact represents both the cognitive process of attaining *evur* through episodic memory, or contact with the domain of *evur*, as well as the importance for distinguishing the registers of discourse for cognitive description. Moreover, this highlights the point that in the process of concept acquisition the members involved in traditional social interaction are also subject to surrounding belief systems and cultural models. Though this point is not further explored by Boyer, it is worth acknowledging in the context of traditional Vedanta. Indeed, we have already encountered several indigenous regimes of the Indian tradition. Representation of the Upanisads within the context of Vedic 'limbs' continues today, through modern saints and orthodox theologians, and may be recognized as an authentic tradition of Indian concept representation and taxonomy.[772] Similarly, the six-fold criteria of Vedic exegesis explained above are a standard form of Brahmanical hermeneutics. Our interest in the Upanisads extends as far as the cognitive processes and pedagogical procedures discovered through the social interaction of their internal structure, surface properties, and defining utterances of *brahman*. We have adopted no hermeneutical strategy towards the aim of discovering the truth of any canon, theology, or worldview.

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[771] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 44.

[772] For instance, in narratives of the late Sankaracharya of Kanchi, Chandrasekharendra Saraswati. See *The Vedas*, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1991), pp. 2-3.

Several interesting factors also arise in relation to the internal structure of Advaita and the discourse register of gurus. For instance, as we have seen with the verse following the doubting student of the *Kena*, it is suggested that for knowledge of *brahman* one should practice religious disciplines, self restraints, rituals, and a range of preparatory knowledge provided in Vedic canons. The point to note here is not that cognitive analysis of traditional discourse of Vedanta displays no interest in such *vakyas*, for that much is obvious. Rather, at this point I only wish to emphasize the fact that my configuration of the registers of discourse are only provided for distribution of utterances of truth in terms of Advaita. There are no doubt countless techniques, practices, suggestions, criteria for qualification, and mind purifying indulgences that may be found within the Upanisads and even more abundantly in modern Indian circulations of the *guru-sisya-parampara*.

Nevertheless, analysis of traditional discourse of Vedanta is focused on particular salient statements for empirical hypothesis of the transmission of *brahmavidya*. Neither am I interested in such cultural and ideological pedagogies which suggest any number of practices related to mental conditioning or preparation for knowledge of *brahman*. As clearly stated above, the hypothesis provided may only be substantiated through the revelation of *brahman* by gurus. The specific features and surface properties distributed with this register of discourse must be further discussed, but it has already been explained that these procedures simply involve listening (*sravana*).[773]

The account of traditional discourse as a form of communication through repetitive social interaction requires theories subject to empirical investigation. One such hypothesis concerns the ordered differences of discourse registers, which distinguish between reliable utterances of 'truth' and other more common stereotypes in reference to the representation of traditional categories and domains of knowledge. As we have mentioned, the principles of ordering registers are not simply random but are causal factors for the repetitive maintenance of traditional discourse. Discourse registers of traditional institutions are organized to convey the veracity of expert discourse among

[773] In the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad Yajnavalkya explains to his wife Maitreyi that the atma is to be heard of etc. This is stated on least two different occasions. BU 2.4.5; 4.5.6. ātmā vā are drṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitraiyi. See Madhavananda (1993), ibid., pp. 202; 538.

other members of the social group with distorted representations of the objects designated. One of the most important distinctions for registers of expert discourse concern factors of cognition and epistemological salience. In fact, this is one of the main factors which allow us to recognize traditional institutions; our observations are focused precisely upon those 'attention-demanding' gestures of expert discourse and utterances of truth. In addition to explicitly revealing *brahman* as the truth, moreover, the Upanisad itself makes statements such as: "the eye does not go there, nor speech, nor even the mind."[774] Obviously, it is the saliency of such statements that guide our attraction.

Now, for analysis of traditional discourse of Vedanta it is imperative that the more common and public process of truth-ascription be distinguished from ethnographic criterion of truth and its description. In previous chapters I have attempted to outline some of the common properties of Brahmanical, Hindu, and neo-colonial narratives. In this section I wish to provide some defining features which may substantiate our suggestion that there is some connection (*sambandha*) between the purposes (*prayojana*), or intentions, of the Upanisads and the goal of liberation (*moksa*) in reference to the *adhikari*. It should be immediately explained, however, that I only wish to use this term in the simple meaning of 'qualification.' The word has been used in a range of indigenous traditions surrounding the Vedas, as well as reconfigured by bourgeois Indian nationalists. In the present context, use of the term '*adhikari*' simply implies one who is qualified to receive knowledge of *brahman* through listening to the *guru*. Prior to approaching this register of discourse, however, it is necessary to briefly substantiate our recognition of the epistemic salience of *brahman* as a traditional category of analysis.

One of the more salient definitions of *brahman* is found at the beginning of the second portion of the *Taittiriya* Upanisad (*anandavalli*), verse 2.1.1: *brahman* is being, awareness, limitless (*satyam jnanam anantam brahma*).[775] This opening verse (*upakrama*) serves to introduce a new topic from the previous section and also declares that the *brahmavid*, the one who knows *brahman*, attains (*apti*) the supreme (*param*). We

[774] na tatra caksur gacchati na vag gacchati no manah. KU 1.3. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 48.
[775] TU 2.1.1. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 303.

are not currently interested in determining the meaning of this entire Upanisad through any six-fold criteria (*sadlinga*) or other Brahmanical formulations of scriptural hermeneutics. The importance at this point is simply to understand the cognitive veracity of this verse as a means of knowledge (*pramana*) in reference to *brahman*, the object of knowledge (*prameya*), defined here as *satyam jnanam anantam brahma*. A preliminary assumption, however, is that the subject matter or content (*visaya*) of this particular sentence (*vakya*) should connect the *prayojana* with a valid cognition of *brahman*. Prior to filling the content of this empty category with the reality of *brahman*, or rather understanding the cognitive constraints (*sankoca*) with which it is currently limited, it will be useful to equip this narrative with additional revelations of *brahman*.

In the *Chandogya* Upanisad *brahman* is again identified with *satyam*, and further narrated as the source of creation.[776] In the opening verse of the sixth chapter we learn that one *Svetaketu* had been sent away by his father *Uddalaka* to live as a *brahmacarya* (celibate) while studying the four Vedas.[777] Upon returning home after some time, *Uddalaka* asks *Svetaketu* if he had asked about that instruction through which the unknown (*avijnatam*) becomes known (*vijnatam*).[778] In response, *Uddalaka* proceeds to deliver the now famous '*vacarambhana*' *sruti* (CU 6.1.4). The importance of the *vacarambhana sruti* is that it is widely recognized as an early revelation of the doctrine of *satkaryavada*, a theory of causality which demonstrates that the effect (*karya*) is non-separate from the cause (*karana*). In fact, this revelation is also used to substantiate the concept of *mithya*, an explanative category for understanding the dependent reality of the *karya*, which relies upon the *karana* for its existence. This idea that the cause exists within the effect (*karana-karya-vada*) suggests, then, that while the *karya* is dependent upon the *karana*, the reality of the *karana* is independent of the *karya*.

The logical reasoning for this relation (*sambandha*) may be extended in terms of continuity (*anvaya*) and discontinuity (*vyatireka*). For instance, in the reasoning of

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[776] See also CU. 8.3.4. See Swami Gambhirananda (trans), Chandogya Upanisad (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1983), p. 592.
[777] CU 6.1.1-6.1.2. Gambhirananda (1983), ibid., pp. 406-407.
[778] CU 6.1.2.-6.1.3. Gambhirananda (1983), ibid., pp. 407-408.

anvayavyatireka, one may argue that when there is a transmission of *brahmavidya* then there is an Upanisad and a *guru* (*anvaya*), but this logic does not necessarily imply that when there is a *guru* and an Upanisad then there is a transmission of *brahmavidya* (*vyatireka*). In terms of causal relations (*karyakaranasambandha*), on the other hand, one can see that in the absence of the cause there can be no effect. The traditional category for describing this level of existence, that is, the definition for that which possesses a dependent existence, is *mithya*. Now, as all ethnographers confronting the acquisition of traditional categories well know, different schemes of classification provide a range of concepts which may be absent from other language systems. For instance, a cultural system which only recognizes the cognitive validity of perception may have no representation of a category such as '*mithya*.' The only implications derived from this fact concern the recognition that the cognitive significance of conceptual models is that they are the product of shared mental representations of knowledge and reality.

As briefly witnessed in reference to the narrative of Uddalaka, the Upanisads provide countless depictions of creation, as well as attempts to explain the phenomenon of duality in relation to the revelation of Advaita. The Brahmanical theologian Sankara and his disciples are largely responsible for creating and transmitting countless conceptual models built upon elements of the Upanisads. Indeed, most theological debates concern validating these belief systems in reference to Vedic authority. In this process certain traditional categories have been more useful than others and have been interpreted for application to Advaita. For instance, Sankara's mental concept of superimposition (*adhyasa*) is widely employed by Hindu gurus of Vedanta for explaining the 'superimposition' of false attributes, the world, or ignorance (*avidya*) upon the non-dual reality of *brahman*. As we have seen, the Upanisad revelation about levels of knowledge has also been complemented by conceptual systems concerning the 'levels of reality.' In terms of the clay pot of *Uddalaka*, some theologians stress mythic narratives of creations, such as viewing the clay as an example of the material cause (*upadana-karana*) while the narratological connection to *brahman* provides an efficient refuge for those coming to terms with duality, or conceptual instrument of creation (*nimitta-karana*).[779]

[779] The classic example is provided in terms of a spider in the Mundaka.

One of the more important debates for theologians has been a matter of conceptualizing the 'transformation' of *brahman*, how *brahman* relates to the world, the conditioned nature of *brahman* (*saguna brahman*), etc. Some of the more recent attempts focus more upon conceptualizing *brahman* in combination with the world in way in which there is derived a mental representation of 'God' (*isvara*), in which case the 'soul' (*jiva*) is naturally fabricated. Our interest in the *vacarambhana sruti*, on the other hand, lies with discerning the methodology of this doctrine as revealed by *Uddalaka* specifically as a means of instruction for cognition and communication, whereby the unknown (*avijnatam*) becomes known (*vijnatam*). Using an illustration (*drstanta*), Uddalaka explains that through knowing a single lump of clay all other things made of clay thereby become known. Whether a clay pot, a gold necklace, ring, or bangle, or perhaps a cloth shirt, all of these become respectively known upon knowledge of the clay, gold, or cloth. One of the more important points of this instruction in terms of Indian constructivism concerns the procedures *Uddalaka* reveal to account for the apparent transformation of earth into all its various forms. For *Uddalaka*, this apparent transformation has speech as its basis, pot is simply a name for that which is in reality only clay.[780]

In the second section of chapter six, *Uddalaka* continues his instruction and further reveals that prior to creation there was *brahman* (*sat*) alone, one with out a second (*advitiyam*).[781] Following this narrative, *Uddalaka* eventually asserts that in the process of creating the earth, and elements, etc., *brahman* enters as a deity of the individual soul (*jivatman*) and then through the power of speech manifests name and form (*namarupa*).[782] As such, Svetaketu is finally told that all this manifold name and form of creation has but the self (*atman*) for its existence, which is the truth (*satyam*): you are that *Svetaketu* (*sarvam tat satyam sa atma tat tvam asi svetaketu*).[783] *Svetaketu* did not grasp this knowledge, however, and *Uddalaka* is led to repeat this revelation several times over, as well as get involved with miscellaneous issues about why one doesn't realize they are in fact *brahman* etc. These sorts of questions do not relate to our concerns but it is

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[780] vacarambhanam vikara namadheyam mrttika iti eva satyam. CU 6.1.4. Gambhirananda (1983), ibid., p. 409.
[781] sat eva somya idam agre asit eke advitiyam CU 6.2.1. Gambhirananda (1983), ibid., p. 412.
[782] CU 6.3.2. Gambhirananda (1983), ibid., p. 432.
[783] CU 6.8.7. Gambhirananda (1983), ibid., p. 468.

important to understand the productive power of speech, as well as the importance of name and form (*namarupa*). There is one final point I would like to derive from the teachings of *Uddalaka*. Specifically, in his attempt to impart knowledge to *Svetaketu*, *Uddalaka* provides an additional method of instruction which may prove to be of some importance. *Uddalaka* illustrates this method with a narrative of some person who had been brought from another village with his eyes bound and blindfolded. Stranded and alone, the blinded individual continues on a journey, shouting from village to village explaining his situation. In this process, the blindfold is removed and the individual is instructed along the way until he finally reaches his destination. All along the way, the misguided and wrong directions of error are negated while the proper path is indicated.[784]

Now, as already indicated, our hypotheses for traditional discourse concerns the reality of Advaita in relation to cognitive processes surrounding the acquisition of *brahmavidya*. The only logical outcome in this regard is that our focus is upon unconditioned knowledge, not knowledge about the forms, qualities, and attributes of *brahman* (*saguna brahman*). In this context, I wish to emphasize the narrative of *Uddalaka* and its importance in terms of cognition and communication. This narrative provides a model for our representation of traditional discourse. There is no need for descriptions of the soul or levels of reality or conditions of *brahman*, for us, a simple clay pot is enough. Uddalaka's revelation that *brahman* is the only reality, in which Svetaketu is no doubt implicated, must be understood in the context of his preliminary instruction that speech is the basis of all conceptualizations of duality. Subsequent narratives about the form, creation, story about how the jiva entered the body, etc., are conceptual models far beyond our interests. For cognitive description of traditional Vedanta, I would like to focus upon the implications for understanding the power (*sakti*) of conceptual mental constructs, specifically in regards to speech (*vak*) and words (*sabda*).

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[784] CU 6.14.1, 6.14.2. Gambhirananda (1983), ibid., pp. 485-486. This process appears similar to a type of logic later described as *sthularundhati-nyaya*, which is based upon the method in which the Arundhati star is distinguished among others in the sky. In actual fact, there is not much difference in this logic than the (sakha-candra-nyaya). Through pointing with ones finger, directing the viewer through the center of various tree limbs etc., one may eventually locate the star Arundhati.

Further constructs accounting for this fact (*maya*, *avidya*, *saguna brahman*, *apara vidya*, *adhyasa*, *vyavahara*, etc.) would only muddle the issue with more abstract systems of language.[785] In contrast, I wish to emphasize that the teaching tradition of Advaita Vedanta is precisely aimed towards using words and the power of speech in ways which remove previous conceptual models initiated through cognitive procedures and mental constructs. As I have attempted to demonstrate, however, there are a range of conceptual models that are in one way or another always provided along with this process. The choices will depend upon pedagogical and methodological preferences, which are often expressed in terms of the demands of various 'qualities' of students, the mimetic (or perhaps 'orthodox') traits of the teacher, etc. In terms of Advaita, the abilities of the teacher are expressed with the extent to which they remain focused upon the transmission of *brahmavidya*, as opposed to descriptions of mental preparation, ethical sermons, or (more recently) nationalist campaigns. At the moment, our comments are limited to hypotheses concerning the acquisition of *brahman*, for which *Uddalaka* may provide an example. For better understanding of this revelation from *Uddalaka*, that is, the utterance *tat tvam asi*, we may now move along to other Upanisads in the course of our analysis.

Further instruction in the knowledge of *brahman* and *atman* is revealed with the dialogues and subsequent questions surrounding the teaching episodes in the *Katha* Upanisad personifying Death and the young *Naciketas*. The overall theme of this narrative is to suggest that through knowledge of the self one attains immortality. As we have already witnessed, the elements within creation (i.e. body, mind, sense organs etc.) depend upon the *atman* for their existence so it is unnecessary at this point to further elaborate this description as offered in the *Katha*. The contributions of the *Katha* lie with its repetitive narrative of the self in reference to the mind. The idea is put forth that all objects of ones awareness become known in the light of the self, whether through sleep or waking states of experience,[786] but the Upanisad attempts to distinguish the mind as a knower. Even while one perceives diversity there is in fact only unity, and knowledge of this reality should be cognized in the mind, or else one shall forfeit immortality and go

[785] Of course, much of this would be considered a part of the teaching methodology by 'traditional' teachers, such as going from the 'gross' to the 'subtle,' etc.
[786] KaU 2.1.4. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 185.

from death to death.[787] Any defects perceived in creation or ignorance of the mind cannot be attributed to the *atman*, which is compared to the sun as the eye of all people remaining untainted though providing the light in which each and all witness the blemishes thereby revealed.[788] The *atman* is limitless and cannot be known through objects of our awareness, rather the self itself is the consciousness of consciousness.[789]

One of the more important points of the *Katha* is its revelation that *atman* is to be known through the act of cognition. While the Upanisad continues to emphasize the role of the teacher and *sruti*, indeed the *Katha* intervenes at several places to narrate directly in the course of the dialogue of Death and *Niceketas*, it makes explicit that *atman* is not to be known as an object of knowledge. An interesting distinction is also made between the true *atman* and limiting adjuncts of the mind.[790] Moreover, the *atman* is described in relation to the intellect similar to a reflection in a mirror.[791] One cannot know the *atman* through the sense organs or sensory perception, it is known cognitively and with this knowledge one overcomes death and attains immortality.[792] Similar emphasis upon the mind in relation to knowledge of *brahman* is narrated in the *Kena*, which emphasizes that immortality is gained through knowing *brahman* in every thought.[793]

Brahman is known as the mind of the mind, the consciousness in which fluctuating thoughts of the mind are illumined. It is precisely this reason that the *Kena* also asserts that *brahman* cannot be known through the mind.[794] This need not lead one to assume, however, that the mind must be transcended for some transcendental perception. The fact that *brahman* cannot be reached by the mind is simply another way of saying 'mind of the mind,' etc. Indeed, one wonders how else to describe such a phenomenon. Nevertheless, further discrimination must be made for the role of the intellect and the

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[787] KaU 2.1.11. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 191.
[788] KaU 2.2.10. na tatra sūryo bhāti na candratārakaṁ nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto'yamagniḥ tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvaṁ tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṁ vibhāti. KaU 2.2.15. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., pp. 190; 211.
[789] KaU 2.2.13. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 210.
[790] KaU 2.3.13. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 227.
[791] yatha adarse tatha atmani KaU 2.3.5. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 218.
[792] KaU 2.3.9. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 222.
[793] KU 2.4. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 66.
[794] KU 1.3. Gambhirananda (1996a), ibid., p. 48.

process of cognition in relation to *brahman*. The *Mundaka* of *rsi Angiras* also arrives at this distinction through describing the mind as a conditioning adjunct.[795] The individual is also narrated in terms of two birds sitting in a tree; one eats various fruits while the other simply witnesses these actions.[796] The *atman* is to be known as the consciousness by which the entire mind and all its thoughts are illumined.[797]

In another creation narrative, the *Aitareya* reveals that in the beginning there was but the *atman*, alone.[798] The *Aitareya* also provides a list of mental properties and feelings in terms of the 'heart' and the intellect and asserts that these are all but limiting adjuncts of consciousness, which is *brahman*.[799] In the *Prasna* Upanisad of *rsi Pippalada*, it is explained that the internal coordinates of the mind and ego (*ahankara*), as well as the modes of understanding and ascertainment, are all distinguished from the seer, but this witnessing capacity is not a function of the *atman*.[800] The one for whom the knower and the internal functions of the mind are all merged in the *atman* attains oneness with *brahman*. In the *Brhadaranyaka*, *Yajnavalkya* asks *Maitreyi* in regard to the knower of *brahman*, the one for whom there is no duality, then through what, he asks, can one know the knower.[801] In this Upanisad *brahman* is also depicted as immediate and direct knowledge, and as the self of the individual.[802] It is only from this standpoint, for *Yajnavalkya*, that the Vedas are no Vedas.[803] For teaching purposes, of course, the distinction must be maintained. *Yajnavalkya* explicitly states, moreover, that when there is no cognition of an 'other,' then there is only knowledge alone which exists.[804] One without a second, there can be no other object to be known. Negating duality, 'not this,

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[795] MU 2.2.7. Gambhirananda (1996b), ibid., p. 129.
[796] MU 3.1.1, 3.1.2. Gambhirananda (1996b), ibid., pp. 137-139.
[797] MU 3.1.9. Gambhirananda (1996b), ibid., p. 150.
[798] AU 1.1.1. Gambhirananda (1996b), ibid., p. 19.
[799] AU 3.1.2., 3.1.3. Gambhirananda (1996b), ibid., pp. 63;66.
[800] PU 4.8-4.9. Gambhirananda (1996b), ibid., pp. 463; 465.
[801] yenedaṁ sarvaṁ vijānāti taṁ kena vijāniyāt vijñātāramare kena vijānīyāditi BU 2.4.14. Madhavananda (1993), ibid., p. 259.
[802] BU 3.4.2. Madhavananda (1993), ibid., p. 326.
[803] BU 4.3.22. Madhavananda (1993), ibid., p. 462.
[804] BU 4.3.23. Madhavananda (1993), ibid., p. 467.

not this' (*neti neti*), *Yajnavalkya* positively asserts *brahman* as the 'truth of the truth' (*satyasya satyam*).[805] Let us now return to *Uddalaka* in light of these developments.

Following the *vacarambhana sruti*, in the sentence *tat tvam asi* we have seen that one's self is non-separate from *brahman*, any unique properties or distinct particulars of which are dependent upon the transformative power of language, however conceived. The world of creation consists of name and form, but the words of Uddalaka direct us towards the light in which conceptual constructs are revealed. The word 'tat' (that) in the utterance of *Uddalaka* refers to *brahman*, as clearly indicated in the broader context of the narrative. While 'tvam,' on the other hand, is directly addressed to the student *Svetaketu*. The verb of being (*asi*) renders the statement as a truth-predicate which, uttered in the terms of Uddalaka, indicate the truth of 'brahman.' In the light of what we now know about *brahman*, however, it would appear that 'Svetaketu' is a mere dependent byproduct, or an illusion, a superimposition, a simple name and form, a body-mind-sense complex, a word, letters on a computer screen. At the same time, there is also the fact that atman is identified with *brahman*, who had entered the human form at a certain stage of 'creation' or, in more precise words of the *Aitareya*, the atman preceded the world of name and form. There may indeed be some connection, if investigated in terms of mentalist modes of recognition, but let us first discern any possible syntactic or logical comprehension.

Among analysts of grammatical structure, syntax, sense, and meaning it has largely been within the Mimamsa school of Vedic exegetes that one finds the greatest contributions. Many of these forms and rules of analysis have been adopted by later hermeneutes of Vedanta, although it is generally true that proper analysis of sentence structure does not occupy much attention among modern saints. It is also important to note that for Vedanta this analysis is inseparable from its position among other means of knowledge. One of the more important epistemological distinctions in this context concerns the specific source of knowledge (*prama*). While we have earlier dismissed other epistemic taxonomies, the concept of *pramana* is useful for epistemological understanding in terms of cognitive

[805] BU 2.3.6. Madhavananda (1993), ibid., p. 234.

validity. The very nature of a *pramana* is conceived as source of knowledge which cannot be gained through other means and which cannot be contradicted.[806]

In noting this issue, however, it is certainly unnecessary to get involved with the highly tangential and totally unrelated theories and epistemological speculations generated within various Indian schools of debate (*pramana-vada*). Our present interest are limited to the surface properties involved in the analysis of words (*sabda*) as a valid means of knowledge (*pramana*). As such, it is important to understand the relationship between a word (*sabda*) and the object (*artha*) to which it refers. For our purposes, at this point I wish to distinguish between an object, a mental construct (*vikalpa*), and meaning, or criteria for knowledge. In fact, we must eventually abandon the idea of an object, as our intentions are to negate duality. Mental concepts, too, may be abandoned, but only if we keep in mind that it is the precise role of the utterance (*tat tvam asi*) to negate such limiting adjuncts and attributes. Indeed, in terms of linguistic analysis of syntactic structure, this aspect of the sentence conveys the surface properties of *tat tvam asi*.

For our criteria of knowledge, the entire utterance must be subjected to specific prerequisites for the power of words to generate a valid cognition. The first property I wish to consider is that of syntactic expectancy, or affinity among the verbal relations of the sentence (*akansa*). Not merely an example of syntactic unity, we have already classified *tat tvam asi* as an utterance of truth. Moreover, the grammatical apposition of 'tat' and 'tvam' indicates that the utterance is governed by the provision that words having the same case-ending are therefore capable of syntactic scrutiny.[807] Next is non-contradiction or congruity (*yogyata*) among the individual words, and contiguity in terms of the apprehension of meaning, or verbal comprehension of the sentence. While we will have an opportunity to further discuss the idea of intention from a broader standpoint, it has already been made explicit that our hypothesis for acquisition of *brahman* is constrained with the preliminary assumption that the purport of the epistemic narratives under analysis relate to the transmission of *brahmavidya*. As expressed in grammatical

[806] See Dharmaraja Adhvarindra, *Vedanta Paribhasa* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1993), pp. 4-5.
[807] Adhvarindra (1993), ibid., pp. 86-116.

terms of co-referentiality (*samanadhikaranya*), the fact that 'tat' and 'tvam' share the same referent leads one to further discrimination and inference of surface properties.

Another way of stating this fact, however, is to say that this analysis has in fact led us toward a doubtful cognition (*samsaya*). In actual fact the doubt cannot be maintained because *samsaya* depends upon an error in regard to a particular limiting adjunt, quality, property, etc. The *vacarambhana sruti* clearly negates all such distinctions as mere linguistic constructs, again, however conceived (or grounded). The ignorance of *Svetaketu*, therefore, must ultimately be understood as a result of some sort of 'psychological' or existential failure rather than any epistemological limitations inherent to the power of verbal comprehension. To understand the 'vicious condition' (*upadhi*) of *Svetaketu*, it must be inferred that his vagueness, doubt, and error stems from a failure to discern the underlying, or 'co-existing,' essence of his non-relational identity with *brahman*. Both the basis of this ignorance as well as its removal is attributed entirely to the power of speech. The doubt thus created by *Uddallaka* cannot be understood without reflection upon the power-knowledge relations surrounding his intentions.

The capacity of a word to signify an object is known as its power (*sakti*). If upon hearing an utterance one is incapable of deriving any meaning (vakyartha), allowing that the syntactic structure is itself conducive to semantic transference, in terms of the primary referents denoted by the words, secondary meanings (laksyartha) are often indicated. It is a general feature of all languages that some such cases are often understood in terms of purpose, proximity, behaviour, etc. For instance, to say 'the guru is a jackass' is simply to mean that one is acting in a certain manner, perhaps. Or, to say the house is on the Ganges is only to imply that the abode is near the river, as it can't literally be on the water itself. If I say 'here comes yellow,' this might mean that a coward is approaching.

These sorts of expression, which are by no means exhaustive, serve to express the implied meaning of a word through *laksana*. In our case, the direct meaning (*vakyartha*) of the word 'tvam' is surely in contrast with the descriptions of *brahman*, as we have narrated above. Nevertheless, due to our understanding of atman, it may be possible to

make further connections in this regard. The idea that atman is reflected in the mind creates a possibility for the intervention of *laksana*. As such, we will now need to define the reality *Svetaketu* finally gained through the instruction of *Uddalaka*, upon relinquishing all the conceptual constructs, names and forms (*namarupa*), adjuncts etc. prohibiting any valid cognition which might destroy his ignorance of *brahman*.

The reality of *brahman* is clearly defined in the *Taittiriya* Upanisad as *satyam jnanam anantam brahma*. Opening in praise of the supreme fruits of attaining *brahman*, a preliminary attempt to understand this verse may serve to formally delineate the discourse registers of traditional Vedanta. The first point to notice in this observation is that the words *satyam jnanam ananta brahma* all share the same gender, case, and number. The neuter noun brahma is presented as the subject of this *vakya*, but as the words all share a grammatical relation of co-referentiality (*samanadhikaranya*) each term may be defined as either a substantive (*artha*) or qualifying adjective. As such, it must be decided if the qualities of being (*satyam*), knowledge (*jnanam*), and limitlessness may be attributed to *brahman*. In this deliberation, moreover, one must not lose sight of the non-duality of atman and *brahman*. For understanding the sentence, therefore, it is clear that the Upanisad intends to reveal the definitive nature (*svarupalaksana*) of *brahman*.

The word *ananta* obviously negates any attempt to understand *brahman* as a concept or mental representation of reality. The very possibility of cognition requires a distinction between a subject (i.e. the one who wants to know), the object to be known, and a means of generating knowledge. If the purpose of the Upanisad is to create a shared representation of *brahman* in the minds of *brahmavits*, one who knows *brahman* as oneself, then *anantam* could neither qualify as an adjective or substantive in the transmission of *brahmavidya*. Concepts are quite simply the minimum basis for categories of thought and may only be represented in terms of difference. The word *anantam*, rather, excludes all diversity from *brahman*. Diversity implies form, whether as subjective units of thought or material objects, and the nature of form is limitation. Obviously the Upanisad is not presenting *brahman* as a concept or an object of thought, for as we have seen *brahman* is the awareness in which thoughts are known. For

indicating the essential nature of *brahman*, on the other hand, *ananta* serves to distinguish the substantive from any further limiting attributes.

Revealed as immutable being, *brahman* can be neither identified with nor limited by objects in the world of *namarupa* or concepts objectified in the mind. Neither can *brahman* be distinguished in terms of space and time, as both these concepts are objects of awareness. *Brahman* is the unconditioned reality, existence *as such*. From the standpoint of the clay, the shape, form, colour etc. of the pot is irrelevant. The substrate reality of *brahman* is indicated by the word 'is,' even in the expression: 'the world *is* an illusion.' The word 'jnana' reveals that the unconditioned reality is sentient being, as well as introduces the subject for whom *brahman* is sought as an object of knowledge. Nevertheless, it must be understood that *jnanam* neither denotes *brahman* as an agent of knowledge (i.e. knower) nor indicates the mental apparatus of cognition. In apposition with *satyam*, knowledge in this context is neither created nor produced.

One important implication in this regard is for the subject, the conscious being, the knower, who therefore cannot attain *brahman* through an act of cognition. Through the svarupalaksana of *brahman*, the *jivatman* in grammatical apposition with *ananta* is thereby indicated in the abstract sense of unconstructed awareness, immediate knowledge, or consciousness *as such*. The basis for this relation stems from the inevitable fact of countless narratives describing how *brahman* 'entered' the individual. These narratives, in turn, have led to all sorts of interpretations about various mental strata and the functions of the mind. For our purposes, no such models are worth entertaining. The basic idea is inevitably reduced to a distinction between the knower/known and subject/object. Modern Hindu gurus of Vedanta often spend considerable amounts of time internalizing different meditations etc. through withdrawing attention to the 'witness consciousness.' The idea of the witness (*saksin*) can be found in a rudimentary form at several points in the Upanisads, as can various practices meant to lead one inwardly from the gross to the subtle. There is even a method dedicated to the 'seer/seen discrimination' (*drgdrsyaviveka*). At bottom, the only point of this sort of analysis is to lead those who may have somehow failed to recognize a distinction in the cognitive process whereby

modifications of thought (*vikara*), fluctuating thought forms (*vrtti*), etc., are witnessed as objects of awareness, or the subject for whom such changing thoughts are known.

In the *Taittiriya* verse in question, this awareness is indicated as the essential nature of brahman. It is an actual goal of certain forms of yoga to discriminate the seer from the seen and thereby separate the *purusha* from the *prakrti* in some attempt to simply 'abide in consciousness.' In is very often the case that students of Vedanta also attribute some notion of 'spiritual development' towards 'cultivating' this sort of distinction. In fact, the entire discriminative process results in a thoroughly dualistic self-understanding and the witness is only worth acknowledging in relation to the processes of cognition. If such discrimination has taken place, the idea is then to understand that the essential nature, or content, of the immediate self-evident awareness expressed in such notions as 'I' is none other than *brahman*, which is infinite bliss, limitless existence, and immortal being. As such, knowledge cannot be attained anymore than an ocean wave can become water.

The guru who unfolds the implications of *satyam jnanam anantam brahma* distinguishes the nature of oneself from all other objects in the world and the *sisya* thereby recognizes the truth of atman. In this process the prior cognitive constraints (*sankoca*) limiting ones capacity for knowledge of *brahman* are removed with the procedures through which the *adhikari* merges in the desired object of knowledge. In this context one is able to understand narratives such as those from the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad: "I am Brahman (*aham brahmasmi*)."[808] As a result of understanding this epistemic narrative, the erroneous cognition (*viparyaya*) which had previously served to obstruct (*avarana*) or conceal brahman from view of the cognitive subject (*pramata*) is replaced with a distinct register of discourse and domain of knowledge leading to a sequence in which *brahman* is thenceforth revealed through the 'noble style,' or perspective of first-person narration.[809] As such, let us now employ the generic power of *sakti*.

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[808] BU. 1.4.10. Madhavananda (1993), ibid., p. 100.

[809] It is obvious that we are not simply dealing with the surface features of this narrative, which we will later constrain to the register of gurus. As Tzvetan Todorov explains, "In the absence of historical reality, we would be dealing with the categories of general poetics that are called—depending upon textual levels—modes, registers, styles, or even forms, manners, and so on. The 'noble style' or 'first-person narration' are indeed discursive realities; but they cannot be pinned down to a single moment in time: they

Theorizing Generic Formations: *Dayanandarupam*, or a Corpus for Disciples

In summary of our overall approach to the myth of Vedanta in relation to Dayananda's narrative of Advaita, it is true that our analysis contrasts in many ways with taxonomic variants of the *swami*. Of course, cultural, ideological and other differences of desire and resistance would appear to render this approach inevitable. At this point I would like to make more explicit the cognitive effects derived from the causal factors and surface properties of Advaita in relation to the hypotheses provided.

Central to our initial division of traditional interaction surrounding the *guru-sisya-parampara* is the idea that among registers of discourse it is gurus who are responsible for establishing a representation of the following: the situation, procedure, and diagnosis. Similarly, it is assumed that the situation at hand is undefined in the mind of the *sisyas*. The causal connection is derived from initiation rituals structuring the teaching lineage, and it is my hypothesis that important surface properties and defining features of Advaita must be represented for the *sisyas* in terms of the diagnosis and procedures offered in reference to the current situation.[810] It may be true that the *sisyas* are unaware of the reasons for the current situation and indeed may conjecture a range of possibilities leading to the current state of affairs, but in terms of criteria of truth it is important that the *guru* 'diagnose' the situation in a way in which the suggested procedures will lead to the transmission of *brahmavidya*. Following this hypothesis:

> Formalisation would be represented by people as an index of the fact that the utterances produced are influenced or triggered by ancestors…This assumption can be entertained only if the listeners have representations about both the existence of a causal link and the fact that formalisation is its index. They must have (i) some representation of the fact that the ancestors, spirits and other entities described are actually instrumental in bringing about the utterances concerned, and

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are always possible. By the same token, in the absence of discursive reality, we would be dealing with notions that belong to literary history in the broad sense, such as trend, school, movement, or, in another sense of the word, 'style.'" See Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990), p. 19. Of course, as Todorov explains elsewhere in reference to empirical observation and speech-acts, the most popular genre of first-person narration is that of autobiography.

[810] See Boyer (1990), ibid., pp. 73; 93; 97.

(ii) some representation of the surface properties of the formalised utterances as a consequence of this process.[811]

The idea of formalised language in this context should not lead to confusion. The only meaning of this term is that the surface properties distributed in a certain register of discourse are repeated over a course of time until they are actually represented as a general feature of a particular traditional institution. The surface properties of ritual speech are usually represented in terms of phonological combinations, juxtaposition of words, contiguity, elliptical breaks, iconic modes, parallelistic constructions, etc. Formalised language, or ritual speech, of course is associated with the domain of truth and the register of expert discourse. Moreover, different surface properties may be invoked for distribution across other domains and distinct discourse registers. Most importantly, I wish to register the competence, criteria of truth, and causal relations of gurus and sisyas as naturalised positions of knowledge in a hierarchy of power. To understand the cognitive processes involved in the production of truth-statements I also wish to distinguish between the acquisition of traditional categories and the initiation of traditional discourse, if only to highlight their causal connections.

To recall the representation of natural kind terms, it may be emphasized that such members stipulate a common underlying essence as well as various stereotypical features. Translated to the context of traditional discourse of Vedanta, I wish to establish the causal connections of Arsha Vidya and epistemic narratives of the Upanisads. Instantiating a traditional discourse of truth and communication, Swami Dayananda asserts that "a guru becomes an important factor in gaining self-knowledge because the handling of *prakriyas* is involved in unfolding the truth." The Upanisads function as a means of knowledge (*pramana*) when used as an instrument by competent *gurus* who know how to handle their words, especially the words *tat tvam asi*. In various performances, Dayananda unequivocally asserts that he is "a traditional teacher of Vedanta," that is, one who is able to 'handle' various "methods (*prakriyas*) adopted by the Upanisads, and by the teachers in the tradition, to communicate the vision of the *mahavakya* (the sentence revealing the

[811] Boyer (1990), ibid., p. 88.

oneness of the individual and the Lord): *tat tvam asi*."[812]

Now, it may be recalled that Swami Dayananda initially became acquainted with the word Upanisad for the first time during a lecture (*jnana-yajna*) about the Mundaka offered by Swami Chinmayananda in Madras, June 1952. As we have seen, Chinmayananda had been eager to embark on a nationalist campaign to distribute sermons about the Upanisads to common folk throughout India. The first such sermon (*jnana-yajna*) was held in Pune in 1951 and narrated the *Katha* Upanisad. The sermon was attended by a mere eighteen Indians, but within five years the *jnana-yajnas* had swelled to addressing more than 50,000 members of the general public. The impetus for this growth was largely due to the zealous tactics devised by Swami Dayananda following his initial fascination with the charismatic Chinmayanda in Madras. Simply put, upon hearing the sermons of Chinmayananda, Dayananda and another enthusiastic audience member apparently joined together in an attempt to institutionalize the saint. The sermons were not enough, Dayananda was determined to organize some study groups and future events to learn more about the teachings of Chinmayananda. Going even further, along with another audience member, Dayananda offered a proposal which Chinmayananda could not resist:

> They got together to create an organization. Their idea was to name it the Chinmaya Mission. Accordingly they wrote to Swamiji [Chinmayananda] at Uttarakashi. In his reply Swamiji said, 'Don't start any organization in my name. I have not come here to be institutionalized. I have come here to give the message of our ancient sages, which has benefited me. If it has benefited you also, pass it on.' They replied to Swamiji that the word 'Chinmaya' only meant true knowledge and that, as seekers of Truth, they were naming the organization the Chinmaya Mission. The word 'Chinmaya' need not be understood as connoting Swamiji's name. Swamiji relented at last. Thus

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[812] Dayananda distinguishes the Upanisads as an independent means of knowledge (*pramana*) unavailable for contention: "The contender's self, which is the subject matter of Vedanta, is not available for the contender's means of knowledge. If it is, then who is the subject who employs the means of knowledge? Suppose I am the subject. How can I be the object about which I have a contention?" According to Dayananda, the subject matter of the Upanisads, one's self, is not within the range of their own means of knowledge, such as perception (*pratyaksa*) and inference (*anumana*)." See Swami Dayananda, *The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedanta (*PA: Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, 1993), pp. 1-3. We have interpreted the utterance 'tat tvam asi' in terms of *jahajahallakshana*.

was born the Chinmaya Mission on August 8, 1953.[813]

Following the sermons in Madras, Dayananda learned that the *jnana-yajna* would return the next year and a lecture on the *Taittiriya* would then be provided. As such, Dayananda immediately enrolled in a community college to learn Sanskrit grammar in preparation for chanting the *Taittiriya*. By the time Chimayananda had returned to Madras the following year, Dayananda had become disinterested in his career and was devoted to a spiritual journey. In September, 1955, Dayananda had become fully engaged with the Chinmaya Mission as both secretary and editor of the newly established *Tyagi* magazine, the first in a series of publications for the movement. Dayananda maintained this role as editor for the Chinmaya Mission well into the early 1960s and some of the earliest writings from the swami are discovered among these editorials. During a course of research at the Swami Dayananda Ashram in Rishikesh, India, I was able to locate one such editorial which had been published as a serial, a commentary on *Sadhana Panchakam*, a simple stanza often attributed to Sankara. In the commentary, Dayananda notes that "...to absorb the mind in the regions transcendental and behold the Self within, is also to end all accumulated *Vasanas*." The swami added: "These *Vasanas* are indeed the source of all cravings, cravings to achieve, to possess, to hold, to exhaust and so on and on. In all these varieties, what persists is a sense of dissatisfaction, a sense of imperfection."[814] Soon after this time, Dayananda grew more and more disconcerted and spent countless nights unable to sleep from all his doubts about Vedanta and knowledge. He was suffering from insomnia, depression, and had now set out to explore a variety of the world's mystics.[815] Dayananda had been taught to believe that Vedanta was a theory about knowledge which had to be experienced, or realized.

It was in the midst of this spiritual search and existential angst that Dayananda happened

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[813] See Swami Chidananda and Rukmani Ramani, *Call of the Conch: History of the Chinmaya Movement* (Mumbai: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 2001), p. 20.

[814] The commentary has been published in a series of articles first published in *Tyagi* in the 1950s, under the authorship of 'Brahmacharya Natarajan.' Dayananda actually never underwent brahmacharya-diksa (initiation) before taking *sannyasa*. See Swami Dayananda, *Adi Sankara's Sadhana Panchakam* (Rishikesh: Swami Dayananda Ashram, June, No Date), pp. 23-24.

[815] See Padma Narasimhan, Swami Dayananda Saraswati: The Traditional Teacher of Brahma Vidya (Madras: TT. Maps, No Date), p. 59.

upon one *swami* named Pranavananda. There are very few existing details about Pranavananda and many of Dayananda's disciples have never even heard his name.[816] There are only a few rare publications, which are now all out of print, where I have been able to find any information about Pranavananda, but I wish to suggest that it is from this swami that Dayananda was initiated in traditional Vedanta. The details for Pranavananda are obscure, but even more so are the narratives surrounding the swami's teacher. This is a lineage that will, perhaps, remain untraced. On the other hand, the Indian tradition provides a place for such initiates. As Dayananda explains, "I asked Swami Pranavanandaji who had taught him. He said, 'I have not studied formally. But there was one Avadhuta mahatma—during the course of Sat Sangh with him, he taught me what I know.'"[817] Upon gaining permission from Chinmayananda, Dayananda headed to Gudivada to study with Pranavananda at the *swami*'s ashram, but had returned to Madras by 1962. Still, it is important to understand the impact of Pranavananda.

At the outset, Pranavananda "...completely dismissed the theory of *Vasana Ksaya*—the negation of *vasanas*—as a means to Moksah." More importantly, the swami "...talked about Pramanams, the means of knowledge...he used to talk about Vedanta as a Pramana and handle it like that." Finally, the vision had become clear for Dayananda. For Dayananda, the Vedanta now functioned as a direct means of knowledge for atma, no less clear than the eyes functioned to reveal objects, colours, and forms. This is the secret of the Upanisad: "There should be no conditioning with words. This is the Vedanta-*Rahasyam*—the secret of Vedanta. The words must be used to unfold."[818] Now Dayananda went back to the Upanisads in the light of *pramana* and all darkness had been removed. Dayananda had not only found the secret of Vedanta, as he explains:

> Because I had suffered for want of the knowledge that Vedanta is a Pramana, a means of removing my ignorance, my appreciation of the Pramana aspect is very thorough. Only on the basis of Pramana, I

[816] Dayananada is still very much associated in the public mind with Chinmayananda. For instance, during a course of sermons I attended with the swami in Australia, the lecture hall was filled with pictures and slogans of Chinmayananda. This would not have happened in America, but it is indicative of the extent to which middle-class Indians are unable to discern any differences between various swamis.
[817] Narasimhan (No Date), ibid., p. 61.
[818] Narasimhan (No Date), ibid., p. 60.

> handle my teaching. I had found out a method wherein the Pramana comes alive. So I am gone—Swami is not talking—there is no personality involved...It is like your eyes...Only then it is Pramana. Through my teaching you see. For that, I have to obliterate myself, my ideas, my personality. So, there is a difference, when you hear someone else and listen to me. You hear the Sastram speaking. That is why I can make people see at the time of the teaching itself. All my disciples have imbibed it to a great extent. Some of them may have to learn to handle it as a Pramana, because they did not suffer as I did. They don't know the magnitude of the discovery that Vedanta is a Pramana. People see at the time of the teaching itself. It is a marvel. It is a wonder.[819]

Returning back to Madras and then the Chinmaya Mission in Bombay, Dayananda was initiated (*diksa*) in the *saraswati* monastic order (*dasanami*) by Chinmayananda in 1962, but I do not take this event as the paradigmatic initiation narrative of traditional discourse of Advaita. Less than a year later Dayananda had left for Rishikesh with a desire to study the commentaries of Sankara under Swami Tarananda Giri (?-2004) at the historic Kailas Ashram. Swami Tarananda would instruct Dayananda in the intricacies of the Ratnaprabha (circa. sixteenth century) commentary on Sankara's Brahma Sutra bhasya, a exegetical analysis purported to follow the reasoning of the Pancapadika and the Vivarana school of Advaita. In a rare interview, Tarananda explains:

> Sankara had established this tradition of teaching—sampradaya. We belong to his sampradaya...which sampradaya we belong to is known from the mangalacaranam in which we salute the guru. Before Sankara, the teaching was concise—not so elaborate—but the advent of the Buddhists who condemned the Vedas altogether, compelled Sankara to refute all the schools of thought obtaining then. This negation of all concepts, is done by posting the concepts purvapaksa, and then dismissing them by analysis of the words of the Upanisad and by logic, siddhanta. Swami Dayanandaji was able to understand these subtle passages of the sastram with ease. It is the Lord's grace and the guru's grace, which helps the student to gain an insight.[820]

Dayananda remained in Rishikesh for more than three years studying Sanskrit and the commentaries of Sankara, but again became fully engaged with the Chinmaya Mission by 1967. Chinmayananda had summoned Dayananda to instruct the newly forming

[819] Narasimhan (No Date), ibid., p. 62.
[820] Narasimhan (No Date), ibid., p. 81.

residential courses at Chinmaya Mission center in Bombay. From nearly one thousand applicants, fifty-six students were chosen for an in-depth course of Vedanta. During these residential courses Dayananda began to attract a number of students who were also aware of the differences in the teaching styles between the swami and other instructors of the Chinmaya Mission, several of whom were Westerners and would later take on important responsibilities for establishing Dayananda's own mission in America and abroad.[821]

During a last minute twist of fate in 1979, Chinmayananda was set to journey to the United States to conduct a residential course of Vedanta when he suddenly realized his passport had expired, and Dayananda was hastened to the task at hand. On November 7, Dayananda began the first residential course of Vedanta on behalf of the Chinmaya Mission West in Napa, California. The course was held on property obtained in Piercy, California, and was attended by students from all over the world, several of whom would remain faithful devotees of Dayananda. In a scarcely known 'upheaval' Dayananda quietly left the Chinmaya Mission following the conclusion of the course in California in 1982 for 'personal reasons,' taking with him an entire crew of senior disciples who had been in service of the mission.[822] Dayananda spent the years following the completion of the course in California teaching throughout the United States under the auspices of Arsha Vidya Pitham, a non-profit religious organization founded in 1982 to support his activities in America. In 1986, Arsha Vidya Pitham purchased fourteen acres of wooded land in the Pocono Mountains of Eastern Pennsylvania and began construction for permanent teaching and residential facilities.[823] From January 1987 until December 1989, Dayanada taught a resident course in Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania at the newly constructed Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, a teaching center and Institute of Vedanta and Sanskrit formed under the auspices of Arsha Vidya Pitham.[824] Describing the *gurukulam*, Dayananda

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[821] On the one hand, Chinmayananda would teach his famous BMI chart concerning the transcendence of vasanas in the mornings and in the evenings Dayananda would teach Vedanta as a pramana and dismiss the idea of vasanas as a means to moksa.

[822] Chidananda and Ramani (2001), ibid., p. 253.

[823] *Arsha Vidya Pitham-Institute for the Study of Vedanta, Sanskrit and Yoga Newsletter* 5.1, January, 1987.

[824] Commenting on the time-frame chosen for the course, in the inaugural talk for the residential course in Pennsylvania, Dayananda explains: "Why are we taking three years to study Vedanta? In fact, three years may not be required at all, but this knowledge does seem to have a peculiar element to it. It seems to grow, not in a linear way, but in terms of clarity. You hear me speaking today and you think you understand. But you will hear the same topic again, perhaps after one or two years, and you will say 'Oh, now I understand.'

makes explicit his ideas concerning the boundaries of the teaching tradition:

> What I teach is the Vedic knowledge which has come down traditionally from the rsis—the great seers. Therefore, it is called Arsha—meaning 'that which is from the rsis. Vidya means knowledge. So Arsha Vidya means knowledge flowing from the rsis. Pitham is just a centre of learning... I do not call it an organization. It is not a formal hierarchy. It is just a vehicle for teaching Vedanta. What I call an 'organization' is a structure in which there is someone like the Pope heading the organization with many people under him at various ranks and levels. Arsha Vidya Pitham is not like that. It is not an organization with a hierarchy. There are no ranks—no Number One—no Number Two—no Number Three. The corporate structure is only a legal entity as a non-profit corporation for the purpose of establishing this teaching institution. It has no branches and committees. It helps me in the work I do. The important point is to keep it forever within the boundaries of the tradition of teaching.[825]

In addition to his teaching activities in America, Dayananda has also established two institutions on the subcontinent: one located in Rishikesh at the foothills of the Himalayas and Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, located in the forested region towards the Western Ghats in South India.[826] Prior to the course in Piercy and following the course at AVG in Pennsylvania, Swami Dayananda taught a total of four 'three-year' residential courses in India, two in Bombay and two in Coimbatore respectively. All graduates of these courses are issued 'teaching certificates' and several of Dayananda's students now have their own schools of Vedanta. Moreover, the swami has conducted

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Clarity comes in increasing degrees—something like a Polaroid picture of the swami. When the picture first comes out of the camera, nothing can be seen; it is all dark. Then, after some time, something begins to appear until, eventually, the picture of the swami is clear. As the picture is developing, we do not see the swami totally. As we keep looking at it, however, the picture becomes clearer. Between the first recognition and the final confirmation of the swami, there is a lot of difference in what is actually seen." See *Arsha Vidya Gurukulam 10th Anniversary Souvenir*, September 21, 1996, p. 14.

[825] Cf. "Swamiji (Dayananda) takes pride in declaring that he belongs to the age-old tradition of guru-sisya-parampara and that none of his ideas is original. Very often Swamiji used to point out Upanisads and bhasyas as the source of various ideas." See Swami Viditatmananda, 'Our Swamiji,' in *Arsha Vidya Gurukulam Second Anniversary Souvenir*, September 16, 1988, p. 13.

[826] In the course of our research Swami Dayananda and his senior disciples have been interviewed in India and abroad, but we have largely confined our investigation to the American context and the swami himself.Research has been undertaken at all three teaching centers that Swami Dayananda has established: Swami Dayananda Ashram in Rishikesh upon the banks of the Ganga, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in Tamil Nadu, South India and Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in the United States. Swami Dayananda and several of his long-term students have also been interviewed in order to arrive at further conclusions concerning the early years and history of his teaching career.

weekend retreats, or 'camps', sensitive to the general audience of AVG since its inception. Since 1990 Dayananda has continued to make annual trips to the United States to conduct short-term courses in Advaita Vedanta at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam. Vedanta classes are held weekly and are conducted by various teachers in the swami's absence. There are also programs dedicated to yoga, etc., Vedic heritage and Hindu culture. A handful of Dayananda's disciples visit AVG on various occasions throughout the year, often giving public talks on various epics and texts at Hindu temples during their visit, and the future of AVP seems dedicated to kindly supporting and publishing their sermons.

Though Dayananda had begun to teach Vedanta to students from as early as 1963, between his studies of the Brahma Sutras at Kailas Ashram under Swami Tarananda Giri, no classes were recorded until the late 1970s. Since then, Swami Dayananda's teachings have been recorded on audio and video cassettes and, from these recordings, a smaller number have been transcribed.[827] Arsha Vidya Pitham publishes audio and video cassettes for all Dayananda's teachings that have taken place at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, as well as available transcripts from these sources and, more recently, there has been some attempt to produce MP3 recordings. Though not within the range of our research, it is worth mentioning that Sankaracharya also offered a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita and Swami Dayananda's talks and commentaries upon this smrti text have remained one of the primary interests at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam. As Swami Dayananda has explained, "The public can relate to the Gita much more than with other texts because the Gita talks about various attitudes and values, which are important in day to day life." Swami Dayananda has reserved his explication of the Upanisads for those who "like to learn in depth."[828] It should be noted that one of the main objectives at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam has been the production and distribution of Home Study materials for Swami Dayananda's commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita.[829]

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[827] Unfortunately, most of the recordings prior to the inauguration of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam are not readily available for purchase in the United States. Swami Dayananda Ashram maintains an archive dedicated to the swami and also continues to publish his early writings and teachings.

[828] Swami Dayananda, *Dialogues With Swami Dayananda.* (Rishikesh: Sri Gangadhareswar, 1988), p. 3.

[829] Dayananda's commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita from the residential course in Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania has, with the effort of many devotees, been transcribed and published by Arsha Vidya Gurukulam and offered in the form of a 'Home Study Course.' The 'Home Study Course' has passed through several formats and editions over the years. The classes in Saylorsburg were initially recorded on 362 audio

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam is home to the only temple in the United States dedicated to Lord Siva-Daksinamurti. The temple was consecrated by Dayananda on May, 28, 1990 at an event attended by nearly two thousand devotees from India and abroad.[830] A caption at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam reads: "Tradition holds that Lord Siva in the form of Dakshinamurti was the first teacher of Vedanta. He imparted self-knowledge to the four rishis seated at his feet, initiating an oral tradition which has been passed down to us through the centuries." Sankaracarya, an Indian *bhasyakara* widely believed to be a participant in an uninterrupted guru-sisya-parampara traced to Siva, and Vyasa, legendary compiler of the Vedas, are described as "important links in this lineage of teachers." "Arsha Vidya Gurukulam," it is asserted, "is a place where one learns the knowledge imparted by the Rishis." Unfortunately, since embarking on national campaigns unrelated to the Advaita tradition, Dayananda is seldom present at the gurukulam.[831]

The differences between the teaching methodology provided in the Upanisads and the hermeneutics of Sankara may be emphasized in the context of the acharya's specific contribution to the Advaita tradition. While the Upanisads are said to contain pedagogy and prakriyas necessary for revealing the oneness of atman and brahman, according to Dayananda, it is Sankara who has provided the means for determining the purport of certain passages, and how to deal with certain topics of the Vedas.[832] While I have kept

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cassettes and this format is still available for purchase from AVG. The edited transcripts from these classes were first distributed through bimonthly study materials delivered to the student's home, and then the entire course was eventually presented in binder format as the first edition of the Home Study Course. This edition is no longer published by Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, but I was able to obtain this initial version of the course in the form of PDF files. A revised publication of the *Bhagavad Gita Home Study Course by Swami Dayananda* is currently available from Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in four volumes. On January 1, 2004, Arsha Vidya Gurukluam announced the release of 7 MP3 CD's containing all 363 lectures from the 1987-1989 courses in Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania. Besides public talks, Swami Dayananda continues to give short term courses, weekend programs, and special talks on the Bhagavad Gita at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam. There are many Bhagavad Gita Home Study Groups throughout America and Arsha Vidya Gurukulam maintains a contact sheet for those interested in this Vaisnava smrti text.

[830] *Arsha Vidya Gurukulam-Institute for Vedanta and Sanskrit Newsletter* 8.1, October, 1990, p. 2. The groundbreaking ceremony for the temple was held on June 5, 1988. See *Arsha Vidya Gurukulam Second Anniversary Souvenir*, September 16, 1988, p. 9.

[831] Cf. "I don't see that I will be teaching here permanently, but the Gurukulam at Saylorsburg will continue to serve the seekers through the camps and courses, short and long-term, conducted by my able students, who are now teachers." *Arsha Vidya Bharati (For Private Circulation Only)* 3, October, 1996, p. 8.

[832] See Swami Dayananda, *A Collection: Talks and Essays of Swami Dayananda* (Rishikesh: Sri Gangadhareswar Trust, 1999), pp. 41-44.

an eye on the theologian's commentaries, Sankara is not a prototype of Advaita.[833] More simply, Sankara is obviously not the creator of the Advaita tradition (*sampradayakrt*), but only one theologian in the lineage of traditional Advaita (*sampradayavit*):

> Advaita is not founded by Sankara at all. Sankara was an acarya. He was not a sampradayakrt, but a sampradayavit. He did not create a sampradaya, he was only a link in the sampradaya. In fact he himself says asampradayavid murkhavad upeksaniyah. If there is someone who doesn't know the sampradaya, he has to be shunned like a murkha, a fool. So far as learning is concerned, you don't learn from him. Sampradaya has another meaning—that which is well given to you, samyak prakarsena diyate, that which is given to you properly as it is.[834]

Of course, the Advaita *sampradaya* does not merely look upon Sankara as theologian or even just a guru. Forging his myth in the fourteenth century, but claiming to be merely providing a summary of the ancient stories connected with the life of Sankara, Vidyaranya invokes Siva as an avatar of Vedanta. Upon creating a scenario where various *devas* approach the God in complaint that righteousness is under attack, Vidyaranya's Vaisnava ideology incarnates Siva as a narrator of his identity with the theologian.[835] More significantly, Vidyaranya makes Siva-Sankara a participant in his political agenda of sanctifying the fate of the Bhamati,[836] or subordination of the Vivarana.[837] The tradition of Vivarana traces itself to Sankara's disciple Padmapada, the

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[833] Cf. "Sri Sankara Bhagavadpada was the very first to introduce an institution in our religion, an institution with a strong foundation. It was again he who brought together the followers of our religion on an institutional basis, thereby enabling it to flourish without losing even a bit of its vitality. I, who praise Sankaracarya for his work of institutionalization, at the same time support the system of individual acaryas (teachers without the backing of an institution)." Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, *The Guru Tradition* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1991), p. 107.

[834] Swami Dayananda, 'Tradition of Advaita,' in *Arsha Vidya Bharati (For Private Circulation Only)* 3, October, 1996, p. 24.

[835] In his Brahamanical narrative of defense, Vidyaranya has Siva respond: "taking a human body, I shall secure what is good for you. I shall establish the Dharma, conquering all the leaders of the perverse paths. I shall produce a commentary on the Brahma Sutras, setting forth the true teachings of the Vedas. I shall do this, taking the form of a great Sannyasin, Sankara by name, accompanied by four disciples who would be like the luminous sun dispelling darkness of ignorance conjured up by the acceptance of duality. Like Mahavishnu, I shall embody myself on earth". Madhava-Vidyaranya, *Sankara-Dig-Vijaya: The Traditional Life of Sankaracharya*, Swami Tapasyananda (trans), (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, No Date), p. 5.

[836] According to traditional accounts *Bhamati* was the name of Vacaspati's wife, whom he neglected during an eclectic study of various schools of Indian thought.

[837] The word *Vivarana* simply means exposition.

only student of the *acarya* who produced a commentary of the *Brahmasutrabhasya*.[838] The commentary, *Pancapadika*, is based upon Sankara's introduction to the *Brahmasutra*, the *Adhyasabhasya*, and exegesis of the first four sutras (*catussutri*), but with exception of these fragments the majority of Padamada's commentary is purported to have been destroyed. To legitimate this outcome, Vidyaranya reincarnates another student of Sankara in the form of Vacaspati Misra (tenth century CE), a theologian whose commentary on the *Brahmasutrabhasya* subsequently formed with the Bhamati.[839]

As I have argued, the idea of any 'traditional' interpretation of Vedanta cannot limit itself to comparisons with pre-colonial forms of Indian religions. The Indian tradition itself is so syncretistic that the attempt to define any one perspective as 'traditional' is bound to overlook the heterogeneity of Vedanta, not to mention perhaps also fail to appreciate the radical reconfiguration of power and knowledge in British India. For my part, the approach I have taken attempts to understand the repetition of paradigmatic speech-acts on the basis of underlying cognitive processes and traditional categories of the Upanisads. While it would be inane for us to try to link up pre-colonial Indian schools of Vedanta with their modern counterparts, we may note that this challenge has already been attempted. For instance, in reference to academic discourse of Vedanta Anantanand Rambachan argues that the Upanisads are misunderstood as provisional declarations dependent upon *anubhava* for the attainment of knowledge of *brahman*.[840] Reviewing

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[838] However, it is not until Prakasatman's *Pancapadika Vivarana* (circa. 975 CE), a commentary of the *Pancapadika*, that the 'Vivarana' is conceptualized as a distinct school of Post-Sankara Advaita.

[839] Cf. "Looking at the position of the planets, the Acharya then told Sureswara in privacy: 'In this work called Panchapadika, only five chapters, especially those portions dealing with the first four sutras, will receive the attention of posterity ...Owing to your Prarabdha you will have another birth as Vacaspati, when you will write an exposition of the commentaries on the Sutras. That work will be the guide for men to understand the meaning of the commentary for all time'." Madha-Vidyaranya (No Date), ibid., p. 150.

[840] Once under the sway of Vivekananda, Anantanand Rambachan explains: "my reading of Vivekananda convinced me that, as far as Advaita, and indeed Hinduism as a whole, was concerned, the authoritative source of knowledge was a very special experience (*anubhava*) that revealed beyond any doubts the basic truths about the meaning of human existence." Rambachan elaborates his understanding in the following manner: "Along with my understanding of the paramount epistemological status of this experience, I also gathered, from Vivekananda, what I considered, at that time, to be the established view of the Vedas or *sruti* in Advaita and Hinduism. *Sruti* was just a record, in words, of this experience as attained by others. At best, it informed us of what they had attained and the means that they employed. The aspirant, however, could not simply rely with faith on this testimony, which was only a secondhand report. As the testimony of another, the knowledge that one may gain by a study of the *sruti* lacks conclusiveness and freedom from doubt. This knowledge is presented by Vivekananda as "theoretical" information that cannot lead to

Rambachan's work, Arvind Sharma claimed that its "...accomplishment consists in presenting the interpretation of Sankara's thought in the light of the Vivarana School successfully and, as modern presentations of Advaita seem to be more in accord with the Bhamati School, in redressing the balance in this respect."[841] The status of the Upanisads as an independent means of *brahmavidya*, in contrast to the belief that properly understanding their words (*sabda*) is dependent upon the performance of any actions, is a central distinction in the history of Vedanta and it is correct to notice this antagonism, but modern exegesis should not be compared to pre-colonial schools of Advaita.

In this particular case, moreover, Rambachan did not at all access the Pancapadika of Padamapada, the Pancapadika-vivarana of Prakasatman, or the Vivarana-prameya-sangraha of Vidyaranya, etc. Rather, his interpretation of 'Advaita Vedanta' is derived from Sankara's commentaies upon various Upanisads, the Bhagavadgita, and the Brahma Sutras, not these so-called exponents of the Vivarana. The lines of reasoning and doctrines of the Vivarana were not even within the range of Rambachan's reference, but

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liberation (*moksa*). To be definitive, this knowledge had to be verified, and this was possible only through a similar direct experience. As a source of knowledge, therefore, even the *sruti* was subordinate to *anubhava*." See Anantanand Rambachan, *The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Vedas* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), p. 2. In large measure, however, Rambachan rejected the discourse of Vivekananda upon attending a course of Vedanta conducted by Swami Dayananda. Under the tutelage of Dayananda, Rambachan studied several Upanisads and the commentaries of Sankara, as well as an array of spurious Indian texts. Recollecting the influence of Dayananda upon his subsequent understanding of Advaita Vedanta, Rambachan proclaims: "He taught me to see that the Upanisads, properly approached and unfolded as a *pramana*, afford a knowledge which is an immediate and sufficient solution to the perennial human quest for fullness." This view of *sruti*, of course, was radically different than that which had been provided by the sermons of Vivekananda: "This understanding centered around Sankara's treatment of sruti as *sabda-pramana*, a source of valid knowledge (*pramana*) composed of words (*sabda*)." According to Rambachan, "In important contrast to Vivekananda's argument that the declarations of sruti needed further verification to become conclusive was Sankara's contention that liberation (*moksa*) is the immediate result of understanding the words of the sruti." Following his studies with Dayananda, Rambachan produced a monograph wherein he attempted to amend the representation of Sankara provided by contemporary scholars. According to Rambachan: "Advaita Vedanta, as systematized and expressed by Sankara, is widely represented in contemporary studies as positing a special experience (anubhava) to be the ultimately valid source of the knowledge of brahman (brahmajnana). According to these studies, Sankara only accorded a provisional validity to the knowledge gained by inquiry into the words of the sruti (Vedas) and did not see the latter as the unique source (pramana) of brahmajnana. The affirmations of the sruti, it is argued, need to be verified and confirmed by the knowledge gained through direct experience (anubhava) and the authority of the sruti, therefore, is only secondary." See Anantanand Rambachan, *Accomplishing the Accomplished: The Vedas as a Source of Valid Knowledge in Sankara* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1991), pp. x1-1.

[841] Arvind Sharma, 'Feature Review of Anantanand Rambachan's Accomplishing the Accomplished,' in *Philosophy East & West* 43.4, 1993, pp. 737-744; 738.

Sharma is also incorrect to believe that modern representations of Sankara are in accord with the Bhamati. Contemporary exponents of Advaita simply equate *anubhabva* with the Yoga experience of *nirvikalpa samadhi*, a mental condition brought about by techniques of internalization which render the mind in binary opposition to all mental content and the normative divisions of cognition, but it is even more often the case that anubhava is simply equated with 'direct insight,' 'intuition,' etc. Though there are other differences between them, the issue in question regarding the role of the Upanisads as a pramana is indeed a fundamental dispute between the *Bhamati* and *Vivarana*.

It is important to note that Vacaspati sought to harmonize the teachings of Sankara with those of Mandana Misra (circa. 660-720 CE), an elder contemporary and rival of acarya.[842] A central tenet of Mandana narratives of liberation is that knowledge must be combined with action (*jnanakarmasamucchaya*). For Mandana, this action includes not only ritual duties, but also the mental action of repeated meditation (*prasankhyana*). More importantly, we should briefly consider the teachings of Vidyaranya, an orthodox figure located squarely in the Vivarana tradition. In his treatise, the *Pancadasi*, Vidyaranya associates contemplation (*nididhyasana*) with mental absorption (*samadhi*) and asserts that it is only though this experience that one attains direct knowledge (*aparoksatma-vijnanam*) of *brahman*. Clarifying his stance, Vidyaranya declares this knowledge is indirectly revealed by the guru at initiation with words propounding Vedic dictums (*paroksam brahma-vijnanam sabdam desika-purvakam*).[843] Clearly, the Vivarana transmit the exact ignorance (*avidya*) we seek to problematize. Without recourse to the rhetoric of 'schools', we may simply emphasize the Upanisads as a verbal means of knowledge (*sabda pramana*) for an element of traditional discourse of Vedanta.[844] In the

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[842] Besides the *Bhamati*, Vacaspati composed commentaries upon the works of Mandana and also attempted to "clarify" the writings of various other figures within the Indian tradition.

[843] See Vidyaranya Swami, *Pancadasi*, Swami Swahananda (trans) (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1967).

[844] For instance, the Australian Indologist Michael Comans notes this controversy as an ongoing circle of contestation among followers of the Advaita tradition: "the difference centres around whether the *sruti* provides only the necessary condition and requires to be further supplemented by some other discipline, namely repeated meditation (*prasankhyana*), in order to prove soteriologically effective". Concerning this distinction, Comans explains: "This was a well known issue in Advaita circles and it has been discussed down the centuries with protagonists for both views, though many modern followers of Advaita—not to mention those who are interested in Indian thought in general—hardly seem aware that there has been any such controversy." See Michael Comans, 'Sankara and the Prasankhyanavada,' in *Journal of Indian*

context of our interests, it is more important to understand the Upanisads themselves in the light of epistemic narratives of Advaita and the myth of Vedanta.

Arsha Vidya was revealed to the *rsi*s by Siva and has since been methodically transmitted through a lineage of *guru*s and disciples: "there is a method of teaching, a method of communication, by which the vision of the whole can be imparted to the other. We have a tradition that begins from Lord Siva and comes down to us through the Rishis" It is clearly from the tradition of Arsa Vidya that Dayananda derives his epistemic power, as witnessed in the logic whereby his lineage is generated: "the knowledge is first revealed to the Rsis and from them it flows to us. Therefore this vidya is called Arsha Vidya, the Vidya, the vision of the Rishis."[845] Central to Arsha Vidya is a pedagogy which communicates the "vision" of the statement "that thou art" (*tat tvam asi*), a sentence (*vakya*) spoken nine times by Uddalaka to his son Svetaketu in the sixth chapter of the *Chandogya Upanisad* which has been accorded a particularly profound (*maha*) status by all Vedantic theologians (*acaryas*). According to Dayananda, this sentence, or utterance, produces a mental (or intellectual) cognition of ones identity with God if 'unfolded' according to the methods (*prakriyas*) contained in the *Upanisad*s.

Throughout various Upanisads, Dayananda insists, the meaning of this single *mahavakya* is unfolded through the proper 'handling' of *prakriyas* adopted by gurus who narrate therein. Qualifying Advaita in the context of Brahmanical hermeneutics and a lineage of teachers (*acaryas*) concerned with validating some true interpretation of all the Upanisads, however, the swami admits that "teacher of Vedanta" should be enough and raises a valid question: "why this adjective 'traditional?'"[846] To fathom any answer, however, it should be emphasized that for Dayananda *tat tvam asi* does not only contain the essence of all the Upanisads: the entire 'teaching tradition', if not school, of Advaita Vedanta is expressed in this salient statement. It is true that the Upanisads themselves provide instances of canonical formation similar to the procedures of Brahminization, but

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Philosophy 24, 1996, pp. 49-71; 49.

[845] Swami Dayananda, *Arsha Vidya: Vision of the Rishis* (Rishikesh: Sri Gangadhareswar, 1991), p. 13.

[846] Swami Dayananda, *The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedanta* (Saylorsburg: Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, 1993), p. 1.

in chapter two an image of Siva provided codes of negotiation.

To register an overall theme in Dayananda's traditional methodology, I wish to outline his basic diagnosis for the fundamental problem. It may be recalled that the hypotheses I have provided for the criteria of truth and repetition of traditional Vedanta were suggested as a means of understanding the causal connections between *gurus* and *sisyas*. In this regard, I suggested that the current situation for *sisyas* involves non-recognition of Advaita, or more specifically ignorance of the particulars of atman and *brahman*. *Gurus* of Arsha Vidya (i.e. Swami Dayananda), I suggested, diagnose this situation in such a way that the procedures offered (i.e. *sravana*) will lead to a recognition of the fundamental problem and, therefore, reveal the truth of the situation. At this point, I wish to put these hypotheses to the test in an attempt to arrive at a better understanding of the cognitive processes underlying the repetition of traditional Vedanta. Along with this situation, it may also be recalled that the registers of *gurus* and *sisyas* have been delineated with specific properties. As these are yet to be defined, it is appropriate to now collect the surface features of gurus before proceeding any further.

In the *Mundaka* Upanisad the *rsi Angiras* explains that, upon examining the fruitless results accumulated through action (karma), a wise student desirous of attaining knowledge of the impermanent nature of reality should dutifully approach a guru who both knows the teaching methodology of the *sruti* (*srotriya*) and is steadfast in their knowledge of *brahman* (*brahmanista*). Now, both of these qualities are important and must be further defined. To begin with, a srotriya is a guru who is well versed in the pedagogy of the teaching tradition (*sampradaya*). The methodology might be any number of techniques, such as handling words in such a way as to negate all forms of conditioning, using paradoxes and illustrations to convey certain logic, methods (*prakriyas*) of superimposition and denial, use of implied meaning, syllogisms, reasoning, modes of inference etc. This would all constitute surface properties of the *srotriya*, but our present concerns lie with the diagnosis of a situation, not the procedures or recipes leading to its remedy. Related to these traits is the criterion of *brahmanista*, which implies a guru who knows *brahman* as oneself (i.e. *aham brahmasmi*). The importance of

these factors for the outcome of the diagnosis is that they must both be represented for the *sisya* as directly connected to the current situation (i.e. *advaita*). Given these connections, the hypothesis is that the *guru* must first give rise to doubt in the mind of the *sisya*.

Strictly speaking the concept of a 'sisya' is much too broad for our purposes so a few general properties must also be defined to register this mode of discourse. A basic feature is that the *sisya* will be a *mumuksu*, that is, desirous of liberation (*moksa*) from the cycle of rebirth (*samsara*). As indicated by the verse quoted from the *Mundaka*, moreover, the *mumuksu* should be one who has recognized the limitations of attaining that which is uncreated through the created, or reaching the impermanent through the permanent. In such a situation, as we shall see, the *mumuksu* will come to understand that the solution requires not action (*karma*), but knowledge (*jnana*). The student who fits this prototype is categorized as a 'jijnasu,' the characteristics of which simply imply an understanding the means to *moksa* is *jnana*. The student I have chosen for traditional discourse, however, is the *adhikari*. As normally understood by Hindu gurus, the *adhikari* is a student who falls under a set of criteria (*sadhana-catustaya*) postulated by Sankara, most specifically in his Brahma Sutra *bhasya*. The *sadhana-catustaya* include: (1) the ability to discriminate between the transient and the eternal (*nitya-anitya-vastu-viveka*), (2) dispassion for securing the enjoyments of pleasure or pain here or hereafter (*iha-amutra-artha-phala-vairagya*), (3) the six accomplishments beginning with mental equipoise (*sama*), *dama*, etc.,[847] and (4) the desire for liberation (*mumuksutva*). While all of these traits would no doubt be present, the current hypothesis for traditional Vedanta only involves the requirement of exposing oneself to contexts and situations of the teaching lineage and listening (*sravana*) to *gurus* and utterances of truth.

Diagnosis of the problem would be the first procedure involved in creating this situation, the result of which would warrant nothing short of a fundamental solution. In this process, the means of knowledge (*jnana*) will be causally related to *moksa* and the

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[847] We must resort to Brhadaranyaka Upanisad for the listing of these mental dispassions: mental resolution, mental alertness, withdrawal of attachment to external objects, objectivity, concentration, and faith. Cf. santo danta uparatastitiksuh samahitah sraddhavitto bhutva atmanyeva atmanam pasyati. BU 4.4.23. Madhavananda (1993), ibid., p. 530.

cessation of *samsara*. There is in this case a high probability for an outcome whereby the surface properties of gurus (*srotriya brahmanista*) may serve to index the truth of the situation (i.e. *advaita, moksa, jnana*). As Dayananda explains, the primary importance of learning from a guru who knows the Advaita tradition (*sampradayavit*) is that Vedanta must be handled as a *pramana*. It is in this context that the *advaita sampradaya* is offered for a solution to *the* fundamental problem:

> This *sampradaya* therefore is precious. It is something that every human being wants. It is not something that belongs to us Indians or to anybody in particular. We are fortunate that we happen to be the inheritors of this *sampradaya*, the *vaidika-sampradya*. We can all claim that we are *vaidikas*. That is a privilege in itself. We are privileged to have this *sampradaya* and this *sampradaya* is the solution to the problems that the entire humanity faces. It is not a solution to a Hindu problem. It is a solution to the human problem.[848]

Of course, this is in radical contrast to the *advaita sampradaya* institutionalized by Sankara. This reference to Sankara, moreover, unwittingly introduces an additional issue for the representation and acquisition of traditional categories. Specifically, our strategic codification of traditional discourse would seem to interfere with Brahmanical procedures of truth and communication. Let me offer one justification for this inevitable conclusion. For our purposes, I would like to suggest that Sankara, as well as the *guru-sisya-parampara* of Advaita, may be viewed as an icon of tradition. In structuralist semiotics, an iconic sign is that aspect of discourse which exploits the similarities and resemblances shared between a sign and its object, or a word and that to which it refers. Structuralism and semiotics both share a common concern in their attempt to explain the way in which a sign conveys meaning. In contrast to an icon, an additional category produced with this attempt to understand the way words function to communicate knowledge, lies the 'symbol,' a sign which shares no connection or resemblance whatsoever with its object. In many ways, a word itself is a symbol. A symbol conveys meaning only due to the fact that its users share an agreement in terms of that to which it refers. The final element of communication introduced by semiotics is the index. An indexical sign, in fact, shares not

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[848] Swami Dayananda, 'Tradition of Advaita,' in *Arsha Vidya Bharati (For Private Circulation Only)* 3, October, 1996, pp. 24-25.

only a resemblance but a direct causal connection with its object.

Now, like ones reflection in a mirror or an epistemic genre and its object of knowledge, an icon no doubt resembles the reality to which it refers, but the implications of complete closure or total identity is that the sign may no longer function in the realm of power-knowledge relations: in short, like an *avatar*, the sign transcends time and history. In the discourse of Advaita it has been important that our narrative not lead to such universalizing pretensions. As I wish to indicate, in reference to the real face-to-face encounter and local situations of an utterance of truth, it is necessary to constrain the cognitive procedures of religious formations to historical lineages and contemporary representations. As far as our own symbol, or allegory, is concerned, it is in reference to traditional discourse of truth that it has been employed, and it is this fact which has taken priority, not whether or not our aberrant interpretation may be taken as any truthful image of Advaita, or as a discursive and non-discursive formation of gurus accurately reflected in their disciples hagiographic representations. In terms of non-duality and the recognition of liberation (moksa), while a means of knowledge is indeed inseparable from its end, knowledge, a subtle distinction is required for understanding tradition in terms of cognition and communication. On the other hand, anchoring the index of Advaita as a mythic revelation, Siva again enters the realm of power-knowledge relations.

Conclusion

Manufacturing Authority: Ideology of the Text

> It is hard to ignore the element of disavowal here, the same anxious declaration of a swift, unilateral, and irreversible severance from the past.[849]

> That is why, inversely, schizoanalysis must devote itself with all its strength to the necessary destruction...And when engaged in this task no activity will be too malevolent...brutally intervening each time the subject strikes up the song of myth...carrying him back *to the factory*.[850]

In the course of this analysis I have sought to construct a postcolonial narrative which contests hegemonic variants in the myth of Vedanta. A central challenge in this regard has been to analyze the paradigmatic axis of Advaita as an epistemic tradition which may displace neo-colonial regimes of power that continue today through a variety of mystical interpretations of Vedanta. In particular, we have witnessed how a number of defining features of modernity have impacted the tradition and its reliance upon the Vedic revelation (*sruti*) as a means of valid knowledge (*sabda pramana*). Problematizing the discourse of Orientalism and the secular origins of language, I have also sought to subvert both nativist discourse of 'tradition' and Indological employment of this philological (or theological) mode of analysis in the modern world.

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[849] Tomoko Masuzawa, *In Search of Dreamtime: The Quest for the Origin of Religion* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993) p. 31.

[850] Implicit to this conception is the very important idea of 'deterritorialization', a process central to the goals of schizoanalysis which lies in opposition to 'reterritorializations.' In terms of the motives and goals of schizoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari explain: "In its destructive task, schizoanalysis must proceed as quickly as possible, but it can also proceed only with great patience, great care, by successively undoing the representative territorialities and reterritorializations through which a subject passes in his individual history. For there are several layers, several planes of resistance from within or are imposed from without. Schizophrenia as a process, deterritorialization as a process, is inseparable from the stases that interrupt it, aggravate it, or make it turn in circles, and reterritorialize it into neurosis, perversion, and psychosis." For Deleuze and Guattari, these reterritorializations are provided by psychoanalysis and established forms of psychiatry. At the forefront of their task, Deleuze and Guattari seek to provide a true politics of antipsychiatry by following a basic premise: "undoing all the reterritorializations that transform madness into mental illness." As Deleuze and Guattari explain, however, "even the schizo's stroll or voyage does not effect great deterritorializations without borrowing from territorial circuits." In the destructive process of any deterritorialization, one must remain vigilantly aware of both internal and external circuits of individualization. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 1983) pp. 345-353.

Analyzing the academic state of affairs surrounding teacher-student relationships in India, K. Satchidananda Murty notes that "...due to the unfortunate *guru-sisya* tradition and the structure of our caste-class hierarchical society, students expect to be 'given' knowledge of truth..."[851] The fact that Indian students expect such a boon is certain proof that they, if not their teachers, surely have misconceptions about the ways in which knowledge is transmitted in traditional Vedic lineages.[852] In this context, moreover, it should be emphasized that I do not wish to frame narratives of Indian academics (or even 'gurus') in binary opposition to Western Indologists.[853] For instance, Temple University's prestigious Hindu philosopher Jitendranath Mohanty, an Indologist whose own work displays contraptions of Husserlian phenomenology, has produced a taxonomic hierarchy whereby Western Indologists are subordinated by 'philosophers' due to the fact that the former concern themselves with the textual basis of Indian traditions. The inferiority of Indologists is contrasted with philosophers proper, superior hermeneutes ambiguously described as critical thinkers. On the other hand, as Mohanty does confess, "the Indian philosopher finds himself between two worlds—not at home in either, and more often

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[851] K. Satchidananda Murty, *Philosophy in India: Traditions, Teaching and Research* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985), p. 186.

[852] While we cannot substantiate the validity of this observation, it may indeed be suggested that Richard King's analysis of 'Eurocentric-cognitivism' represents precisely a neo-colonial element of Indian scholarship at the root of Murty's concern. More specifically, Murty's anxiety "...amounts to a variant on the secularist thesis which suggests that 'Indian philosophy' cannot be real philosophy (i.e., philosophy as modern westerners practice it) because it involves explicitly theological criteria (for instance, a reliance upon revelation or *sruti*)..." Richard King, *Indian Philosophy: An Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought* (Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Press, 1999a), p. 31.

[853] For instance, analyzing Indian scholarship of Advaita, Andrew O. Fort arrives at the following succinct conclusion: "Neo-Vedanta has become the primary interpretive model in modern Indian scholarship on Advaita." In this model, Fort tells us, "one finds both new terms like *philosophy* and *religion* (versus *darsana* and *sampradaya*) and old terms like *dharma* and *yoga* that carry new meaning." Moreover, "neither are neo-Vedanta thinkers and scholars fully imbedded in the Western tradition of "critical inquiry," though they often use categories and research methods of Western scholarship." As an example of this phenomenon, Fort notes that Neo-Vedantic scholars privilege the concept of 'experience' and 'Vedantic truths' at the expense of textual exegesis and analysis of texts and thinkers in their historic contexts. In the history of Vedanta, Fort emphasizes that while traditional Advaitins "claimed that they held the true and final view [and] recognized themselves as a 'school' or lineage", modern saint's "hold that Vedanta is a universal truth transcending a mere position or 'religion.'"[853] See Andrew O. Fort, *Jivanmukti in Transformation: Embodied Liberation in Advaita and Neo-Vedanta* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), p. 2. Of course, the distinction may be emphasized in the context of Fort's tireless philological investigation into the theology of pre-colonial Indians, but could also be derived from discourse analysis and ethnographic observation.

than not lacking expertise and first rate scholarship in either."[854] Mohanty complains that the failure of Indians to produce any worthwhile scholarship is a direct result of their fascination with 'comparative philosophy' which, he suggests, displays a certain staleness and "methodological naïvete" incapable of producing creative thinking.[855] Of course, Mohanty's valuation of 'creativity' at the expense of 'tradition' is itself a culturally conditioned stance which reflects hegemonic values of post-Enlightenment Europe.

The philological displacement of the unilateral transmission of sacred language and revealed authority is reflected in narratives of Vedanta, both within and outside the Western Academy, as well as among those institutions further abroad modeled on its structure of learning. This epistemic violence is discerned in the force with which it is felt as an assault against "...the thesis of *sabdapramana*, namely the thesis that the *sruti* texts have no human author", by Mohanty.[856] As Mohanty correctly notes, the thesis of *sabda-pramana* is on the defensive against modernism and he, too, is led to confess:

> It is for me to literal an understanding of this thesis to construe it as meaning that the texts are simply not composed by any human author at all...It is also totally muddled—and betrays an insensitiveness to the nature of Hindu thought—to say that the *sruti* is *apauruseya*, i.e. has no

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[854] According to Mohanty, "within the tradition of Indology, scholars have passed judgments on Indian philosophy. It is like a scholar in *Germanistik* using available philological methodologies for judging philosophical content of Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. It has been good for European philosophy that no such 'Occidentalism' laid claims to judge matters philosophica.l." See J.N. Mohanty, *Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought: An Essay on the Nature of Indian Philosophical Thinking* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

[855] It is indeed disheartening to find such comparativism still being taught throughout the Indian university. Analyzing this hegemony more than thirty years ago Agehananda Bharati arrived at similar conclusions, but it appears that the students he witnessed have come of age and, in validation of Mohanty's discoveries, they do not appear to have been very creative. Placing their work within "the redemptory frame of the neo-Vedanta diction of Renaissance thought", Bharati notes: "Every year, Indian philosophers, or rather, Indians who study or teach philosophy at Indian universities, and who publish their doctoral theses in English, produce works whose captions reveal the generalistic predilection of the Renaissance; token captions of these numerous works are of the kind "Wisdom and Love in Kant and Vedanta," "Liberation in Pringle—Pattison and Buddha," "Concept of Truth in Samkaracarya and Bradley." On the quasi-philosophical side, the apologetic has developed a mode of juxtaposing Western authors and ideas within Indian texts and their authors, historical and mythical." See A. Bharati, 'The Hindu Renaissance and Its Apologetic Patterns', in Journal of Asian Studies 29.2, 1970, pp. 267-287; 273; 284. According to Bharati, even otherwise 'orthodox' philosophers in India even side with the modern renaissance scholar for fear of being considered 'stagnant.' This mode of comparitivism is precisely that which Mohanty has reprimanded in the modern Indian university.

[856] Mohanty (1992), ibid., p. 257.

human author in the sense that it contains revealed truths.[857]

In an attempt to provide 'methodological insights' of Indian thought which he believes would "...rehabilitate the tradition's self-understanding, without attempting to return to that naïve use of *sabdapramana* to which a return is just impossible", it is true that Mohanty allows some space for this authoritative position.[858] For instance, Mohanty suggests Indians should appreciate the 'autonomy' of the *sruti* as a foundational means to interpret their self-experience.[859] Taking the first step in an attempt to provide a post-colonial approach for the 'cross-cultural' study and practice of philosophy, Richard King correctly notes that "one feature likely to be pounced upon in such a context is the acceptance of authoritative testimony (*sabda*) as a valid means of knowledge (*pramana*)..."[860] Rather than place this situation outside the range of philosophical dialogue, however, King suggests *sabda pramana* and the testimony of *gurus* may actually contribute to the post-colonial study of philosophy:

> Indeed, one should note that, in the acknowledgement of the importance of teachers (*guru*), the function of tradition (*sampradaya*) and the inevitability of speaking from a particular perspective (*darsana*) in the exercising of critical reasoning, the Indian approach is both more realistic and more honest about its particularity and social location.[861]

For King, "such an approach not only makes a contribution to the pushing back of colonial frontiers and ideologies but also participates in the expansion of philosophical debate into a wider cultural arena."[862] If one combines 'traditional' Indological typologies of Vedanta with the confessions of bourgeois saints and Indian academics

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[857] Mohanty (1992), ibid., pp. 22-23; 257.

[858] For instance, in the context of global secularization, he boldly suggests: "...for a people whose faith in the infallibility of the scriptures is considerably weakened...*sabdapramana* can no longer provide the theoretical basis for a satisfactory philosophy. But that is not to reject language (*sabda*) altogether as a means of true cognition (*pramana*)." Mohanty (1992), ibid., pp. 22-23.

[859] Mohanty (1992), ibid., p. 259.

[860] Praised on the basis that the apparently theological nature of Indian thought must inevitably be addressed if constructive progress in the field is to proceed in the light of dominant discourses of modernity and secularism, for instance, King notes that "Jitendranath Mohanty, for instance, has argued that the acceptance of tradition and authoritative testimony as a valid means of knowledge (what is known in Indian circles as *sabda-pramana*) is a legitimate philosophical position to hold..." King (1999a), ibid., pp. xiii; 14.

[861] King (1999a), ibid., p. 31.

[862] King (1999a), ibid., p. 244.

thereby contrasted as 'modern', or even 'neo-' (much less the affirmative strands interweaving both), moreover, King's prognosis becomes urgent: "going 'beyond Orientalism' should not be seen as the end of 'Indology' as an academic practice within Western academia, as this would be to give up any hope of mutuality in the intellectual encounter between India and 'the West.' This stance is somewhat ironic since Indology has been largely portrayed as powerful braids in the fabric of Orientalism, but shielding the epistemic violence of this discipline is less difficult than locating any 'indigenous epistemic traditions' in the aftermath of Eurocentric regimes of secularization.[863]

At the same time, while creating a homogenous textualized body of data for their object of analysis, scholars wielding the Eurocentric disciplinary power of religious studies—many of whom prefer to view themselves as naturalists instead of theologians—may perceive the utterances of *sabda pramana* as a threat to their scientific integrity. For instance, Donald Wiebe has argued against Indo-critical theories of religion as a religious mode of analysis, not an analysis of religion.[864] The problem with involving indigenous epistemic traditions in the critical apparatus for the study of religion, for Wiebe, is that this may involve privileging the 'revelatory' dimension of human experience at the expense of 'science,' and this too without providing any legitimate account of the nature of the "revelatory."[865] I agree with Wiebe that "...there is something epistemically distinctive about science that makes it inappropriate to claim that mythic cosmologies are on a par with scientific theorizing."[866] Indeed, it is in this context that we frame our Indo-critical analysis of Siva's revelation. This overall approach, alas, is inevitably mythic.[867]

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[863] Concerning the emergence of Indo-critical theory, the 'Indo-' aspect of this methodology "should not be seen as an exploration of the Indian response to a given situation"; rather, one must remain vigilantly aware of the "epistemological problems and political dangers" of indigenism. Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India, and 'The Mystic East,'* (NY: Routledge, 199b) pp. 212; 214.

[864] See Donald Wiebe, 'Modern Western Science, The Study of Religion, and Orientalism and Religion,' in Method & Theory in the Study of Religion 14, 2002, pp. 265-278; 271.

[865] Wiebe (2002), ibid., p. 269.

[866] Wiebe (2002), ibid., p. 272.

[867] Cf. "The description of the relation between a canon of signs and an interpretive language which "speaks" that canon, and the description of that relationship in a third text, replicates precisely the same structural relationship. The text of theory is not situated higher in an ontological hierarchy, nor can its language be divorced, as in Plato, from the specificity of its linguistic effects, allowing it to become a master language which looks down upon other languages from above." Tim Murphy, 'Elements of a Semiotic Theory of Religion,' in Method & Theory in the Study of Religion 15, 2003, pp. 48-67; 66.

Analyzing the inevitable situation of the present dilemma in the academic study of South Asian history, J.E. Llewellyn alludes to the "problems and promise of sitting on the fence."[868] The "problem" that arises from this uncomfortable position lies in the "division between postcolonial/postmodern/poststructural theories and the more traditional writing of history." [869] Llewellyn senses that there is "still relatively little tolerance for post-whatever theorizing on the part of the dead white males of history" and he has a clue as to why this is so: "This asperity is probably borne of bitter experience, with the historian finding the fruits of years of work in dusty archives and steamy villages dismissed with a wave of the theorist's hand, 'That is all well and good, but you have missed the point.'"[870] The 'promise' of this situation, which straddles both the theorist and historian of South Asia, is that "every history now must be postorientalist, and to be interesting most theoretical works will have to incorporate history."[871] Llewellyn, of course, is simply optimistic. As always, theoretical writing of any interest will assimilate historical datum, but even 'postcolonial' historians of South Asia have hardly stepped beyond Orientalism and, indeed, work in this area has scarcely begun.[872]

As Pascal Boyer has argued, it is a necessity for ethnography to abandon previous anthropological theories of tradition if one is to provide any legitimate description of traditional discourse. In large part, this is a result of the structuralist approach in previous anthropological models of ritual speech and seemingly 'empty' notions. Boyer's cognitive theory of traditional discourse moves beyond binary distinctions of

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[868] J.E. Llewellyn, '(Foot)Notes on Orientalism and Religion,' in Method & Theory in the Study of Religion 14, 2002, pp. 234-248; 246.

[869] Llewellyn (2002), ibid., p. 246. Underneath Llewellyn's fear lies a dread harbored since the publication of Edward Said's groundbreaking work, specifically the 'synchronic' approach of structuralist analysis is thought to be at odds with traditional conceptions of historiography and diachronic narratives. The 'history of the present,' however, seems to bring the burdens of the past to bear upon the present.

[870] Llewellyn (2002), ibid., p. 246.

[871] Llewellyn (2002), ibid., p. 247.

[872] In a recent theorization of post-Orientalist historiography, however, Gyan Prakash directly adds to the pain of Llewellyn's fence. Outlining the future of post-Orientalist historiography, Prakash maintains that such an enterprise can only be conducted from a 'post-foundational perspective' (Prakash 1990). In other words, Prakash calls for a multifocal method which, in his own case, draws upon post-structuralist and Marxist approaches in order to highlight the heterogeneity of power relations exposed with 'First World' theories of 'Third World' history. See Gyan Prakash, 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Indian Historiography is Good to Think', in Nicholas Dirks (ed.), *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 353-388.

conservatism and literalism which have previously dominated the understanding of ritual practices and traditional interaction. Boyer exposes the misunderstandings of anthropologists who believe that ritual participants 'mindlessly' and repetitively chant words for which they don't even have a meaning. This does indeed contribute to the preservation of tradition, but as cognitive analysis demonstrates 'literalism' is not always simply a matter of traditional 'authority' or 'conservatism':

> Obviously, there is no conservatism here, just the (true) belief that any change of this kind will preclude successful computing. So one can be a 'literalist' and insist on literal repetition because one thinks the desired effects will be brought about by the surface properties of the object. This is precisely the attitude of people involved in traditional interaction. As I mentioned above, traditional literalism means that one takes, e.g., the precise gestures of a ritual, their order, the fact that only certain persons may participate, the allocation of roles during the ceremony, as the essential aspects without which one is not performing the ritual at all.[873]

When placed in the context of 'ritual speech' which does indeed involve cognitive understanding of the words uttered, then, Mohanty's belief that *sabda pramana* is just too literal an understanding of revelatory language does actually prove insightful. In an attempt to elicit the underlying causal features of traditional discourse, however, it is not due to any misguided approach to putting the 'surface properties' of traditional discourse into discursive action that has been our direct concern. For an Indo-critical stance of discourse analysis, the irony is that it is precisely due to this 'literalist' approach that one recognizes the heightened importance of orality. If structuralist approaches to ritual speech have led anthropologists to mystical notions and empty, dangling, signifiers, it would seem that their very understanding of language may itself need a fresh analysis. For example, let us simply note the implications of Fredric Jameson's interpretation of avant-garde constructions, or late capitalist modes of cultural production:

> What I want to underscore, however, is precisely the way in which the signifier in isolation becomes ever more material—or better still,

[873] Pascal Boyer, *Tradition as Truth and Communication: A Cognitive Description of Traditional Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 17.

> literal—ever more vivid in sensory ways, whether the new experience is attractive or terrifying. We can show the same thing in the realm of language: what the schizophrenic breakdown of language does to the individual words that remain behind is to reorient the subject of the speaker to a more literalizing attention towards those words...As meaning is lost, the materiality of words becomes obsessive, as is the case when children repeat a word over and over again until its sense is lost and it becomes an incomprehensible incantation. To begin to link up with our earlier description, a signifier that has lost its signified has thereby been transformed into an image.[874]

Starting from this assumption, ethnographic observation demonstrates rather well that traditional discourse alters ones image of otherwise empty signifiers such as 'Siva,' or '*brahman*.' As such, our approach has been precisely to anchor Siva and the underlying cognitive procedures of *brahmavidya* with the discourse of Advaita. Anchorage, a term used by Roland Barthes to describe the 'parasitic' function of captions surrounding photographs in an attempt to establish a chain of 'second-order signifiers,' has indeed helped 'counter the terror' of free-floating signifiers.[875] In a way similar to Barthes analysis of the synchrony of Fashion, I am interested in the structural constraints and the operational means of conciliation between the institutionalization of Advaita as codified in canonical utterances and its actualization in society.

In this context, we may note Tzvetan Todorov's call for further theorization of the discursive elements identified in the genre of autobiography. Autobiography is one or the more common forms of first-person narration which "separates all the 'referential' or

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[874] In this context, Jameson's typology of postmodernism and the cultural production of pastiche are placed in relation to the modernist practice of parody. Jameson characterizes postmodern pastiche by noting that "the immense fragmentation and privatization of modern literature—its explosion into a host of distinct private styles and mannerisms—foreshadows deeper and more general tendencies in social life as a whole." As we have seen, the mimetic effects of various anti-colonial Indian nationalists demonstrate rather well their ability to successfully assume the position of their colonizers. Parodic subversives, on the other hand, are qualified in stark contrast to bourgeois practitioners of postmodern pastiche. See Frederic Jameson, 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society,' in Hal Foster (ed), *The Anti-Aestheric: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983), pp. 111-125; 113-114; 120.

[875] For Barthes, photographic captions serve to 'fix the meaning' of images which might otherwise connote a free-floating range of assumptions. Words limit the connotations of the image with a 'literal' meaning. See Roland Barthes, 'The Photographic Message,' in Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 15-31. Also 'Rhetoric of the Image,' in Barthes (1977), ibid., pp. 32-51. For discourse analysis of Advaita, the work of Barthes has proved invaluable, as especially provided in his structural approach to the discourse of fashion in *The Fashion System*. See Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

'historical' genres from all the 'fictional' genres" and, for Todorov, it is the speech acts which constitute this genre as a kernel of truth.[876] In relation to Indian saints, or modern day *rsis*, we may agree that this generic speech act is also widely distributed outside literature, but notice the object of knowledge thereby revealed: "this shift in object is revealing: the identity of the genre comes from the speech act that is at its root, telling one's own story; however, this initial contact is not prevented from undergoing numerous transformations in order to become a literary genre..." This rudimentary description has been salvaged for Indo-critical analysis of Advaita.[877]

Proceeding from a mere image of Siva, we elicited codes for traditional discourse of Vedanta with Swami Dayananda's captions surrounding this image.[878] No doubt providing a more stable understanding of such signifiers than of, say, a *murti* (image) of Siva alone could reveal, my approach to traditional discourse has been along the lines of 'problematization.' This approach is highlighted nicely in Nikolas Rose's undoing of theories of 'de-traditionalization.' What is needed is greater attention focused towards regimes of 're-traditionalization.' As Rose makes explicit in terms of authority and the genealogy of subjectivity, this enables us to weigh both the costs and benefits, not of being freed from the government of subjectivity, but of governing ourselves differently.[879] Such an approach would not attempt to write the history of Vedanta, but problematize the heterogeneous authorities that have, at certain times throughout history, contributed to the invention, shaping, re-shaping, and normalization of human conduct in ways that have effected the procedures whereby human beings have come to understand

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[876] Cf. "To put it simply, autobiography is defined by two identifications: the author's identification with the narrator, and the narrator's identification with the chief protagonist." See Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 25.

[877] Todorov, for his part, has left "...the task of identifying these transformations to specialists." Todorov (1990), ibid., pp. 25-26.

[878] See p. 120.

[879] Cf. "One sees here, in the sphere of consumption, the rise of powerful new authorities and technologies for the government of conduct, the dissemination of modes, techniques and images of self-reformation and self-problematization...they establish a relation to their subjects that presupposes freedom...and these new modes of subjectification become available, in reverse as it were, for new techniques for the regulation of conduct...As styles of self-display become associated, in a calculated manner, with identification and differentiation of ways of being human, the 'mirror dance' of mimesis and alterity takes new forms that are highly regulated, but exist in a complex and often contestatory relation with political, theological, medical and psychological images and norms of conduct." See Nikolas Rose, 'Authority and the Genealogy of Subjectivity,' in Paul Heelas, Scott Lash, and Paul Morris (eds), *Detraditionalization: Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 295-327; 319-320.

and act upon themselves as 'selves' of a certain type: Aryans, *rsis*, Brahmins, bourgeois nationalists, Hindus, *sampradayavits*, etc.[880] The power effects of discourse, it should always be recalled, is that it functions as a disguise for underlying modes of individualization and, except in rare instances, those caught in the networks of power are themselves unaware of the dominant regimes structuring the forms of legitimation thereby exercised:

> ...The interpellation of the subject is always partial, incomplete, riddled with gaps and open to reconfiguration and resistance...The fixing of identities is not a matter of being pushed or pulled by gravity but of being invited to play a role in such a way that the invitation appears to have already been answered by the subject before it was proposed, but at the same time the invitation could always be refused.[881]

Now, as we have seen, while admitting that Advaita is the essence of 'Hinduism,' Dayananda rejects the typical characterization of Vedanta as one of six 'schools' of Indian 'philosophy' (*sad-darsana*) based upon the idea that the subject matter of the Upanisads is not within the range of our available means of knowledge, such as perception (*pratyaksa*) and inference (*anumana*). Clearly, Dayananda's authority extends beyond the cognitive horizons usually professed by 'philosophers'. In traditional discourse of Advaita, the Upanisads are indeed held as a means of knowledge (*pramana*), but so is Dayananda; as a matter of fact, the transmission of *brahmavidya* cannot be institutionalized without conjuring this alliance. The intended effect of our comparison of Dayananda to Siva the 'destroyer,' or Daksinamurti the wise and benevolent patron saint of ascetics, is that the swami is framed in his own self-image, that is, he is allowed to function (as an informant, or even an agent) in a manner similar to the *rsi*s, or *guru*s,

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[880] Cf. "It would examine the forms of knowledge and systems of truth that underpinned such programmes, and the intellectual and practical techniques invented and deployed—ranging from fasting to behaviour modification. It would examine the practices that such programmes gave birth to, problematized, or sought to shape...And it would consider the ways in which these developments accorded human beings various means for describing, judging, directing their own conduct, as subjects, selves, citizens, individuals, generals, lovers, teachers, labourers, wives, husbands, courtesans or other types of being. It would thus be a study of the connections between the truths by which human beings are rendered thinkable—the valuables attached to images, vocabularies, explanations, and so forth—and the techniques, instruments and apparatus which presuppose human beings to be certain sorts of creatures, and act upon them in that light." Rose (1996), ibid., p. 296.

[881] See Mark Poster, 'Databases as Discourse, or Electronic Interpellations,' in Heelas (1996), ibid., p. 279.

whom he idealizes as revealed sources of authority.[882] This paradigmatic image of *Arsha Vidya* may be indexed in the myth of Vedanta, but the implications of Dayananda's narratives are that his vision reflects beliefs and practices of an ancestor lineage of Vedic *rsis*[883] More specifically, in spite of theorizing the internal structure of Advaita as a genre of discourse fabricated with enunciations (speech acts/utterances) codified in the Upanisads, it is the production, regulation, and transmission of a Saivite performance which is actually institutionalized on the stage of *Arsha Vidya*.

Aligned with this approach, I have argued that traditional discourse of Advaita may institute epistemic narratives as a variant genre in the myth of Vedanta. Now, I wish to suggest that like the *sruti*, to follow an analogy provided by Louis Althusser, the process of interpellation results in interlocutors or interpellates who function as God's mirrors, that is, God's reflections.[884] The *guru-sisya-parampara*, extended as a lineage of *brahmavidya*, allows one to recognize themselves in the causal relations of *sabda*

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[882] Ideological connotations and causal relations of *swamis* and *rsis* are, in one way or another, common occurrences in Indian forms of Vedanta. Vivekananda, for instance, often described the Vedas as the vision of the rsis and stressed the necessity of becoming a rsi for insight into the meaning of the sruti. As Anantanand Rambachan notes, however, "...Vivekananda does not see the rsis as the creators of the truths that they advocate. Like scientists in relation to the natural world, they are only discoverers." See Anantanand Rambachan, *The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Vedas* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), p. 43. As for Dayananda, he is often quick to note that one should not question the roots (*mula*) of the *rsis*. If we are to look beyond the rsis for a source of knowledge, says Dayananda, we must simply connect it to the Lord, the revealer of knowledge. Of course we have discussed the mula of the rsis in chapter two, in our discussion of Brahminization etc.

[883] One of the more asinine attempts to understand and locate the 'reference' or referential meaning of laksana is provided by B. Matilal. Words such as 'brahman,' have been put forth as 'Suchness,' 'Highest Bliss,' 'Ultimate Reality,' etc., says, Matilal, in a manner of Humpty Dumpty, who thought he had the power to just master the meanings of words in Alice's Wonderland: "Just as the indicated meaning, the Chairman, is derived from 'the chair' on the basis of an existent relationship between the chair and the Chairman, the mystic will similarly have to specify a relationship between his Ultimate Reality—the ineffable Ultimate Reality—and the 'shadow' meanings of the above expressions. What could be this relation that the mystic supposes to exist between the Ultimate Reality and the direct meanings of the above expressions? In hindsight and not entirely facetiously one may remark that unless we reduce our everyday world into a shadow play, we cannot make any good sense of the mystic's justification of the ineffability doctrine on the basis of the theory of laksana 'indication.'" SeeB. Matilal, 'Mysticism and Reality: Ineffability,' in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 3, 1975, pp. 217-252; 245. On the other hand, for another attempt to view Asian religions as forms of constructivism see Donald Rotheberg, 'Comparative Epistemology and the Study of Mysticism,' in Robert K.C. Forman (ed) The Problem of Pure Consciousness (NY: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 163-210.

[884] See Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays (NY: Monthly Review Press, 1971), pp. 178-180.

pramana. Institutionalization of traditional Advaita, as codified in this description, appears in verses similar to the following:

नत्वा विश्वं महाविष्णुं चिदात्मानं परायणम्
सरस्वतीं दयानन्दं मदाचार्यं नमाम्यहम्

natvā viśvaṁ mahāviṣṇuṁ cidātmānaṁ parāyaṇam
sarasvatīṁ dayānandaṁ madācāryaṁ namāmyaham

Having bowed to the great Visnu, who is [in the form of] the universe, whose Self is Awareness, who is the supreme goal, [and] to the goddess Sarasvati, I pay homage to my teacher, Dayananda Saraswati.

अहं केवलचिद्रूपः स्वप्रकाशः शिवात्मकः
एकः पुरुष एवास्मि योऽखिलात्माखिलोऽपि च

aham kevalacidrūpaḥ svaprakāśaś śivātmakaḥ
ekaḥ puruṣa evāsmi yo'khilātmākhilo'pi ca

I am solely of the nature of awareness, self-luminous, auspicious (*siva*) [absolutely pure, unchanging awareness]. I am the one being who is the self of all and who is all.[885]

The above verses from Sri Vasudevacarya are actual expressions of truth and the living reality institutionalized as an index of the *guru-sisya-parampara*. Granted, I am now a far cry away from epistemic genres of Advaita. Though inevitably aware that it may unfortunately appear perverse (if not delusional), for some, let me now offer an interpretation of this vision for how it might resist, if not reflect, shifting towards literary analysis. In the acquisition of knowledge, the journey of the character/reader from

[885] Both of these verses are taken from a manuscript (grantha) composed in Sanskrit by one of Swami Dayananda's disciples, Sri Vasudevacarya (Dr. Michael Comans).

ignorance to truth, this may provide an insightful critique of the extra-literary construction of knowledge and those who proclaim the linguistic production of reality.[886] Concerning the construction of readers of epistemic narratives, Tzvetan Todorov notes that "the construction represented in the text is isomorphic to the one that takes the text itself as the point of departure. What the characters do not know, the reader does not know either."[887] Since we are dealing with the *Upanisads*, specifically referential epistemic narratives, it may be useful to further distinguish this genre from 'nonrepresentational' discourse. The self-referential texts in this genre of discourse purportedly lead to "no construction at all", and are classified by Todorov as "...a kind of poetry, usually called lyrical...which does not evoke nothing that is external to itself." As he notes, however, "only referential sentences permit construction" but in some rare instances they are prohibited from doing so.[888] Let us see what happens when this discourse is shifted to and from the textual fabric of *ecriture*.

Schizophrenic discourse, as far as Todorov is able to theorize, signifies the extra-literary identity crisis faced by readers of referential narratives (or sentences) which fail to construct knowledge. Analyzing the literary structure of this discourse, Todorov explains that such texts are "indeed referential, but construction does not occur, for it is in some sense undecidable." Describing the crisis schizophrenic narratives thereby induce, Todorov notes: "this effect is achieved by the disruption of one or another of the mechanisms necessary to construction...schizophrenic discourse makes construction impossible, through a series of devices it appropriates."[889] In order to exemplify the inevitable ignorance with which unconstructed readers are confronted, Todorov provides

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[886] Todorov is no doubt correct that "even though we no longer look at art and literature as imitation, it is difficult to give up a way of seeing inscribed in our linguistic habits that leads us to conceive of the novel in terms of representation, transposition of a preexisting reality", but his characterization of this mode of analysis may be equally applied to literary minded structuralists such as himself: "...it already poses a problem; it is unequivocally distorting inasmuch as it deals with the text itself." Exemplifying this trend in reference to reading as construction, Todorov serves to define structuralist hegemony in terms of modern novels and their general mode of production: "what exists, first of all, is the text, and nothing else; it is only by subjecting the text to a particular type of reading that we construct an imaginary universe on the basis of the text. The novel does not imitate reality, it creates reality." Todorov (1990), ibid. p. 39.

[887] Todorov (1990), ibid., p. 47.

[888] Todorov (1990), ibid., pp. 40; 48.

[889] Todorov (1990), ibid., p. 48.

a prototype of narratives wherein referents are juxtaposed.[890] Upon substantiating the extra-literary logic of this discourse, as discerned in modern referential novels, Todorov confesses he can do more than acknowledge that there indeed exists a peculiar form of speech which manipulates the discursive and non-discursive modes of production.

In the Chandogya Upanisad, the transmission of *brahmavidya* is illustrated with an epistemic narrative wherein the guru Uddalaka imparts knowledge to his son Svetaketu. With the utterance of Uddalaka, moreover, the identity of Svetaketu and *brahman* is implicated in a domain of knowledge whereby the co-referentiality (*samanadhikaranya*) of *tat* and *tvam* is rendered schizophrenic by the verb of being (*asi*). Clearly, the discourse of Uddalaka is a conceptual site of contestation, but the fact that Svetaketu's ignorance is indeed removed is confirmed at the conclusion of the dialogue when the Upanisad repeats: "He understood that from him. He understood that from him". Indeed, there is no ambiguity in asserting that this narrative provides a prototype for an epistemic genre of discourse. One important point to understand about the systematic implications of Advaita is that this discourse reconfigures semiotic models of signification by indexing an unconstructed referent as the ultimate limit of negation.

In traditional discourse of Advaita and the *guru-sisysa-parampara*, it must be emphasized that these narrators do not regulate realms whereby referential narratives are 'representatively undecidable.' When placed in a traditional context, specifically an institutional sphere of orality, the discourse of these characters is no longer schizophrenic, that is, in the manner of Todorov's analysis. The internal structure of this discourse should be understood as a theoretical solution to the historical fact that "...oral expression in the religious expression of humankind produces its own problems for the transmission of traditional wisdom" for, as Richard King explains, "to promulgate

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[890] Todorov summarizes the whole affair accordingly: "let us now imagine that, in a text, the same character is mentioned in turn by different names: at one point he is called "John," at another "Peter," or he is referred to as "the man with black hair" and then as "the man with blue eyes," without anything indicating that those two expressions refer to the same individual; or let us imagine that "John" designates not just one but three or four characters. In each case the result will be the same: construction will no longer be possible, for the text will be representatively undecidable...we have moved from the unknown or ill-known to the unknowable" Todorov (1990), ibid., p. 48.

knowledge in an oral context it is necessary to have interlocutors and lineages structured in such a way as to preserve such insights."[891] Indeed, the possibility of inter-textual imperialism in the structure of such lineages is parallel to the presence of ignorance (or mysticism) in the transmission of *brahmavidya*: "such a situation clearly cannot prevail in the dynamic...moment of oral expression."[892] As an Indo-critical construction of epistemic narrators who codify the procedures whereby I frame the referent of this Saivite production, schizophrenic discourse simply reveals ordinary, everyday, unconstructed awareness as the foundation of knowledge, and destruction.

[891] King (1999b), ibid., p. 63.
[892] King (1999b), ibid., p. 66.

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