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ARYAN ANCESTORS, PARIAHS AND THE LUNATIC FRINGE

DOROTHY M. FIGUEIRA

In going East . . . everyone . . . ought to feel that he is going to his "old home," full of memories, if only he can read them.\(^1\)
If we follow them [the Indian poets] cautiously, we shall find that with some effort we are still able to walk in their footsteps.\(^2\)
De l'Inde . . . descend un torrent de lumière, un fleuve de Droit et de Raison.\(^3\)

I

Historians of the occult have made irresponsible claims to the influences of Eastern cosmic theories and practical methods for spiritual development upon National Socialism.\(^4\) Mythologizers of Nazism as well as sober scholars have drawn a causal relationship between early Sanskrit philology, Indian philosophy and National Socialist ideology.\(^5\)

In a journalistic work translated from the French as *The Soul of India* (1961), Amaury de Riencourt speculates that, with the help of Indian philosophy, Germany fought and destroyed the Greco-Roman and Semitic heritages of European culture in the twentieth century.\(^6\) A direct line is drawn from early European study of philology which recognized the relationship between German and Sanskrit, to those Romantic poets and philosophers entranced with India, through Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Houston Stewart Chamberlain culminating with Adolf Hitler. The suggestion that the entirety of German history, especially Romanticism, contributed in the formation of the Third Reich is not a radical proposal.\(^7\) Riencourt modifies this topos by suggesting a direct movement from the Romantics to the National Socialists.

Raymond Schwab's *La Renaissance orientale* (1950) also recently reedited,\(^8\) draws a direct connection between Schopenhauer, India and National Socialism. Schwab maintained that Schopenhauer used India as a cudgel to beat the Semitic tradition. Schopenhauer's critique of the Old Testament is perceived
as having an insidious racist and hegemonic agenda. Once again a causal relationship between early philologists, Schopenhauer and subsequent racists and anti-Semites is proposed.

Léon Poliakov’s *Le Mythe aryen* associated Indomania, *Germanenwahn* and anti-Semitism in one breath. He cites F. Schlegel as the first author of the Aryan myth\(^9\) and interprets Herder’s enthusiasm for Indian philosophy as symptomatic of Germany’s impatience to release itself from Judeo-Christian fetters.\(^10\) Poliakov maintains that Schopenhauer allowed Germany to see itself as a child of India and Buddhism.\(^11\) Poliakov then draws a connection between Schopenhauer’s pro-Indian (for Poliakov, synonymous with pro-Aryan) sentiments and his anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish arguments.\(^12\) Thus, Jakob Grimm can appear as an influential propagandist of the Indo-German and Aryan myth.\(^13\) To be fair to Poliakov, he does not single out the Germans; most of European history presents a single history of the Aryan myth, which he does not distinguish from anti-Semitism. For Poliakov, all anthropology, linguistics, philosophy and history is the prehistory of the destruction of the Jews.

*Terribles simplificateurs*? Yes, but these theses prove elucidative, nevertheless. Given the recent reeditions in English of both Schwab and Riencourt and the publication of other works suggesting a deep connection between India and National Socialism, it appears that this trend in scholarship is flourishing. It is not surprising that the more recent of such works can call upon Orientalist criticism to lay claims to an a priori racist/imperialist agenda at work in all East-West literary and philosophical relations.\(^14\) In the following pages, I would like to examine specific Indian symbols which found their way into Nazi ideology and iconography in the hope of deciphering the role such influences played.

Historians trace the rise of National Socialism to the influences of nationalism, anti-liberalism, cultural pessimism and racism.\(^15\) The vision of the *Volk*, a national collectivity inspired by a common creative energy, was promulgated as the unique essence of the German people. Mosse has speculated that this ideological preoccupation resulted from Germany’s delayed political unification and the Romantic reaction to modernity.\(^16\) When Germans began to conceive of their national unity, they did so in cultural terms. *Sturm und Drang*, the identity of all Germans in folk songs
and the Romantic idealization of medieval Germany laid claim to a spiritual unity, if there never was a political unity. Racism, too, had a place in volkisch ideology. By exploiting racial differences, Germans lent validity to the claims of national distinctions and superiority. In this direction, they were aided and abetted by Darwinism, purporting that the superior would prevail over inferior races. How, then, did Germans identify the Volk? Where did the notion of the Aryan race enter into their understanding of their cultural identity?

In the Petersburger Sanskrit Wörterbuch, the term aarya is defined as treu, ergeben, and fromm. Aarya, belonging to Treuen can signify "ein mann des eigenen Stammes." The Petersburg dictionary cites the term's etymology from areiōi (Herodotos refers to a people named arioi, dwelling in present-day Iran) and Diodorus' mention of the Areianoi. In 1763 the French translator of the Zend Avesta, Anquetil Duperron translates Herodotus' and Diodorus' Aryans as ariens and in 1776, Johann Friedrich Kleuker translates their name into German as Arier.

In the late eighteenth century, Sir William Jones sought to discover the relationship between Sanskrit and the Classical and modern European languages. With time, scholars such as F. Schlegel, Franz Bopp, Jacob Grimm and Aug. Fried. Pott would add their respective theories. Which Volk was the Urvolk? What was the Mutter- from which Töchter-Völker sprang? Which Ursprache did this Volk use and, finally, where was their Urheimat? As Grimm and Pott would maintain, the Aryans in India and Persia were the Urvolk, Sanskrit the Ursprache, and the Central Asian Highlands the Urheimat. It was believed that these Aryans moved south and west, differentiated and isolated themselves. Theodor Benfey (1868) thought they migrated in the opposite direction, from Europe to Asia.

German linguists then sought names for the newly discovered linguistic family, such as Japhetische, Sarmatisch, Kaukasisch, Indisch-Teutsch, Mittellaendisch, Sanskritisch, Indogermanisch, Indokeltisch, Indoeuropaisch, and Arisch. They identified its Ursprecher as Teutarier, Arioteuten, or Viros. If the relationship between Sanskrit and modern European languages was mistakenly thought to be that of an Ursprache to a Sprache, then those who spoke these languages were Indians and their descendants included, among others, the Germans. Schlegel (1819) used
Arier in the sense of “our German ancestors while they were still in Asia.” The Aryan language was the language of the Ur-Aryans. The Aryans were, therefore, the equivalent of the Urvolk from which the collected linguistic and Volk- family descended. To support his argument, Schlegel developed what we know to be false etymologies, such as the German Ehre deriving from the Sanskrit root ari. Significant in this regard is the fact that Schlegel’s knowledge of Sanskrit was incomplete and colored by a crisis of faith which coincided with his study of the language. Christian Lassen also thought that the old Germans were named Arier, although he personally preferred the alternative term Indogermanen. “Aryans,” the Ur-inhabitants of Iran and India, comprised the group of peoples from the language family which speak the Indogermanic language and which, according to biblical genealogy, had been named Japhetic.

With A. F. Pott’s article “Indogermanischer Sprachstudium” in the Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste, the term Indo-europäisch gained parlance. For the sake of clarification, since this term suggested that all European languages came from the same branch, Pott spoke of a Sanskritsprachstamm, with Sanskrit now thought to be the oldest language.

The racial use of the term “Aryan” can be found in Gobineau, Retzius, Poesche and Penka. For Gobineau, the Aryan race ranked superior to all others due to its cultural sophistication; he recognized Aryans as the passive material from which “Culture” was formed. Although formally a monogenist, Gobineau still accepted the biblical creation myth. For the Urheimat, Gobineau held to the theory of an Asian migration, in which the Aryans wandered into India, met and mixed with the indigenous Blacks. He noted how far-sighted the Indian Law-givers had been when they recognized in this intermingling the decline of Indian culture. For this reason, Gobineau maintained, they instituted the system of castes. Gobineau attributed the capacity of spirituality to Aryan blood. Closest to the Aryan was the brahman, and so forth in declining order. Gobineau held that Buddhism and Islam struck the death blow to Aryanhood, through its wanton disregard for caste. Nevertheless, Gobineau placed India as the exception in universal history. It was the only high culture with long-term success at separating the races. Most significantly, Gobineau, the aristocrat (and Viking, for that matter) posited India as the
Gegenbild to Europe—especially nineteenth-century Europe which was careening toward bastardization through the over-throw of class structure. Gobineau did not use the term Arier for Jews. He held to Noah’s genealogy and, for him, the Semites belonged to the white race. It should be noted that Gobineau’s theories, unlike those of the other Aryan race theorists, were hardly circulated or accepted by his contemporaries.

Theodor Poesche, Karl Penka, and George Vacher de Lapouge maintained that there existed a linguistic classification of Indo-European languages necessitating an Indo-European community of speakers, a Volk family. These theorists routinely combined linguistic classifications with race classifications. For Poesche and Penka, the Urtyp was dolichocephalic (German-Scandanavian) and brachyccephalic (Celt, Slav). Who was Urherr and who was the Urknecht in their system? In England, the Germans (Anglos, Saxons and Normans) subjugated indigenous Celts; in France, the Germans (Franks) the Celtic Gauls; in Southern Europe, the Germans the indigenous Italians or Iberians; in the East, the Germans subjugated the Slavs. These Germans were the brahmans in India: they were strong, blond and blue-eyed in the north due to light and climate. Poesche situated their Urheimat in Lithuania; Penka in Scandinavia; Lapouge by the North Sea. In early times, this Urvolk wandered to India, but they found the climate unconducive. They eventually left; those who had ties with the dark indigenous population remained. Thus these Aryans effected a selection of the fittest, when the colonizers were decimated and forced to mix for survival. The present-day inhabitants of India have only a small percentage of Aryan blood coursing through their veins, since, early on in their stay, they diluted their race by mingling with the indigenous population. Poesche held that while modern Indian languages were mostly Aryan, the Volk physically could no longer make such a claim. To these Aryan theorists, the Indians were Negroes and Mulattoes, who know how to retain the noble language of their paternal ancestors. Subtropical nature has physically and spiritually overrun the Aryan species and stifled its fullness.

Poesche, Penka and de Lapouge were strictly Darwinian and, by accepting environment as the selection factor, they diametrically opposed Gobineau for whom India provided the last Aryan
bastion which had protected itself from mixture. For these Aryan theorists, mixture was inevitable; the only way the Aryans would live in India was by sacrificing race in order to keep language and culture.

The view that the Aryans had degenerated paralleled the general devaluation of India in nineteenth-century European consciousness. By the end of the nineteenth century, the initial Romantic enthusiasm with India and her inhabitants had considerably ebbed. While for thinkers such as Herder and Goethe India had been the cradle of civilization, it now became, to cite Enrico de Michelis, the grave of the Aryans.\(^{30}\) In a similar downward spiral did the Aryans in India degenerate from their forebears. Although the Indians were not excluded from the Aryan race category, as it was stipulated in the Arierparagraph\(^{31}\) of the Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtenums of April 7, 1933,\(^{32}\) by the time of the National Socialist Nürnberger Gesetzen of September 15, 1935, it could no longer be a question of Aryan and not Aryan,\(^{33}\) but deutsches oder artverwandtes Blut. Thus, the initial race theorists differed significantly from the National Socialists in that their mechanical race selection theory left little room for factors such as Will or, more importantly, Selbstzucht (self-discipline). While the racial fate of the Indian Aryan was determined by his passivity or fatalism, the fate of the German Aryan necessitated a will to power.

II

In actuality, the myth of the Nazi link with the Orient has less to do with the migrations of Aryan warlords than with National Socialism’s complex pedigree of Theosophical provenance. Theosophy provided a mixture of Ancient Egyptian esoterica, American spiritualism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Mme. Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society in New York City in 1875. By presenting a tirade against the rationalism and materialism of the modern Western world, Mme. Blavatsky encouraged her readers to seek truth through ancient religion in defiance of contemporary agnosticism and modern science. She first directed them to Ancient Egype in Isis Revealed (1877). With her emigration to India in 1879 and no doubt sensitive to the popularity of translations from Sanskrit scripture, she shifted her base of oper-
ations as well as the locus of Truth to India. Theosophy received in India its systematic formulation.

The Secret Doctrine (1888), primarily a plagiarism of contemporary works on Hinduism, describes the activities of God from the beginning of creation. Theosophy supported belief in a cyclical historical process. The present universe can be viewed as an emanation and subsequent progression. The first volume of The Secret Doctrine describes cosmogenesis where the primal unity of the unmanifest Divine Being becomes manifested through emanation and gradually fills the universe. All subsequent creation then passes through seven evolutionary cycles. Blavatsky illustrated cosmic cycles with a variety of esoteric symbols, of which the swastika, an Indian symbol of luck, was the most popular. In fact, it became the seal of the Theosophical Society.

In the second volume of The Secret Doctrine, Blavatsky attempts to relate man to this vision of the cosmos (anthropogenesis). During each cycle, seven consecutive root races, descending on a scale of spiritual development and increasingly enmeshed in the material world, rise and fall. One of these root races, the Aryan, had as its first underrace the ancient Indians, followed by those Indians who had been sent to Egypt (called Ario-Semites), the Persians, and Celts. The fifth Aryan underrace, the Teutonic, currently reigned, possessing qualities such as scientific understanding, which is especially prevalent, we are told, in Germany. These Aryans were in the process of ascent; their process of spiritual advance lay before them. The agglutinated speech of the other races and their respective underraces became inflected in the Sanskrit of the Aryan race.

Another tenet of Theosophy incorporated the Hindu belief in reincarnation and karma. The individual human ego was regarded as a tiny fragment of Divine Being. Through reincarnation, each ego pursued the stages of the cosmic journey toward eventual reunion with the Divine Being, from whence it issued. One is countlessly reborn according to the principle of karma—where good acts earn superior reincarnation, and bad an inferior rebirth.

The Jews belong to the second Aryan underrace, the so-called Ario-Semites, a mixture of those Aryans who wandered from India to Egypt and were called Ursemites. The Jews are also thought to have stemmed from the fourth root race, the Atlan-
Blavatsky identified the Jews with the pariahs (candala) of ancient India.

They can just as well be the expelled chandala of Ancient India who were mentioned as the “Brick wall” by Veda-Vyasa and Manu. The Semitic languages are the bastard descendants of the first corruption of the eldest children of early Sanskrit. The Semites, especially the Arabs, are later Aryans, materially degenerate in intellect and perfection. To these belong all the Jews and Arabs. The first belong to a branch which descends from the Indian candalas.

The concept of the pariah had been emplotted in eighteenth and nineteenth century literature and opera as the noble savage, an Enlightenment symbol for social equality. In contradistinction to Enlightenment and Romantic imagery, in the modern racist configuration of Theosophy, the pariah retains its Indian status as a degenerate. A third metaphorization of the pariah, distinct still from those of the Enlightenment and Theosophy, is to be found in the fulminations of Nietzsche. Whereas the Enlightenment and Romantic pariah rebelled against his fate, Nietzsche’s candala (Tschandalen) symbolized fatalistic resignation and passivity in the guise of charity. He too was a product of the shift which had occurred in the general reception of things Indian; the pariah as a symbol for cultural progress had become an object of the despair with the European present.

Nietzsche has popularized the figure of the candala in his discussion of Christianity and Buddhism which he characterized as the world’s two great nihilistic movements, “decadent” and rooted in the monstrous disease of the will. In Buddhism, however, Nietzsche recognized a more consistent type of pessimism. It provided a “nihilism that was freer, more aristocratic and more cultivated than in Christianity, it was a Tschandala religion.”

Nietzsche identified his vision of the Untermensch with the candala; the Christian through love and pity for his fellow man rendered himself an Untermensch. In opposition to Christianity, the Hindu faith, as expressed in the Laws of Manu exhibited a realistic acceptance of life (a “jasagende arische Religion,”) which did not disguise its appreciation of power. Led by a non-moralizing elite made-up of the noble classes, philosophers and warriors, Indians controlled the rabble which was always ruled by Zucht. Nietzsche understood Indian morality as promulgated in Manu in the following manner:
Here is the task presented, not less than four races to breed once and for all: a priestly, warrior, peasant and finally a servant race, the sudras...

But also it is important for this organization to be formidable, not in battle with a brute, but with its opposite idea, the man of race, the mis-hman man, the candala.40

Like the Ubermensch, the ancient Hindu possessed a feeling of completion, an affirmation of life and a triumphant, pleasant feeling about himself.41 His success was due to his ability to segregate himself rigorously from the "excrement of society."42 The Tschandala and his religion, on the other hand, reaffirmed the need for Nietzsche's alternative vision.

These orders are instructive enough—in them we have at once Aryan humanity, completely pure, completely original—we learn that the idea "pure blood" is the contrary of a harmless conception. On the other hand, it becomes clear which people perpetuated hatred, candala hatred against this humanity, where it became a religion and a genius...

Under this point of view are the Christian gospels, as the Jewish root, only understandable as the breeding of race and privilege—it is the anti-Aryan religion par excellence: worthy of the candala—the gospel preached to the poor and lowest, the collected revolt of all the downtrodden, the ill-bred, those who have come off poorly against the "race"—the immortal candala revenge as a religion of love. . .43

Nietzsche's Tschandala represented the individual who has been rendered weak in will by a weak religion. He did not identify the Tschandala with the Jew. The association of candalas44 with Jews was, therefore, an important development. Theosophists, as well as other occultists such as List and Lanz von Lebenfels, would make this connection and appropriate the figure of the candala in their racial ideology.45

Theosophy flourished in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Its vogue in Germany and Austria derived from the fact that Theosophy provided a philosophical rationale for the Leben-sreform groups of Wilhelmian Germany. The end of the century saw the growth of the German Theosophical movement owing largely to the effort of Franz Hartmann (1838-1912). From 1892 onward, translations from Indian sacred texts alongside the works of Mme. Blavatsky were available in several journals. Hartmann's journal Lotusblüthen, which had a swastika emblazoned on the cover, was distributed by Wilhelm Friedrich, a Leipzig publisher of esoteric works dealing with karma and translations of the Bhagavad Gitā. Other journals include Paul Zillman's...
Metaphysische Rundschau (1896), which published articles on yoga, phrenology, astrology as did Prana (1909-19); Harald Grävell van Jostenoode’s Aryavarta, a volkish text imbued with a mixture of Buddhist piety; and, finally, Ostara.

Not only was the German occult subculture well developed prior to the First World War, but, with the appearance of such publications, a definite evolution took place in occult ideology. While the earliest Austrian Theosophy was coupled with mystical Christianity, its later Viennese manifestation dealt more with myth, folklore and comparative religions. Theosophy’s eclecticism with respect to esoteric lore and its non-Christian perspective on the cosmos and man’s origins, were well suited to völkisch speculation.

Guido von List provided a synthesis of Theosophy and German mythology. In Wotanism, List incorporated the “Hindu” concept of birth cycles (death and rebirth), as well as the belief that all creatures are emanations of a spiritual force. Man, as an integral part of this unified cosmos, must live in accordance with nature, i.e. in close identity with one’s Volk and race. Friedrich published List’s Sexualreligion (1897) describing the sexual religion of the Aryans and their practice of eugenics to maintain the purity of the race. Only the union of the pure could release primal energy and produce excellent offspring. In Die Gnosis (1903), List expanded upon his theories concerning the immortality of soul, reincarnation and karmic determination. With the publication of the German translation of The Secret Doctrine, List became more and more influenced by Theosophy. Hartmann would praise him for discovering the congruence between Germanic and Hindu doctrines.46

List’s blueprint for change called for the Pan-German empire establishing the subjection of non-Aryans to Aryan masters in a hierarchical state where professions rested solely on racial purity. Aryans were relieved from menial tasks in order to rule over non-Aryans. This vision, clearly based on Hindu caste edicts, did not differ significantly from the Nuremburg Laws of 1930’s.

In List’s last work Die Ursprache der Ario-Germanen (1914), the ancient German national past corresponds to Hindu kalpa or world cycle. List’s apocalyptic hopes for the end of the present cycle and the dawning of new age struck responsive chords in Viennese society suffering from over-crowding,47 tuberculosis,
and the dissolution of traditional social institutions. Theosophy and the bastardization of Hindu religious concepts offered an occult vision of the millenium. Toward the end of the war, List suggested that the German victims would be reincarnated as a collective messianic body. By using the principle of *karma*, he claimed that the 100,000 war dead would be reborn to form elite messianic corps armed for a subsequent national revolution, which, in keeping with his vision of the *kali yuga*, would usher in the new age.

As an Austrian reaction to the demands of Slavic nationalists, the Pan-Germanist movement led to the emergence of the Ariosophists. Racism was a vital element of the Ariosophist doctrine. Gobineau's theory of the Nordic Aryans' superiority and his pessimistic prediction of their submergence by non-Aryan peoples corresponded well with accepted Darwinian postulates. Aryans need not succumb to the fate of deterioration but could prevail against threats of decline and contamination by maintaining their racial purity. The Ariosophists, who were initially active in Vienna before the First World War, were responsible for contributing the occult component to the German nationalist cause. In addition to endorsing belief in the obsolescence of the social order by their support of the belief that the modern world was based on evil principles, they substituted for their disenchantment with the contemporary world a vision of an ideal world. Thus they combined the German *volkisch* nationalism and racism with "Hindu" notions borrowed from the Theosophy of Mme. Blavatsky and Nietzsche, with a view toward proselytizing the coming era of German world rule.

Ariosophy's amalgamation of current racist theories with theories of *karma* resulted in a Manichean worldview grounded in gnostic fatalism. Just as belief in *karma* justified caste exclusion for Indians, likewise it supplied a basis for Ariosophical thought whose primary concern consisted in distinguishing the darker races from the Aryans who possessed a pan-psychic energy which was believed to be identical with God.

By positioning the Aryans closest to the Divine, the Ariosophist Lanz von Lebenfels viewed human history as a conflict between Aryan divine men and *Untermenschen*, specifically referred to as the *Tschandalen*. The fall of man resulted from the Aryans' racial compromise. Good was pitted against evil, the blond against the...
Tschandala. Lanz specifically identified these *Tschandalen* with the Jews.

The Jews as a race among all historical and prehistorical races and from the dross of all the ruined of all cultures of mixed-together *candala* peoples. ⁵³

According to Ariosophy, the time had come to reverse the ascendency of the inferior races in Europe. By advocating the extermination of inferior races, Lanz exceeded Nietzsche's rhetorical fulminations against Christian compassion, which called for sterilization and castration. ⁵⁴ The Pan-German periodical, *Ostara*, dealt with such problems as economical racial issues. Among stock themes of this journal are found the caste laws according to Manu, documentation concerning the Manichean struggle of dark races against blonds, racial somatology, antiparlamentarianism and racial sexual differences. ⁵⁵ For a population distressed by the effects of defeat, economic collapse and revolution upon their traditional values, the second *Ostara* series (1922), ⁵⁶ offered solace: "all oriental and ancient states had declined with the appearance of mob-rule and the dictatorship of the blond "Ario-heroic" ruling class." Some historians, seeking to account for his Manichean vision of Aryan versus Jew, maintain that Hitler was deeply influenced by a disciple of Lanz, Dr. Karl Lueger, ⁵⁷ and was a regular reader of Von Liebenfels' *Ostara*. ⁵⁸ Hitler was certainly receptive to the comic book Manichean vision of the conflict between blonds and the dark races and it is generally believed that he was more influenced by the conflict between Aryans and *Tschandalas* of *Ostara* and similar pamphlets than by Gobineau and Nietzsche. Furthermore, one can find echoes of Lanz' theories as they were articulated in *Ostara* in the Third Reich's decrees banning interracial marriages, extinction of inferior races through polygamy, and SS *Lebensborn* homes. ⁵⁹

However, the suggestion of any direct influence of occult-nationalistic groups on Hitler must be tempered. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler made contemptuous attacks on the "völkisch wandering scholars" of these lodges and noted that Germany's salvation demanded a mass political party which could be effectual in battle and not the antiquarianism and ceremonial antics so prevalent in these organizations. ⁶⁰ In this sense, Hitler acknowledged Ariosophy as a symptom rather than a significant influence. The NSDAP would diverge in its views on ideology and action from
these organizations, although a direct line of symbolic succession can be seen in their mutual symbol, the swastika, which can be traced back through List to Theosophy.

These various occult groups, however, all did conform to a certain stereotype and, as such, reflect the ideological climate of their day. Their doctrines cited exalted and superhuman ancestors, whose ancient gnostic rule had brought the Aryans wisdom and power until it was supplanted by an alien and hostile culture. They contributed to the mythological mood of the subsequent Nazi era by the fact that the NSDAP originated from their ranks. To suggest that they directly influenced people in positions of political power exaggerates their importance.\(^6^1\) During the Third Reich, such organizations were officially dissolved; the general Nazi policy was to suppress lodge organizations and esoteric groups.

Three elements of Indian provenance form a bridge between the nineteenth-century “Indian” occultism and Nazism: the term “Aryan,” the swastika, and the candala. These elements and their transformation into objects of militancy coalesce and bear fruit in groups such as the Germanen Order, founded in 1912 and the later Thule Society. Rudolf von Sebottendorf revived the Germanen Order in 1917.\(^6^2\) Advertised as a Germanic lodge for German-blooded men, its symbol was the swastika.\(^6^3\)

For Sebottendorf, the term “Aryan” could be etymologically broken down in the following manner:

\[
\text{Ar rune} = \text{eagle. Sons of the eagle, the son... according to the stone watch-towers of Stonehenge and Oudry in Brittany, a high culture of the Aryans 1000 years before Christ can be established.}\(^6^4\)
\]

Unlike Theosophists, who viewed humanity as an all-inclusive fraternity, such occult racist groups conceived of Aryans in a biological sense. They imitated Theosophy’s use of the swastika which became the German wheel of the sun.

Sebottendorf appropriated the term Tschandalen from Lanz von Liebenfels and used it in the Münchner Beobachter, soon to become the Völkischer Beobachter, whose motto was “Nieder mit den Tschandalen.” The subsequent National Socialist use of the term Tschandala derived from this implementation by Lanz, and not from Nietzsche (Götzentämmerneg und Antichrist), although Nietzsche’s concepts would have suited Nazi ideologues.\(^6^5\)
There are clearly connections and cross-fertilizations between occult and political groups. However, the facts do not support the claim of a direct causal connection between Theosophy, Ariosophy, the Thule and Nazism. The anti-Semitism of Theosophy's founder supplied a religious rationalization for occult anti-Semitism and a strong racist substructure; Ariosophy would take the vision of god-men and make them German-Aryans, the Thule Society would take the Ariosophist ideas of racial supremacy and seek to implement them. The entire spectrum borrowed the occult interpretation of human history as apocalypse and was fully grounded in the idea of spiritual superiority. The bonds between filiation and influence are not without their murkiness.

The discovery of Indian culture in the 18th century, along with such forces as the French Enlightenment, did in fact effect the destruction of biblical myth regarding the origin of man. However, this rejection of the biblical worldview need not necessarily be viewed as establishing the *sine qua non* equivalent to anti-Semitism. Rather, it announces the beginning of the scholarly writing of history. India, among other countries, became an object of study. However, when India entered into discussions of the Nationalist camp of the Weimar Republic, it did so in an incestuous fashion. Germany had been sacrificed by the Imperialistic Western powers who had, by means of the Versailles Treaty, given Germany a colonial status. Oswald Spengler (1924) would typify Germany as "ein europäisches Indien." For Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Germany needed to fight the same battle against British imperialism as India. The revolutionary group of the National Socialists broke with Hitler in 1930 with this anti-imperialistic orientation as one of their points of division. They articulated their purpose in the *Grundmanifest* of the Schwarzen Front:

For us, consent with the Indian fight for freedom from English domination and capitalist exploitation has been and is important. This is so mainly from the fact that each weakening of a contractual power of Versailles is favorable, as is the sympathetic agreement with each fight which leads the subjugated peoples against their exploitative usurpers. It is a compelling result of our concept of nationalism, a volkisch peculiarity, that we assume the burden of other peoples and nations.
In contradistinction to this ideology of solidarity, Hitler's position was, however, perfectly clear. He advocated the supremacy of one race of high value over the world.

An alliance of the down-trodden nations is a dumb slogan ... When today the Indians live under the rule of England ... or the Blacks under the rule of any European people, so is this grounded in their inferiority ... The Freedom fight of the Blacks, Indians and so forth is an attempt to break the natural order ... The admiration of Gandhi is, in my estimation, a racial perversity.\textsuperscript{70}

In this respect, Hitler repudiated \textit{völkisch} politics in favor of a Capitalistic race-imperialism based on the European model.\textsuperscript{71} Thus, with this judgment, India ceased being the symbol of a fictitious German past. In subsequent National Socialist ideology, India came to represent an apocalyptic vision of Germany's future.

\textbf{III}

It was primarily through the rantings of the official National Socialist party ideologue, Alfred Rosenberg, that this shift occurred. In the \textit{Mythus des 20. Jahrhundert}, Rosenberg discussed India at length. There we learn that the ancient Indians lived their lives not for love, but for the sake of duty and honor.\textsuperscript{72} Theirs constituted the first racial cultural wave which, originating in Atlantis, had crossed the mountains of India pushing back and surpassing the inferior races, prevailing over un-Aryan superstitions and magical cultic practices. The Aryan Indians kept apart from the dark inhabitants, by instituting a policy of separation. Thus racial purity was responsible for the great achievements of these Indians. Non-Aryan magic disappeared, when Aryan spirituality, based on the aristocratic self-consciousness, overcame the un-Aryan magical sacrifice-based religion.

After this separation of blood and blood, the Aryans constructed their picture of the world, which, in its depth and breadth even today has been surpassed by no philosophy.\textsuperscript{73}

However, this supremacy was eventually overturned as the Aryans lost their sense of color and blood. In other words, the Aryans died in their quest for the individual self.\textsuperscript{74} Aryan blood
was diluted through infelicitous mixing of the races, “after long-
lasting proximity with the ever more penetrating representation
of the low-caste indigenous population.”

With their supremacy thus overturned, Indian Aryans became
less creative as bastard art (in the form of such things as phallic
worship) took over. Although traces of Aryan genius occasionally
blossomed in the lyrics of Kalidasa and the philosophy of Shank-
ara, it could not stem the tide. It was not simply the issue of blood
which precipitated the Aryans’ downfall, but rather their spiritual
values, specifically the concepts of Atman/Brahman, which de-
stroyed their sense of race, as it had once destroyed their person-
ality. In the misguided quest for the individual Self, the Aryan
oversoul perished. With the loss of personality and racial con-
sciousness followed also the loss of honor. In terms reminiscent of
Nietzsche, India has fallen prey to influences which sapped its
spiritual strength.

Buddhist and Christian compassion as well as Indian pessimism
brought about the apotheosis of the Aryan Untermensch. Com-
passion, loss of individual racial Self, inaction and the ultimate
consequent of fatalism characterize the destiny of the Aryan in
India. The land of our dreams and hopes for cultural invigora-
tion perished due to its own spiritual flaw. Those advocating In-
dian spirituality in the West, those indulging in the fatuous quest
for redemption might well take notice of where their flirtation is
leading them.

India’s tragedy consists in the disappearance of the Indian
Aryan. The society which had once given us the genius of Sanskrit
epic and the sophistication of speculative philosophy has now
degenerated into race chaos. India was “used up” and weak. The figure of Gandhi epitomized India’s implicit call for
inaction and fatalism. The Indian situation was bad enough: its
rejection of the world led to the Aryans mixing with indigenous
populations, which led to spiritual weakness and loss of a racial
“will to self-assertion” and Gandhi with his pacifism struck the death blow.

Rosenberg took particular issue with the Gandhi-rapture
which was raging in the völkisch-nationalist
camp. The admirers of Gandhi were particularly deleterious to
German Aryans. Germans following Indian philosophical
fatalism and its modern historical praxis can only lose their own
nature, and hence their myth of race. In this regard, Rosenberg admitted his indebtedness to Houston Stewart Chamberlain.84 Either there would be a universal reawakening or Germany would follow India’s course and redescend into chaos.85 Although Germany’s contributions to myth ranked above all other nations, like India it would fall prey to mongrelization. Germany was fortunate in that, having observed the racial decline of its Aryan forbears, it could avoid a similar destiny.86

As did Nietzsche, Rosenberg viewed this mulattoization of the world to be also supported by Christianity. Like Buddhist compassion, Jesuitical-Roman spineless pity was un-Germanic and degenerate. Humanitarianism, as advocated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, presented a fatal error which only compounded Oriental abstract fantasy.87 The vision of man’s equality, articulated for example in the early nineteenth-century pariah literature, is subverted in the later image of the candala. The enlightened project of Humanitat, with all its presuppositions, must be repudiated, lest it justify the enfranchisement of Negroes, the incurably sick and the insane.88

Thus, in place of the Nordic “desire for the enhancement of life” (“Lust an der Steigerung des Lebens”), in which one can recognize Nietzsche’s Herrenmoral, Rosenberg found the “world conquest of the decrepit Aryan Indian” (“Weltüberwindung des gealterten arischen Inders”) whose acme in Buddhism represented the “appearance of the ruin of the Nordic racial spirit in the tropical Indian environment.”89 Buddhism struck the final blow to Aryanhood, by breaking all remaining bonds to family, line, Volk and State, and furnished ideological ferment for the disintegration of racial barriers (Auflösung der Rassenschranken). Both Rosenberg and Günther present India as a projection of the European situation. All the topoi for the critique of civilization could be collected in the description of the Indian Aryan’s decline: moral universalism, Nietzsche’s Sklavenmoral, Individualism, the destruction of family, sexual self-destruction and the big city, which was seen by the race hygienicians of the late nineteenth century as the Rassengrab. India, once metaphorically the cradle of German civilization, now became the symbol of its grave. It functioned, thus, as both an example and a warning to the Nazis. Just as the Aryans in India fell, so would those in Europe, if the situation were not reversed.
An aristocrat such as Gobineau portrayed India as an example of successful conservation of a white master race through the strict separation of races in castes. Aryans in India were not ruined, their descendants rule today as brahmans and ksatriyas. The duration of Indian culture was based on conservation of Aryan master elements, the gradual decline of the Indian Aryans through mixture was as an unavoidable natural process.

The Darwinian race theoreticians of the late nineteenth century perceived in the decline of the Indian Aryan proof that a physical type cannot subsist in an environment to which it is not suited and, from the case study of India, they drew anticolonialist conclusions. Rosenberg saw in the fall of the Indian Aryans a parable for the fall of race through the lack of the will to self-assertion. The Indian Aryan did not understand the myth of race sufficiently and, therefore, did not sufficiently fulfill caste rules; they mixed with indigenous populations, lost their moral identity, made cities, disappeared in race chaos, and finally died. They represented "a racial disgrace, whose product today as miserable bastards in the water of the Ganges seek a cure for their crippled existence." 90

Rosenberg, unlike Gobineau, did not recognize this dilution of blood as an historical movement which, at best, could be retarded. Rather, through a will to self-discipline (Zucht), he believed that race could be turned around and once again raised. Race was not, as in Darwin, a passive enduring work determined by environment, but a process legitimizing the mastery of the Nordic races over lesser races, the British over the Indians, the German over everyone else.

Hitler had rejected any bond between volkisch Germany and national liberation movements. The lunatic fringe had transformed the nineteenth-century image of the Aryan ancestor into that of another popular exotic character, the pariah. By attributing the Aryan's demise to his spiritual values, loss of will to self-assertion and blood chaos, Rosenberg provided the ideological framework to "rationalize" Hitler's race-imperialism.

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5. For a critique of this scholarship, see Jürgen Lütt, "Indische Wurzeln des Nationalsozialismus?" *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 3 (1987): 468-79.

6. Amaury de Riencourt, *The Soul of India* (London: Jonathan Cape) 268: "The oriental Renaissance was bearing bitter fruits, and it is still an open question whether all this could have happened without the discovery of Aryan India in the 19th century."


11. In the same manner, Nietzsche allowed Germans to see themselves...
as descendants of Iran and disciples of Zarathustra (Léon Poliakov, *Le Mythe aryen*, 210).


17. Eighteenth-century linguistics was based upon biblical monogenesis: the Semitic branch stemmed from Sem, the Hamitic (African) from Hem and the Japhetic (Caucasian, Asian-European) from Japhet. Differences were attributed to the milieu theory which held that climate, nourishment and lifestyle altered physical attributes. Thus, George Louis Leclerc, the Comte de Buffon (1707-88) and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) held that the *Urtype* (Adam/Noah) evolved through degeneration into different races. Along with Cuvier, Lamarck speculated that there occurred periods of catastrophe in which biological and geological material, normally relatively stable, became enormously plastic. Darwin, basing his thoughts on Lamarck’s theory of the species, held that the species passed through change due to environment and therefore functioned dynamically.


24. Gobineau depended heavily upon the research of Christian Las-

ses.

mann, 1939-40) 2:208.

26. The first time that the term Aryan was used in the "not-Jewish" sense was in the *Satzung* of a Wiener Turnverein of 1887: "Mitglieder

27. In the preface to *L'Aryan, son rôle social* (Paris, 1899), George Vacher de Lapouge judges the term "Aryan" as inadequate, acknowl-
edging its use in the title of his work as a concession to the public which was accustomed to it.

28. It was with F. Max Müller, that the distinction between linguistic and racial classification was articulated. In his *Antrittsrede* to the University of Strassburg in 1872, Max Müller noted that there were only Aryan and Semitic linguistic families, but no Aryan race, blood or skulls. In other words, he firmly stated that you cannot base ethnological classification on linguistic principles and warned against the mixing of linguistic and anthropological terms. See Über die Resultate der Sprachwissenschaft, Vorlesung gehalten in der kaiserlichen Universität zu Strassburg am xxiii. mai MDCCCLXXII (Strassburg: K. J. Trubner, 1872) 17: "Es gibt Arische und Semitische Sprachen, aber es ist unwissenschaftlich . . . von Arischer Rasse, von Arischen Blut, oder von Arischen Schadeln zu sprechen, und dann ethnologische Classificationen auf linguistischen Grundlagen zu Versuchen." Müller had nothing against an anthropologist speaking about dolichocephalic races, etc. He was not against race theory per se. On the contrary, he was member of the Gobineau Vereinigung. See G. Deschner, *Gobineau und Deutschland*, diss, Erlangen 1967.


30. Enrico de Michaelis, *L'Origine degli Indo-Europei*, Biblioteca di Sci-


31. Aryans were thus defined: "Der Arier (auch Indogermanen, Japhetiten) sind einer der drei Zweige der kaukassischen (weissen) Rasse; sie zerfallen in die westlichen (europäischen) d.s. dies Oestlichen (asiatischen) Arier, d.s. die Inder (Hindus) und Iranier (Perser, Afga-
nen, Armenier, Georgier, Kurden). Nichtarier sind daher: 1.die Angehörigen des beiden anderen Zweige der kaukassischen Rasse, näm-
lich die Semiten (Juden, Araber) und Hamiten (Berber). Die Finnen und Ungarn gehören zur mongolischen Rasse; es ist aber kaum die Absicht des Gesetzes, sie als Nichtarier zu behandeln.", cited in Sieferle, 459-60. See also Haensel/Strahl, *Politisches ABC des Neuen Reichs* (Stuttgart, 1933), 13-14 under the rubric *Arier*.

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32. The general purpose of this law was to exclude from the Civil Service all Jews who before the First World War were not civil servants or could not show proof of active duty.  

33. Reichsbiirger- und Blutschutzgesetz. Meyers Lexikon, Bd. 1, 1936, sp. 557 stated that the designation “deutschblütig” superceded “arisch.”


41. F. Nietzsche, The Antichrist, 56.


sratenen, Schlechtweggekommenen gegen die “Rasse”—die unsterbliche Tschandala-Rache als Religion der Liebe . . .”

44. According to Manu, even among outcasts, the candalas were the lowest like swine or dog and excluded from the village.

45. A popular theme for this lunatic fringe consisted in speculation of the descendence through sudra men and brahman women.


47. The population of Vienna tripled between 1870-90.

48. The equivalent to the Age of Bronze in Hindu mythology.


50. Social Darwinists published between the 1890’s and 1910. Ernst Häckel, the eminent zoologist who warned against the mixing of races, founded the Monist League in 1906 to popularize a racist version of the social Darwinism among Germans.

51. Later racist theorists, such as Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936) and Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927), based their theories on skull measurements and other physical characteristics such as hair color and eye color, rather than the earlier racists, like Gobineau, who relied on linguistics as the standard of racial distinction.

52. To draw these distinctions, heraldic devices, in which the Aryans had recorded the karma of their families were studied. See Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, “Grundriss der ariosophischen Geheimlehre,” Zeitschrift für Menschenkenntnis und Menschenschicksal, 1 (1925-26): 4-11.


55. Note that Sir William Jones’ translation of the Laws of Manu (1794) had been translated into German by Johann Christoph Hüttner under the title Hindu-Gesetzbuch (Weimer: Industrie Comptoirs, 1797) and had been examined in racist sense by a F. Germardt, “Aus dem Hindu-Gesetzbuch des Manu” in the Politisch-Anthropologische Revue 3 (1904): 264-68. Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, The Occult Roots of Nazism. The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany 1890-1935 (Wellinborough, Northam tonshire: Aquarian Press, 1985), 242, suggests that this might have been Lanz’ source. Lanz used Tschandala for lower classes and mongrelized inferiors, see Ostara 1, April 1908 (22): 6, 16.

56. Die Ostara und das Reich der Blonden, vol. 1.

57. Lueger was a mayor of Vienna in the 1890’s and one of the first European politicians to make a career out of anti-Semitism.


61. The one exception to this rule was Karl Maria Wiligut (pseud. Weisthor) whom Goodrick-Clarke refers to as the private magus of Himmler (Goodrick-Clarke, 177) and head of the Department of Race and Early History within the Race and Settlement main office of the SS, among whose duties was to produce German mantras.


63. The Germanen Order's official newsletter had swastika on cover, also on various pieces of organization jewelry. Although current among various volkisch organizations, it was through the Germanen Order and the Thule Society, its successor organization in post-war Munich, that this device came to be adopted by the Nazis.


65. The modern racist can easily see something biological in Nietzsche's discussion of race, the *Tschandala*, pure blood, Jewishness and spiritual Züchtung.


71. See Otto Strasser, "Hitler, Gandhi und das junge Deutschland," 377.


73. Rosenberg, Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhundert, 28: "Nach dieser Scheidung zwischen Blut und Blut gestalteten die Arier sich ein Bild der Welt, das an Tiefe und Weitraumigkeit auch heute von keiner Philosophie überboten werden kann."


75. Rosenberg, Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhundert 31: "... nach langdauernden Auseinandersetzungen mit den immer wieder eindringenden Vorstellungen der niederrassigen Eingeborenen." Rosenberg was also influenced by Hans F. K. Günther who described the process of Aryan racial degeneration in Die nordische Rasse bei den Indogermanen Asiens (Munich: J. F. Lehmann, 1934), 41: "Die Kastengesetzgebung wurde als Rassenschutz dadurch beeinträchtigt und schliesslich sinnlos, dass sie das Aufheiraten von Frauen aus der nachstniedrigen Kaste in die höhere zuließ . . . Auf solche Weise verdunkelte in zunehmendem Masse das arische Indertum sich selbst und entfremdete sich selbst dem Geiste seiner Vorväter. Durch Aufnahme nichtarischen Blutes wurde so im Lauf der Jahrhunderte aus dem Indertum das Hindutum, aus indischem Geiste der Hindugeist, der vom Indogermanentum schliesslich nur noch etwas Uebertragbares, die Sprache bewahrte." This process of degeneration corresponded to a gradual darkening of the Aryan, even in the highest caste. Through the crossing of races, the mixture of castes, and the environment, the Aryan race of India met its downfall. The "lastende feuchte Hitze Indiens," infant mortality and higher sickness in general contributed to the spiritual Widerstandswillen of the Aryans. See Die nordische Rasse, 50: "Sie hat also eine immerwährende Qual immer von neuem dem ererbten Geiste mutiger arischer Lebensfrische entgegengewirkt, bis diesem mutigen, lebensfrohen, dieseitigen, echt Indogermanischen Geiste beim Zusammenbruch wurde der Erbstamme des eingewanderten Indertums das Mark entzogen."


80. Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhundert* 267: [Der Inder] legt ein derart grosses Gewicht auf sie; dass er in letzter Konsequenz zu der auch ausgesprochenen Anschauung gelangt, die Tat als solche konne einem Wissenden, des Atman-Brahman Teilhaftigen, nichts anhaben. Er ist "nicht durch das Werk befleckt, das bös." "Alles Fleischliche sei sowieso nur Trug und Schein, was mit ihm geschehe, gleichgültig. Das ist die letzte Konsequenz Indiens."


82. Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhundert* 622. See also 661-62: "Wir sehen hier offen ein europäisches Lebensgefühl eingreifen, das allerdings sofort wieder durch die Bemerkungen abgeschwächt wird, dass weder Hautfarbe noch Ahnen den Brahmanen machten, sondern Charakter. Hier offenbart sich die ganze Tragik selbst des über die 300 Millionen seiner Volksgenossen hinausragenden Inders. Denn, wollte er die Entfaltung der Arier schildern, so musste er bekennen, dass der Arier bis auf ganz geringe Spuren untergegangen ist. Hinterlassen hat er
Heldengesänge, eine tiefe, grosse Philosophie, spater ins Extreme, Uferlose, Dschungelartige getrieben, das Rassenchaos forderte."


84. Richard Wagner's English-born son-in-law and a political philosopher who developed racial themes of Aryan superiority.


