A Study of Hermeneutics in the Approach to Indian Philosophy in the West

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Abstract

My thesis stems from the observation that there exists a problem of recognizing Indian thought as philosophy, and, by extension, including it in the field of academic philosophy in the West. The question I examine is regarding the role of hermeneutics in shaping the West's image of Indian philosophy. As my point of departure, I use Friedrich Schlegel's *On the Language and Philosophy of the Indians* as a case because it exemplifies an influential early Orientalist encounter with India. I examine the interpretive methodology in this text both in light of its historical-philosophical context and in light of the postcolonial debate, and identify limitations of the hermeneutical approach, both in terms of a misconstruction of Indian thought, and of maintaining an Orientalist misrepresentation. In the final chapter, I discuss these findings in relation to the debate on the exclusion of non-Western philosophy in academic philosophy in the West.

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Introduction

My motivation for this paper is my interest in, and knowledge of, Indian philosophy. During my three years of studies of philosophy and Sanskrit language in India, I was introduced to a variety of subjects, including metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and logics, as presented in the classical philosophical texts. My curriculum included the Tarka Samgraha in the study of Nyaya (Indian logic), the Bhagavad Gita in the study of Advaita Vedanta and Samkhyakarika in the study of Samkhya. However, when I turned to the treatment of the same philosophical subjects in my own discipline at home, I was confused to meet with the absence of Indian philosophy.

My thesis stems from the observation, then, that there exists a problem of recognizing Indian thought as philosophy, and, by extension, including it in the field of academic philosophy, or the established canon of philosophers taught within the field. My experience is not, however, uncommon. The conversation on this topic is already established within academic philosophy, both in terms of a critique of the exclusion of non-Western philosophy, and in terms of the postcolonial critique of the Orientalist representation of non-Western philosophy. My thesis is intended as a contribution to this conversation.

The question I will examine in this thesis, is regarding the role of hermeneutics in shaping the West's image of Indian philosophy. This is based on the recognition of hermeneutics as the interpretational methodology that shapes our understanding, in this case, of Indian thought. Therefore, in order to assess our understanding of Indian thought, we need to examine the methodology that has shaped this interpretation, as well as the image of Indian thought that this methodology has provided. This has been studied as part of the scholarship on Orientalism, and I present several works from this debate in my assessment of the interpretive methodology in the encounter with Indian thought. However, as my point of departure, I have chosen to use an early Orientalist text as a case. This allows me to examine the interpretive methodology in an early Orientalist text both in light of its historical-philosophical context and in light of the postcolonial debate.

The text I use as a case, is Friedrich Schlegel's *On the Language and Philosophy of the Indians* (1808), because it exemplifies an early, influential cross-cultural encounter with India. My aim in analyzing this text, is to examine Schlegel's interpretational methodology and how his

methodology contributes to shape the image he portrays of Indian thought. In the first chapter, I situate Schlegel's text in its historic-philosophical context, and offer a summary of its content. Drawing on this contextual background, I then perform a philosophical analysis of *On the Language* in the second chapter. To briefly summarize, my analysis shows a problematic interpretive practice where Schlegel's hermeneutical approach is informed and guided by his philosophical ideas, mainly his philosophy of history and his theory on revelation and reason. Schlegel's problematic interpretive practice in *On the Language*, leads to critical questions about his hermeneutical methodology. These questions represent the starting point for the third chapter. In this chapter, I assess Schlegel's interpretational project in light of the postcolonial debate on German Orientalism, with the aim of identifying the limitations of the methodology. I will argue that the interpretive practice of the early Orientalists is problematic, as exemplified by Schlegel in *On the Language*. Based on my analysis of his text and scholarly consensus on German Orientalism, the limitations of Schlegel's hermeneutical approach can be identified both as a misconstruction of Indian thought, and as supporting a sustained Orientalist misrepresentation. I further address the question of how we can improve our attempts at cross-cultural interpretation. Building on the scholarship on German Orientalism, I outline a suggestion for an improved approach. In the last part of the third chapter, I examine whether the Orientalist misrepresentation of Indian thought, as exemplified by Schlegel's text, still exists as a legacy in terms of prejudice on Indian philosophy. Do these prejudices prevent Indian thought to be recognized as "real" philosophy within the Western academia? I argue, that there is support for this claim. My thesis therefore represents both a critique of unfounded assumptions on Indian thought, as well as a call to broaden philosophy as discipline and practice. Finally, I offer a conclusion, summarizing the results of my study.

Chapter 1.

Schlegel's *On the Language and Philosophy of the Indians.*

Historical- and biographical context, and introduction of the text.

Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829) is recognized as the leading figure of German Romanticism. His influence is especially associated with the journal *Athenaeum*, which he established in 1798 together with his brother August Wilhelm Schlegel. It was through the publications in this journal, that Schlegel formulated and established his concept of "romantic poetry" (Beiser, *The romantic imperative* 106); a concept that came to represent the aesthetic ideal of the Romantic movement. Schlegel is also the figure within the Romantic movement best known for his philosophical contributions. In addition to his aesthetics, which is reflected in his development of the concept of romantic poetry, he is recognized for his critique of foundationalism, his emphasis on philosophy of history and his theory of knowledge.[1] Schlegel is also acknowledged for his contributions to hermeneutics,[2] although his work within this field is less well-known. Furthermore, he is given credit as a leading figure in what has been referred to as "the Oriental Renaissance"[3] during the Romantic period. Schlegel's interest in the Orient[4], and especially India, is seen most evidently in the period 1800-1808, during which time he engaged with Indian language and literature through studies that led to the publication of the text *On the Language and Philosophy of the Indians* in 1808. On account of the theories he presented in this work, Schlegel is credited with contributing to the establishment of modern linguistics, Sanskrit language and Indology as academic disciplines. However, this work also represents the conclusion of Schlegel's interest in the Orient and is referred to[5] as a work that also contributed to removing Indian thought from the philosophical agenda.

Schlegel's *On the Language* is primarily referred to as a pioneering work within Indo-European studies and is, as noted above, acknowledged for its scientific value within the fields of

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[1] According to Dalia Nassar in *The Romantic Absolute* (81).
[2] Michael N Forster elaborates on Friedrich Schlegel's hermeneutics in his book *German philosophy of language: from Schlegel to Hegel and beyond* (45-79).
[3] See for example *Oriental Renaissance* by Raymond Schwab (71).
[4] The Orient refers to the Eastern world, i.e. Asia (including the Indian subcontinent) and the Middle East, as opposed to "the Occident", i.e. the West. Until Edward Said's publication of *Orientalism* in 1978, the term Orientalism denoted the scholarship on the philosophy, language and literature of the Orient, and the scholars would be termed Orientalists. With Said's publication, the term Orientalism took on a new meaning, now denoting the Western representations of the Asian Other; representations influenced by the attitudes of imperialism and structured according to power and domination.
[5] See for example Herling's *The German Gita* (2).

linguistics, Sanskrit language and Indology. The text contains a study of Indian language, philosophy and history, as well as translations of a selection of Indian texts. *On the Language* had significant impact on the current scholarship, encouraging a more rigorous academic approach to the study of Indian culture, including its language and history. There has been less focus on the philosophical content or value of the text, although it has been seen as a source of Schlegel's theory of language, and containing comments on hermeneutics. I will argue that *On the Language* is an important text in order to understand Schlegel's philosophy, including his view on hermeneutics, both because he explicitly articulates parts of his theory on hermeneutics, and because the text as such represents an interpretive endeavor in his encounter with Indian culture. I will also argue, that two of Schlegel's main philosophical theories are represented in the text, significantly shaping its content and form, as well as his interpretive approach to Indian thought. The first is Schlegel's philosophy of history, and the second is his theory on revelation and reason, which also reflects his religious view. In the following, I will first outline the historic-philosophical background for *On the Language* by situating the text within the context of the Romantic movement's Oriental Renaissance[6] as well as in Schlegel's philosophy. Secondly, I will present a short review of *On the Language*.

1.1 The Oriental Renaissance in German Romanticism

In the Romantic period, there was significant interest for Indian philosophy. Several German philosophers, including Herder, the Schlegel brothers, von Humboldt and Hegel engaged in Indian philosophy, studied the texts, and debated whether or not Indian philosophy should be included in the Western philosophical tradition. The engagement with Indian philosophy within the philosophical academic circles in Europe led to a considerable influence on the philosophical debate and agenda at the time.

In the late 18th century, several classical Indian texts were translated into European languages, leading to increased interest in Indian philosophy in Europe. Sir William Jones established the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 and took on the task of translating several Indian classics into English in collaboration with scholars such as Charles Wilkins and Thomas Colebrooke.

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[6] My focus is primarily on the Romantic movement's interest in India, even though I refer to the "Oriental Renaissance".

Among the translations were the Bhagavad Gita,[7] Manusmrti (the Laws of Manu),[8] the Isa-Upanishad[9] and Kalidasa's Sakuntala.[10] Georg Forster's translation of Sakuntala from English into German in 1790, had a huge impact on the Early Romantics, especially Herder, Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel. Kalidasa was referred to as the "Indian Shakespeare", and the translation of his text Sakuntala significantly contributed to the rise of interest in Orientalism in Germany[11]. In 1792, Johann Gottfried Herder published fragments from the Bhagavad Gita in German, translated from Charles Wilkins' English publication from 1790. According to Bradley L. Herling in *The German Gita*, this was the first Indian text translated to German with "philosophical depth" (2). Access to these Indian texts in German translation contributed to great optimism regarding the influence Indian thought would have on Western philosophy, especially among the philosophers of the Romantic movement. Together with contemporary philosophical ideas, the now available Indian literature created an appealing image of India within the German Romantic movement, described by Wilhelm Halbfass in his 1988 classic *India and Europe*, as "occasionally bordering on fanaticism" (72). This interest in, and optimism regarding the impact of Indian thought, characterizes what has been described as the Oriental Renaissance.

According to Halbfass, two of the Enlightenment ideas that contributed to this development were the criticism of Christianity (69), and "the degeneration theory" (71). The criticism of Christianity led to "the attempt to trace it back to older traditions, or the view that a more pristine religious consciousness could be found in Asia, and specifically in India" (69). The degeneration theory contributed to a critique of the development of philosophical and religious ideas in India, while reinforcing the view of original purity with a "motif of origins and unspoiled pristineness" (72). These ideas can be found to varying degrees among the Early Romantics, and is the background for the description of India by Herder as the "cradle of humanity" (Herder cited by Halbfass 72) and by Schelling as the "spirit of infancy" (Schelling cited by Halbfass 72). However, Halbfass further describes how the admiration for India can be regarded as the Early Romantics' reactions to the Enlightenment and its "faith in reason and

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[7] The Bhagavad Gita is part of the 6th book of the Indian epic Mahabharata, a text traditionally attributed to Vyasa, and dated to around 400 BCE (King 63).
[8] Manusmriti is an ancient Indian text, classified as a dharmashastra; a legal text. The text is attributed to Manu, and dated to around 200 BCE (Mohanty 5).
[9] Vedic literature, belonging to the Shukla Yajurveda, by scholars dated to around 900 BCE (Perrett 7).
[10] The most famous drama of the Indian dramatist and poet Kalidasa, by scholars dated to the period between 100 BCE and 400 CE (Burrow 53).
[11] According to Nicholas Germana in *The Orient of Europe*.

progress" along with its "fall into a quantifying, mechanical, merely rational way of viewing the universe" (73). Along with these ideas, Enlightenment had also brought disillusion with a loss of "awareness of the unity and wholeness of life" (73). This unity and wholeness could only be found by a return to the roots; to the origin, which was believed to be found in ancient India. The interest in India was therefore an expression of a search for origins, idealized as purity, unity and wholeness.

The Indian literature available to the Early Romantics was read and understood within this framework of ideas, and it was praised for its ideas on unity, its mythology,[12] and its poetry, which "was at once religion" (74). According to Gemana in *The Orient of Europe*, the Early Romantics regarded true religious experience as ineffable. However, the artist would, through inspiration, be able to communicate the religious experience through poetry. Religion was a construction of words and symbols, with the aim of pointing to something beyond itself; something ineffable. Therefore, for the artist, Indian mythology and poetry represented new inspiration. Admiration for Indian poetry and mythology is also expressed by Friedrich Schlegel in his statement, that "In the Orient, we must look for the highest Romanticism" (Schlegel cited by Germana, "Self-Othering in German Orientalism" 86). This statement was published in Schlegel's *Rede über die Mythologie*, an essay that was published as a part of his text *Gespräch über Poesie* in 1800, and it conveys a reverence for India that differs markedly from the more critical view that he communicates in *On the Language* eight years later. In *On the Language* he criticizes the same features that he earlier admired. In Indian mythology, "wild inventions and savage errors predominate" (473), and Indian "philosophy is everywhere overlaid, he writes, with "rude errors and arbitrary fictions" (471). Contrasting his earlier, idealized view, Schlegel now condemns both Indian mythology and philosophy. Instead, he idealizes orthodox religion, and believes that "eternal truth" is to be found in the Bible (517). Schlegel's high esteem for the ideas of Romanticism has eight years later been replaced by a belief in truth represented by the Bible. Although this radical change of view is puzzling, it is not an unfamiliar phenomenon when it comes to Schlegel, as can be understood from the following short biographical background.

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[12] Several of the Romantics published texts on this subject, among them Schelling in his work "Über Mythen, historische Sagen und Philosopheme der ältesten Welt" from 1793. In 1800 Schlegel pointed out in his "Rede über die Mythologie", that Europe had a need for a new mythology that would serve as the focus of literature, just as the old mythology had done for Greek and Roman literature" (Tzoref-Ashkenazi 721). His intention was not to adopt Indian mythology, but to let it inspire the creation of a new, European mythology.

1.2 Friedrich Schlegel

Throughout his life, Schlegel constantly developed and changed his philosophical ideas, therefore his thinking is complex with clear discontinuities. One can recognize three main periods of his thinking, often described as an early "classicist" phase, a "romantic" phase, and a "late" phase.

1.2.1 The classicist phase

According to Michael N. Forster in the book *German philosophy of language*, Schlegel's classicist phase is characterized by his studies of Greek philosophy, literature and language, and his admiration for neoclassicism. In his text *Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie* from 1795, Greek poetry is set up as representing the "objective" aesthetic ideal, and he contrasts the aesthetic ideal of classical Greek poetry to "modern poetry". He finds modern poetry "interesting"; a term he later changes to "romantic". In his classicist phase, then, Schlegel's preference is for the ancient and classical. The shift of preference to the modern and romantic marks his shift to the romantic phase.

1.2.2 The romantic phase

By the time Schlegel has established the *Athenaeum* in 1798, romantic poetry has become his aesthetic ideal. In *Athenäumsfragment* no. 116, Schlegel declares that all poetry should be romantic, Beiser writes in *The romantic imperative* (110). Characteristic features of Schlegel's romantic phase include his ideal of mixing genres, of fusing poetry and philosophy, and an interest in mythology. Schlegel's call to "look for the highest Romanticism" in the Orient, reflects the view of his romantic phase.

Schlegel develops his philosophy of history in his romantic phase. In his description of this theory, his focus is on the methodology of philosophy. The methodology requires a historical understanding of philosophy, which means, that any evaluation of a philosophical system must be done from an internal perspective, as opposed to an external. The internal perspective is achieved when the evaluation of a philosophical system is done "in accordance with its own premises" (Nassar 98). Schlegel further claims, that there exist necessary sequences in historical development. This is explained by his belief, that consciousness develops throughout history, and that "in order for philosophy to grasp reality, it must grasp the historical development of consciousness" (Nassar 102). A development of consciousness also leads to a necessity in the transitions from one philosophical perspective to the next throughout history, represented by

"different epochs of consciousness with specific schools of thought" (102). In this manner, Schlegel believes, philosophy can be understood as an expression of mankind's developing consciousness throughout history.[13]

1.2.3 The late phase

Scholars commonly refer to Schlegel's late phase as characterized by political and religious conservatism. According to Forster, Schlegel turned "towards Catholicism and political conservatism" (34). This turn is reflected in Schlegel's personal life as well as in his philosophical views. In his personal life, it is indicated by his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1808, the same year that the text *On the language* was published. In his philosophy, he expresses an increasing support of traditional religious ideas. The Cologne lectures in 1804-1806 are by some scholars seen as indicating the beginning of his shift from his romantic to his late phase. Forster refers to the Cologne lectures as showing Schlegel's "empathic turn to Catholicism" (35). In her book *The Romantic Absolute*, Dalia Nassar refers to a discussion on whether Schlegel's view on "art as a supplement to an *original* experience of divine revelation" (87) represents a shift away from his romantic phase. Nassar, however, associates the Cologne lectures thematically to Schlegel's romantic phase. She describes them as lectures "in which he provides one of his most comprehensive and critical examinations of the history of philosophy" (87), which belongs to his romantic phase. She also points out, that he "does not yet formulate his later critique of pantheistic religion in favor of Catholicism" (87), which characterizes his late phase. Schlegel's shift from the romantic to the late phase, then, occurs around the time of his publication of *On the Language* in 1808.

Schlegel's ideas on religion show a conservative turn in the late phase, which is also expressed in *On the Language*. Although Schlegel consistently avoids referring to Catholicism in *On the Language*, the text can, according to Peter Park, be read as "an apology of a Catholic convert" (91). "The arguments there could only have been made by a devout Catholic", Park says, referring to *On the Language* (91). This echoes the critique Schlegel received from his contemporary scholars. Goethe and Heine were convinced that the text was nothing but an apology for Catholicism, and Hegel was especially critical, calling Schlegel the "pinnacle of empty subjectivity and a Catholic apologist" (Park 101). "The book gained followers among Catholics", and "comparative linguistics had to be rescued from Catholic-Roman enthusiasm

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[13] Schlegel's ideas on philosophy of history, or historicism, bear resemblance to Georg Hegel's philosophy, where the ideas are more developed.

to gain legitimacy in the nineteenth century" (101), Park writes. Park's observations are supported by Herling, who describes how Schlegel's text caused a "Romantic, Catholic-tinged discourse" to dominate the discussion of India in Germany and suggests, "that German Indology arose from a desire to purify the study of India of Catholic, mystical, Romantic overtones" (*The German Gita* 172). Germana also calls attention to the importance of the association between Indian thought and Catholicism and emphasizes Schlegel's conversion as the main reason for the image of India to have become "irrecoverably tied" to Catholicism (*The Orient of Europe* 248). Schlegel's view on religion, then, not only influenced his approach to Indian thought in *On the Language*, but also had the consequence of associating India with religion, and specifically Catholicism in the further study of Indian thought in Germany.

Schlegel's religio-philosophical view, including his theory on revelation and reason, is closely connected to the pantheism controversy; a philosophical debate initiated in the 1780s, which had a significant influence on the contemporary scholarship throughout Europe. This topic will be covered in depth in the next chapter.

1.3 On Friedrich Schlegel's *On the Language and Philosophy of the Indians*
Schlegel's description of the studies and the efforts he carried out in order to complete the text, gives an impression of the pioneering work he did. The scope of the project stands in contrast to the availability of learning resources and access to relevant literature. In the preface, Schlegel describes his studies in Sanskrit language and Indian literature. From 1803-4, he narrates, he received personal instruction from Alexander Hamilton, who was a member of the British Society of Calcutta, at the time living in Paris. His access to the Indian literature was the public library as well as a private collection of books, which was still quite limited, according to his remarks in the preface. He regards a book in Sanskrit grammar and practical vocabulary created by an unnamed missionary to have been essential to his learning, second only to the personal instruction he received from Hamilton. Schlegel's initial studies in Indian language and literature lasted between 1 and 2 years, after which time he wrote *On the Language*, which was published in 1808.

The text *On the Language and Philosophy of the Indians* is divided into three chapters called "Book I, On the Indian Language", "Book II, On the Indian Philosophy", "Book III, Historical

Ideas", in addition to the preface, and finally a translation of a selection of Indian literature[14]. In the following section, I will present a summary of Schlegel's text.

In the preface Schlegel emphasizes his aim to further encourage the already growing interest in Indian literature, and to lay a foundation for the study of Indian literature in Germany. He compares Indian literature to the classical Greek literature, indicating that Indian literature has potential to acquire the status, along with the Greek, of classical literature within the Western tradition. Further, he predicts Indian literature in Europe to cause a new renaissance.

In the first chapter of *On the Language*, "Book I, On the Indian Language", Schlegel presents his theory on the origin of language; a theory that he supports with a study of comparative grammar. The theory holds that all languages have a common origin, and that Sanskrit language, because of its superior internal structure, is the most ancient and therefore the original language, from which all other languages have been developed. The theory also holds that languages in general are subject to degeneration over time.

In the second chapter of *On the Language*, "Book II, On the Indian Philosophy", Schlegel portrays Indian history of thought as consisting of five main epochs of ideas. The epochs are listed as emanation, metempsychosis, astrology, the principle of dualism, and pantheism. Schlegel presupposes an original revelation of "truth" (472), and describes the following epochs according to their development as an increasingly "perverted conception" (472) of this revealed truth. Pantheism, the final epoch, represents "unassisted reason" (490), standing most strongly in contrast with the revealed truth, leading, according to Schlegel, to moral corruption and "false conceptions of the infinite God" (477).

In the third chapter of *On the Language*, "Book III, Historical Ideas", Schlegel compares mythology, philosophy, religion, language and literature on different continents, but with emphasis on differences and similarities between India and the West. His focus is on religion, and he holds, that the revelation of God as described in the Bible is the truth and standard for comparison. The Indian history of thought is ideal for comparison with the Bible, according to

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[14] Only the three chapters "On the Indian Language", "On the Indian Philosophy" and "Historical Ideas" are translated into English. The last part of the text, containing Schlegel's translations from Sanskrit to German, is only available in German. This part of the text, which also includes a general introduction, introductions to each of the texts translated and footnotes explaining translational choices, I have studied in German.

Schlegel, because the "contrast of truth with error ever places the former in a more majestic and transcendent light" (516). This chapter, then, is where Schlegel most clearly states his religious views.

The last section of *On the Language* contains Schlegel's translations of excerpts from Indian literature, with the title "Indische gedichte", "Indian poetry".[15] The excerpts are taken from the texts Ramayana, Manusmriti (the Laws of Manu), Bhagavad Gita and Sakuntala and, according to Schlegel, selected based on which subjects within the texts he wants to focus on. In the Bhagavad Gita, for example, he has chosen to focus on the teaching of oneness, he writes. The translations show his effort to keep the original meter of the verses, which preserves the poetical style of the texts.

With this contextual background, I will proceed to an analysis of *On the Language* in the next chapter.

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[15] This section is not included in the English translation, and I refer to the original German version of the text, *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier.*

Chapter 2.

Schlegel's interpretational project in *On the Language and Philosophy of the Indians*

Schlegel's hermeneutical approach in *On the Language* is influenced by several of his philosophical ideas, mainly his philosophy of history and his theory on revelation and reason. In this chapter I will substantiate this claim by showing how Schlegel's philosophical ideas are expressed in his text, and how this shapes *On the Language* as a hermeneutical project.

2.1 The historical method

My view is, that Schlegel's historical method, based on his philosophy of history, is an important part of the methodology in his approach to and interpretation of Indian literature and history of thought. But in which way has Schlegel's philosophy of history shaped his approach to, and interpretation of Indian philosophy? And how is this expressed in the text *On the Language*?

The influence of Schlegel's historical method on Indian literature and philosophy in *On the Language* is mainly shown in three interrelated aspects of the text. The first is the overall historical perspective, the second is his presentation of the historical development of thought as epochs of ideas, and the third is his emphasis on explaining the change from one epoch to the next as a necessary development.

The overall historical perspective in *On the Language* is shown in Schlegel's presentation of the main subjects in the book, which are Indian language, Indian philosophy, and historical ideas, as reflected in the titles of the chapters. These subjects are all set in a historical context, and Schlegel maintains this historical perspective throughout all of the three chapters. In the first chapter, Schlegel's aim is to provide "an authentic history, in short, of the origin of language" (464). He postulates Sanskrit as the original language and intends to prove his thesis by using "comparative grammar and a genuine historical foundation" (464). In the second and third chapters, Schlegel tracks the development of philosophical and religious ideas throughout history using both a historical and a comparative perspective. The historical perspective involves a portrayal of the Indian history of thought, while the comparative perspective involves

juxtaposing selected ideas from the Indian tradition of thought with similar ideas in Western philosophy and Christianity.

The second aspect showing Schlegel's historical method in *On the Language*, is his presentation of the historical development of thought as epochs of ideas, arranged as a genealogy of the Indian history of thought. The epochs are listed as emanation, metempsychosis, astrology, the principle of dualism, and pantheism. This second aspect is closely interlinked with the third aspect, which is his emphasis on historical development or change, represented by the necessity of transition from one epoch to the next. In *On the Language*, Schlegel describes how religious and philosophical ideas are systems in a "gradual transition from one to another" (495). He thus directs the attention to the quality of change in history that is expressed through the shifts from one system of ideas to another.

The background for these ideas, demonstrating the need for the historical methodology, is already established in Schlegel's philosophy, especially from his Jena- and Cologne lectures, delivered between 1800-1801 and 1804-1806, respectively. In these lectures, he presented the views, that philosophy is historical in its very character, and that this historical character necessitates a historical methodology in order for us to understand philosophy. These views were based on his claim, that the development of consciousness over time is represented in transitions of epochs of ideas, identified as schools of thought. This relation between consciousness and time makes philosophy necessarily historical, a view that must be reflected in the methodology. Hence, Schlegel's philosophy of history, including his view on epochs of ideas and their transitions over time, were established during the time he studied Sanskrit and Indian literature (1803-1804), and while he wrote *On the Language* (published in 1808). New in *On the Language*, however, is Schlegel's description of history as characterized by the contrast between revealed truth on the one hand, and the degenerative effect of reason on the other hand. The historical development of philosophical and religious ideas in India through the epochs of emanation, metempsychosis, astrology, the principle of dualism, and pantheism, are portrayed in light of the degenerative influence of reason on revealed truth. This stands in contrast to his Jena lectures, where "Schlegel explains the transitions from one epoch to the next in terms of error and recognition of error" (Nassar 103). In the Jena lectures, Schlegel regarded the transition from one epoch to the next as a philosophical development characterizing the evolution of consciousness to higher levels of complexity. As this process always happens through the recognition and correction of error, it represents a positive,

progressive development of ideas, and therefore a trust in reason. By 1808, however, Schlegel's trust in reason seems to have been replaced by a trust in revelation. This change must also be seen in the context of his religious view and his stance in the pantheism controversy, and I will return to this topic in more depth later, in my discussion of how Schlegel's view on revelation, reason and religion influenced his hermeneutics in *On the Language*. But seen in light of Schlegel's philosophy of history, the changes identified in Schlegel's views as expressed in *On the Language* compared to the Jena- and Cologne lectures indicate, that his view on the historical development in part is a continuation of his previous ideas, but in part conflicts with his earlier view. The idea of history as moving through epochs with a necessity that is traceable and reflected in the development of ideas, is preserved. Schlegel's view on historical development as a constant degradation of revealed truth by reason, however, stands in conflict with his earlier view. The necessity is now the necessity of degradation rather than of rational progress.

What is Schlegel's intention for applying the historical method on Indian literature in *On the Language*? What does he hope to achieve? At least two answers are suggested in those of Schlegel's texts concerning his philosophy of history, including his review of F I Niethammer's Philosophisches Journal (1797), and his Jena- and Cologne lectures. Here Schlegel emphasizes, that a philosophical approach to a philosophical text includes evaluating it by determining its worth, as opposed to only describing it. He also holds that the worth of a philosophical system should be determined based on its own premises instead of external premises. In order to achieve this, the philosopher needs to take an internal perspective, which can only be accomplished through a historical methodology. According to Schlegel's description of his philosophy of history, then, his intention for applying the historical method on Indian literature in *On the Language,* must be seen as an attempt to understand Indian philosophy, and specifically, to understand Indian philosophy from within, as well as evaluating it, or determining its worth, which is essential in order for his own text to have philosophical value. The historical perspective is, according to Schlegel, the only perspective from which the necessity of the transitions from one epoch to the next can be recognized. For Schlegel, the historical perspective therefore provides an internal perspective, which makes it possible to understand philosophy from within. This perspective is therefore also required in order to evaluate philosophy. These intentions, however, have hermeneutical implications, as they influence the approach to Indian philosophy in the attempt to understand and interpret it. I regard Schlegel's attempt to understand Indian philosophy from within, as well as evaluating

it, as representing his hermeneutical approach to Indian philosophy based on his historical methodology. This is also confirmed in his own explicit comments on hermeneutics.

Schlegel writes about hermeneutics in a relatively short section of *On the Language* in the end of chapter 3 ("Book III, Historical Ideas"), and the view he presents here is very much in line with the hermeneutical approach described above. In his comments on how to read and understand Indian literature, Schlegel emphasizes knowledge of philosophy, "particularly the Indian branch of it." (521), "intimate acquaintance" (521) with the ancient philosophy, and the need for knowledge of history and language in addition to philosophy (522). All of these factors can be seen as a prerequisite for the use of Schlegel's historical methodology, with the aim of understanding the philosophical system from within. In addition, Schlegel draws attention to the significance of history in order to understand contemporary philosophy, pointing out, that "nothing that exists can actually be called *new*; all must be kindled and inspired by ancient memories" (522). This statement supports the idea, that history of philosophy itself becomes an essential part of philosophy. This shows, then, that Schlegel's explicit comments on his recommended hermeneutical approach are in agreement with the hermeneutical approach actually taken up in the text. It is reasonable to conclude, then, that Schlegel's text reflects his historical methodology, which influences his hermeneutical approach. The hermeneutical approach emphasizes a historical perspective and the development and change of epochs throughout history with the intention to understand Indian philosophy from within, as well as evaluating it. Next, I will examine the hermeneutical consequences of this approach.

2.1.1 Evaluation and critique

What is the hermeneutical consequence of Schlegel's historical approach? Which are the hermeneutical points to be drawn from Schlegel's *On the Language*? Can we identify gains or losses resulting from Schlegel's methodology? I will examine the three main features of Schlegel's historical methodology that I regard to have hermeneutical consequences; his portrayal of history of thought as a genealogy of epochs, his focus on the search for the origin of ideas as well as language and history, and his introduction of comparative thinking as a tool for proving his theories.

Schlegel's historical method encourages a focus on how philosophy unfolds throughout history and the necessity of transformation as characterized by the shift of one epoch into another. But which ideas throughout history should be given emphasis? In *On the Language*, Schlegel's

methodology leads to a portrayal of Indian philosophy as a genealogy of epochs of ideas, presented as a well-ordered sequence, consisting of only five main epochs; emanation, metempsychosis, astrology, the principle of dualism, and pantheism. These epochs, then, are intended to represent the history of Indian thought. Schlegel's genealogy gives a simple and well-structured portrayal of Indian history of thought. It is an easily accessible summary of a several thousand year old tradition of thought, at the same time offering a compelling perspective on the development of reason throughout history. But critical questions could and should be asked concerning Schlegel's selection of ideas (and a consideration of the Indian tradition's own portrayal of its history) in the construction of his genealogy. Is this a structural arrangement that Schlegel discovered? Or is it rather a construction, inspired by his historical methodology, and composed in the search for necessity in the development of epochs throughout the history of Indian thought?

I see three serious objections to Schlegel's genealogy that I will address in this context. Firstly, Schlegel gives precedence to philosophy in its unfolding through history, portrayed as a genealogy of epochs, over an accurate portrayal of Indian philosophy. Schlegel's aim is to understand philosophy through its history, rather than to present Indian philosophy as such. Related to this, is the second objection, which concerns the selection of ideas that have given the epochs their names. The ideas are emanation, metempsychosis, astrology, the principle of dualism, and pantheism. When seen in contrast to a standard presentation of history of philosophy, Schlegel's method differs in that he doesn't relate the selection of ideas primarily to philosophical systems or schools of thought. His focus is at least as much on mythology and religion, as on philosophy when he describes the main ideas throughout Indian history. This is reflected in the variety of literature that he chooses as reference, including Manusmriti (also called Laws of Manu), the Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana and Kalidasa's Sakuntala, representing Hindu law, poetry, epics and drama, respectively, instead of standard philosophical texts. The selection of texts shows a mixture of genres and topics not representative for a study of Indian philosophy. In addition, Schlegel doesn't refer to specific sections in the texts in order to prove the validity of his selection of ideas, instead he refers to the texts in general. When he discusses the philosophy of the text Bhagavad Gita, for example, he writes: "It is clearly seen, even from the translation, to be pure Pantheism" (493). He resolves the fact that the text resists a pantheistic interpretation by stating that the author of the text has "misunderstood" the philosophy (493). The mixed selection of literature and the lack of references to literary sources of the main ideas for his genealogy, is a poor basis for his portrayal of Indian philosophy.

Schlegel's interest in creating a genealogy of his selection of ideas seems to exceed his interest in understanding Indian philosophy. Schlegel does mention some classical Indian philosophical schools of thought, which he translates as physics (Samkhya), ethics (Mimamsa) and dialectics (Nyaya) (493). This shows, that he knows of their existence. But he doesn't describe them further, and he doesn't present the main ideas and theories that the schools discuss.[16] This illustrates my third objection to Schlegel's genealogy, which is how his methodology necessarily must sacrifice the complexity, diversity and detail of a vast variety of schools of thought, including the existence of debate and conflicting views within each school, in order to present the entire history of philosophy as a genealogy of a few main epochs of ideas. Schlegel's portrayal of Indian thought as a genealogy of ideas, instead of as a systematic and text-driven description of philosophical schools, represents an interpretational choice. To Schlegel, the historical methodology enables an internal, as opposed to an external perspective. But by using this methodology, he creates a genealogy that contrasts with the Indian tradition's own portrayal of its history. For this reason, his genealogy could, and in my opinion should, be characterized as external or artificially applied. Schlegel has constructed, rather than discovered, the genealogy of ideas that he describes.

Schlegel's focus on the origin of ideas as well as language and history, can be related to the contemporary Romantic ideas. The Romantics expressed a longing for the original, for the roots, based on the idea that the origin represents purity and wholeness; ideas often considered a reaction to the Enlightenment belief in rationality, progress and a mechanical view of the universe (Halbfass 73). However, the search for origins is also an established idea in Schlegel's own philosophy, and an important part of his philosophy of history as described in his Cologne lectures. In these lectures, Schlegel's aim is not only to show how every new epoch, representing systems of thought or ideas, necessarily arise from the previous. His aim is also to track this development "back to its first source" (Nassar 103). This is a view that he repeats in *On the Language*, although the origin he now postulates, and believes to be able to prove, is an "original revelation" of God (473). The hermeneutical consequence of this, however, is an almost exclusive focus on antiquity at the expense of contemporary ideas. The admiration for

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[16] Studying the schools of thought mentioned by Schlegel, the Samkhya, Minamsa and Nyaya, one can recognize related or similar ideas. Samkhya, for example, is a strongly dualist school in the metaphysical sense, and denies the existence of God. This gives the concept of dualism a different meaning compared to Schlegel's definition of dualism as a "religion of light" (488), representing the "eternal strife between good and evil" (482). Schlegel, however, does not describe Sanmkhya as dualistic, but as having a "Pantheistic tendency" (493) based on his reading of the Bhagavad Gita, which is contrary to a standard representation of Samkhya in philosophy. See for example Richard King's *Indian philosophy* (62-66).

antiquity is also reflected in the fact that Schlegel chooses the text Manusmriti (Laws of Manu) as his main source because he is convinced, although wrongly, that it is the oldest available text on Indian philosophical and religious ideas (478). Schlegel's historical methodology, then, tends to turn the focus toward the ancient, further narrowing down the image portrayed of Indian history of thought.

The last point regarding the hermeneutical consequences of Schlegel's historical methodology, is his introduction of comparative thinking as a tool for proving his theories. As previously mentioned, Schlegel's hermeneutical approach emphasizes a historical perspective with the intention to understand Indian philosophy from within, as well as evaluating it, or determining its worth. The historical perspective is essential, because the necessity of the transitions from one historical epoch to the next can only be identified from within the respective perspective. This, then, is what signifies an internal as opposed to an external perspective for Schlegel. In the Cologne lectures, Schlegel specifically emphasizes that the aim is not to negate the respective perspectives throughout history or to use them to prove one's own, but instead to understand philosophy in its development, in its unfolding throughout history. When comparing this ideal with Schlegel's application of the methodology in *On the Language*, however, one would need to point out that the historical perspective is replaced, or at least supplemented, by a comparative perspective. Schlegel's earlier view, that philosophical systems must be evaluated based on their own premises, is continued in the fact that he does portray the Indian ideas in a historical perspective. But in *On the Language*, Schlegel's comparisons seem to represent the decisive evaluation of the Indian philosophical and religious ideas. The ideal with which he now compares all of the Indian philosophical systems, is what he calls "the sole source of lofty truth" (526), and identifies as Christianity (518). Similar ideas to this ideal are valued positively, while contradictory ideas are condemned. The comparative perspective therefore seems to take priority and to stand in contrast with Schlegel's earlier views on his philosophy of history. This development in Schlegel's thought can also be seen as an expression of a conservative change in his religious views and will be further discussed under this subject in the following section.

My suggestion to regard Schlegel's historical method as his methodology for interpreting Indian literature would explain why his portrayal of Indian philosophy in *On the Language* is

so markedly different from a regular description of Indian history of philosophy[17]. Schlegel's genealogy of Indian history of ideas gives an image of Indian philosophy that is impactful, and that has been historically influential in the West, a point that I will elaborate on in chapter 3. But it seems to me, based on the analysis above, that the losses resulting from Schlegel's methodology are greater than the gains. Schlegel's philosophical project has given a temptingly appealing, but misleading picture of the Indian history of thought at the expense of its accuracy, complexity, detail and worth.

2.2 On the conflict between reason and faith in late 18th century Germany. The pantheism controversy

The pantheism controversy was a major philosophical debate, characterized as "the most significant intellectual event in late eighteenth-century Germany next to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*" by Frederick C. Beiser in *The fate of reason* (44).[18] The core philosophical theme of the controversy was, according to Beiser, the question of the "authority of reason", which presented itself as "the dilemma of a rational nihilism or an irrational fideism" (44). The thematics of the pantheism controversy is reflected in Schlegel's *On the Language*, especially in his view on the conflict between revelation and reason. Based on this, it is reasonable to think that Schlegel's text contributed to renew the pantheism discussion in German philosophy, as Bradley L. Herling writes (*The German Gita* 151). I also agree with Peter KJ. Park who argues in his article "A catholic apologist in a pantheistic world: new approaches to Friedrich Schlegel", that the text not only can be considered as influenced by the controversy, but that Schlegel even indirectly uses *On the Language* to situate himself with regards to the pantheism controversy (99). More importantly, however, Schlegel's stance in this discussion, concerning the conflict between revelation and reason, influences his approach to Indian philosophy. In my view, this approach has hermeneutical consequences. In order to substantiate this interpretation, I will outline the main features of the pantheism controversy as a contextual background for Schlegel's text. Understanding the thematic framework of the pantheism controversy is essential in order to recognize the influence that it had on Schlegel's *On the Language*.

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[17] In the West, the main schools of Indian philosophy are listed as Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa and Vedanta, in addition to Buddhist philosophy, Charvaka and Jainism, all of which were founded before the Common Era.
[18] The pantheism controversy is also referred to as a "momentous" (9) and "major philosophical event" (15) by Paul W. Franks.

The pantheism controversy started in 1783, as a quarrel between Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and Moses Mendelssohn about the philosophical legacy of Gotthold Lessing, who died in 1781. Jacobi told Mendelssohn that Lessing had confessed to him of being a committed Spinozist. In late eighteenth-century Germany, Lessing was a respected representative of the Enlightenment, while Spinozism was associated with atheism, anarchism and biblical criticism. Therefore, Jacobi's claim represented an accusation that Lessing was an atheist, and indirectly, that the ideas of Enlightenment ultimately led to atheism. Mendelssohn responded to this by contradicting Jacobi's claim, defending Lessing's memory as well as his own position as a representative of the Enlightenment. However, in 1785, Jacobi published their correspondence as *Briefe über die Lehre von Spinoza*, making his dispute with Mendelssohn public. Soon the debate engaged most of the contemporary German philosophers, including famous figures like Herder, Goethe, Hamann, Reinhold and even Kant. What had started as a dispute regarding Lessing's philosophical legacy, now developed into a debate that questioned and challenged the Enlightenment's foundational ideas. Why did the philosophical questions of the pantheism controversy cause such a heated debate?

The authority of reason was a fundamental principle for the philosophers of the Enlightenment, who trusted its ability to discover the truth through critique of unfounded beliefs. The assumption was, that "reason could justify morality, religion and the state" with greater authority than traditional beliefs (Beiser, *The fate of reason* 2). However, the main philosophies representing the Enlightenment ideas, Kantianism and Spinozism, seemed to undermine, rather than justify beliefs in morality, religion and the state. Kantianism was criticized for leading to solipsism because of its claim that knowledge is only possible through reason, while Spinozism was criticized for leading to atheism and fatalism because of its core doctrine of determinism. This, then, seemed to weaken the authority of morality, religion and the state through challenging the authority of the Bible, the orthodox religions, and the belief and trust in society and its laws. In addition to this, Spinoza's philosophy was regarded as an attempt to rationalize religion. Spinozism was associated with pantheism because of its identification of nature with God. It was also associated with biblical criticism, both through Spinoza's own statements[19],

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[19] Peter Park writes: "Spinoza denied that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch and did not believe in prophecy or the miracles recounted in the Bible. Spinoza also claimed that there was no cognitive content in the Book of Revelation, and he denied the validity of popular forms of religion as well as formal theological systems of Judaism and Christianity" (86).

and the efforts of protestant theologians, including Johann Ernesti,[20] to resolve the conflict between faith and reason by historicizing both. Spinozism therefore challenged and threatened orthodox religions, which led to accusations of heresy and atheism. In this context, then, the accusations that the Enlightenment's faith in reason necessarily would lead to atheism and fatalism had some bearing. And Jacobi's claim that Lessing was a Spinozist, was an attack not only on the legacy of Lessing as a philosopher, but on the whole establishment of Enlightenment. Jacobi's exposure of Lessing as a Spinozist provoked a discussion on the philosophical foundation of the Enlightenment's trust in reason. To Jacobi, the full consequence of this trust in reason, was nihilism, a concept he defined as the "philosophical denial of the existence of man's free will" (Park 85). By introducing this debate, Jacobi managed to put the conflict between reason and faith on full display; a conflict which now took the form of "the dilemma of a rational nihilism or an irrational fideism" (Beiser, *The fate of reason* 44).

If Jacobi's intention had been to convince the philosophers of the Enlightenment to return to traditional faith, he failed. Instead, the pantheism controversy raised the interest for Spinozism in Germany, and Goethe, Novalis, Hölderlin, Herder, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Schelling, and also Friedrich Schlegel became Spinoza enthusiasts as a consequence of the debate (Beiser, *The fate of reason* 44). When it comes to Schlegel, however, his view on pantheism, religion, revelation and reason shifted as he moved from his romantic phase to his late phase. In *On the Language*, Schlegel's primary target of criticism is pantheism, which is consistent with Nassar's description in *The Romantic Absolute*, where she places Schlegel's "critique of pantheistic religion in favor of Catholicism" (87) in his late phase, after the Cologne lectures (1804-06). Relative to the pantheism controversy, *On the Language* positions Schlegel on Jacobi's side in a critique of reason and a belief in revelation as the origin of truth, echoing Jacobi's statement, that "Every proof presupposes something already proven, the principle of which is *Revelation*" (Jacobi cited in Pinkard 93).

The core question of the pantheism controversy was the conflict between faith and reason, raised within the context of Spinozism interpreted as pantheism and atheism. These themes are reflected in Schlegel's *On the Language* in his view on the conflict between revelation and

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[20] Johann Ernesti (1707-1781), German theologian, hermeneuticist and philologist, who focused on biblical interpretation. According to Peter Park in "A Catholic Apologist", Schlegel was influenced by Ernesti's theory of a grammatico-historical method of interpretation presented in his *Elementary Principles of Interpretation* (90).

reason, his view on religion and in his critique of pantheism. Schlegel's stance on these questions therefore also situates him with regards to the pantheism controversy. My view is, that Schlegel's stance on these matters influences his approach to Indian philosophy, how he interprets and portrays it. Schlegel's view on religion is often understood in light of his conversion to Catholicism in 1808. It is reasonable to believe that Schlegel's personal choice of conversion was based on ideas also expressed in his philosophical writings, which seems to be the case in *On the Language.* But in which way did Schlegel's stance in regard to these questions shape his approach to, and interpretation of Indian philosophy? And how is this expressed in the text *On the Language*? In the following, I will examine how Schlegel's view on these questions influences his hermeneutical project in *On the Language.*

2.3 Revelation and reason

The influence of Schlegel's view on revelation and reason is shown in how he frames the genealogy of epochs of ideas according to these concepts. Schlegel's genealogy of the Indian history of thought is arranged according to three assumptions. The first assumption is, that there is an original revelation followed by a history of rationality. In this way, Schlegel's view on revelation and reason frames his historical timeline, starting with an original revelation and ending in "unassisted reason", which is pantheism (490). The second assumption is, that revelation and reason are contrasts, placed on opposite ends of a scale, where revelation represents "truth" and reason the "perverted conception of revealed truth" (472), or "delusion" (490). Schlegel's genealogy then shows the increasing degree of tension between these two concepts throughout history, understood as original revelation of truth on the one hand, and degeneration of revealed truth by reason on the other hand. The third assumption is, that the original revelation is divine, religious, and that the revealed ideas are accurately described in the Bible. This essentially connects the original revelation inseparably to religion, and especially to Christianity. Reason, as represented by philosophy, then becomes the cause for "the misinterpretation of holy wisdom", leading to "error and distorted views" (473) of the religious ideas. Schlegel tries to prove these assumptions in three ways. First, he presents his theory on the origin of language. This theory holds that Sanskrit is the original language from which every other language has developed, and that the development of languages over the course of history represents degradation of the pure excellency of Sanskrit. This theory is meant to support the assumption of an original revelation followed by a history of rationality, as well as the assumption, that the history of rationality involves degradation when compared to the original revelation. Secondly, Schlegel takes support in religious authority, comparing Indian

religious and philosophical ideas with Christianity, and selected texts from the Indian literature with the Bible. These comparisons are meant to support both the assumption of an original revelation, as described in the Bible, and the assumption of revelation representing divine truth, which reason alone has no access to. Thirdly, Schlegel takes support in philosophy, comparing Indian systems of thought with European ones. By comparing and historicizing philosophy, he demonstrates the limits of reason by showing how it keeps repeating itself, presenting the same ideas both within the same cultures over time, but also in different cultures. These comparisons support the assumption that reason is, if not delusion, then at least limited in comparison to revelation. In the following, I will describe how Schlegel establishes these views in *On the Language* and how these views support his stance on revelation and reason. In addition, I will show how these views influence Schlegel's approach to and portrayal of Indian philosophy, and therefore are important in order to understand his hermeneutics.

2.3.1 Schlegel's theory on the origin of language

Why does Schlegel start his text trying to prove a theory on the origin of language? How is this theory related to his view on revelation and reason, and on the Indian history of thought in general? And most important, how does Schlegel's view on language influence his interpretation and understanding of Indian philosophy?

As already mentioned in my summary of the text *On the Language* in the previous chapter, Schlegel's theory on the origin of language is the main theme for his first chapter. The theory holds, that Sanskrit is the most ancient language and the common origin of all other languages. The theory further holds, that languages change over time in a process of degeneration. Schlegel supports this theory with his study of comparative grammar. The theory of a common origin of language is, according to Schlegel, supported by grammatical similarities between Sanskrit language and the languages he uses for comparison, primarily the classical languages Greek and Lantin, but also Persian, German, French and English, and to a lesser degree to Armenian, Slavonian, Celtic, Coptic and Hebrew. The claim, that Sanskrit is the most ancient language, is based on what he characterizes as its superior internal grammatical structure. Schlegel describes highly declined languages, like Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, as truly simple, artistic, and highly organized, with Sanskrit representing the "best example of perfect simplicity" (445). This perfect simplicity in its grammatical structure shows, according to Schlegel, that Sanskrit is the most ancient language. It also shows that the change that occurs in languages over time takes the form of degradation, revealed in the less perfectly organized inner structures of every other

language compared to Sanskrit. In addition, Schlegel takes his findings as a proof of humans' intelligence in ancient time, which is essential in order to defend an original revelation. The structure of Sanskrit language, he writes, "proves that the most profound study and the clearest intelligence were early called into operation; for without much labor and reflection it would have been impossible to frame a language like the Indian" (454). In this way, Schlegel demonstrates a parallel between the origin of language and an original revelation, as well as a parallel in the tendency of both structure of language and the ideas of the original revelation to degenerate over time. Schlegel's theory on the origin of language therefore also supports his theory of an original revelation followed by a history of degradation due to rationality.

In addition to this, however, Schlegel argues that there is a necessary connection between language and the mind as consciousness, thoughts and ideas. Sanskrit language, he writes, "in its simplest form exemplifies the loftiest ideas of the pure world of thought, and displays the entire ground plan of the consciousness" (454). First of all, then, the excellence of Sanskrit language, as expressed through its internal structure, implies a highly developed consciousness. In addition, Schlegel establishes a relationship between the qualities of the language and the mindset of its people by stating that language "actually conveyed the sentiments of the race of men then existing" (456), and that it was "intrinsically bound up with their temperament and philosophy" (457). Schlegel further writes that language originates in "a deep feeling, and a clear discriminating intelligence" (455), and that language is intrinsically bound both to a people's "philosophy", and to their "sentiments" or "temperament" (456). From this it logically follows, that the philosophy (developed from rationality and thinking) and poetry (developed from feelings, or "sentiments" or "temperament" in Schlegel's words) expressed in a certain language, are intrinsically linked to its people. "Confirmed by investigating the structure of the language itself", Schlegel writes, "Indian is almost entirely a philosophical or rather a religious language, and perhaps none, not even excepting the Greek, is so philosophically clear and sharply defined" (457). He also states; "In the Indian language, profound philosophical signification and perspicuity of expression are even more striking than poetical inspiration or imagery, although…the latter property also is most abundantly developed" (457). Through this line of reasoning, Schlegel introduces an argument for a correlation between the structure of the language, its use within certain topics (philosophy, religion and poetry), and the mind or mindset of the people where the language has originated. He further suggests, that time changes people's relation to language. Our "perception of the whole activity and influence" of a certain language, in this case Sanskrit, "can hardly be fully sensible, the ear being now dulled and

confused by a multiplicity of various impressions, and the original stamp of each word being obliterated by long use" (446). From this follows, that people's perception and comprehension of the conceptual expressions of the language, like philosophy, religion and poetry, also change, and that language, thinking and ideas are intrinsically historical. Schlegel's theory of language, then, proposes an intrinsic connection between the structure of language and the historical expression of consciousness as shown in religious, philosophical and poetical ideas. This means, that Schlegel not only points out that there is a parallel between the development of language, consciousness, thinking and ideas throughout history; the intrinsic connection between them necessitates and explains a parallel development. In this way, Schlegel's theory of language both supports his theory of an original revelation as well as his theory of historical degradation due to rationality. By connecting language intrinsically to the historical expression of religious and philosophical ideas, Schlegel also establishes the central role of language in hermeneutics, both in terms of tracking the connection between language and ideas throughout history, but also, and mainly, in terms of the integrated connection between the grammatical structure of a language and its ideas expressed as philosophy, religion, mythology and poetry. I will therefore in the following expand on how Schlegel's theory on language is related to his hermeneutics and how it has influenced his interpretation and portrayal of Indian philosophy.

How would we expect Schlegel's theory of language to shape his approach to Indian history of thought? Firstly, changes within a language would be expected to correspond to changes within the history of rationality, and tracking the changes in a language backwards to its original form would be expected to lead to ideas closer to an original revelation. Schlegel also confirms this when he states, that a "review of the entire scheme of mythology [...] combined at the same time with an inquiry into the historical genealogy of the language, will afford a clue to assist our progress through that ancient labyrinth, and to point out to us the way to return to holiness and light" (497). If the aim is to identify an original revealed divine truth, then the study of language will be of help to find the most ancient ideas. This also explains why Schlegel states, that "all works on philosophy [...] should trace the language from its first natural origin down to the point at which it first became enfeebled, and thence sunk deeper and deeper in the abyss of degradation" (525). Tracking the original language will help tracking the original revealed truth.

Secondly, because Schlegel's theory on language proposes an intrinsic connection between the structure of language and the historical expression of ideas, the structure of language becomes

an important key to understanding them. For Schlegel, the structure of a language represents its internal grammatical structure, as demonstrated in his comparative linguistic study in the first chapter of *On the Language*, as opposed to a common knowledge of language. Hence the full mastery of language, including its grammar, must be important in hermeneutics. This explains Schlegel's interest in studying Sanskrit in his approach to Indian philosophy and his comparative linguistic study presented in the first chapter of his book. It is also in line with his explicit comments on language and hermeneutics in his third chapter, stressing the importance of competence of language as well as philosophy in the study of literature, in order to avoid philology to be "degraded into an empty fruitless study of letters and words" (522). This view, that knowledge of language at the level of philology is necessary in order to understand philosophical and religious texts, may be associated with an influence on Schlegel by Ernesti, as suggested by Peter Park in his article *A Catholic Apologist in a Pantheistic World*. According to Park, learning the ancient languages of the texts was for Schlegel "a hermeneutical necessity – a necessity made obvious by the great Biblical philologists of the eighteenth century, Michaelis and Ernesti" (90). Ernesti had emphasized that "in scriptural exegesis the true sense of a passage is the grammatical-historical sense" (91), stressing the grammatical approach over the logical and philosophical. In contrast to this, however, Schlegel seems to integrate the approaches of language, history and philosophy, stating that the optimal approach combines with "knowledge of language an earnest study of philosophy, and the whole abundance of historical science" (522).

How, then, has Schlegel's theory of language influenced his interpretation and portrayal of Indian history of thought? First of all, because Schlegel's theory on language emphasizes the importance of language in the interpretive process, it endorses a philological approach. Schlegel demonstrates this in his first chapter, "On the Indian Language", by presenting the results of his comparative linguistic studies. This makes his approach distinctly scientific, for which his text is also famous. In addition, his knowledge of Sanskrit enables him to be the first to publish translations of Indian texts into the German directly from Sanskrit. These features give his text academic weight, which had two important consequences; on the one hand it tended to inspire further academic Indian studies, on the other hand it tended to support the views he presented in *On the Language*. In his book *The German Gita*, Bradley Herling explains how "Schlegel's translation bears the imprint of his interpretive structure and is present in the intimate, technical level of textual practice" (120). This is due both to his choice of religious and philosophical concepts in the process of translation, and due to his choice of literary works, as well as his

selection of excerpts from this literature. I will not cover the subject of translation in depth, but Herling's critique is a relevant and interesting observation in this context. Schlegel's scientific approach gives his views academic weight, but his views still represent interpretations that are influenced by other aspects of his hermeneutics.

The second way in which Schlegel's theory on language influences his interpretation and portrayal of Indian history of thought, is by supporting his view on revelation and reason. This is because Schlegel's theory on language is consistent with and supports the theory of an original revelation and historical degeneration over time by reason. In this way, his theory on language gives additional weight to his genealogy of Indian thought as epochs of ideas, which in turn is mainly based on his historical methodology and his view on revelation and reason.

2.3.2 Schlegel's view on religion

Schlegel's view on religion is important because it is closely connected to his theory on revelation and reason, and because it can be seen as influencing his interpretation and portrayal of Indian history of thought. But what is his view, and how is it expressed in *On the Language*?

Schlegel's view on religion is shown in explicit comments on the superiority of Christianity and the Bible as sources of truth compared to every other system of thought. This is apparent by several statements in the third chapter. Examples are his belief that comprehension of the Holy Scriptures "will lead to the knowledge of pure and eternal truth" (517) and that "the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament must consequently be the true one" (518). Schlegel here articulates both his belief in the Bible (or Holy Scripture) as a text that conveys truth and his belief in the Christian interpretation of the Bible. Schlegel also writes, that the only fact "absolutely essential as a point of religious belief, is recorded in the Mosaic history" (515). The essential point that Schlegel refers to, is taken from the Mosaic records of the Bible, which confirms his view on the Bible's authority. Schlegel further addresses the question of comparison between Christianity and what he calls Oriental thought. "The contrast of truth with error ever places the former in a more majestic and transcendent light, and the history of ancient philosophy, of the Oriental system in general, will therefore furnish a most instructive comment on the Holy Scriptures" (516). In this statement, Schlegel's purpose of comparing religious ideas is shown in that he sets the Bible, in its Christian interpretation, as the standard against which every other system of thought must be held. And further, the correctness or truthfulness of other systems of thought depend on the similarity they show to Christianity.

But how does Schlegel's view on religion relate to his stance on the conflict between revelation and reason? Schlegel develops his theory on revelation and reason in the second chapter, where he focuses on establishing his genealogy of epochs, based on the core theory of an original revelation followed by a history of rationality. Here, he also establishes its relation to religion. Schlegel tries to substantiate his theory on revelation and reason by referring to and taking support in religious authority. This is shown in two fundamental choices that he makes; the first is his framing of the conflict between revelation and reason in line with religious ideas, the second is his choice of ideas or epochs to portray. In addition, Schlegel makes use of his comparative technique throughout the chapter, repeatedly referring to religion. Although Schlegel at the beginning of the chapter states that he does not carry out a comparative analysis (467), his comparative technique is shown in his juxtaposing the Indian texts with the Bible, and the ideas from Indian religion and mythology with ideas from Christianity. In the following, I will outline how these choices are shown in the text and how they serve to connect religion to his theory on revelation and reason.

2.3.2.1 Schlegel's framing of the conflict between revelation and reason

Schlegel's genealogy of epochs is, as previously discussed, arranged according to his assumption of an original revelation of truth followed by a history of rationality, which causes a degeneration of revealed truth. Schlegel connects every part of this model to religion. He first connects original revelation to religion by stating that man, in ancient times, "was not left without God in the world" (465), and elaborates further, that "the early Indians possessed a knowledge of the true God" (471). These statements place God and religion at the origin of the historical development. But in addition to this, he connects original revelation to the Bible and Christianity by stating that "what (the Holy Scriptures) teach is not based on a philosophical system, but on Holy Revelation", which "will lead to the knowledge of pure and eternal truth" (517). According to Schlegel, then, the Bible contains the teachings of the original revelation. By comparing the biblical doctrines with similar ideas from Indian literature, Schlegel believes to have found proof for an original revelation. Differing ideas do not, according to Schlegel, contradict his thesis of a common, universal original revelation. "We cannot suppose that original revelation to have been communicated by the immediate teaching of the Father" (473), Schlegel writes, emphasizing instead a "living principle of truth" (173) which would express itself in language. Schlegel takes the similarities of ideas as support for the theory of an original revelation, and the differences as support for the theory of degeneration of revealed truth by

reason. By referring to the Bible, using it as an authority, and by comparative techniques, Schlegel establishes original revelation as a religious, even biblical or Christian idea.

Schlegel's theory of degradation is also connected to religion, first of all by the fact that degradation represents a diminution of the revealed divine truth by reason. In addition, the inspiration for this theory can be seen in Schlegel's statement, that the essential "point of religious belief", is that "man was created in the image of God, but that by his own sin he voluntarily debased that divine image, and fell from the pure light of happiness in which he had at first rejoiced" (515). The essential point that Schlegel refers to, is the Christian doctrine of original sin. This theory can be seen as the religious analogy to Schlegel's theory on revelation and reason, in which man degenerates from a state of truth because of reason. In this way, then, Schlegel creates a connection between religion and his theory on revelation and reason, where degeneration represents the effect on revelatory truth by reason. It is also worth noticing, referring back to Schlegel's philosophy of history, that the theory of a degenerative development of ideas throughout history represents a break with his earlier views. In every earlier reference to his philosophy of history, Schlegel describes the historical development of ideas as a progress towards truth.

The connection between revelation and religion is further confirmed by Schlegel's discussion on pantheism, which represents the last one of Schlegel's epochs. "Pantheism is the offspring of unassisted reason" (490), he states. Pantheism must therefore represent philosophy, which stands in contrast to revelation and truth. This explains why pantheism, according to Schlegel, has "false conceptions of the infinite God" (477) and is "destructive to morality" (495). If religion represents revelatory truth in the form of the Christian interpretation of the Bible, and the effect of reason is degeneration of this truth, then pure reason must represent absence of truth and therefore also of morality. The teachings stemming from revelation represent religion, and stand in contrast to teachings based on reason or philosophy. This contrast is well-known from the pantheism controversy, in the form of a conflict between orthodox religion or faith and pantheism seen as an attempt to rationalize religion, indicating its influence on Schlegel's approach to the thematics.

2.3.2.2 Schlegel's choice of ideas or epochs to portray

Schlegel's genealogy of epochs is shaped by his choice of ideas; which ideas to include and portray, and which to exclude. Based on Schlegel's description of the Indian history of thought

as the degrading influence of reason on an original divine revelation, the epochs follow a pattern of a diminution from revelation to reason; from religion to philosophy. Therefore, the framing of the ideas according to this development already connects it to religion. But in addition to this, the ideas that have given the epochs of Schlegel's genealogy their names; emanation, metempsychosis, astrology, the principle of dualism, and pantheism, are all examples of, or by Schlegel interpreted to be, philosophy of religion. Schlegel also defines and describes the ideas according to their relation to revelation and reason, thus clarifying their position within the developmental sequence. I have already given an outline of the ideas in my first chapter. Here I will only mention the most essential points in order to illustrate how Schlegel presents his theory.

Emanation is, according to Schlegel, the first epoch after the original revelation, and the closest to revelatory truth. This explains why Schlegel writes, that the "doctrine of emanation, if treated as the offspring of natural reason, is totally inexplicable, but, considered as a perverted conception of revealed truth, becomes at once intelligible." (472) The doctrine is close to revelatory truth, but still "a perverted conception" (472) of it. Therefore, as "the root and basis of all primitive superstition" (474), it forms the basis for the development of Schlegel's genealogy of ideas. Schlegel establishes a close connection between the doctrine of emanation and Christianity by repeatedly comparing the ideas. He approves of emanation as "a system of reunion with the divine essence" (475), thus connecting the idea of emanation with divinity and therefore religion. Metempsychosis, defined by Schlegel as "transmigration of souls" (475), he describes as a doctrine "inculcating the necessity of repentance and purification as the terms of reunion with the Supreme Being" (476). In this way, he connects even this idea with "the Supreme Being", divinity or God. Schlegel next portrays the belief of astrology and the wild worship of nature, pointing out, how astrology might "supply a clue for tracing the process of degeneracy from the religious idea once entertained to one so entirely material" (478), and how "the wild worship of nature" shows how "the adoration of the Creator so easily sinks and degenerates into that of the thing created" (478). In this way, he links the doctrine to degeneration as well as to religion, again characterizing degeneration as a process of change that moves away from certain religious ideas. Next, Schlegel describes the doctrine of the two principles as "the worship of light, and the sun" (482). This doctrine is the last one of the systems of thoughts that he characterizes as a religion, naming it "the religion of light" (488). But he also points out that this religion, "originally so pure and beautiful, has been much corrupted" (488). This refers to the next epoch, which is that of pantheism. "When the doctrine

of the two principles ceased to be a religious belief", Schlegel writes, it was "degraded into a merely philosophical system" (492), which resulted in the epoch of pantheism. On pantheism Schlegel writes, that it is "framed according to the mere mechanism of reason" (492). This doctrine ranks the furthest from revelatory truth, and pantheism therefore represents the endpoint of the development from revelation to reason; from religious insight to philosophical reasoning.

But why has Schlegel selected these ideas for his genealogy in the first place? Schlegel offers no other explanation for his choice of ideas, than that they fit into his structure of historical development according to revelation and reason. The doctrine of emanation is chosen for its "Indian origin", its "antiquity" (468) and its closeness to "revealed truth" (472). Every following epoch represents a necessary historical development, according to Schlegel, which is in line both with Schlegel's philosophy of history and his theory on revelation and reason. Under the heading of "The historical method. Evaluation and critique." earlier in this chapter, however, I argue that Schlegel's selection of ideas should be questioned based on their lack of foundation in traditional philosophical schools of thought in India. Seen in light of Schlegel's late religious views, it seems like his selection of ideas is based on their religious content and their suitability when it comes to illustrate his theory of the degenerative influence of reason on revelatory truth. This represents an interpretational choice, which creates a religious instead of a philosophical portrayal of Indian history of thought. As an interpretive practice, this is highly questionable.

2.3.2.3 The influence of Schlegel's comparative choices

Schlegel's comparative technique is shown in how he juxtaposes the Indian texts with the Bible, and the ideas from Indian religion and mythology with ideas from Christianity. Even though Schlegel refers to several texts, including the Vedas, the Puranas, the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana, and Kalidasa's drama Sakuntala (494), he takes the Laws of Manu as his main reference and main authority for his interpretation of Indian thought. Schlegel bases this choice both on the text's age, as already mentioned, and its content. The text represents "the basis and groundwork of the Indian constitution and legislature (of Indian *life*, in fact)" (468), he writes, but he also refers to its content as cosmology, mythology, philosophy and religion (468, 477). It is worth noticing that Schlegel in general ignores philosophical texts belonging to the

classical philosophical schools of thought[21], and rather chooses to focus on a text that are more characterized by a mixture of subjects. The main texts, then, from the Indian and the Western tradition that are held up against each other, are the Bible and the Laws of Manu, thereby implying that they are equivalent, comparable, and that Indian thought expresses religious view in the same way that biblical theology does. This same tendency for comparison to religion is also seen in Schlegel's description of the ideas that he selects for his genealogy of epochs. When discussing the content of these ideas, he uses a biblical or Christian-religious language. Examples of this, is his mention of "the Father" (473) in reference to the original revelation in India, "the eternal strife of hell" (469) in reference to the Indian doctrine of emanation, and the claim, that "the early Indians possessed a knowledge of the true God" (471). It is also shown in his use of capital letter when referring to "God" (471), "He" (472) and the "Creator" (477). This suggests a belief in a Christian creator God, as opposed to a reference to "god" as a more abstract concept. These choices then, of selecting one main Indian text for comparison with the Bible, and of using a language characteristic for religion, represents a religious interpretation of Indian thought and contributes to establish Indian thought in a religious-, instead of in a philosophical tradition. This fact is, however, obscured by his use of the concepts of "religion" and "philosophy". There is a lack of distinction in his use of these concepts. He characterizes the ideas of the five epochs as both religion and philosophy (495), and uses the concepts interchangeably (488). The second chapter is titled "On the Indian Philosophy", while he early in the third chapter summarizes its content as covering the "question of religion" (496). The ambivalence in his use of these concepts, is consistent with his genealogy of epochs, which describes the historical development of thought as a degenerative influence of reason on revelation, of philosophy on religion. To Schlegel, the epochs of ideas don't represent either religion or philosophy, but both religion and philosophy, of which each is present in various degrees. This way of presenting Indian thought does, however, establish Indian thought even more firmly in a religious tradition, now classifying its entire history of philosophy as history of religion. This is also relevant in a post-colonial perspective, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

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[21] These include the Samkhyakarika of the Samkhya philosophy, the Nyayasutras of the Nyaya philosophy, and the Mimamsasutras of the Mimamsa philosophy. These are the three schools of thought that Schlegel mentions, translating them as physics (Samkhya), ethics (Mimamsa) and dialectics (Nyaya), showing his knowledge of their existence.

In my opinion, Schlegel's view of religion is not only related to, but can be seen as a main reason for his stance on the conflict between revelation and reason. Schlegel's explicit characterization of Christianity as representing "truth and wisdom" (518) in the third chapter, can be considered a conclusion based on the arguments presented in the previous two chapters. A careful examination of Schlegel's text shows that he builds his argument throughout the three chapters, both implicitly through structuring the text and explicitly through stated comments. In the first chapter, he argues, that man was intelligent from the beginning, because his language was pure and perfect and suited for philosophical and religious ideas. Schlegel presents this new stance in opposition to the opinion that "the original condition of man was one of almost unreasoning stupidity, from which he gradually attained certain degrees of intelligence" (465). It is important for Schlegel to establish man as intelligent with a superior language, because this is a prerequisite for the truth of an original revelation. The view he argues against, holds that language and philosophy both have evolved parallel to the development of reason, which is in conflict with the belief in an original divine revelation. In the second chapter, Schlegel wants to prove the theory of an original divine revelation, followed by a history of rationality with a degradation of the revealed truth. This is supported mainly by comparative techniques, with the intention to show that an original revelation has been universal and recorded in several cultures. This ambition influences his portrayal of Indian history of thought as a genealogy of epochs of ideas. In the last chapter, having "proven" an original revelation, it is important for Schlegel to determine that "the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament must [...] be the true one" (518), which establishes the original revelation as true, and correctly interpreted and described in the Bible. For Schlegel, then, Christianity and the Bible represent sources of truth, which make them the standards against which all other ideas are compared and evaluated. Schlegel's preference for Christianity in the form of Catholicism is frequently noted in the secondary literature, mentioned by Herling, Germana, Nassar, Park, Forster and Figueira. This view is based on Schlegel's conversion to Catholicism in 1808. But it can also be derived from his arguments, which tend to be in agreement with Catholic theology, like the skepticism towards reason and the belief in divine original revelation. These views also show Schlegel's stance on the pantheism controversy, which places him in agreement with Jacobi in a call to return to orthodox religion and faith. "The Mosaic history", he writes, can "guide the chosen few into the divinely appointed way of light and salvation" (516). His hope is, he concludes in the last chapter of *On the Language*, that the study of Oriental literature will "bring back a new idea of the Divinity" (526). This perspective supports Peter Park's claim in *A Catholic Apologist,* stating that Schlegel was a defender of Roman Catholicism (84).

2.3.3 Schlegel's critique of reason. Relativizing and historicizing philosophy

Schlegel's critique of reason is expressed in his focus on its influence throughout history, its tendency to produce recurring ideas and its inadequacy in accessing truth. The genealogy of epochs is based on the premise of an original divine revelation of truth, followed by a history of rationality, which represents degradation of this truth. Schlegel emphasizes the influence of reason over the influence of religion in the development of the epochs, and describes how the influence of rationality degrades religion into what he calls "perverted" (472) ideas. In this way the influence of reason throughout history is integrated in his genealogy of epochs. The last one of these epochs is pantheism, which "is the offspring of unassisted reason" (490). He further writes: "Oriental philosophy and its influence on the human mind has never been more deeply debased than in its alliance with Pantheism" (495). The influence of reason, then, is criticized as a perversion and degradation of truth, with a debasing effect on the mind, and Indian thought is taken to be an accomplice in this development.

Even though Schlegel primarily focuses on religion in his comparisons between Indian and Western thought, he does include some pointed references to philosophy. His description of pantheism is the most elaborated, but in addition he gives an outline of idealism, and also includes scattered comments regarding other systems of thought, primarily referring to ancient Greek philosophy. But he doesn't dismiss reason or philosophy altogether, it rather seems he wants to demonstrate its limitation in accessing truth and morality. In order to show this, he uses comparative techniques, on the one hand demonstrating the occurrence of the same ideas within the Indian and the Western history of thought, and on the other, showing the contrast between the perfection or purity of religious ideas compared to philosophical ideas. This is best shown by his portrayal of pantheism.

Pantheism is first contrasted with emanation, which emphasizes the difference between an idea born of reason compared to one born of revelation. The difference is, according to Schlegel, seen both in the conception of God, and in morality. On the conception of God, he writes, that emanation shows a "noble purity and simplicity" (472), while pantheism shows "irregular abstract and false conceptions of the infinite God" (477). On morality he writes:
"The pure morality inculcated by the doctrine of emanation [...] gives it the superiority over pantheism" (477). Pantheism, in contrast, he describes as "destructive to morality" (495). In this way, he establishes the contrast not only between emanation and pantheism, but also

between revelation and reason. Schlegel next creates a link between the Indian doctrine of pantheism and the European one. "Pantheism is the offspring of unassisted reason, and therefore marks the transition from the Oriental to the European philosophy" (490). It is difficult not to read this statement as Schlegel positioning himself in relation to the pantheism controversy. His condemnation of pantheism as a doctrine is clear. In addition, his critique of pantheism also involves a critique of reason, supporting Jacobi's position in the pantheism controversy. Schlegel's historical and comparative perspective on ideas also make it clear, that while European pantheism was contemporary, the Indian doctrine was ancient. In *A Catholic Apologist*, Peter Park suggests, that Schlegel's intention was to "put European philosophy on the same plane with Asian philosophy, to historicize it and relativize it and thereby to throw doubt on any claims of its superiority or truth" (96). Schlegel's comparison of Indian and European pantheism can be seen as an example of this strategy.

2.3.4 Evaluation and critique

How has Schlegel's theory on revelation and reason influenced his interpretation and portrayal of Indian history of thought? What is the hermeneutical consequence of this approach?

There are two main features of his theory of revelation and reason that I regard as having hermeneutical consequences; first the connection between revelation and religion and between reason and philosophy, and second, the contrast between revelation as truth and reason as the degrading of truth. Schlegel creates the connection between revelation and religion by identifying the original revelation as biblical truth, by selecting religious ideas for his genealogy of epochs, and by comparing every one of these systems of thought with Christian theology. These choices have the effect of establishing Indian thought in a religious tradition, both by presenting a selection of religious systems of thought (as opposed to philosophical ones) in a genealogy of epochs, and also by suggesting biblical ideas as the natural basis for comparison. Schlegel further emphasizes the contrast between revelation and reason as representing truth and degradation away from truth, respectively. The epochs, then, follow a pattern of development from revelation to reason; from religion to philosophy. This gives a gradual transition between religion and philosophy, conceptually as well as historically. In this way, religion and philosophy become inseparably connected. Indian history of thought is not separated into a religious and a philosophical tradition, but rather portrayed as a tradition of religion, influenced by philosophy. Schlegel's correlation of revelation with truth and reason with degrading of truth and even "perversion" of truth, also allows for an evaluation of the

truthfulness of the respective systems of thoughts. The truthfulness is then reflected in the morals of each epoch. This represents a basis for a grading of their value, and Schlegel assesses every system of thought according to this model. Emanation, as the system closest to revelation, he characterizes as pure and superior, while pantheism, as the system born of pure reason, is "destructive to morality" (495), "dangerous" (469), "fatal" (495), and "assumes a fearful character" (490). In this way, Schlegel not only portrays Indian history of thought, but also evaluates it according to his own theory on revelation and reason. Schlegel's view, favoring revelation over reason, corresponds with Jacobi's stance in the pantheism controversy. Schlegel's interpretation of original revelation as biblical truth also corresponds with Jacobi's view in the pantheism controversy. In addition, this view is in line with Schlegel's personal choice of converting to Catholicism in the same year that the text *On the Language* was published.

In light of the critique above, why did Schlegel's interpretation appear so plausible? Summing up, two main hermeneutical choices stand out. The first is his choice of constructing a model of genealogy based on his understanding of philosophy, including both his philosophy of history and his theory on revelation and reason. The model that Schlegel presents, is a carefully designed construction based on his own philosophy, and meant as a contribution to the philosophical debate of his time. This contradicts a description of Indian history of philosophy, which one would expect to be based on its presentation within the Indian tradition. The second hermeneutical choice that stands out, is Schlegel's choice of source literature as well as the excerpts he has selected for translation. The source literature is chosen with the intention to cover primarily religion and mythology, rather than philosophy. This is important because it sets the premises for Schlegel's approach to Indian thought, and therefore also, and even more definitively, his readers' access, because the choice of the texts and their interpretations has already been made for them. The significance of these choices can be appreciated by noting which literature Schlegel chooses not to include or refer to as source literature, and which parts of the texts he avoids in his translations. The texts that Schlegel has ignored cannot represent a hermeneutical resistance to Schlegel's interpretation. By ignoring them, he avoids interpretational uncertainty, and presents a reading that seems unchallenged. His interpretation therefore seems to be supported by the literature, while he fails to include, and also to mention, the literature that would have contradicted his portrayal of Indian thought.

2.4 Contradicting views

As already shown, Schlegel's *On the Language and Philosophy of the Indians* is a hermeneutic endeavor, representing the application of his theory into practice. Although the text demonstrates a questionable interpretive practice, it allows for an extraction of his implemented ideas, which can be interpreted as implicit statements of his theory. In addition, some aspects of his theory of hermeneutics are outlined through explicit comments, articulating his views on the method of interpretation. Schlegel's explicit statements, combined with his implemented ideas understood as implicit statements, makes it possible to construct a model of his theory of hermeneutics. In this way, some criteria of Schlegel's hermeneutics can be established, as shown by my analysis of the hermeneutics in *On the language* in this chapter. The weakness of this method, however, is that these criteria cannot represent the full model of Schlegel's theory of hermeneutics. They can only represent the model of Schlegel's theory in his text *On the Language*. The reason for this, is first of all, that the text belongs to Schlegel's late phase, expressing ideas that differ from those of his romantic and classicist phases. As his philosophical ideas, like his philosophy of history and his theory on revelation and reason, have been shown to have such a significant influence on his hermeneutics, these criteria, then, will not necessarily apply to or correspond with other philosophical works of his. In addition to this, the main part of Schlegel's hermeneutical model in *On the Language* in based on an extraction of his implemented ideas, assuming that this represents his application of the theory put into practice. This process of extraction depends on interpretation to a much larger degree than an explicit account of hermeneutical ideas, and will therefore be characterized by a greater uncertainty when it comes to the precision of the content. The process of extracting Schlegel's ideas from his practice, is also based on the assumption, that there is correspondence between his theory and his practice. The possibility must be considered, that Schlegel's implementation of these hermeneutical criteria was not an explicit part of his hermeneutical theory, but rather a philosophical model that he applied with unintentional or unplanned hermeneutical consequences. In order to answer these questions, it is relevant to compare my findings with other assessments of Schlegel's hermeneutics.

Schlegel never wrote systematically on hermeneutics in order to present a consistent theory. There are, however, explicit comments on his theory of hermeneutics scattered throughout his authorship. The work of outlining Schlegel's theory on hermeneutics based on Schlegel's full authorship has been done by Michal N. Forster in his text *German philosophy of language: from Schlegel to Hegel and beyond*. Forster's construal of Schlegel's hermeneutics is therefore

relevant for my analysis. In the following, I will outline the main aspects of Forster's presentation of Schlegel's theory of hermeneutics, as well as examine to which degree they are consistent with Schlegel's hermeneutics in *On the language*. Finally, I will discuss the causes of the discrepancies I find between Forster's account of Schlegel's hermeneutics, and my analysis of Schlegel's hermeneutics in *On the language*.

According to Forster, Schlegel was more influential in the development of modern hermeneutics than has been acknowledged[22]. Forster ascribes Schlegel's importance in the field of hermeneutics to the contributions of five (families of) ideas. Four of these are relevant to textual interpretations. The first of these ideas, that "genre is essential in interpretation of literary and non-linguistic art" (48)[23], emphasizes the importance of correct identification of genre. According to Forster, this idea is based on Schlegel's conception of a valid and real distinction between classical and romantic poetry. Schlegel had himself made the mistake of criticizing romantic poetry according to the characteristics and standards of the genre of classical poetry. Forster describes how Schlegel in the main body of his work *On the Study of Greek Poetry* (1797) "strongly valorized the "classical" at the expense of the "interesting" (later "romantic") poetry (12), because he considered romantic poetry to fail in satisfying the genre requirements. Later in the same year, however, Schlegel added a preface to the same text, where "classical" and "interesting" (romantic) poetry was given "equal validity and value" (12). This change of opinion was caused by his recognition, that classical and romantic poetry were "two different, but equally well-defined and legitimate genres" (13). Hence, Schlegel knew from experience that failing to recognize the genre of a text would lead to failure in recognizing its own characteristics and standards. This, according to Forster, led to Schlegel's conclusion, that the correct identification of genre is important.

Even though it is correct that Schlegel changed his opinion regarding the characteristics of poetry as he moved from his classicist to his romantic phase, I consider Forster's description of

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[22] Schlegel's contemporary, Friedrich Schleiermacher, is the philosopher normally associated with the development of early modern hermeneutics. But according to Forster, Schlegel was more influential in the development of modern hermeneutics than has been acknowledged. Forster argues, that Schlegel "anticipated and influenced key moves" (12) in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. Forster also points out, that Schlegel's so called "together-philosophy" ("symphilosophie") with Schleiermacher makes it hard to assess which of Schleiermacher's doctrines were preceded by, or co-created with Schlegel (46). This means, that doctrines usually attributed to Schleiermacher, may be recognized in Schlegel's work as well. However, Schlegel's importance in the field of hermeneutics is, according to Forster, due to his own contributions, listed as five (families of) ideas, which exceeded Schleiermacher's (47).
[23] I cite this idea as Forster has presented it, including genre's importance in interpretation of both literary and non-linguistic art, though noting that the relevance for my study is its relation to literary art.

this idea imprecise. Schlegel is well known for "a mixing of genres", as Forster himself points out (12). A similar view is also presented by Frederick Beiser in *The Mysterious Romantic*. According to him, Schlegel holds, that "the romantic poet will not be bound by any definite rules of genre" (130). The idea of the necessity of correct identification of genre can also not be found in *On the Language*. Schlegel's approach in *On the Language* is rather characterized by a tendency to relate to different genres, both textual and thematic, without defining them or regarding mixing genres or thematics a problem. This is shown in his lack of definition of textual genres as poetry, prose or scientific literature, and also in his lack of specifying which texts represent religious, philosophical, or mythological themes. Therefore, in the most common interpretation of the concept of genre related to Schlegel, Forster's description is neither supported by the text *On the Language*, nor by secondary literature. It seems, however, that Forster ascribes to the concept "genre" the meaning of a time-related kind of literature, as reflected in his reference to Schlegel's assessment of classical and romantic literature. This description is in line with Schlegel's philosophy of history, which assumes that the ideas expressed in the literature of each epoch in history must be interpreted and understood in light of its own criteria. Schlegel's implementation of this method on Indian philosophy has been thoroughly covered earlier in this chapter.

The second of Schlegel's ideas, as presented by Forster, is that "texts sometimes express meanings and thoughts, not explicitly in any of their parts, but instead implicitly through their parts and the way in which these are put together to form a whole" (53). Forster explains this as a central principle in Schlegel's romanticism, referring to the "primary function of poetic art", which is to "indicate an Infinite that could not be expressed directly in language but only indirectly" (56). In this sense, the principle expresses the inadequacy of language for direct articulation. But even though Forster describes this principle as one of Schlegel's main hermeneutical ideas, I find it hard to recognize it in *On the Language*. Instead of emphasizing the inadequacy of language, Schlegel emphasizes its adequacy and significance. This is most clearly expressed in the first chapter, "On the Indian Language", where Schlegel develops his theory on language. Here he argues for an integrated connection between the grammatical structure of a language and the historical expression of consciousness as shown in religious, philosophical and poetical ideas. This explains why he regards it as necessary for himself to learn Sanskrit language in order to understand and interpret the Indian texts, and it explains why he chooses a philological, even linguistic approach to language in his text. Thus, when he recommends "knowledge of language" (522) in the interpretation of foreign and ancient texts,

it is consistent with his own method. It should be noted, however, that the principle that Forster refers to, is said to represent a central principle in Schlegel's romanticism. *On the Language* is a text that belongs to Schlegel's late phase, therefore several of its ideas differ with principles characterizing his romantic phase. This principle represents such an example.

The third of Schlegel's ideas, as listed by Forster, is the principle, that "the interpreter must penetrate beyond an author's conscious meanings and thoughts to discover his unconscious ones as well" (17) with the aim of understanding the author "better than he himself does" (17). Forster doesn't, however, elaborate on how this principle is expressed in Schlegel's texts, or if Schlegel gave more details for its use. It is therefore also difficult to identify in *On the Language*, and to decide on its relevance for this text.

The fourth point on Forster's list of Schlegel's ideas concerns "the presence of inconsistency and confusion in texts" (17). Schlegel holds, according to Forster, that confusion and inconsistencies in a text need to be recognized, understood and explained by the interpreter. Although Schlegel encourages the recognition and explanation of inconsistencies in texts, he doesn't, according to Forster, see them simply, or even primarily, as flaws. Inconsistencies, although detrimental to a philosophical system, may in Schlegel's view be "a sign of many-sidedness and intellectual integrity for the philosopher" (60), as Forster formulates it. It may also show a philosopher's development of ideas over time (61). Based on this, Forster suggests, Schlegel recognized, that the significance of inconsistencies vary according to their character or nature (63).

This principle, of inconsistency and confusion in texts, is an interesting idea to consider in an examination of Schlegel's *On the Language*. Schlegel only mentions one example of inconsistency in a textual source, referring to the system of thought presented as Samkhya philosophy in the Bhagavad Gita. Schlegel disagrees with this classification, and instead characterizes the system of thought as pantheism (493). He solves this inconsistency by stating, "we must therefore conclude that the author either completely misunderstood it, or violently wrested the meaning to support his own system" (493). In this case, Schlegel seems to prioritize the internal consistency his own interpretation over finding the cause for the inconsistency within the text. It is also remarkable that this is the only example in *On the Language* where Schlegel refers to a textual inconsistency. Textual inconsistencies could be interpreted not only as the author's confusion, but as the text's resistance to the interpretation offered by the reader,

in this case Schlegel. Therefore, pointing out inconsistencies would serve to question the interpretation, opening the text for other interpretational versions. Schlegel's portrayal of the texts prevents this option, partly by avoiding the inconsistencies, partly by ignoring their importance. In this way he removes the text's resistance to the chosen interpretation. While the principle that Forster ascribes to Schlegel is commendable, Schlegel's implementation in his text seems to focus on avoiding the need to question his own interpretation rather than as an opportunity to examine the text with more attention.

As shown above, Forster's account of Schlegel's hermeneutics is not consistent with my analysis of Schlegel's hermeneutics in *On the language*. What are the causes of these discrepancies? As already mentioned, the most evident cause is that Forster doesn't separate between Schlegel's classicist, romantic and late phase when it comes to his hermeneutics. Is it reasonable to expect one theory of hermeneutics to represent the philosophy of a thinker who repeatedly changes his view on so many related subjects? Examples of theories relevant to his hermeneutics that shifted from his romantic to his late phase, is, as mentioned earlier, his philosophy of language, his philosophy of history and his theory on revelation and reason, which also involve his view on religion. My analysis of *On the Language* shows Schlegel's hermeneutics in his late phase, which is one reason why it is not consistent with Forster's account. In addition to this, Forster also disregards several aspects of Schlegel's philosophy that influence his hermeneutics. He does present Schlegel's theory on translation and theory of language, but as my analysis has shown, other aspects of Schlegel's philosophy are significant in order to understand his hermeneutics, especially his historical method and his theory of revelation and reason. This is another cause for the discrepancies between Forster's account of Schlegel's hermeneutics and my analysis of his hermeneutics in *On the Language*. Based on these considerations, I regard Forster's approach as too imprecise and without enough detail in order to render the complexity of Schlegel's hermeneutics in *On the Language*. While many of the features Forster isolates might be commendable, they are not clearly represented in *On the Language*, nor do they capture the most important features of Schlegel's own hermeneutical endeavor in this text.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have done a philosophical analysis of Schlegel's text, showing how underlying premises inform and guide his entire project of interpretation. Schlegel constructs a portrayal of Indian history of thought that emphasizes and idealizes its religious and mythological aspects

at the expense of the rational ones, both in terms of historical influence and in terms of access to truth and morality. The premises that shape his interpretational project, are his main philosophical theories and the assumptions driving them. The philosophical theories are first, the theory on history as a genealogy of epochs, developing with necessity in the direction of degeneration, and second, the theory that this development takes place along an axis of revelation and reason. The assumptions underlying the theories are the associations between an original revelation and religion on the one hand, and between reason and degeneration of truth on the other. My analysis points to a philosophical consistency in Schlegel's text, and enables a more complete interpretation of *On the Language*, compared to previous engagements with the text. Unlike Park, who has a religio-philosophical orientation in his reading, my analysis covers Schlegel's entire hermeneutic interpretational project, including his historicism. And while Schlegel's text has been widely recognized for his pioneering scientific theory on comparative linguistics, my analysis shows that it is part of his philosophical project, directing his interpretational choices. In this way, the philosophical emphasis of my reading of Schlegel's text shows, that *On the Language* is a text of philosophical importance in Schlegel's writing beyond what has previously been recognized. My analysis also establishes Schlegel's text within the context of his contemporary philosophical debate. The views that he presents on religion, revelation and reason situate him with regards to the pantheism controversy. Schlegel's interpretational project is, as I have shown, subject to his religio-philosophical view to a significant degree. Therefore, by prioritizing the exposition of his own theory on revelation and reason over the understanding of Indian philosophy, Schlegel makes his portrayal of the Indian history of thought a battleground for a contemporary European philosophical debate. Combined with a philosophy of history that can be characterized as speculative, this choice significantly influences his hermeneutical project. As an interpretive practice, this is highly problematic.

These considerations lead to questions on hermeneutics as a methodology of interpretation. Does Schlegel's hermeneutical project reveal a methodological weakness? My analysis of Schlegel's text shows that he allows his own philosophical theories to determine the guidelines for the interpretation of Indian thought. His own philosophy is given priority over the hermeneutics, driving the interpretational project in a certain direction, according to his own philosophical agenda. This could be seen as a deeper philosophical problem, rather than a methodological problem of hermeneutics. However, my analysis of Schlegel's text also reveals a close, almost integrated, relationship between his interpretational practice and his

philosophical ideas. It is not possible to differentiate between his hermeneutical method and the philosophical theories driving the process of interpretation. This connection, between Schlegel's philosophical theories and the interpretational project, therefore represents a problem for his hermeneutical practice. By definition it also represents a methodological problem of his hermeneutics, when hermeneutics is understood as an interpretive methodology[24].

As an early Orientalist text, *On the Language* has been the subject of postcolonial criticism for its contribution to the Orientalist misrepresentation of Indian culture (Said 27). The text represents an example of interpretive practice, and is therefore relevant to the discussion of the methodology of hermeneutics in the postcolonial scholarship on Orientalism. The misrepresentations of Indian philosophy that have been constructed in the West's encounter with Indian history of thought, and the lack of ability to correct these misrepresentations, have been identified as hermeneutical problems, and criticized in the postcolonial discussion of Orientalism. The role of hermeneutics in constructing and maintaining the misrepresentations of Indian philosophy, as well as the consequences of maintaining these misrepresentations, will be discussed further in the next chapter.

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[24] Hermeneutics is described as "the methodology of interpretation" by C. Mantzavinos in his article "Hermeneutics" (1).

Chapter 3.

Schlegel's hermeneutical approach from the perspective of postcolonial criticism. The legacy of Orientalism in Western philosophy.

Given the problematic image that Schlegel constructs in *On the Language*, why would we care to study his text? Why spend time analyzing a work that constructs a misrepresentation of Indian thought?

The Orientalist view of India that Schlegel's text represents, still exists as a legacy in terms of deeply rooted prejudices on Indian thought, which is, as I will show in this chapter, understood as religious and irrational. The consequence of these prejudices, is a lack of recognition of Indian thought as "philosophy proper" within the field of academic philosophy. This lack of recognition results, on the one hand, in a lack of interest in studying it, and consequently a lack of knowledge of the philosophical problems that Indian philosophy raises, discusses and the solutions that are proposed. On the other hand, this image of Indian thought prevents the inclusion of Indian philosophy into the field of academic philosophy, consigning it to "area studies" or history of religion instead. One way to challenge this lack of recognition, is to challenge and criticize the assumptions that support them, showing that they are based on misrepresentations of Indian thought. As a typical early Orientalist text, *On the Language* presents the model of Indian thought according to the assumptions described above, emphasizing and idealizing its religious and mythological aspects at the expense of the analytical and rational. My analysis of Schlegel's portrayal of Indian history of thought shows this by revealing two problems. The first can be characterized as a methodological issue, which is the problem of his hermeneutics in the approach to Indian literature. The second can be characterized as a substantive issue, which is the misrepresentation of Indian philosophy that results from his methodology. Pointing out these problems through my analysis, represents a critique of the assumptions that support the current dominant view on Indian philosophy in the West, leading to the situation described above. It also links my thesis to two interrelated philosophical debates that are already established. The first is the postcolonial critique of the German Orientalist representation of Indian philosophy and the second is the quite recent critique of the exclusion of non-Western-, including Indian, philosophy from academic

philosophy. Both the methodological and the substantial issue mentioned above are relevant to these debates. In the following, I will present both of these debates, and show how my analysis of Schlegel's text relates to them.

3.1 Postcolonial critique of the German Orientalist representation of Indian philosophy

As I have shown in the previous chapter, Schlegel's problematic interpretive practice leads to a construction of Indian thought that is a misrepresentation. But given Schlegel's interest in interpretation and cross-cultural inquiry, this result expresses a dilemma. How come his encounter with Indian culture doesn't give a better result; a correct instead of an incorrect representation of Indian philosophy? Schlegel's interest in and knowledge of interpretive practice is shown in his philosophy of history, and his interest in understanding Indian culture is shown in his effort to learn Sanskrit language, and translate and study classical Sanskrit texts. If this kind of awareness, knowledge and interest in interpretation and cross-cultural inquiry results in a misrepresentation, what hope is there for cross-cultural inquiry to give anything but misrepresentations? Should we give up trying? An attempt to answer these questions leads to an inquiry into the role of hermeneutics in constructing misrepresentations, such as in the case of Schlegel's *On the Language*, as well as its role in maintaining them. Why are the misrepresentations constructed, and why are they rather maintained than corrected in later interpretations?

These questions are debated as part of the postcolonial criticism of Orientalism. Within German Orientalism, which Schlegel is representative of, the role of hermeneutics has been the most extensively analyzed by Bradley L. Herling in his book *The German Gita: Hermeneutics and Discipline in the Early German Reception of Indian Thought, 1778-1831* and in his article "Either a Hermeneutical Consciousness or a Critical Consciousness". In the following, I will first outline the background for the postcolonial debate on German Orientalism and situate Schlegel's text within this context. Next, I will present the main points of Herling's study, and finally, I will employ the conceptual framework that Herling establishes in order to examine the interpretive approach within the postcolonial scholarship and assess Schlegel's interpretive methodology in *On the Language* from a postcolonial perspective.

3.1.1 History and background

Edward Said initiated the postcolonial criticism with the publication of *Orientalism* in 1978. The central claim of his critique is that the West has created an incorrect representation of the

Eastern world based on imperialist prejudices of Western superiority. The incorrect representation of the Orient "has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image" by emphasizing and accepting that there is a "basic distinction between East and West" (10). Inspired by Foucault, Said connects the Western academic representation of the East with power, and describes Orientalism as "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (11). According to Said, the Western intellectual encounter with the Orient represents a power relation, a view that challenges the role of the Western scholarship on the Orient as scientific and neutral. Said argues that the intellectual representation instead is part of Orientalism as a "discursive formation" (31) that both creates and maintains inequality between the East and the West in various kinds of power; politically, intellectually, culturally and morally (20).

3.1.2 The case of Germany

The scholarship on Orientalism soon pointed out weaknesses in Said's analysis. In the case of Germany, Said was criticized for including German Orientalism as part of the Western power structure, equivalent to the British and French, despite of Germany's lack of imperial history. In relation to India, Said's criticism was easily applicable to the British Orientalist representation[25], while its application to German Orientalism seemed less evident. The German encounter with India was purely intellectual[26], differing significantly from the British colonial relation[27]. Said's failure to explain the consequences of this difference in his analysis was, and still is, criticized. "The study of German Orientalism has had a conflicted relationship with the Saidian mode of inquiry" (47), Robert Cowan writes in his article "Introduction: new models for Indo-German scholarship within the critical reappraisal of orientalism"; a statement that refers to this thematics. Despite the criticism, however, the scholarship on German Orientalism

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[25] The view, that Said's criticism is easily applicable to the British Orientalist representation of India, is supported by Bradley Herling (*The German Gita* 8), Ronald Inden (417), Nicholas Germana (*The Orient of Europe* 10-11).

[26] "What German Orientalism had in common with Anglo French and later American Orientalism was a kind of intellectual authority over the Orient within Western culture" (27), Said wrote in the introduction to the second edition of *Orientalism*, published in 1980. His comment on Germany's role in Orientalism in this edition was a response to the criticism of his treatment of the case of Germany in the first edition of 1978. Here, he had not accounted for the difference that would have to exist in the relationship between the Orient and Germany compared to the colonialism of England and France. In the next edition, he directly addressed this topic in the introduction, clarifying his view on German Orientalism, and elaborating; "What German Oriental scholarship did was to refine and elaborate techniques whose application was to texts, myths, ideas, and languages almost literally gathered from the Orient by imperial Britain and France" (27). Said saw British, French and German Orientalism as one common power structure and did not differentiate the countries' relationships to the Orient further.

[27] This criticism is outlined by Nicholas Germana ("Self-othering in German orientalism" 80), Bradley Herling (*The German Gita* 8), and Robert Cowan (47).

has drawn on Said's analysis, developing more detailed and nuanced models. This scholarship is considerable[28], wide-ranging, and related to multiple disciplines[29], including Indian and German philosophy, religion, mythology, Sanskrit language, translation theory, Orientalism, colonialism and postcolonial critique. Therefore there is a rich, but also complex, collection of scholarly information available, of which a detailed inquiry falls outside the scope of my study. I will, however, summarize some main positions within the scholarship on German Orientalism in order to provide background for the cross-cultural interpretive challenges in the German Orientalist encounter with India, and to situate Schlegel's interpretive project within this context. In the following, I refer to some of the main scholars, including Edward Said, Ronald Inden, and three contributors from the recent scholarship; Robert Cowan, Nicholas Germana and Bradley Herling. This selection is limited, but attempts to give an idea of the historical timeline in addition to the various scholarly contributions[30].

3.1.3 Models developed on German Orientalism as part of the postcolonial criticism

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said emphasizes the unified perspective that Orientalism represents in the West's relation to the East. According to Said, what German Orientalism had in common with Anglo-French Orientalism, was an "intellectual authority over the Orient within Western culture" (27). He points out how German Orientalists based their work on information "almost literally gathered from the Orient by imperial Britain and France" (27), indicating the contrast between German Orientalists' close connection to the colonial powers on the one hand and their poor connection to the Orient on the other. He mentions Friedrich Schlegel's *On the Language and Philosophy of the Indians* as an example of this, describing it as a text based "on hours spent in Paris libraries" (27). In this way, Said creates a common Western framework for Orientalism, without any significant differentiation based on nationality or personal interests.

Ronald Inden is one of the first scholars to have made use of Said's analytical framework in order to refine the model of German Orientalism. In an article from 1986, "Orientalist constructions of India", he continues Said's criticism of the "Orientalist discourse". Inden agrees with Said that Orientalism constitutes a "structure of ideas" that is related to dominance

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[28] For a more comprehensive survey of the literature, see *Sanskrit and 'orientalism'* by Douglas T. McGetchin and Peter KJ Park (15-19).

[29] For a more comprehensive survey of the disciplines, see Cowan (49).

[30] To make a limited selection is, however, also problematic because it reduces complexity and depth, and exposes my presentation to criticism of reductionism and essentialism. For a comprehensive survey of the scholarship on German Orientalism, see Cowan's article (49-51).

(409) and describes the Western representations of India as essentializing and reductionist. The Orientalist discourse, he states, is characterized by a focus on a "'cause' or 'factor' to the exclusion of others" (415) in order to make "the strange and incoherent seem rational or normal" (414). This, Inden argues, gives a reductionist representation. In addition, the Orientalist discourse is based on the assumptions, that the essence of Indian civilization is characterized by irrationality, and that the essence of Indian thought is dreamlike (420). This, Inden argues, gives an essentialist representation. Inden points out that the features of the Orientalist representation of India have been viewed alternately negatively and positively within the discourse on India in the West, but that they have been maintained relatively unchanged. Inden illustrates this by giving several examples. He shows how Hegel is representative of the condemning view, because he places India outside of the historic development based on its alleged passivity[31] and describes the Indian civilization as irrational compared to the Western civilization[32]. The Early Romantics, including Johann Herder, Friedrich Schlegel and Friedrich Creuzer, are representative of the idealizing view, which Inden characterizes as "romantic, spiritualistic, or idealistic" (430). Creuzer, for example, approvingly describes how Indians express their religious knowledge "in 'symbolic' and 'mythic' rather than rational and discursive forms" (431). The representation of India as irrational, spiritual, and exotic, then, is accepted both by those who disapprove of these features, and those who idealize them. Inden rejects this as an essentialist representation, and points out how it continually is reproduced by the choices made by the scholarship. In *The German Gita*, Herling refers to one of Inden's examples of this. Inden argues[33] that the Western emphasis on the Indian philosophical school of Advaita Vedanta at the expense of other Indian schools of thought, fits the Orientalist representation of India as "feminine, mystical, dreamy passivity", while at the same time authorizing the "European superiority and masculine dominance" (Herling, *The German Gita* 9). This is the process by which the essentialist representation is both constructed and maintained. According to Inden; the "facts" are "produced" (Inden 401) in order to match the already accepted structure of knowledge. In his analysis of German Orientalism, Inden

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[31] "The spread of Indian culture is prehistorical, for History is limited to that which makes an essential epoch in the development of Spirit. On the whole, the diffusion of Indian culture is only a dumb, deedless expansion; that is, it presents no political action. The people of India have achieved no foreign conquests, but have been on every occasion vanquished themselves." (Hegel cited by Inden 425).

[32] "In India the primary aspect of subjectivity-viz., that of the imagination-presents a union of the Natural and Spiritual, in which Nature on the one hand, does not present itself as a world embodying Reason, nor the Spiritual on the other hand, as a consciousness in contrast with Nature. Here the antithesis in the (above-stated) principle is wanting. Freedom both as abstract will and as subjective freedom is absent" (Hegel cited by Inden 427).

[33] Herling refers to Ronald Inden's book *Imagining India*, published in 1990.

therefore agrees with Said, but in addition, his criticism is substantiated with more details on the German case.

Nicholas Germana, Bradley Herling and Robert Cowan are key contributors[34] to the recent scholarship on German Orientalism. They are all critical to Said's treatment of German Orientalism, considering it to be too superficial and generalized because they regard his theory to be based on premises that are characteristic only of the Anglo-French Orientalism, not the German. Yet they are part of the tradition of postcolonial criticism that relates to Said's analytical model, developing and refining its application.

In his article "Self-othering in German orientalism", Nicholas Germana claims to show a weakness in Said's analysis. Germana argues that German Orientalism developed a relation to the Orient that differed significantly from that of Anglo-French Orientalism because of Germany's pursuit of a national identity. He describes the background for this difference in his book *The Orient of Europe: the mythical image of India and competing images of German national identity*. Here, Germana describes how the political change in Europe following Prussia's defeat for Napoleon in 1806 and the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, gave rise to a new German nationalism, where the search for origins became important. Since Germany could not rival the military powers of England and France, the cultural aspects of nationalism became all the more important, initiating a search for authentic cultural roots. This pursuit of a German national identity led to what Germana calls "self-Othering"; a situation where the German Orientalists tended to identify with the Orient. According to him, German Orientalists sought to identify with the *oriental* Other, while trying to construct an identity against, or in contrast to, the *imperial* Other. This was based on mythological, imaginative constructions of "an ideal Oriental Other" as well as "the barbaric Westerner" ("Self-Othering in German Orientalism" 81), and represented an attempt to establish a kind of "uniqueness" ("Self-Othering in German Orientalism" 84), associating German culture to the Orient. This tendency to identify with the Orient, however, was not constant. Instead, Germana describes an ambivalence in the German Orientalists' relationship to India as characteristic for German Orientalism, and refers to how their view on the Orient as well as on the West vacillated between approval and disapproval. Still, Germana points out that the German Orientalists' tendency to identify with the Orient instead of against it, was very much the opposite of Said's

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[34] Nicholas Germana is a scholar of intellectual and cultural history, Bradley Herling is a religion scholar and Robert Cowan is a comparatist (Cowan 48).

description of Orientalism as providing "a contrasting image" of the Orient ("Self-Othering in German Orientalism" 90). According to Germana, then, Said underestimated to which degree the German national self-determination shaped the scholarship's encounter with the Orient[35]. Germana regards this identification as supporting the argument that Germany was a special case, with features distinguishing German Orientalism from the Anglo-French. He also regards it as contradicting Said's claim, that German Orientalism had "authority over the Orient" (Said quoted by Germana, "Self-Othering in German Orientalism" 82), because he does not consider a process of identification with the Orient to be compatible with a position of authority. Germana further takes Schlegel to be an example of the process of self-Othering. In his account, he focuses on Schlegel' romantic phase, a choice that supports his interpretation of German Orientalism's idealization of, and identification with, the Orient. He also points out, however, that this view is not characteristic of Schlegel's late phase, acknowledging the ambivalence in Schlegel's attitude towards the Orient, shifting from enthusiastic in his romantic phase to critical in his late phase.

In his article "Introduction: New Models for Indo-German Scholarship", Robert Cowan concurs with Germana's interpretation of German Orientalism as influenced by a national self-determination process. In addition, he emphasizes the personal nature of the German Orientalists' engagement with India as another main point conflicting with Said's model. Cowan finds support for this view in Dorothy Figueira's and Sheldon Pollock's works. Figueira and Pollock both refer to how intellectuals made use of ideas from and about India for national or personal interests, for example in a search for "understanding their own geographical, linguistic and spiritual origins" (50). Based on this, Cowan even argues, that German Orientalism "can *only* be understood as a set of *personal* attempts to appropriate foreign concepts, motifs, and stories in an effort to tell Germany's own unique story" (51). In contrast to Said, then, who emphasizes the unified perspective of Orientalism, Germana and Cowan emphasize diverse, differentiated perspectives both at the level of different countries and different scholars. This insight is relevant also for the field of hermeneutics, Cowan states, refering to Herling's contribution. Herling's study provides a hermeneutical analysis of the main approaches within the scholarship, as well as an evaluation of the methodology of some of the main German Orientalists, including Friedrich Schlegel. I will return to Herling's analysis later in this chapter in order to elaborate on his study in more detail.

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[35] Nicholas Germana names Orientalist scholars Susanne Zantop and Todd Kontje in support of this view.

How is Friedrich Schlegel's interpretive project situated within this German Orientalist context? Can the considerations on German Orientalism presented above add new perspectives to my philosophical analysis of Schlegel's *On the Language*?

The main difference between the views of Said and Inden on the one hand, and the recent scholarship on German Orientalism on the other, is whether Orientalism represents a unified or a diversified perspective. According to Said and Inden, Orientalism represents a structure of dominance based on the imperial establishment, which supports Western power in every way; politically, socio-economically, intellectually, culturally and morally. The recent scholarship on German Orientalism, in contrast, tends to emphasize the national and individual perspectives, questioning the existence of a unified Western perspective. They accept that German Orientalism has contributed to intellectual dominance over the Orient, but dispute its contribution in supporting political or socio-economic interests of power because of the lack of colonial bonds. However, as I will show in the following, support for both of these perspectives, the diversified and the unified, can be found in Schlegel's *On the Language*.

The diversified perspective is characterized by national and personal interests influencing the German Orientalists' approach and interpretation of the Oriental culture. In *On the Language*, both national and personal interests are present, though difficult to separate. Schlegel's theory, that a historical genealogy of epochs develops along an axis of revelation and reason, can be seen as an expression of his philosophical views and as a positioning relative to the pantheism controversy. Further, Schlegel's philosophical engagement in the pantheism controversy represents both a personal interest in his positioning relative to the debate, as well as an attempt at finding support for certain contemporary European philosophical views in Oriental thought, which can be seen as also representing national interests. Schlegel's religious view, which is closely connected to his theory on revelation and reason, can be seen as an expression both of his philosophical theory and his personal religious conviction. In addition, it plays a role in his position on relative to the pantheism controversy. Lastly, Schlegel's theory associates Sanskrit language and Biblical truth to an original revelation. This can be seen as an expression of his philosophical theories inspired by contemporary Romantic ideas, or it can be understood as a view shaped by the German national self-determination process, representing a search for an authentic cultural origin, as argued by Germana and Cowan. These aspects of my analysis of Schlegel's text, then, are consistent with the analytical model presented by the recent

scholarship on German Orientalism which emphasizes the personal and national interests of the Orientalists' approach to India. I disagree, however, with Germana's and Cowan's view on the consequence of these findings. I will return to this topic below.

The unified perspective of German and Anglo-French Orientalism, as described by Said and Inden, is recognized as a common representation that also characterizes the German Orientalists' approach and interpretation of the Oriental culture. This representation portrays India as irrational, spiritual, passive and exotic. When it comes to Germany, the construction and maintenance of this representation is, according to Said, based on shared prejudices and shared information gathered by the imperial countries. Inden further emphasizes the production of facts that match the established representation. I find support in my analysis of *On the Language* for the claim, that Schlegel contributes to a representation common for Anglo-French and German Orientalism. Three of Schlegel's choices substantiate this view.

The first of these choices regards Schlegel's sources of information on Indian language and literature. Schlegel based his work on information that he received from British and French sources. According to his own account in the introduction to *On the Language*, Schlegel learned Sanskrit while living in Paris from the British linguist Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton had served in the navy of the East India Company and was a member of the British Society of Calcutta, connecting him to Britain as a colonial power. Schlegel's access to literature, he narrates, was in the national library in Paris as well as a private collection of books. Said's critical comment on Schlegel's access of information in his study of Indian literature and language thus corresponds with his own account. Why didn't Schlegel choose to travel to India instead of accessing information on India via British and French sources? It is reasonable to ask whether his choice of access to information contributed to shape Schlegel's view and if Indian sources of information would have provided a different selection of material and a different perspective. Schlegel's choice of access to information is an example of how a common source of knowledge contributes to constructing a common representation for German and Anglo-French Orientalism.

The second of Schlegel's choices regards his selection of source literature, which supports a religious and mythological interpretation of Indian thought over a philosophical one. The Laws of Manu, the Bhagavadgita and the Vedic literature have strong mythical, poetic and religious elements, and Schlegel has not taken into account any of the Indian commentary literature for

information on various philosophical interpretations[36] of the texts. Schlegel's tendency to present only excerpts in his translations also supports his own interpretation of Indian thought. In his analysis of Schlegel's translation of the *Bhagavadgita*, Herling points out how Schlegel's selection of excerpts creates a distortion of the text that supports his historical genealogy of Indian thought (*The German Gita* 143). In addition, Schlegel fails to include classical philosophical texts in his project of interpretation, like the Nyaya Sutras of the Nyaya school (Indian logics), or the Brahma Sutras of the Vedanta school. The choice of including these or similar texts would have provided a more balanced perspective, demonstrating rational, analytical aspects of Indian thought. Schlegel's choice of source literature, then, aids in creating a biased portrayal of India and Indian thought. Inden's argument, that Orientalism serves to produce the facts that match the accepted essentialist representation, is illustrative of this choice.

The third of Schlegel's choices that contribute to a common representation for Anglo-French and German Orientalism, regards Schlegel's interpretational approach based on his philosophical theories. In constructing a genealogical history developing along an axis of revelation and reason, Schlegel favors the essentialist and reductionist perspective. As I have pointed out in the previous chapter, Schlegel's construction of Indian history as a genealogy of five epochs of ideas, must necessarily be at the expense of scope and detail of Indian history of thought. By connecting his theory of an original revelation with Biblical ideas as interpreted by Christian theology, he favors a religious perspective over a philosophical. And by equating divine revelation with truth on the one hand, and human reason with degeneration of truth and moral decay on the other, he favors the irrational over the rational. Schlegel's interpretational approach therefore supports an essentialist and reductionist representation, maintaining a portrayal of Indian thought as religious and irrational.

Situating Schlegel as a German Orientalist in the context of the postcolonial criticism, then, shows that his contribution supports both of the mentioned main positions above. However, my view is that the arguments supporting Said's and Inden's position are more persuasive. I also

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[36] The oldest known classical commentary on the Manusmrti (Laws of Manu), is Bharuci's (ca 600-800 CE), while Medhatithi's is the most famous (ca 900-1100 CE). Some of the most famous classical commentaries (Sanskrit "bhasya") on the Bhagavadgita, are Sankara's (ca 800 CE), expounding an Advaita Vedanta interpretation, Ramanuja's (ca 1100 CE), expounding a Vishishtadvaita interpretation and Madhva's (ca 1250 CE), expounding a Dvaita interpretation. Sankara (ca 800 CE) has also written commentaries to eight of the Upanishads, texts that are part of the Vedas.

make the claim, that the recent scholarship has disregarded details of Said's and Inden's analyses, which has caused them to overestimate the implications of their own findings. I will substantiate this view in the following.

The main argument in Germana's critique of Said's position concerns the German Orientalists' tendency to identify with, instead of against, the Orient. This, he holds, contradicts Said's description of Orientalism as creating a "contrasting image" of the Orient, and therefore it challenges Said's position of a unified German and Anglo-French perspective. According to Cowan, another main point that stands in conflict with Said's model, is the personal nature of the German Orientalists' engagement with India. Cowan emphasizes personal and national interests in a search for roots in the process of Germany's national self-determination. Personal and national interests generate a diversified perspective, Cowan holds, which contradicts Said's model of a unified perspective.

As shown above, my analysis of Schlegel's *On the Language* supports the view, that there are personal and national interests characteristic of German Orientalism. I also agree with Germana's and Cowan's view, that this leads to a process of self-Othering. I do not, however, agree that this challenges Said's and Inden's position. My view on this is based on Inden's analysis, where similar ideas have already been examined. When Inden refers to the "contrast" between the West and the Orient, he relates it to the Western essentialist and reductionist representation of the Orient. He describes it as an incorrect, but accepted construction of knowledge. This representation typically describes the Orient as "irrational, illogical, unscientific, unrealistic, and subjective" (Inden 408), in contrast to the West, which is described as "rational, logical, scientific, realistic, and objective" (408). Inden argues, that this contrast is just as real and relevant whether or not the representation of the Orient is regarded as positive or negative; idealized or rejected.

For the recent scholars on German Orientalism, however, the term "contrasting image" has taken on a different meaning. To them, it signifies not the representation of the Orient, but rather the attitude of identification against, instead of with, this representation (Germana, "Self-Othering in German Orientalism" 90). Because of the different meaning of the term, the argument presented by Germana cannot refute Inden's analysis. As Inden points out, the main problem of the Orientalist discourse is not whether or not the West identifies *with* or *against* an incorrect representation of the Orient. The problem is the actual representation. And this

representation is not refuted neither by Germana nor Cowan. In light of Inden's analysis, then, I regard his and Said's position to have been underestimated by the recent scholarship. A diversified perspective based on national and personal interests, as the recent scholarship emphasizes, adds detail to Said's model, but doesn't challenge it. Even the diversified perspective seems to support a common structure of knowledge.

In this context, Schlegel becomes an example of how an approach, even when motivated by personal, philosophical, religious or national interests, still can serve a common Orientalist perspective. Schlegel consistently portrays India as mythical, religious, exotic and irrational both in his romantic and his late phase, although his view changes from idealization in his romantic phase, to criticism in his late phase. Schlegel's representation of India, then, illustrates both Inden's and Germana's points. His representation of India demonstrates the contrast between the Orient and the West that Inden criticizes in his analysis, as well as the ambivalence between identifying with or against the Orient that Germana describes. Both the positive view of his romantic phase and the critical view of his late phase, however, contribute to an essentialist and reductionist representation of India, which therefore supports a common Orientalist perspective.

3.1.4 The role of hermeneutics in cross-cultural inquiry

As discussed above, the postcolonial debate shows both that the representation of the Orient in the West is incorrect and that this misrepresentation tends to be reproduced and therefore maintained. The acknowledgement of this situation leads to the question – how can we do better in our attempts at cross-cultural interpretation? Two aspects require attention when we try to answer this question. The first is the methodology of the cross-cultural interpretation. The second is the representation, or the model, that is constructed using this methodology. The methodology must be reviewed and criticized in order for the model to be revised. The tendency for the misrepresentation to be maintained, points to flaws in the methodology, therefore it is not enough to review and criticize only the model. This makes the hermeneutics of the early Orientalists an important topic, as well as the hermeneutic approach of the scholars studying their work. This topic is already established within the postcolonial scholarship. In the case of German Orientalism, it has been discussed in depth by Bradley L. Herling in *The German Gita: Hermeneutics and Discipline in the Early German Reception of Indian Thought, 1778-1831*, published in 2006, and in his article ""Either a Hermeneutical Consciousness or a Critical Consciousness." Renegotiating Theories of the Germany-India Encounter", published in 2010.

Herling's contribution within this field is significant because it introduces a new perspective on the entire German India-scholarship with a focus on hermeneutics as a methodology. In the following, I will therefore first present the main points in Herling's study and show how he establishes a conceptual framework for the hermeneutic approach. Next I will assess the interpretive approach of the postcolonial scholarship according to Herling's conceptual framework and show how this provides insight into Schlegel's interpretational methodology. Finally I will discuss how my view differs from Herling's.

3.1.5 Bradley Herling's study

Herling's point of departure is the postcolonial debate on German Orientalism. He states, that it is possible to recognize overarching theoretical features within the postcolonial literature on German Orientalism and offers an analysis of the scholarship's theoretical debate. Inspired by Ricoeur, Herling considers there to be two main hermeneutic approaches, characterizing them as "either a hermeneutical consciousness or a critical consciousness" (Ricoeur quoted by Herling, *The German Gita* 6). The two main approaches refer to the hermeneutical views as represented by Gadamer and Habermas, respectively. According to Herling, these two different lines of approach can be identified in the scholarship on Orientalism; one predominantly critical, initiated by Edward Said's post-colonial criticism, and the other hermeneutical, typically represented in Halbfass' classic on the topic, *India and Europe. An Essay in Understanding*, published in 1988.

As these two approaches build on different theories, their subsequent interpretation of the cross-cultural encounter conflicts. Hermeneutical consciousness, which is based on Gadamer's hermeneutical model, is in its essence positive when it comes to our ability of interpretation and understanding. It is based on the dynamic movement of question and answer between the reader and the text, constituting the hermeneutic circle. Prejudices are necessary and valuable as a starting point for the interpretive process. Critical consciousness, on the other hand, which is based on Habermas' view, emphasizes a "careful critique of distortions in discourse" (*The German Gita* 6). The critical approach suggests that the hermeneutical circle is driven by a will to power, and that miscommunication and misunderstanding always is related to authority.

In his study, Herling explains how the framework that he describes, of a hermeneutical and a critical approach, represents different interpretive methodologies within the scholarship on German Orientalism. The approach of critical consciousness emphasizes the dismantling of

power structures and is typically expressed in Said's postcolonial critique of Orientalism, as well as in Inden's critique of German Orientalism. Said and Inden both criticize the Western misrepresentations of the Orient and consider them to be connected to power and domination. The approach of hermeneutical consciousness, on the other hand, emphasizes the individual encounter with the object of interpretation, and encourages a focus on diversity, complexity and detail. The hermeneutical approach is typically expressed in Halbfass' classic *India and Europe*. Halbfass describes both interest and disapproval of Indian thought within the scholarship and emphasizes the individual scholars' encounters and interpretations.

According to Herling, identifying these approaches within the scholarship, and recognizing how they are used, serves to point out the limitations of the methodologies, which lead to misinterpretations and misrepresentations. While Said and Inden point out the limitations of the hermeneutical approach, the scholars favoring the hermeneutical approach within the more recent scholarship on German Orientalism describe the limitations of the critical approach. Herling elaborates on this criticism.

According to Herling, hermeneutical consciousness can be criticized for being too optimistic. It cannot account for why incorrect interpretations occur or why they are not corrected. The possibility for error in interpretation is "a somewhat vague issue" (*The German Gita* 21), he states, and criticizes Gadamer for not accounting for the problem that occurs when "the interpretive horizon of the interpreter overwhelms the text" (*The German Gita* 21). He also points out that the method cannot explain "a *sustained* misreading, where a tradition persists in a flawed interpretation over time" (*The German Gita* 21). This methodological weakness of the hermeneutical approach represents a problem in cross-cultural encounters, like the German encounter with India. Herling describes Orientalism as "a situation where one culture persists in misunderstanding another and becomes so routinized in its mistakes that it can no longer refine or revise its views" (*The German Gita* 21). Orientalism, then, exemplifies both of the methodological flaws of the hermeneutical approach; both an initial and a sustained misreading. Critical consciousness, on the other hand, can be criticized for its one-sided focus on power-relations, Herling states. Because of this, the critical approach tends to simplify and generalize the complexity in the interpretive process, and therefore to construct its own misrepresentations. "While attempting to restore humanity, agency, and diversity to the Other", Herling writes, it "simultaneously constructs the West as an agentless monolith" (*The German Gita* 14). The representation of both the West and the Orient is distorted by the critical approach because it

portrays the West as an impersonal force and the Orient as a passive victim. The critical approach therefore tends to camouflage both the individual scholar's attempts of understanding, and the resistance that the Oriental texts have given in the process of interpretation. This distortion is often associated with the critical approach's tendency to rely mainly on secondary literature, according to Herling, and he mentions this as a key difference between the critical and the hermeneutical approach. "The hermeneutical consciousness proposes that the most effective way to delve further into the problems that Said originally raised is to engage in detailed historical work on texts" (*The German Gita* 15), he writes. The ideological differences between the hermeneutical approach and the critical approach, then, express themselves in the practical approach to the research material.

Herling regards the dynamics between the two different approaches to have brought progress within the scholarship because it has led to identification and criticism of their respective limitations. Like Ricoeur, however, Herling challenges the contrast between the two approaches. He believes that the limitations can be avoided by bridging or synthesizing the two approaches. The focus on the individual encounter in the hermeneutical approach will counteract the tendency of the critical approach to disregard diversity, complexity and detail. The focus on dismantling power structures in the critical approach will counteract the tendency of the hermeneutical approach to allow incorrect assumptions to be accepted and maintained and therefore prevent the development and reproduction of faulty frameworks of knowledge. Bridging the approaches will therefore provide more truthful interpretations.

This bridging can, according to Herling, be achieved by what he calls a "third way", which involves "reassertion of careful intellectual history and incisive textual analysis" ("Renegotiating Theories" 76). He regards the works of Dorothy Figueira and Richard King as examples of attempts to bridge the two approaches. Both of these scholars combine Saidian critique with a hermeneutical approach. Herling also exemplifies how to bridge the approaches by implementing this methodology in his own works *The German Gita* and "Renegotiating Theories". In *The German Gita* he presents a detailed textual analysis of the interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita* given by several German philosophers[37] during the period 1778-1831 and also situates the texts within the intellectual history of the German India-encounter. His own study therefore represent a contribution to bridging the two approaches.

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[37] The German philosophers are Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Schlegel, August Wilhelm Schlegel, Wilhelm von Humboldt and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

3.1.6 On Schlegel's interpretational methodology

In light of Herling's theory outlined above, how do we assess Schlegel's interpretational methodology in *On the Language*? To discuss this question, I will examine Schlegel's work in a postcolonial perspective according to Herling's conceptual framework. Such an examination requires a comparison of Schlegel's contribution at least with prior, and optimally also subsequent, contributions in order to point out the role that Schlegel has in the Orientalist discourse. Herling's analysis shows this more clearly than my analysis does because he situates Schlegel within the academic discourse on India during the period 1778-1831, which facilitates comparison. Therefore I will refer mainly to Herling's analysis of Schlegel's work, which includes both a study of his *Bhagavad Gita*-translation as well as an assessment of *On the Language*. Moreover, I will also show how my own analysis of *On the Language* supports Herling's.

I agree with Herling that there is support for both the hermeneutical and the critical approach in Schlegel's text. The aspect of Schlegel's text that is emphasized by the scholars who favor the hermeneutical approach, is Schlegel's attempt to deepen the understanding of Indian thought through scientific research. Schlegel's theories on language, philosophy and religion, and his skill in Sanskrit language, enable him to present an interpretation of Indian literature more technical and detailed than what had been done before[38]. In this way, then, Schlegel refines and adjusts the interpretive representation of Indian culture. Herling describes this as Schlegel's ability "to foster hermeneutical adjustment by proliferating and differentiating the conceptions that characterized Indian culture, religion and thought" (*The German Gita* 155). Schlegel's contribution does not, however, disrupt the existing Orientalist representation of Indian culture, but rather strengthens it. This is the aspect emphasized by the critical approach. In his analysis, Herling convincingly shows that Schlegel reinforces the Orientalist representation of India by confirming already existing ideas on India as the origin of religion, myth and poetry. Comparing Schlegel's interpretation with Herder's, Herling states, that it "can be argued that Schlegel's work represents only a more sophisticated recirculation of Herder's conceptions and styles" (*The German Gita* 120). This indicates not only that Schlegel's

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[38] Schlegel's text is recognized as a pioneering work within Indo-European studies, and Schlegel is acknowledged for several of the theories, including his contribution in comparative linguistics, for proposing the theory that Sanskrit is the origin of European languages, and for his knowledge in Sanskrit language, which contributed to establish Sanskrit as an academic discipline in Germany.

interpretation doesn't offer significant new understanding, but that his interpretation contributes to the misrepresentation of India that has already been established by Herder. The same conclusion can be drawn if one compares Schlegel's contribution in his romantic phase to that of his late phase. As I have pointed out earlier, even though Schlegel's view on India shifted from idealizing in his romantic phase to critical in his late phase, the characteristics he ascribes the Indian culture are consistent. Thus, he restates his own portrayal of the Indian culture as irrational and religious, although his attitude shifts from positive to critical. In addition to this, scholars favoring the critical approach would even claim, that the hermeneutical advance that Schlegel makes in presenting a more technical and detailed scientific interpretation of Indian literature, is appropriated by frameworks of misrepresentation, which reinforce the Orientalist discourse. One of the main reasons for this is the philological competence Schlegel demonstrates by including a comparative linguistic study and a translation of Sanskrit texts in *On the Language*. I agree with Herling when he claims that the "technical authority" (*The German Gita* 155) of Schlegel's text adds authority to the Orientalist representation of India. "Schlegel opened the hermeneutical circle wider, only to close it again", Herling writes (*The German Gita* 155). The overall effect of Schlegel's work was to reinforce the Orientalist representation of India.

Based on these considerations, I regard Schlegel's interpretational methodology to be dominated by the limitations of the hermeneutical approach, which is the tendency for incorrect assumptions to be accepted and sustained, leading to misinterpretations and maintained misrepresentations. The tendency of misinterpretation is illustrated by Schlegel's absolute confidence in what can be seen as Gadamerian prejudices. Schlegel's philosophical views can be regarded as Gadamerian prejudices, which he relies on in his interpretation of the text. As I have shown in my analysis of *On the Language*, Schlegel's interpretive project is heavily influenced by his philosophy, including his theory on history and his view on religion, and can be characterized as a case where, as Herling writes, "the interpretive horizon of the interpreter overwhelms the text" (*The German Gita* 21)[39]. Schlegel contributes to the tendency of sustained misrepresentations by constructing an image of Indian thought as irrational and religious which confirms and reinforces the Orientalist representation of India as irrational, spiritual, passive and exotic.

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[39] In my reference to a Gadamerian perspective, I rely on Herling's analysis. Assessing Schlegel's hermeneutics in light of Gadamer's theory would certainly be interesting, but lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

This discussion on Schlegel's interpretation methodology represents an attempt to answer my initial question on whether there is any hope for cross-cultural inquiry to provide anything but misrepresentations. The insight that Schlegel's interpretational methodology is dominated by the limitations of the hermeneutic approach may seem discouraging. But I agree with Inden's argumentation in his article "Orientalist Constructions of India", that mistakes can be instructive, but only when we are made aware of them. It is only when we become aware of its limitations that we will make an effort to change the methodology. This argument also answers my initial question of why we need to engage in texts that construct misrepresentations. A critical view of the history may help prevent us both from repeating mistakes, and from inadvertently reproducing them within the framework already established by our predecessors.

3.1.7 Discussion on Herling's theory

Although Herling's aim is to bridge the two approaches, he seems to show inclination towards the hermeneutical approach. Herling provides both a theoretical outline of the hermeneutical approaches within the scholarship on Orientalism as well as examples of scholars illustrating the different lines of approach. However, his theoretical descriptions of the hermeneutical approaches, including the critical, the hermeneutical and the synthesized approach, are to some degree in conflict with his examples. Herling exemplifies the critical approach with Said's postcolonial criticism, the hermeneutical approach with Halbfass' work, and the synthesized approach with more recent scholars. This indicates the view, that the scholarship develops in the direction of a better interpretational methodology, represented by a bridging of the critical and hermeneutical approach. If we consider Herling's analysis in the context of the postcolonial debate, previously outlined in this chapter, we recognize the similarities between the features he describes as characteristic of the two main hermeneutic approaches and the two main perspectives within the scholarship on Orientalism. The unified perspective, held by Said and Inden, corresponds to the critical approach, which, according to Herling, is characterized by its tendency to mask the diversity in the attempts of cross-cultural understanding. This is in agreement with Herling's view. The diversified perspective, however, which is emphasized by the recent scholarship, can be seen as corresponding to the hermeneutical approach, which, according to Herling, is characterized by its focus on the individual efforts in the cross-cultural encounter. Herling's description of the hermeneutical approach almost exactly matches his suggestion as to how to bridge the two approaches. The hermeneutical approach, Herling writes, proposes "to engage in detailed historical work on texts" (*The German Gita* 15), while his suggestion as to how to bridge the approaches is to engage in "careful intellectual history and

incisive textual analysis" ("Renegotiating Theories" 76). Although he describes his own methodology as the bridged approach, Herling himself, then, seems to lean towards a hermeneutic approach, according to his own definition of the term. This tendency towards a hermeneutical approach can also be recognized in Herling's descriptions of the characteristics of the hermeneutical and critical approach. When he points out the contrast between them, he focuses on the flaws of the critical approach as opposed to the hermeneutical approach; the critical approach masks diversity whereas the hermeneutical approach encourages differentiation ("Renegotiating Theories" 72-73). Herling's favoring of the hermeneutical approach may also explain his claim, that the critical approach mainly relies on secondary literature, while the hermeneutical approach emphasizes careful historical study of the texts. He seems to underestimate the appeal from representatives of the critical approach, for example Inden, to study "the 'biased' and the 'out of date'" texts (445), and fails to notice Inden's reference to an abundance of such historical texts in his own study. Although Herling takes initiative to bridge the two approaches, then, he seems himself to lean towards the hermeneutical approach.

3.1.8 How can we improve our efforts to interpret and understand in a cross-cultural encounter?

Still, the issue that Herling raises regarding the hermeneutical approach is important because it ultimately concerns the question - how can we improve our efforts to interpret and understand in a cross-cultural encounter? I agree with Herling that bridging the critical and the hermeneutical approaches will improve the interpretational methodology. My view on this is also reflected in my own analysis of Schlegel's *On the Language*. My study combines the attention to textual detail and historical-philosophical context, which is characteristic for the hermeneutical approach, and the focus on disrupting faulty (Orientalist) frameworks of knowledge, which is characteristic for the critical approach. My analysis of Schlegel's *On the Language*, therefore shows both approaches, and can be regarded as a contribution to bridging them.

However, based on the persistence of the Orientalist misrepresentation in the West, it seems to me that the limitations of the hermeneutical approach tend to be underestimated. The most apparent problem of the hermeneutical approach is its tendency to allow incorrect interpretations to be accepted and sustained. In addition, the capacity of the hermeneutical approach to refine the existing models by providing details, can also serve to the detriment of

interpretation because it provides a faulty model with greater authority. *On the Language* serves as an example of this, where Schlegel's expertise in philosophy and language allows him to refine the representation of India as religious and irrational, but not change its faulty underlying assumptions. Therefore, although the hermeneutic approach is required because of its capacity to improve understanding, the critical approach is needed because it has the capacity to disrupt an existing misrepresentation. The critical approach exposes the incorrect structures of knowledge and opens for the possibility of new interpretations.

But the limitations of the critical approach must also be pointed out in a discussion on how to do better in cross-cultural interpretation. The most apparent flaw of the critical approach is its focus on power and domination as the cause for misrepresentations. The assumption that desire for power is the only cause for misrepresentations is itself reductionist and leaves out every other cause for misunderstanding. Based on our knowledge on Orientalism, it is evident that the misrepresentations are connected to power. In German Orientalism, this is expressed in the scholar's power to interpret, explain and intellectually represent another culture with more authority than the individuals of that culture have themselves. Because of this, German Orientalism has been understood as based on a desire for intellectual power. But even though we recognize that there is power connected to the misrepresentations, there may be other factors involved. This complexity needs to be recognized.

Based on these considerations, then, a synthesis of both approaches will provide the best interpretive methodology. While Herling leans towards the hermeneutical approach, however, I tend to lean towards the critical. The Orientalist misrepresentation of Indian thought as essentially religious and irrational, is still maintained in the West, which suggests a need for greater influence of the critical approach. But even more important than this – we need to move past the Western scholarship on the Orientalist representation of Indian thought and into their subject of interest, which is Indian philosophy.

3.2 The Western bias of philosophy

In my discussion of the postcolonial criticism of the German Orientalist representation of Indian philosophy, I have examined both the interpretational methodology, referred to as the hermeneutic approach to Indian thought, and the model that it constructs. My main focus has been on the methodology, based on the acknowledgement, that it has been used to construct the Orientalist representation of Indian thought as irrational and religious or spiritual. When I now

turn to the discussion on the exclusion of non-Western philosophy in academic philosophy in the West, my main focus will be on the constructed model. Is it correct to claim, as the critics do, that the legacy of Orientalism still exists as a misrepresentation of Indian thought in the West, even in academic philosophical circles? Do Orientalist preconceptions of Indian thought prevent its recognition and inclusion into Western academic philosophy?

These questions have been discussed as part of the public debate on "the decolonizing of academia"[40] . This debate has brought attention to the critique of a systematic bias in the curriculum, teaching and research within the universities; a bias that can be seen as sustaining Orientalist ideas. Within the academic western philosophy, however, Bryan W. Van Norden is the one who has presented the most distinct articulation of this issue in his book *Taking back philosophy: A multicultural manifesto*, published in 2017. The book is a call for Western academic philosophy to diversify by including non-Western philosophy. Norden presents his view by listing the counter-arguments and refuting them. His book therefore covers not only the question of Orientalist legacy, but a broader range of topics, which are beyond the scope of my thesis. My focus will be on examining if the main arguments against recognizing, and therefore including, non-Western philosophy are supported by assumptions based on the Orientalist representation of Indian thought. For this purpose, I will in the following refer the main arguments, as listed by Norden, and assess them from a postcolonial perspective. Finally I will discuss my findings and their implications.

The background for Norden's book *Taking back philosophy* is a piece written by him and Jay L. Garfield published in the *New York Time*'s philosophy blog *The Stone*, and the reactions it caused. In the piece titled "If Philosophy Won't Diversify, Let's Call It What It Really Is", the authors, who both teach what Norden calls "less commonly taught philosophy" (3), point out that American philosophy departments offer almost exclusively courses in philosophy originating in Europe or the English-speaking world. They argue that philosophy departments should expand their curriculum to include non-Western philosophy, and provocatively suggest that the philosophy departments that fail to do so should rename themselves to "Department of European and American Philosophy". The piece "produced a storm of controversy" (10), Norden writes, and according to Garfield, who wrote the foreword to Norden's book, they were not prepared for the "personal attacks, and frank racism that characterized most of the replies",

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[40] For an overview of the published articles in the Norwegian debate on the subject, see the PRIO (Peace Research Institute Oslo) news article "Decolonizing the Academy. An Overview of the Norwegian Debate".

nor for "the spectacularly ill-informed essays" (xii), even from fellow philosophers. *Taking back philosophy*, then, is an attempt to expound on the views presented in the blog post, while also presenting and responding to the arguments included in the replies that he and Garfield received.

3.2.1 The quality argument and the essentialist argument

In the debate on whether non-Western philosophy should be included in academic Western philosophy, there are several arguments that are commonly repeated. Norden separates the arguments into two main categories, and names them "the quality argument" (12) and "the essentialist argument" (16). He illustrates both of these arguments by referring to replies received on the blog post in *The Stone*. The comments that express the quality argument, he writes, "suggest that non-European thought somehow isn't as good as European philosophy" (12). "Many argued", Garfield describes, "that there simply is nothing valuable in any non-Western tradition" (*xiii*). The most remarkable about these comments, according to both Norden and Garfield, is how poorly founded the claims were. Norden ascribes this critique and the following dismissal of non-European philosophy to ignorance. He states, that when people hold this view "it is *never* because they have carefully studied it" (16). Those who do study it, on the other hand, "recognize it as both philosophical and important" (16). In his book, Norden follows up on this claim with a large number of examples and discussions on non-European philosophy, placing it in dialogue with Western philosophy and thus demonstrating that non-European philosophy is just that; "philosophical" and "important".

The essentialist argument is based on the claim, that "the essence of philosophy is to be part of one specific Western intellectual lineage" (16), and that it has Greek origin. Norden connects the essentialist argument to eurocentrism and rejects the critique both conceptually and historically. He illustrates the conceptual problem in two ways. First, he refers to philosophy as "engaging in the same kind of enquiry" (16) and disputes the opinion that the same (philosophical) activity should be referred to differently depending on the geographical area. Secondly, he lists the many examples of dialogue across cultures and traditions that have occurred throughout the history of Western philosophy, and disputes the idea of Western philosophy as isolated from philosophical traditions in the rest of the world. Norden illustrates the historical problem of the essentialist argument with the idea, that philosophy started in Greece. This is a "recent, historically contingent, and controversial view" (19), he writes, and draws attention to the fact, that the common opinion during the eighteenth century was that

philosophy originated in India or Africa. However, this view was contested by Kant and Hegel, who dismissed non-European philosophy based on racist ideas. Kant "asserted that Chinese, Indians, Africans, and the Indigenous peoples of the Americas are congenitally incapable of philosophy" (22), Norden states[41], and points to the parallel opinion of contemporary philosophers who "take it for granted that there is no Chinese, Indian, African or Native American philosophy" (22), implying that the dismissal of non-European philosophy today has its origin in racist ideas. According to Norden, then, the essentialist argument is supported by assumptions of eurocentrism. I agree with Norden on this, and will elaborate on how the essentialist argument is supported by assumptions related to Orientalist ideas. Moreover, I consider the quality argument not only to be based on ignorance, but also on assumptions typical for Orientalism.

3.2.2 Is Orientalism still represented in the view on Indian thought in Western academic philosophy?

In my discussion of this question, I will mainly focus on Indian philosophy, in order to be able to draw on the previous conclusions of my study. I will relate to Norden's two categories of arguments, but my starting point will be the Orientalist representation of the Orient as the "contrasting image" (Said 10) of the West, and Indian thought as irrational and religious. My aim is to show that the two most common categories of arguments, listed by Norden, are based on assumptions that have roots in an Orientalist representation of Indian thought.

The first assumption, that the Orient, including India, is the contrasting image of the West, is expressed in the Orientalist "distinction between East and West" (Said 10). According to Inden, this is communicated in the Orientalist discourse, which "presents itself as a form of knowledge that is both different from, and superior to, the knowledge that the Orientals have of themselves"

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[41] Norden's statement is supported by quotes from Kant, which show that he graded races according to a hierarchy.

> 1. The race of the whites contains all talents and motives in itself.
> 2. The Hindus … have a strong degree of calm, and all look like philosophers. That notwithstanding, they are much inclined to anger and love. They thus are educable in the highest degree, but only to the arts and not to the sciences. They will never achieve abstract concepts.
> 3. The race of Negroes … [is] full of affect and passion, very lively, chatty and vein. It can be educated, but only to the education of servants, i.e., they can be trained. (In another context, Kant dismissed a comment someone makes on the grounds that "this scoundrel was completely black from head to foot, a distinct proof that what he said was stupid.")
> 4. The [Indigenous] American people are uneducable; for they lack affect and passion. They are not amorous, and so are not fertile. They speak hardly at all, … care for nothing and are lazy.
> (Kant cited by Norden 22).

(408). According to this view, then, Indian thought must be significantly different from Western thought. In addition, the Western assessment of Indian thought is more valid than the Indian assessment of its own tradition of thought.

This assumption can be related both to what Norden labels the quality argument and the essentialist argument. The quality argument asserts an inferior quality of non-Western philosophy compared to Western philosophy, in line with the Orientalist assumption, that Western knowledge is different and superior. The essentialist argument claims that philosophy is connected to an essential "westernness" by lineage or origin. This presupposes a vital or essential difference between Western and non-Western thought, which is in line with the Orientalist assumption, that Western knowledge is different. Both arguments imply that the Western assessment of Indian thought is more valid than the Indian one by refusing to recognize Indian thought as philosophy despite the existence of an Indian philosophical tradition. It seems reasonable to conclude, then, that the Orientalist idea of Indian philosophy as different, exists as an assumption for the most common arguments against accepting Indian thought as philosophy.

The existence of this assumption has also been confirmed by several scholars. Herling writes in *The German Gita*, that "philosophers have been loath to accept that proper philosophical inquiry has taken place "west of the Suez"", and that "the genealogical momentum" of this claim persists in spite of abundant counter arguments (277). The situation that Herling describes, can be seen as an expression of both the quality argument, in the reference to "proper philosophical inquiry", and the essentialist argument, in the reference to the geographical area. Another example is provided by Richard King, who points out how the assumption that Indian philosophy is significantly different, has established itself in how we linguistically describe Western and non-Western philosophy. In his book *Indian philosophy: An introduction to Hindu and Buddhist thought*, King argues that the view of Western philosophy as "philosophy (the universal category) and "Indian philosophy" as a particular and culturally limited set of beliefs" (14) is a result of European colonialism and therefore a legacy of Orientalism. He also points out, that the way we categorize philosophy into "Indian philosophy" and "philosophy", contributes to the Orientalist dichotomy between East and West by defining Western philosophy as the standard category in contrast to the non-Western, which needs to be labeled. This practice is part of an "ongoing tendency to dichotomize and reify the distinction between East and West" (239), he states. The categorization of philosophy that King criticizes,

reinforces the impression of non-Western philosophy as essentially different, and can be seen as an expression of the essentialist argument.

The second assumption, that Indian philosophy is irrational or non-rational, is closely related to the West's construction of the Orient as its "contrasting image". According to Inden, the Orientalist discourse is based on the assumption, that the essence of Indian civilization is characterized by irrationality (420), which stands in contrast to the essence of the West, which is rationality (402). The Orientalist assumption of Indian thought as non-rational is supported by my analysis of Schlegel's *On the Language*, where the non-rational is favored over the rational in Indian thought by the portrayal of reason as the cause for degeneration of truth and an ensuing moral decay. According to this view, then, of Indian thought as irrational or non-rational, Indian thought is not only different from Western thought, but also lacks a central quality in order for it to qualify as philosophy. Therefore this assumption can be seen as supporting both the quality argument and the essentialist argument. The quality argument asserts irrationality as an inferior quality to the Western rationality. This view is supported by Norden, who describes the assumption, that non-Western philosophy is "irrational" (14) as underlying the quality argument, because it leads to the belief, that "non-Western philosophy is not really philosophy" (16). This assumption can, however, also be connected to the essentialist argument because it presupposes an essential difference between non-Western philosophy as irrational and Western philosophy as rational. It seems, then, that common arguments against accepting Indian thought as philosophy are substantiated by Orientalist assumptions of its irrationality, contrasting the West's rationality.

The biased view of Indian thought as irrational or non-rational has been criticized by several scholars. In the introduction to his book *Perception: An essay on classical Indian theories of knowledge* Bimal K. Matilal writes, that Indian philosophy too often is "presented as mystical and non-argumentative, that it is at best poetic and at worst dogmatic" (4-5), and that he has himself been met with the critique, that he is "leaning over backwards" in order to "show the analytic nature of Indian philosophy" (4). Thus, even when the rational, analytical part of Indian philosophy is demonstrated, it is met with disbelief in the West. Nussbaum and Sen agree with this view, and refer to the "contrast between the enormous variety in traditional Indian culture and the simple concentration on mysticism and nonrationality in the typical image of India" (304). Matilal in addition shows how the view of Indian philosophy as irrational has been presented by several influential Western philosophers, including Hume and Locke, by

mistaking, or at least presenting, mythological stories as representative of Indian philosophy. The examples illustrate the tendency of Western philosophers to turn to mythology or poetry instead of Indian philosophical texts in their research, and supports Matilal's statement, that Indian philosophy too often is "identified with a subject that is presented as mystical and non-argumentative" (4). In his text, Matilal makes the point, that "had Locke read any Indian philosophical text", he would have found "obvious similarities in certain problems of empirical philosophy" (5). The necessity for philosophers to become familiar with the Indian texts is also a main argument for Norden. In his view, "any acquaintance with Indian philosophy reveals that, in terms of both methodology and subject matter, it is philosophical even according to the most narrow standards that Anglo-European philosophy might supply. Just open a book!" (82) Common for all of these descriptions is an identification and criticism of the unfounded assumption of Indian thought as irrational or non-rational, which leads to an apparent contrast between Western and Indian thought, and where Indian thought is devalued.

The third assumption, that Indian philosophy is religious, can be seen as supporting the essentialist argument. According to Inden, Hinduism is one of the Orientalist essentialist categories of India (402), which means, that the West defines India by one of its (main) religions. My analysis of Schlegel's *On the Language* also confirms a biased focus on Indian religion or spirituality compared to reason and philosophy, to a large extent related to Schlegel's stance in the pantheism controversy. The assumption, that Indian thought is essentially religious, then, differentiates Indian thought from Western thought. It allows for Indian philosophy of religion, but not for philosophy of the Western kind, because modern Western philosophy distinguishes itself from religion. This assumption, that Indian thought is religious, is implied in the Western institutional structures of the universities, where Indian philosophy is consigned to religious studies. Based on this, the Orientalist characterization of Indian thought as religious, still exists as an assumption supporting its essential difference from Western thought.

The biased view of Indian philosophy as religious and spiritual has been confirmed by scholars. In his book *Indian philosophy: An introduction*, King criticizes the "widely held belief", that Indian thought is "bound to a specific religious worldview" (14). This view is supported by Daya Krishna. He points out in the preface to *Indian philosophy: A counter perspective*, that the main ideas about Indian philosophy have become so fixed in the West that they are regarded as self-evident. Important among these ideas, is that Indian philosophy is spiritual. But

spirituality or religion is not, according to Krishna, the only nor the main object of interest for Indian philosophy. Nussbaum and Sen take a similar stance in their article "Internal Criticism". They call attention to the fact, that even though nonreligious or nonspiritual aspects are included in standard descriptions of Indian philosophy, they are regarded as minor "aberrations" (303), while Indian philosophy's religious aspects represent the norm. The different weighting in the portrayal of the nonreligious aspects compared to the religious ones is problematic and amounts to a biased view. In addition to this, the assumption, that Indian thought is religious, is indicated by the conventional classification of Indian philosophy as either orthodox or heterodox, reflecting the Indian categories of *astika* and *nastika*,[42] respectively. The orthodox group of Indian philosophical schools is also labeled "Hindu philosophies", which implies a connection to Hinduism. King discusses the problematic classification of Indian philosophy extensively in his book *Indian philosophy: An introduction*. He points out, that several of the philosophical schools are non-theistic[43], even among the so-called orthodox schools, and that the other schools' relationship to theistic belief "is a matter of some debate" (16). This contradicts the common Western association of religion with theistic belief, which makes the classification of Indian philosophy misleading. In light of these considerations, then, the assumption that Indian thought is essentially religious still exists, echoing the Orientalist representation of India.

My examination above substantiates that there is a connection between the Orientalist representation of India, and the assumptions that support the most common arguments that Indian thought is not philosophy, or "real" philosophy. But is there any truth to the arguments, that Indian thought is different, non-rational and religious? Are there other reasons for not recognizing Indian thought as philosophy?

It is important to acknowledge, as Amartya Sen does in his article "Indian Traditions and Western Imaginations", that the Indian intellectual tradition is characterized by its "irreducible diversity" (168). There are indeed non-rational and religious aspects of the Indian tradition of thought, which makes the claims somewhat true, that Indian thought is non-rational and religious. However, there are non-rational and religious aspects also in the Western tradition of

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[42] According to the standard modern description of Indian philosophy, the astika schools include Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa and Vedanta, while the most important nastika schools include Buddhism, Jainism and Charvaka. Again, according to the standard description, the astika schools accept the authority of the Vedas, while the nastika schools do not. The issue of the authority of the Vedas and dogmatism within Indian philosophy is relevant to the discussion on Indian philosophy and religion, but is beyond the scope of this thesis.
[43] Samkhya, Mimamsa, Carvaka and Buddhism. The first two are orthodox schools.

thought, with its history of mythological beliefs, Paganism and Christianity. The biased Western image of India does not result from the fact that there is no tradition for rational or non-religious thought, but from the fact that these aspects are downplayed, while the non-rational and religious ones are overemphasized. This is exemplified by Nussbaum and Sen in in their article "Internal Criticism", as referred above, where they point to the fact that the established biased view of Indian thought is presented as the norm.

However, the attempt of both Indian and Western scholars to counterbalance this biased image has also provided a basis for criticism. In the effort to prove Indian philosophy acceptable, there has been a tendency among scholars to adapt Indian thought to the norm of modern Western philosophy. This approach has been criticized for its tendency to remove the distinctiveness of the Indian tradition of thought, which also results in a biased view. An example of this kind of distinctiveness, is the text *Bhagavad Gita*, commonly dated to 200-500 BCE. The *Bhagavad Gita* is a historical, mythological, religious and philosophical poem in the form of a dialogue between the god Krishna and the warrior Arjuna. This kind of mixture of thematics and genre is uncommon in Western philosophy, and is not easily classified. The text is indeed recognized as a philosophical work, also by Herling, who traces its influence on German philosophy through the works of Herder, the Schlegel brothers, Humboldt and Hegel in his book *The German Gita*. However, the philosophical content of the text is developed into more rigidly structured philosophical arguments in the commentary literature.[44] Approaching the *Bhagavad Gita* while ignoring the commentary literature, then, certainly gives the impression, that Indian philosophy is "non-rational" and "different" from the Western point of view, which supports the biased image of Indian thought. On the other hand, ignoring its distinctiveness in genre and thematics and focusing only on its rational and non-religious aspects, would represent an example of adapting the text to a certain conception of philosophy that does not apply, consistent with the criticism above. How, then, should the difference or distinctiveness of Indian tradition of thought be approached?

Richard King expands on this issue when he discusses the biased focus on religion in Indian philosophy in *Indian philosophy: An introduction*. He disapprovingly describes some scholars' attempt, including Daya Krishna's, to strip Indian philosophy of all spirituality, or to overemphasize its non-religious nature. He argues, that this is a strategy for adapting Indian

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[44] There are more than 200 commentaries just in Sanskrit, according to Richard H. Davis in *The Bhagavad Gita: A Biography* (55-56).

philosophy to dominant Western assumptions about the nature of philosophy in order for it to be accepted as philosophy on Western terms. It entails an attempt to "project the Enlightenment dichotomy between philosophy and religion onto materials where such a polarity does not exist" (29), he writes, and refers to the fact, that the foundations of the principal schools of Indian philosophy are ancient; pre-Enlightenment. King's criticism opens up for a view on Indian philosophy not characterized by an assumption of its essential religious nature, but where its inquiry into religious or spiritual subjects is nevertheless recognized. This is an important perspective, because religion has undoubtedly had considerable significance for the Indian tradition of thought. Without the assumption of Indian philosophy as essentially religious, both religious and non-religious aspects can be equally emphasized.

A similar kind of critique is addressed by Norden. He refers to the argument, that "characterizing non-Western thought as "philosophy" is itself a kind of intellectual imperialism, since it takes for granted the Western category" (30). This argument is based on the view, that the Western and non-Western traditions of thought are too different to be characterized by the same concept. Norden, however, refutes this view. He rejects the underlying misconception of a monolithic Western philosophy, which leads to the assumption, that "what one Western philosopher does is definitive of all philosophy, and must be what philosophers in other cultures are doing" (30). Norden instead advocates "a broad characterization of philosophy" (31), which would invite different traditions of thought into a dialogue with our own.

This broadening of the characterization of philosophy, that Norden encourages, would also represent an answer to the question of how the distinctiveness of a text like the Bhagavad Gita should be approached. With such an approach, the text would, along with its commentary literature, provide a contribution to philosophy as a discipline both in terms of its content and in terms of its genre, as to how philosophy can be conveyed.

3.2.3 Discussion

My examination above shows, that the assumptions that support the most common arguments against recognizing Indian thought as philosophy can be traced to Orientalist ideas. The fact that Orientalist ideas are represented as a legacy in the contemporary view of Indian thought in Western academic philosophy is thus substantiated. These assumptions about Indian thought prevent its recognition as philosophy proper, and therefore both its inclusion into Western academic philosophy and philosophers' engagement with this tradition of thought. The lack of

philosophers' engagement with Indian philosophy is a consequence of both its exclusion from the discipline, and of its lack of recognition as "real" philosophy. The assumptions about Indian thought therefore also have the implication, that Indian tradition of thought is not evaluated by contemporary philosophers, and thus the Orientalist representation is not reassessed.

This dilemma is reflected in the scholarship that engages in Indian philosophy. The bias in the representation of India and Indian thought is far more often referred to by non-philosophers than philosophers. The scholars discussing the problem of bias in my examples above, are the Western religion scholar Richard King, the Indian philosopher Daya Krishna, and Bimal K. Matilal, who is both an Indian philosopher and a Western religion scholar. The Western philosophers included, who have addressed the same topic, are Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen, in addition to Bryan W. Van Norden. My selection of non-philosophers and philosophers in this study, though, is not representative of the balance of contributions. However, my intention has been to show, that the biased view of Indian thought is also recognized by Western academic philosophers.

Even though Friedrich Schlegel and, as recorded by Herling, several other of his contemporary philosophers, engaged with Indian philosophy, they also contributed to removing it from the discipline of philosophy by emphasizing its religious and irrational features. Given the postcolonial scholarship on Orientalism and the awareness on hermeneutics in a cross-cultural setting that I have referred to in my study, the conditions are certainly there for a reassessment to give a better understanding of Indian philosophy than the Orientalists had. The obstacle for such a reassessment seems to be the philosophers' engagement with the subject, which is, ultimately, caused by dubious assumptions preventing Indian thought to be recognized as philosophy. The fact, that a connection can be substantiated between these assumptions and Orientalist ideas about India, is a strong argument for reviewing them. Recognizing this, the continued exclusion of Indian philosophy could be regarded a silent acceptance of the Orientalist representation of India.

A discussion on recognizing Indian thought as philosophy also, however, implies a question of what philosophy is. Norden suggests, that it is "dialogue about important unsolved problems" (142), which suits the context of cross-cultural philosophy. The question does, however, require reflection on what we consider philosophy to entail, both as an activity and as a discipline. Should we broaden the concept of philosophy and include different philosophical traditions into

the dialogue? Does Indian thought need to prove itself to be philosophy in order to be recognized as part of the discipline in the West? Or is it time to shift the burden of proof and, instead of asking if Indian thought is philosophy, rather ask, why is it not?

3.2.4 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have focused on the problematic interpretive practice of the early Orientalists, as demonstrated in the case of Schlegel. Drawing on the findings in my analysis of Schlegel's text, I have examined the hermeneutical problems from the perspective of the postcolonial debate. Building on the scholarship on German Orientalism, I have further identified the hermeneutical issues in Schlegel's case. Herling's conceptual framework has been helpful in this process, with his reference to the hermeneutical, the critical and the bridged approach. Schlegel's case exemplifies the typical hermeneutical problems in the early Orientalists' encounter with India. His text demonstrates, according to Herling's framework, the limitations of the hermeneutical approach. Schlegel allows his interpretive horizon to overwhelm the text, which constructs a misrepresentation. In addition, his interpretation serves to maintain and even further consolidate the Orientalist misrepresentation of Indian thought. Applying Herling's conceptual framework to Schlegel's case, then, clearly demonstrates the interpretative issues of both the methodology and the model. In addition, it suggests a path forward for an improved interpretive approach in cross-cultural encounters by synthesizing the hermeneutical and the critical approach.

In the last part of the chapter, I show the relevance of these findings by studying to which extent the Orientalist model of India still exists as a legacy in academic Western philosophy. My study suggests, that assumptions supporting arguments against recognizing non-Western thought as philosophy in the West can be traced to Orientalist ideas. This finding substantiates that there is a legacy of Orientalist ideas, existing as deeply rooted prejudice on non-Western, including Indian, thought. The legacy contributes to preventing non-Western philosophy to be recognized as philosophy and therefore engaged with by most philosophers. It is also reflected in the institutional structures of the universities by the exclusion of non-Western philosophy from most philosophy departments. Even though there are other arguments to consider in a discussion on whether to include non-Western philosophy in the university programs of philosophy, the awareness of an Orientalist legacy gives reason to reflect. Given the previous scholarship on German Orientalism, including on hermeneutics, the ground has been cleared for Indian thought to be reconsidered and reassessed by philosophers in an academic setting.

This chapter, then, both represents a critique of unfounded assumptions on Indian thought, as well as a call to broaden philosophy as discipline and practice.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have enquired into the role of hermeneutics in shaping the West's image of Indian philosophy. To do so, I started by examining Friedrich Schlegel's *On the Language and Philosophy of the Indians* (1808) with the aim of identifying which hermeneutical points could be extracted from the text based on his engagement with Indian culture.

My analysis emphasizes a philosophical reading of Schlegel's text based on the historical-philosophical context, an approach, which can be identified as historical reconstruction. Based on my findings, I argue, that *On the Language* provides a thorough and consistent portrayal of Schlegel's philosophical views, characteristic of his late phase, of which the most important are his historicism and his religio-philosophical orientation. The fact that he allows these philosophical theories to guide his interpretive approach is highly problematic, because they shape his portrayal into a misrepresentation of Indian thought.

These findings led me to more general questions about the role of hermeneutics as a methodology. My analysis of Schlegel's text identified two problems; first the limitations of the methodology in his approach to Indian thought, and secondly, the misrepresentation of Indian thought caused by his methodology. In chapter 3, I explore these problems from a postcolonial perspective, relating them to two already established debates within academic philosophy, an approach, which can be identified as rational reconstruction. The first debate is the postcolonial critique of the German Orientalist representation of Indian philosophy, and the second is the discussion of the exclusion of non-Western, including Indian, philosophy from academic philosophy in the West.

Relative to the postcolonial debate on the German Orientalist representation of Indian philosophy, I focused on the questions of what we can learn from history, and how we can improve our interpretive approach in a cross-cultural setting. Drawing on the scholarship on German Orientalism, and employing Bradley Herling's conceptual framework, I examined the interpretive methodology both within the postcolonial scholarship as well as in Schlegel's *On the Language* in order to identify the limitations of different hermeneutical approaches. Based on the insight from the case of Schlegel and from the scholarship on German Orientalism, I argue, with Herling, that an improved methodology must strive for synthesizing a

hermeneutical and a critical approach, a view that is also reflected in the choice of methodology in my own study.

This view, that we can improve our interpretive approach, suggests that there is possibility for new interpretations with improved understanding of Indian thought within the discipline of philosophy. However, since the early Orientalists, including Schlegel, engaged with Indian thought, it has largely been removed from the philosophical agenda and delegated to the field of religious studies in the West. Indian thought is therefore not easily brought to the attention of most Western contemporary philosophers. This is a central issue in the debate on the exclusion of non-Western philosophy from academic philosophy in the West. The exclusion of non-Western philosophy is supported by arguments that non-Western thought is not "real" philosophy. In my thesis, I explored this issue by examining the assumptions supporting the arguments against recognizing non-Western philosophy in light of the Orientalist representation of Indian thought. My analysis shows that it is possible to trace these assumptions back to Orientalist ideas, characterizing Indian thought as religious, irrational and contrasting the West's.

In conclusion, then, my study suggests that Orientalist ideas live on as assumptions supporting arguments against recognizing Indian thought as "real" philosophy. This legacy therefore contributes to prevent Indian thought from being recognized as "real" philosophy, as well as supporting its exclusion from most philosophy departments. By excluding it from the discipline of philosophy, non-Western (including Indian) philosophy is unrecognized, and the reasons why remain a blind spot within Western academic philosophy. The conversation on this topic, to which my thesis is intended as a contribution, calls this problem into awareness and represents both a critique of the current view on Indian thought as well as a call to open the field for a cross-cultural dialogue.

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