6 'Mystic Hinduism'

Vedānta and the politics of representation

> They assert that the world is nothing but an illusion, a dream, a magic spell, and that the bodies, in order to be truly existent, have to cease existing in themselves, and to merge into nothingness, which due to its simplicity amounts to the perfection of all beings. They claim that saintliness consists in willing nothing, thinking nothing, feeling nothing ... This state is so much like a dream that it seems that a few grains of opium would sanctify a brahmin more surely than all his efforts.
>
> (Diderot)[1]

The 'discovery' of Vedānta as the central theology of Hinduism

One finds a considerable interest in the archaism of Indian culture among Orientalists and the Romantic movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1808 Friedrich Schlegel, a central intellectual figure in the Romantic movement in Germany, wrote *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, expressing the characteristically Romantic yearning for spiritual guidance from the East in the wake of the radical social and political transformations occurring as Europe entered the modern era. For many, most notably J.G. Herder (1744–1803), the archaic nature of the Hindu Vedas represented the origins of human civilization, the source of Indo-European mythology and language, and provided a window into the mysterious prehistory of humankind. India was the land of precious metals and stones mentioned by Moses and constituted the 'cradle of the human race'. Moreover, for the early Orientalists the ancient Vedic materials became the normative paradigm for the entire Hindu tradition – an ahistorical yardstick by which all subsequent forms of Hindu religiosity could be measured, assessed and evaluated. This nostalgia for origins, usually grounded in an evolutionary history of humankind, tended to conceive of India as a throwback to the 'childhood' of humankind. While Europe and the New World were undergoing enormous social and political changes, India seemed to have remained unchanged for thousands of years, representing a crucial example of static archaism with which the dynamic modernity of the West could be successfully contrasted.[2]

Locating the 'essence' of the Hindu tradition in origins (*archē*), in this case the ancient Vedas, however, was also prevalent among the nineteenth-century Hindu reformers as a nationalist and anti-colonial stratagem. For Dayānanda Saraswati and the Ārya Samaj, for instance, the Saṃhitas were the source of all legitimate manifestations of Hinduism and also provided evidence of the superiority of Hinduism over 'younger' religions such as Christianity. For Saraswati, Christianity was a poor imitation of the Hindu religion. Indeed, all knowledge, he believed, could be demonstrated to have originated in Mother India from time immemorial, including modern technologies such as aircraft, long-forgotten and now claimed to be the sole invention of the colonizing Westerners. Equally, since William Jones had established an Indo-European link between Sanskrit and the classical languages of European culture, interest in comparative linguistics had developed steadily among Orientalists and the search for a common Indo-European source most often turned its attentions eastwards. Saraswati explicitly identified this 'Ur-language' with Vedic Sanskrit, now conceived as the 'mother of all languages'. This approach, of course, intersected well with Romantic representations of India as the geographical point of origin of European civilization.

There is an increasing tendency, however, from the late eighteenth century onwards to emphasize the 'mystical' nature of Hindu religion by reference to the 'esoteric' literature known as the Vedānta, the end of the Vedas – namely the *Upaniṣads*. Western readers were first introduced to these works with the publication of the *Oupnek'hat* (a Latin translation of Dārā-Shukōh's Persian translation of parts of the Sanskrit *Upaniṣads*) in 1801–2 by Anquetil-Duperron. The *Oupnek'hat* became enormously influential as a sourcebook of ancient Hindu wisdom in the early nineteenth century, despite criticism from Orientalists for its reliance upon Persian translations of the Sanskrit texts and the idiosyncratic nature of the work.[3] Anquetil-Duperron appealed to Western intellectuals, in particular those engaged in the contemporary debate with Kant and German Idealism, to engage with the philosophical content of the *Upaniṣads*.[4]

> Anyone who carefully examines the lines of Immanuel Kant's thought, its principles as well as its results, will recognize that it does not deviate very far from the teachings of the Brahmins, which lead man back to himself and comprise and focus him within himself.[5]

This call was met most strikingly by the German idealist Schopenhauer, who remained deeply interested in Vedāntic and Buddhist philosophical ideas and indebted to Anquetil-Duperron's *Oupnek'hat* as the fundamental sourcebook for understanding the mystic wisdom of India. Indeed, Schopenhauer described Anquetil's work as 'the most rewarding and edifying reading (with the exception of the original text) that could be possible in the world; it has been the solace of my life and will be the solace

of my death'.[6] For Anquetil, however, the *Upaniṣads* did not merely represent the central philosophy of the Hindus, it also provided evidence that the fundamental teachings of Christianity already existed in the ancient scriptures of the Hindu faith, albeit in a distorted and unclear fashion.

> The books of Solomon, the Sacred Canons of the Chinese, the Vedas of the Hindus and the Zend-Avesta of the Persians, all contained the same basic truth, and had one common parenthood in their origin. What one would find in the books of Solomon, one would find also in others, but with one single difference, namely, what the former would have clearly and lucidly, others would have blurred by false reasoning, as it were dusty and rusty. But a skilled artisan should know how to extract the gold alone, which lies mixed with mud and scoria.[7]

Thus, the initial reception of Vedānta in the West was framed by a perennialist agenda (note, however, that Anquetil's perennialism explicitly privileges Christianity), becoming the key Hindu example of the perennialist thesis that all religions, at a fundamental level, express the same basic truth.[8] This characterization, though subject to contestation by Orientalists from the outset, has continued to play a significant role in Western interpretations of the *Upaniṣads* on a more popular or 'culturally diffused' level. The influence of the works of the Theosophical Society in the early twentieth century and of New Age literature in the late twentieth century have contributed to this perennialization of Vedānta.

In many respects an early impetus was gained in the popularity of the perennialist position by the emphasis that early Orientalists placed upon the *Bhagavad Gītā*, a text that is really a part of a much longer Hindu Epic, the *Mahābhārata*. The *Gītā* was first translated into English in 1785 by Charles Wilkins, one of the small group of pioneering British Orientalists (such as William Jones and Henry Thomas Colebrooke) usually associated with the birth of modern Indological research. Wilkins suggests in his preface that:

> The Brahmans esteem this work to contain all the grand mysteries of their religion and so careful are they to conceal it from the knowledge of those of a different persuasion, and even the vulgar of their own, that the Translator might have fought in vain for assistance, had not the liberal treatment they have of late experienced from the mildness of our government, the tolerating principles of our faith, and, above all, the personal attention paid to the learned men of their order by him under whose auspicious administration they have so long enjoyed in the midst of surrounding troubles.[9]

From a subalternist perspective, Wilkins' remarks are suggestive of the complicity of interests between the brahmanical pandits and the 'liberal' British ruler in this enterprise, but what is interesting for our current

concerns is the way in which the *Gītā* is seen by Wilkins and subsequent Orientalists as representative of the 'grand mysteries' of the Hindu religion as a whole. William Jones, for instance, recommends that those who wish 'to form a correct idea of Indian religion and literature' should 'begin by forgetting all that has been written on the subject, by ancients and moderns, before the publication of the *Gītā*'.[10] The attention received by this text in the West and subsequently among the Bengali intelligentsia has led to references to the *Gītā* as 'the Hindu version of the Bible', a clear reference to the centrality of the text in the development of a unifying ideology of 'Hinduism,' constructed in the image of Christianity.[11]

The *Gītā* propounds its own type of inclusivism,[12] a feature that Wilkins saw as the central import of the text:

> It seems as if the principal design of these dialogues was to unite all the prevailing modes of worship of those days and, by setting up the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead, in opposition to idolatrous sacrifices, and the worship of images, to undermine the tenets inculcated by the Vēds, for although the author dared not make a direct attack ... his design was to bring about the downfall of Polytheism; or, at least, to induce men to believe God present in every image before which they bent, and the object of all their ceremonies and sacrifices.[13]

Despite Wilkins' reference to the Vedas in this passage he acknowledges that at the time of writing he had not yet read any of the Vedas,[14] though it is likely that he was aware of the spurious *Ezourvedam*, a Jesuit work purporting to be a French translation of a Hindu Veda. Although the fraudulent nature of the work was not demonstrated until 1782 by Pierre Sonnerat, such was the hyperbole surrounding this text (and Voltaire's vigorous promotion of it) that it seems unlikely to have escaped Wilkins' attention. The *Ezourvedam* offered a critique of the ritual practices and polytheism of the Hindu masses and propounded a monotheistic position that approximates closely to Wilkins' own rendering of the import of the *Gītā*. Indeed, Wilkins even goes as far as to describe the 'most learned Brāhmans' of his day as Unitarians and states that this is in accordance with the teachings of the *Gītā*. The Hindus, he points out, believe that they are bound to transmigration until 'all their sins are done away' and aspire to '"Mooktee", eternal salvation, by which is understood a release from future transmigration, and an absorption in the nature of the Godhead, who is called Brāhm'.[15]

For authoritative commentaries upon these texts, Orientalists soon turned to the exegetical literature of the various Vedānta traditions, especially those of Rāmānuja (Viśiṣṭādvaita) and Śaṅkara (Advaita), for whom the *Gītā* represented one of the three scriptural foundations (*prasthānatraya*), alongside the classical *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahma* or *Vedānta Sūtras*.

References to the *Upaniṣads* as 'mystical' and esoteric texts have generally

appealed to a creative etymological rendering of '*upa-ni-ṣad*' as 'sitting at the feet of' – suggesting as it does the availability of such teachings to a select few.[16] The classical Upaniṣadic material was composed over a period of almost a thousand years,[17] and reflects, even in its earliest stages, a movement away from the ritualism of the Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas and the development of an increasingly allegorical interpretation of Vedic sacrificial practices. This allegorical approach is exemplified, for instance, in the opening passage of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*:

> Truly, the dawn is the head of the sacrificial horse; the sun his eye; the wind his breath; the universal fire his open mouth. The year is the body (*ātman*) of the sacrificial horse; the sky his back; the atmosphere his stomach … ; the stars his bones; the clouds his flesh …

Here, ancient Vedic sacrificial practices are universalized in their meaning (*artha*) by the establishment of a series of homologies (*bandhu*) or 'correspondences' between the microcosm (the ritual event) and the macrocosm. Interestingly, this is reminiscent of the phenomenon of mystical hermeneutics within Christianity where similar allegorical interpretations of biblical events were seen as representative of the 'hidden' meaning of the divine plan. Perhaps the most characteristic example of this phenomenon within the *Upaniṣads* is *prāṇāgnihotra* – the transformation of the fire sacrifice (*agnihotra*) from an external, ritualized act into an interiorized yogic practice involving the control of one's breath/vital life-force (*prāṇa*).

The philosophical orientation of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā* seems to have appealed to Westerners with a variety of interests and agendas. The texts appealed to the anti-clerical and anti-ritualistic sentiments of many Western intellectuals and proved amenable to abstraction from their own context via an emphasis upon interiority. The allegorization of Vedic ritual found in the *Upaniṣads* could be applied to all religious practices and institutions, proving amenable to the growing interest in non-institutionalized forms of 'spirituality'. On the other hand, for Christian missionaries the *Upaniṣads* could also be used as evidence of an incipient monotheism within the Hindu tradition. For the liberal Christian this provided a platform for inter-faith dialogue between Christianity and Hinduism and a recognition of some commonality between faiths. Max Müller, for instance, was interested in the comparability of Indian religion and his own liberal version of Christianity and became increasingly preoccupied by the possibilities of a 'Christian Vedānta' in his later years.[18]

For Christians with a more evangelical zeal, the *Upaniṣads* represented a way into the 'Hindu mind-set' which opened up the possibility of converting Hindus to Christianity. J.N. Farquhar, for instance, saw Vedānta as the apex of Indian religious thought and a precursor for the Christianization of India.

The Vedānta is not Christianity, and never will be – simply as the Vedānta; but it is a very definite preparation for it … It is our belief that the living Christ will sanctify and make complete the religious thought of India. For centuries … her saints have been longing for him, and her thinkers, not at least the thinkers of the Vedānta, have been thinking his thought.[19]

Furthermore, the allegorization of ritual in the *Upaniṣads* suited missionary critiques of Vedic ritualism as well as providing an indigenous source for the critique of Hindu polytheism and idolatry. Thus, under fervent pressure and criticism from Christian missionaries and increasing interest from Orientalists, one finds an emphasis among the various Hindu 'reform' movements on the repudiation of idolatry (particularly in the cases of Dayānanda Saraswati and Rammohun Roy). Both the Ārya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj promulgated an uncompromising monotheism as the essence of the Hindu religion. Saraswati argued that this monotheism was present in the ancient Vedic *Saṃhitās* (despite their apparent dedication to a variety of deities) and Roy argued strongly for a monotheistic interpretation of the Vedānta. Both movements, of course, reflect the influence of Western constructions in their exposition of the core of Hinduism.

The *Upaniṣads* themselves represent the reflections of a (largely male) brahmanical élite increasingly influenced by *śrāmaṇa* (especially Buddhist) renunciate traditions.[20] Interest in these texts by Western and Hindu intellectuals alike also contributed to the development of an image of the heroic and noble ascetic as representative of the core values of Hinduism. As Indira Chowdury-Sengupta has recently argued, this image of the heroic *saṃnyasin* functioned in the 'Bengali Renaissance' of the nineteenth century as a direct repudiation of the missionary emphasis upon the renunciate as an unreliable and dangerous fakir, as well as providing a model of heroic and celibate masculinity to counteract Western discourses about the effeminacy of the Bengali male.[21] This was a particular feature, for instance, of the position taken by Swāmi Vivekānanda, who remained a staunch advocate of the cultivation of 'manly pursuits'. Indeed, Vivekānanda is even known to have remarked on one occasion that 'You will be nearer to God through football than through the *Bhagwad Gita*.'[22]

Thus we should note that the construction of 'Hindu mysticism' and the location of a 'spiritual' essence as central to the Hindu religion is bound up with the complexities of colonial and gender politics in nineteenth-century India. This is far from a simple story, as there have been a number of shifts in popular conceptions of the Mystic East. As Paul Wills points out:

> Within [Western] popular culture there must have been numerous expressions of the sense of the East being different, mystical, and spiritual. How different was the general public's perception in the 1890s based on experiences like the carnival 'swami' or 'fakir' from that of the

public in the 1960s when transcendental meditation cults, Nehru jackets and incense were part of the popular culture.[23]

Romanticism and the debate about pantheism

The Romantic interest in Indian culture frequently focused upon the question of its apparent pantheism. Herder was himself deeply involved in debates about the validity of Spinoza's philosophical system and saw a similar pantheistic monism at the core of Hindu thought.[24] Despite his highly idealized picture of India as the cradle of civilization, Herder remained convinced of the superiority of his own Christianity to anything Indian culture could offer. Similarly, Schlegel associated Hindu and Buddhist thought with pantheism. As Wilhelm Halbfass points out, Schlegel's early flirtation with pantheism is what first aroused his interest in the East, but in 1808, shortly after his conversion to Catholicism, Schlegel condemns the doctrine of pantheism as leading to moral indifference and a destruction of the imagination.[25] Such a shift precipitated responses from figures such as F.W.J. Schelling (1775–1854), who providing a spirited defence of pantheism and its implications for the moral life.[26] Although, Schelling's knowledge and involvement in the study of India was minimal, he often praises Indian culture and towards the end of his life became convinced that a noble form of pantheism was best exemplified in the philosophy of Vedānta (by which he meant of course Śaṅkara's Advaita system). Vedānta was 'nothing more than the most exalted idealism or spiritualism'.[27]

Brief mention should also be made at this point of G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) for whom the Indian 'could only attain a dream-world and the happiness of insanity through opium'.[28] Hegel remained interested in Asia throughout his life, though he tended to disparage the Romantic fascination with all things Oriental. Hegel's representation of India is bound up with his own conception of history as the unfolding of the world-spirit and of systematic philosophy as a movement towards a consciousness of freedom. Within this universal picture of world history, divided by Hegel into childhood, adolescence and maturity, India represented the first period in human history – the childhood of mankind. Thus India had nothing to contribute to modernity. Similarly, philosophy, in the specific sense of a 'consciousness of freedom', was a Greek innovation reaching its modern fruition in the Germanic nations where consciousness of human freedom had reached its apex.[29] Hegel remained indebted to the works of contemporary Indologists, especially H.T. Colebrooke, for his appreciation of Indian thought.[30] Through his reading of Colebrooke, Hegel was made aware of the diversity of Indian philosophical thought, but he remained firm in his association of Hindu thought with a Vedāntic type of monism.

In the massively wild religion of the Indians, which is totally devoted to fantasy, they distinguish indeed one thing as ultimate, namely Brahm or

Brahma, also called Brahman. This unity is regarded as the Supreme, and the characterization of man is to identify himself with this Brahm.[31]

Debates about the nature of Indian thought and culture at this time cannot be disentangled from the internal debates and critiques provided of each other by contemporary thinkers. Representations of India functioned as a screen on which European debates could be projected and played out. As Halbfass notes:

Hegel's interest in India is inseparable from his anti-Romantic attitude and his criticism of the Romantic glorification of India ... Furthermore, Schlegel's criticism of Hegel sometimes reminds us of, and even seems to echo, Hegel's own polemics against Schlegel. While Hegel finds 'infinite absolute negativity' in Schlegel's thought, Schlegel in turn finds 'the evil spirit of negation and contradiction' in Hegel; both accuse each other of abstractness ... Schelling's philosophy, too, is included in Hegel's criticism of India ... [K]ey terms of Hegel's interpretation of India, such as 'substantiality,' the abstract 'One,' the empty absolute, were first developed or employed in Hegel's critique of Schelling.[32]

Schopenhauer was also an influential figure in nineteenth-century European thought and inspired the interest of many in the 'spiritual' philosophies of India as well as contributing in his own way to the popularity of Anquetil's *Oupnek'hat*. In contrast to Schlegel and Christian missionary polemics, Schopenhauer argued that the moral life was itself grounded in a principle of universal identity. Indeed, Schopenhauer, perhaps influenced by Anquetil-Duperron here, propounds a form of perennialism when he notes that 'Buddha, Eckhardt, and I all teach essentially the same.'[33]

Schopenhauer's association of Buddhist and Vedāntic thought with the apophatic theology of Meister Eckhart has become a recurring theme in Western representations of 'the Mystic East' from the late nineteenth century onwards and continues to this day. From a scholastic point of view, probably the most influential example of the association of Vedānta with Christian mysticism is Rudolf Otto's *Mysticism East and West* (1932), now generally acknowledged to be a classic work in the comparative study of mysticism. Otto provides a comparative study of the theologies of Eckhart and Śaṅkara and provides an account that is not as dated as one might at first think. Otto avoids a simplistic perennialism that confutes the two thinkers, though this is not surprising since his work is a clear attempt to establish the superiority of the German mysticism of Eckhart over the Indian mysticism of Śaṅkara. Otto's own liberal Lutheranism prevented him from indulging either in statements of crass similarity between Eckhart and Advaita, but it also furnished him with an opportunity to defend the

intellectually rigorous nature of Śaṅkara's system against less sympathetic critics of Indian religion.

However, it is clear that one of the central concerns of *Mysticism East and West* is to redeem the mysticism of Eckhart in the eyes of Otto's predominantly Protestant circle.

> The reproach is often made against Eckhart and against mysticism in general, that the full, vital, individual life of religion, of personal faith, love, confidence and fear and a richly colored emotional life and conscience, is finally submerged in pale abstractions, in the void and empty formula of systematized nonentities to become one with the One … [S]uch reproaches are misunderstandings of the experiential content of Indian mysticism. But applied to Eckhart they are simply monstrous.[34]

This reflects what I consider to be an important feature in the Western 'discovery' of Vedānta as the central philosophy of the Hindus: namely, the projection of Christian theological debates and concerns about the nature and status of Christian mysticism onto an Indian canvas. In other words, we should bear in mind that when Christian missionaries, Western Orientalists and European intellectuals spend so much time discussing the non-dualistic philosophy of Vedānta, they are also involved in domestic debates and concerns that are being 'played out' abroad. As Ashis Nandy has suggested, all writing about India is in some sense autobiographical.

Otto's critique of Advaita Vedānta as detached, amoral and world-denying, therefore, allows him to displace contemporary Christian debates about the status and implications of Eckhart's mystical theology onto an Indian 'screen'. Through this process, Eckhart becomes redeemed or absolved of precisely those characteristics for which he has been so frequently criticized (particularly by the German Protestant theologians of Otto's time). Otto achieves this through a demonstration of Eckhart's Christian allegiance and superiority to the quietistic illusionism of Śaṅkara's Advaita. Eckhart's system is alive and dynamic, while Śaṅkara's tends towards abstractions,[35] Śaṅkara's goal is 'quietism, tyaga, a surrender of the will and of doing, an abandonment of good as of evil works',[36] while Eckhart's quietism is in reality an 'active creativity'.[37] Śaṅkara rationalizes the paradoxes of mystical language while Eckhart 'excites his listeners by unheard of expressions'.[38] Unlike Śaṅkara, Eckhart's theology 'demands humility'.[39] Śaṅkara's Brahman is a static and unchanging absolute, while Eckhart's is a God of 'numinous rapture'.[40] Towards the end of his study Otto places a great deal of emphasis upon what he sees as the antinomian implications of Śaṅkara's system. The charge of amoralism – of mystical antinomianism, is, along with pantheism, probably the most consistent criticism made of Eckhart's writings by subsequent Christian theologians. Indeed, the Papal condemnation of Eckhart's writings (*In Agro Dominico*) explicitly censures Eckhart for implying that the soul's emptying of self-will

leads to a renunciation of works. Otto's concern, however, is to demonstrate that this representation of Eckhart is inaccurate and he arrives at this conclusion by contrasting Eckhart's 'dynamic vitalism' with what Otto sees as the amoral and static quietism of Śaṅkara.

> It is because the background of Sankara's teaching is not Palestine but India that his mysticism has no ethic. It is not immoral, it is a-moral. The Mukta, the redeemed, who has attained ekata or unity with the eternal Brahman, is removed from all works, whether good or evil … With Eckhart it is entirely different. 'What we have gathered in contemplation we give out in love.'[41]

Otto's representation of Śaṅkara's Vedānta system, therefore, becomes a useful foil, a theological cleansing sponge if you like, which purifies Eckhart of heresy while at the same time absorbing these heretical defects into itself. That this is a major motivating force behind Otto's comparison can be seen by his frequent attempts to render Eckhart compatible with his own Lutheranism.[42] Otto never really questions the normative characterization of 'mysticism' as quietistic, amoral and experientialist. If anything, his work (especially *The Idea of the Holy*) actively reinforces such associations. However, what Otto attempts in *Mysticism East and West* is a displacement of the negative connotations of 'the mystical', which he relocates or projects onto a 'mystic East' exemplified by the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara. Otto declares in the conclusion that 'Eckhart thus becomes necessarily what Sankara could never be'.[43] This remark is more accurate than Otto realizes, since it demonstrates the unassailable logic of his own methodology of comparison. Śaṅkara functions in Otto's study as a mirror to hold up to Eckhart, but one that thereby remains wholly inferior to that which it (only partially) reflects. The following table reflects the dichotomies set up by Otto's comparative analysis:

Eckhart	Śaṅkara
West	East
German	Indian
Supra-Theism grounded in Grace	Supra-Theism verging on Pantheism
Activist	Quietist
Moral	Amoral
Dynamic God	Static Brahman
Love	Cool detachment
World affirmed as God	World denied as illusion

Note that Otto's Orientalist dichotomy between the East and West allows him to associate characteristics on each side of the dichotomy with each other. Thus, the moral activism of Eckhart is bound up with his Germanic

roots and the urge for righteousness derives from the Palestinian origins of Christianity.[44] Śaṅkara's amoral quietism is seen as a product of his Indian background. Otto's comparativism also highlights the politics of representation. The contrast between these two representatives (Śaṅkara and Eckhart) can be universalized to demonstrate the differences between East and West in general. This elision is subtle but effective. The universalization of a single representative of Indian religious thought creates a caricature of Indian culture that is then shown to be inferior to the normative standards of German/Lutheran and Christian examples.

Orientalist interest in Vedānta

Heavily influenced by German idealism (especially Kant and Schopenhauer) as well as Romanticism, early Orientalists such as H.T. Colebrooke, Max Müller and Paul Deussen tended to locate the central core of Hindu thought in the Vedas, the *Upaniṣads* and the traditions of exegesis that developed from them. Müller in fact was instrumental in fetishizing the Vedas, representing them as the authentic embodiment of Hindu religiosity that had been 'misunderstood and perverted' by the 'theological twaddle' of the later Brāhmaṇas.[45] For Deussen, an avid disciple of Schopenhauer, the Vedānta philosophy of Śaṅkara represented the culmination of Hindu thought, providing evidence that the idealisms that were in vogue in nineteenth-century European thought were already present at the 'core' of the Hindu religion. In particular one finds an increasing tendency within Western scholarship not only to identify 'Hinduism' with the Vedānta (thus establishing an archaic textual and canonical locus for the Hindu religion) but also a tendency to conflate Vedānta with Advaita Vedānta – the non-dualistic tradition of Śaṅkarācarya (c. eighth century CE). Advaita, with its monistic identification of Ātman and Brahman, thereby came to represent the paradigmatic example of the mystical nature of the Hindu religion.

This increasing emphasis upon the Vedāntic literature and reliance upon one particular strand of Vedānta as representative of Hindu culture require some attempt at an explanation. Although it is common to find Western scholars and Hindus arguing that Śaṅkarācarya was the most influential and important figure in the history of Hindu intellectual thought, this does not seem to be justified by the historical evidence. Until Vācaspati Miśra (tenth century CE), the works of Śaṅkara seems to have been overshadowed by his older contemporary Maṇḍana-Miśra. It is Maṇḍana who seems to have been considered in the centuries after Śaṅkara to have been the most important representative of the Advaita position.[46] Moreover, Śaṅkara's theology was ultra-conservative and highly polemical in nature and he shows little evidence of championing Hindu unity, as is often claimed by neo-Vedāntins. In fact, the polemical nature of Śaṅkara's work creates a significant obstacle to modern attempts to interpret him in an inclusivist

fashion. Indian scholar and Advaitin T.M.P. Mahadevan, for instance, responds to this problem in the following fashion:

> The answer is very simple. When Śaṅkara points out the defects and inconsistencies in the various schools and cults, he does so not in the spirit of a partisan, but with a view to making them whole ... [P]artisanship is incompatible with Advaita. The function of criticism performed by Advaita teachers should be viewed, not as destructive, but as a constructive help.[47]

Presumably Mahadevan would also argue that Śaṅkara's ultra-conservative position, which allows only brahmins to take up the life of a *saṁnyāsin*,[48] is also grounded in a deeply rooted concern for the salvation of all Hindus regardless of their caste status. Contemporary Advaita teachers, of course, have been quick to accept the mantle of spokesmen for Hinduism as a whole and have demonstrated a great deal of interest in the presentation of Advaita doctrine as a unifying theology for all Hindus. None of these issues, of course, would have been central concerns for Śaṅkara, living as he did in an era when there was no conception of India as a unified nation, no developed sense of 'Hindu' identity, nor any likelihood of establishing a unifying world-view for all Hindus, given the diversity of philosophical positions available and the polemical tone of his own writings.

The Śaṅkarācārya *sampradāyas* in Śṛingeri, Kanchi, Dwaraka, Puri and Badrinath (established, according to Hacker,[49] not by Śaṅkara but by Vidyāraṇya in the fourteenth century) make great efforts to establish a secure historical lineage which can be traced back to Śaṅkara himself. This is less arduous in the case of the Śṛingeri *maṭha* since the other four centres adhere to the traditional dates of Śaṅkara, which place him in the fifth century BCE. Emphasis on the establishment of an uninterrupted apostolic lineage reflects not only sectarian struggles between different centres as the 'authentic representative' of the Śaṅkarite Advaita tradition, but also the increasing importance of Advaita as a cultural icon in India.

> The concern for historical affirmation, *especially in this century* among devotees, is fundamentally a concern for apostolic succession, so to speak, which is to say for a teaching tradition possessing personal and unbroken lineage.[50] [my italics]

Once Advaita was established by exponents of neo-Hinduism and Western Orientalists alike as the connecting theological thread that united Hinduism into a single religious tradition, a great deal of popular authority has become invested in the Śaṅkarācārya *sampradāyas* in modern India. This cultural power is not so much because modern Hindus see themselves as adherents of the Advaita position, but rather because, even at a popular level, Hindus have been educated to believe that Śaṅkara was a central figure

in their cultural and intellectual history. Thus, Advaita has gained a significant degree of generalized cultural power in modern India as an iconic representation of Hindu religion and culture without necessarily being able to depend upon widespread adoption of or adherence to its fundamental belief system or traditions by Hindus.

. Given the fact that most Hindus are not Advaitins, why was so much emphasis placed upon Śaṅkara's version of Vedānta as the central philosophy of the Hindus? Niranjan Dhar in his 1977 work, *Vedānta and the Bengal Renaissance*,[51] argues that Vedānta was first identified as 'the philosophy of the Hindus' by Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1765–1837).[52] Colebrooke was head of the Department of Sanskrit at the College of Fort William set up by Lord Wellesley in 1800, and argued that the early Vedic scriptures postulated 'the unity of the Godhead'. Ironically, there were few Vedāntic schools in Bengal and little evidence of the involvement of Vedāntic pundits in the activities of the school.[53] Dhar argues that the choice of a spiritualized, non-activist and conservative Vedānta as the 'central philosophy of the Hindus' was motivated by British concerns about the wider political consequences of the French Revolution and the stability of the British Empire. Wellesley was the brother of the future Duke of Wellington (later to defeat Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815) and frequently spoke out against the French Revolution in the years leading up to his establishment of the College of Fort William. As David Kopf notes, 'a root cause of Wellesley's actions was, by his own admission, his fear and hatred of France and the very real danger of French expansion into India'.[54] Nevertheless, in a private letter to Wellesley, Henry Dundas, chairman of the board of control for India from 1784 until 1801, expressed his doubts about the establishment of the College at Fort William:

[M]y chief objection to such an establishment arises from a consideration of the danger attending the collection of literary and philosophical men, which would naturally be collected together in consequence of such an institution. I would not be surprised if it should ultimately resolve itself into a school of Jacobinism, in place of a seminary for education. I hate Jacobinism everywhere, as I know you do, but in India I should consider it as the Devil itself, and to be guarded with equal assiduity.[55]

What these doubts demonstrate is the extent to which the British authorities feared the spread of revolutionary tendencies in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Wellesley in fact quickly moved to allay concerns about the proposed college, replying to Dundas that the best policy would be 'an early corrective' as 'the most effectual barrier' to the spread of Jacobinism in India.[56] It was in this political context that the College at Fort William was established. In his *Minute on the Foundation of a College* (10 July 1800), Wellesley made it clear that an explicit aim of the College was 'to fix and

establish sound and correct principles of religion and government' as 'the best security which could be provided for the stability of British power in India'.[57] This process, of course, required the complicity of the Bengali landowners (*zamindars*) and intelligentsia, and Dhar argues that this resulted in the identification of a world-denying and ascetic spirituality (Vedānta) as the central teaching of Hinduism, thereby functioning as an effective and indigenous ideological bulwark against social activism, revolutionary tendencies and challenges to the status quo.

It is, of course, far too simplistic to claim that the choice of Vedānta as the representative philosophy of the Hindus was the result of a self-conscious conspiracy by a small (albeit influential) élite. Similarly, David Kopf interprets Ronald Inden's critique of British Orientalism as an account of 'hegemonic agents' involved in 'a huge conspiracy to deprive Asians of everything from their wealth and cultural origins to their innocence'.[58] Reading the Orientalist critique initiated by Said and Inden as a type of conspiracy theory effectively dislocates any insight to be gained from an analysis of the deeper, structural implications of the 'power–knowledge' relationship. The Orientalist critique is not primarily an analysis of the intentions of individual scholars but rather concerns the involvement of the Orientalist enterprise in a wider colonial dynamic. As we saw in Chapter 4, Edward Said himself muddies the waters of his own analysis by introducing the notion of intention into the Orientalist debate. However, as Jyotsna Singh points out:

Overall, we cannot, with the hindsight of history, pre-judge the motives and intentions of men like Colebrooke and Jones. By all accounts, it would be fair to consider William Jones a liberal, and a humanist, albeit with an intensely romanticizing imagination ... Jones's interest in Indian culture was accompanied by an abiding concern for the Indian natives ... Yet these [characteristics] are countered by (and contained within) the pervasive ideological assumption about the British rulers' role as interpreters, translators, and mediators of Indian culture, language, and laws in the face of the Hindus' inability to carry out these tasks ... [T]he main aspects of Jones's well-intentioned efforts. – aimed at the 'discovery' of Indian tradition and the reform of society – fed into a larger liberal, yet colonial, discourse of civilization and rescue that interpellated the Indian subject.[59]

Dhar also ignores earlier interest in the Vedas and Vedānta in the work of William Jones and the influence of Christian missionary work (especially Jesuit scholarship) that preceded the publication of Colebrooke's essays.[60] He also fails to acknowledge the existence of a divergent strand within Orientalist scholarship at the College of Fort William, located by Kopf in the works of H.H. Wilson, which focused upon so called 'medieval Hindu' traits.[61]

It seems more appropriate, therefore, to point to a *confluence of interests* which allowed the 'discovery' of Vedānta to come to the fore and remain largely uncontested until well into the twentieth century. Hindu reformers such as Rammohun Roy followed Orientalists such as Jones and Colebrooke in identifying Vedānta as the central philosophy of Hinduism, seeing this as an overarching theological framework for organizing the confusing diversity of Hindu religiosity.

> In the *Abridgement of the Vedant*, Rammohun argued that image worship as then practised in India was an aberration from the authentic monotheistic tradition, wherein worship of 'the true and eternal God' left no room for idolatry. Whether or not Rammohun was influenced by his knowledge of Islam, the fact is that already, in the manner of the Jones-Colebrooke Orientalists, he divided Indian history into a vedantic period that provided the authentic model for 'the whole history of the Hindoo theology, law and literature' and 'was highly revered by all the Hindoos,' and a later period of 'Hindu idolatry' with its innumerable gods, goddesses and temples' which have been destroying 'the texture of society.'[62]

This approach proved amenable to Christians wishing to criticize the 'idolatrous' practices of Hindu religion. On the other hand, the equation of Vedānta with the 'essence' of Hinduism provided an easy 'monistic' target for Christian missionaries wishing to engage the Hindu religion in debates about theology and ethics. By characterizing Hinduism as a monistic religion, Christian theologians and apologists were able to criticize the mystical monism of Hinduism, thereby highlighting the moral superiority of Christianity. As we have seen, this usually involved the projection of the antipathy felt towards the apparently monistic trends of Christian mysticism (such as Meister Eckhart) onto the Hindu tradition. In colonial terms, of course, the conflation of Advaita Vedānta and 'Hinduism' also provided a ready-made organizational framework within which the Western Orientalist and the colonial ruler could make sense of the fluid and diverse culture that it was their job to explain, classify, manage and control.

It is problematic to claim to be able to intuit the precise motivations of men such as Wellesley and Colebrooke, but Dhar is correct to draw attention to the political circumstances in which the College of Fort William was established and flourished. It would be preposterous to suggest that the pioneering work of British Orientalists such as Colebrooke and Wilkins remained unaffected by British fears about the wider impact of the French Revolution at home and abroad. The fear of Indian insurgency and the potential encroachment of France into British imperial territory must have played a significant role in focusing the minds of those early scholars attempting to make sense of and represent Indian culture to the wider community at large. Moreover, the Orientalists, supported by Warren

Hastings, were also embroiled in controversy with the Anglicists concerning the nature and future development of British rule in India. In this highly charged atmosphere of suspicion and anxiety about the stability of British governmentality both at home and abroad, it is inconceivable to suggest that late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century representations of Indian religion remained unaffected by the wider sociopolitical issues of the day.

Nevertheless, in the emphasis placed upon Vedānta, neither Dhar nor the British Orientalists seem to have appreciated the sense in which the discovery of a 'central philosophy of the Hindus', however apparently ascetic and otherworldly in orientation, would provide solace for Hindus involved in an anti-colonial struggle for home rule (*swaraj*). The 'discovery' of Vedānta provided an opportunity for the construction of a nationalist ideology that could unite Hindus in their struggle against colonial oppression. The irony of the Orientalist emphasis upon the apparently quietistic and counterrevolutionary philosophy of Vedānta is that it further demonstrates the impossibility of controlling the polyvalent trajectories of Orientalist discourses once they have entered the public domain and become subject both to contestation and creative reinterpretation. This feature of discourses was perhaps first noted in the emphasis placed upon heteroglossia and the indeterminacy of language in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin:

> The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own.[63]

Just as the speaker or the author of a text is unable to control the meaning applied to the words which he or she uses once they enter the public domain, the colonial ruler is unable to control the meaning of the cultural symbolic that he constructs in interaction with the colonized subject. As Foucault reminds us, 'there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and the ruled at the root of power relations'.[64] The conditions in which power operates 'is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable'.[65] Thus:

> Whereas Jones and Wilkins translated the Sanskrit classics into English for European readers, the college – perhaps unwittingly – encouraged translations into Indian vernaculars, thereby creating a body of printed

material which would eventually break the intellectual monopoly of the Brahmans.[66]

From the perspective of the Hindu intellectual, searching for a unifying banner in an anti-colonial struggle for home rule (*swaraj*), the discourse of Vedānta provided a centralizing ideology around which Hindus might rally as well as providing an established indigenous and highly intellectual Hindu theology which might aid, through a national system of education, in the promotion of a sense of a unified, national identity.

In this sense, for the Hindu intelligentsia of the nineteenth century, the philosophical traditions of Vedānta seemed to typify the ancient, noble and ascetic 'spirituality' of the Hindu people well. Rammohun Roy, Dayānanda Saraswati, Swāmi Vivekānanda and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan were all unanimous in a rereading of Vedānta (however differently conceived) that rendered it compatible with social activism and worldly involvement. Perhaps the most poignant and ironic example of the inability of the British to control the implications and direction of their own colonial discourses is Gandhi's appropriation of the ideal of the otherworldly *saṁnyasin* in terms of social activism. Gandhi, quite self-consciously it would seem, inverted colonial presuppositions about Bengali effeminacy, otherworldly spirituality and the passivity of the ascetic ethics of non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) and reapplied these cultural symbols in terms of organized, non-violent, social protest. Unlike the emphasis placed by earlier Hindu thinkers on the 'manly spirituality' of Vedānta, Gandhi's injunctions to engage in passive resistance thereby 'feminized the usually masculinist struggle against the colonizer'.[67] Furthermore:

> Gandhi represented himself as 'female,' performing 'feminine' roles like spinning. His own feminization in this type of political iconography – the image of the 'Mahatma' sitting before the 'charkha' patiently spinning 'khadi' – was effective particularly in mobilizing women and men to satyagraha work.[68]

Quite remarkably therefore, Vedānta – the renunciate philosophy that exemplified for the British a passive and otherworldly quietism – became a vehicle for anti-colonial and revolutionary protest through the Gandhian principle of *satyagraha*. The extent to which Gandhi's approach constituted an authentic and effective means of subaltern resistance remains a subject of considerable debate.[69] Nevertheless, as Richard G. Fox notes:

> Gandhian cultural resistance depended on an Orientalist image of India as inherently spiritual, consensual and corporate ... Otherworldliness became spirituality ... Passiveness became at first passive resistance and later nonviolent resistance ... The backward and parochial village became the self-sufficient, consensual and harmonious center of decen-

tralized democracy ... Gandhian utopia reacts against negative Orientalism by adopting and enhancing this positive image. It therefore ends up with a new Orientalism, that is, a new stereotype, of India, but an affirmative one, leading to effective resistance.[70]

It is clear then that the representations of the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkarācarya as a powerful cultural symbolic provided the necessary material for the development of an inclusivistic and nationalist ideology for uniting Hindus in their struggle for independence from British rule. It is to the development of this 'neo-Vedānta', exemplified in the following discussion by the work of Vivekānanda, that I shall now turn in order to highlight the influence that neo-Vedāntic representations of 'Hinduism' have had upon the modern notions of the 'spiritual' or 'mystical' nature of the Hindu religion.

Neo-Vedānta and the perennial philosophy

Advaita Vedānta in its modern form (often called neo-Hinduism, neo-Vedānta or more accurately neo-Advaita) has become a dominant force in Indian intellectual thought thanks particularly to the influence of Swāmi Vivekānanda, renowned scholar and one-time President of India Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and the Western Orientalist tendency to establish Advaita as the 'central theology of Hinduism'. The influence of such thinkers has also helped in the perpetuation of the view, both in India and abroad, that Hindu thought is Vedānta and little else. In a popular and widely read work entitled *The Hindu View of Life*, Radhakrishnan outlined this position in unequivocal terms:

> All sects of Hinduism attempt to interpret the Vedānta texts in accordance with their own religious views. The Vedānta is not a religion, but religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance. Thus the different sects of Hinduism are reconciled by a common standard and are sometimes regarded as the distorted expressions of the one true canon.[71]

The problem with such an account, however, is that it relies heavily upon earlier strands of Orientalist scholarship, which portrayed Hinduism as a single 'world religion', centred upon a mystical theology, and inevitably involved the denigration of heterogeneous Hindu beliefs and practices as 'distortions' of the basic teachings of Vedānta. Radhakrishnan was well aware of the problems of reconciling the 'mystical core' of Vedāntic Hinduism with the variegated realities of Hindu belief and practice, particularly at the 'popular' (or subaltern) level, and it is at this point that we see his underlying concern to educate the masses in the philosophy of Vedānta as part of a national programme of 'consciousness-raising' within India:

It is, however, unfortunately the case that the majority of the Hindus do not insist on this graduated scale but acquiesce in admitting unsatisfactory conceptions of God ... There has not been in recent times any serious and systematic endeavour to raise the mental level of the masses and place the whole Hindu population on a higher spiritual plane.[72]

The claim made by neo-Vedāntins such as Vivekānanda and Radhakrishnan that Hinduism was the only truly world religion – that is, the only religious tradition to acknowledge fully the importance of diversity and to preach tolerance, provided an effective means whereby the long-established Hindu inferiority complex could be overthrown and a considered response be made to centuries of Christian polemic. The advancement of this Hindu inclusivism provided the rhetoric of tolerance necessary to establish possession of the moral high ground. This was clearly a prevailing feature of Vivekānanda's writings and lectures and, as Radhakrishnan himself notes, provided inspiration to the young Hindu intellectual at the turn of the century, intent upon responding to the view that Indian culture was backward, superstitious and inferior to the West.

It is that kind of humanistic, man-making religion that gave us courage in the days when we were young. When I was a student in one of the classes, in the matriculation class or so, the letters of Swami Vivekananda used to be circulated in manuscript form among us all. The kind of thrill which we enjoyed, the kind of mesmeric touch that those writings gave us, the kind of reliance on our own culture that was being criticized all around – it is that kind of transformation which his writings effected in the young men in the early years of this century.[73]

The inclusivist appropriation of other traditions, so characteristic of neo-Vedānta ideology, occurs on three basic levels. First, it is apparent in the suggestion that the (Advaita) Vedānta philosophy of Śankara (c. eighth century CE) constitutes the central philosophy of Hinduism. Second, in an Indian context, neo-Vedānta philosophy subsumes Buddhist philosophies in terms of its own Vedāntic ideology. The Buddha becomes a member of the Vedānta tradition, merely attempting to reform it from within. Finally, at a global level, neo-Vedānta colonizes the religious traditions of the world by arguing for the centrality of a non-dualistic position as the *philosophia perennis* underlying all cultural differences. These strategies gains further support from many modern Hindus concerned to represent their religious tradition to Westerners as one of overarching tolerance and acceptance, usually as a means of contrasting Hindu religiosity with the polemical dogmatism of the Judaeo-Christian–Islamic traditions.

It is true to say that the Indian traditions have rarely shown the same propensity towards the establishment of orthodoxies as can be found, for instance, in the history of Christianity, and, as Wilkins had noted in the case

of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, there is evidence of inclusivism in the Vedāntic corpus of teachings. Indeed, if one examines the earliest clearly Advaitic text – the *Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā* of Gauḍapāda (c. sixth century CE) one finds evidence of a similarly inclined inclusivism at the roots of the Śankarite tradition of Advaita.[74]

The dualists are firmly convinced in the establishment of their own conclusions and contradict one another; but this [view] does not conflict with them. Non-duality is indeed the ultimate reality; duality is said to be a differentiation of it. For them [the dualists] there is duality both ways; therefore this [view] does not conflict [with theirs].

Neither does an existent nor a non-existent originate in any manner [whatsoever]. Those dualists (*dvaya*), [through their] disputing, in fact reveal Non-origination. We approve of the Non-origination revealed by them; we do not dispute with them. Know how it is free from dispute (*avivāda*)![75]

The inclusivistic position of this early Advaita text, however, is not taken up or developed significantly by Śankara, though it remains a recognisable strand within the Vedānta tradition.[76] In the modern era, however, the inclusivist move has emerged as the central platform in the neo-Vedāntic response to Western missionary activity and colonialism.

Contemporary neo-Vedāntins, further supported in the Vedānticization of other traditions by the perennialism of the Theosophical Society, argue for the unity of Hindu doctrine by suggesting that the six 'orthodox' (*āstika*) schools of 'Hindu' philosophy (*darśanas*) are in fact commensurable perspectives on a single truth. This strategy involves taking *darśana* to mean a 'point of view', and suggesting that the six '*darśanas*' are like six points on a compass – all equally valid and complementary 'perspectives' leading to the same fundamental truth. This final truth, however, seems to be best represented by the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta. In a lecture delivered to the Vedānta Society in New York in June 1900, Vivekānanda argues that:

The different sectarian systems of India all radiate from one central idea of unity or dualism. They are all under Vedānta, all interpreted by it. Their final essence is the teaching of unity. This, which we see as many, is God. We perceive matter, the world, manifold sensation. Yet there is but one existence. These various names mark only differences of degree in the expression of that One.[77]

This position is also reflected in subsequent Western introductions to Indian thought. Note, for instance, the following from Theos Bernard's 1947 work *Hindu Philosophy*, published in the year of Indian Independence from British rule:

Together [the *darśanas*] form a graduated interpretation of the Ultimate
Reality, so interrelated that the hypothesis and method of each is depen-
dent upon the other. In no way are they contradictory or antagonistic to
one another, for they all lead to the same practical end, knowledge of
the Absolute and Liberation of the soul.[78]

It is important to point out that such a view of the Indian *darśanas* is histor-
ically inaccurate, as even a cursory examination of the philosophical texts of
each school will demonstrate. Although inclusivist trends existed within a
variety of Indian schools of thought, the traditional relationship between
the *darśanas* was not nearly so cordial and straightforwardly 'graduated' as
Bernard's analysis implies. Indian philosophical texts in fact are highly
polemical in nature and remain firmly committed to the refutation of rival
positions. Indeed classical Indian *darśanas* have tended to define themselves
in opposition to the paradigmatic perspectives of their rivals, thriving upon
debate, disputation and the defeat of rival philosophies.

Neo-Vedāntins such as Vivekānanda have also promulgated the view that
Buddhism (particularly the Mahāyāna) is in fundamental agreement with
their own belief in a non-dual Absolute supporting the world's appearance
and, as such, represents a mere branch of the great Hindu banyan tree.
Thus, in his 1893 lecture, 'Buddhism – the fulfilment of Hinduism',
Vivekānanda states that:

I am not a Buddhist, as you have heard, and yet I am. If China, or
Japan, or Ceylon follow the teaching of the Great Master, India
worships him as God incarnate on earth. You have just now heard that I
am going to criticise Buddhism, but by that I wish you to understand
thus. Far be it from me to criticise him whom I worship as God incar-
nate on earth. But our views about Buddha are that he was not
understood properly by his disciples.[79]

One should not confuse Buddhism and Vedānta, Vivekānanda warns else-
where, as this would be like mistaking the Salvation Army for Christianity.[80]
Vivekānanda says that he cannot accept the Buddhist rejection of a self, but,
nevertheless, honours the Buddha's compassion and attitude toward others.
One should note, however, that 'every one of Buddha's teachings is founded
in the Vedantas'.[81] In fact as Vivekānanda says in 'India's Gift to the World',
the teachings of Christ can themselves be traced back to the Buddha,[82] and
since 'Buddhism is a rebel child of our religion, of which Christianity is a
patchy imitation',[83] Christ is ultimately dependent upon Hindu Vedānta for
his central teachings!

The Vedānticization of Buddhism is highly problematic as an examina-
tion of the sacred literature of the various Buddhist traditions will soon
display. Buddhism is not a form of Vedānta and Vedānta is certainly not a
form of crypto-Buddhism. Both traditions have structural similarities and

some doctrinal commonalities, grounded in the case of Mahāyāna and
Advaita in quite different types of non-dualism, but their world-views
remain fundamentally incommensurable. The Madhyamaka school of
Mahāyāna, for instance, explicitly rejects the postulation of an unchanging
absolute (like the Vedāntic Brahman) in favour of the interdepen-
dence of evanescent *dharmas* (the dynamic, process philosophy of
pratītyasamutpāda). Similarly, in the Yogācāra school there is no postulation
of an unchanging principle of consciousness as there is in Advaita. The
Yogācāra store-consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*) remains an entirely phenom-
enal repository of karmic seeds and, for Asaṅga and Vasubandhu at any
rate, is to be relinquished upon the realization of enlightenment (*bodhi*).[84]

Nevertheless, if one examines Vivekānanda's works closely, it is clear that
he has a shrewd grasp of the Buddhist orientation towards impermanence
and no-abiding-self and is aware of the roots of the Buddhist–Vedantic
debate over the issue of change and the necessity (or not) of positing an
underlying substratum. Buddhist philosophies in India tended to deny the
existence of an ontological substratum underlying the manifestation of the
universe, leading Vivekānanda to note that 'This has been held as the central
idea of most of the Buddhistic philosophies, that this world is itself all-
sufficient; that you need not ask for any background at all; all that is, is this
sense-universe … The idea of substance comes from the rapid interchange of
qualities, not from something unchangeable which exists behind them.'
However, he argues in characteristically Vedāntic fashion that, convincing
though some of these arguments might seem, they fail to appreciate the
point (made by both dualists and non-dualists) that the idea of change
requires the postulation of an Unchangeable.

All we see are waves, but those waves themselves are non-different from
the mighty Ocean … There is, therefore, but one Atman, one Self, eter-
nally pure, eternally perfect, unchangeable, unchanged; it has never
changed; and all these various changes in the universe are but appear-
ances in that one Self.[85]

Where Vivekānanda's subtlety emerges, however, is in his Advaitic appropri-
ation and interpretation of the Buddha. The various Buddhist traditions, he
argues, have in fact misunderstood what the Buddha was teaching and fail to
appreciate his indebtedness to Vedāntic philosophy.

Neo-Vedānta theorists extend this inclusivism beyond India, providing
their own colonization of other cultures in the form of an 'essentialist' view
of the various 'world religions'. This approach, despite its universalistic
pretensions, succeeds in locating Vedānta philosophy at the pinnacle of
human religious expression. Thus Vivekānanda argues that 'The Vedānta
includes all sects … We are all glad to remember that all roads lead to
God.'[86] Both Vivekānanda and Radhakrishnan argue that all the major reli-
gions are essentially the same. Vivekānanda states, for instance, that 'I

accept all religions that were in the past, and worship with them all, I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him.'[87] This is what Vivekānanda describes as the Universal Religion that resides at the core of all religions, rendering them all complementary in their attempts to express the nature of the Absolute.

> I believe that they are not contradictory; they are supplementary. Each religion, as it were, takes up one part of the great universal truth, and spends its whole force in embodying and typifying that part of the great truth.[88]

However, closer examination of Vivekānanda's Universal Religion demonstrates that other religions tend to function as 'supplementary' truths to the higher-order truth of Advaita Vedānta. Although Vivekānanda strongly opposes homogenization, arguing that a diversity of religions is necessary to satisfy the diverse interests and characteristics of humanity, his own understanding of the universal principles underlying the various religions is, as we have seen, closest to Advaita Vedānta in its philosophical specificity, with a Buddhist-inspired emphasis upon compassion and a pinch of Christian social activism added for good measure.[89]

Such inclusivist approaches tend to underplay and devalue the diversity of the world's religious traditions and fail to take seriously the heterogeneity of Indian religion. Vivekānanda's theistic proclamation of tolerance, for instance, palpably ignores the non-theism of Buddhism, Jainism or Taoism in the Asian context, though it might satisfy theistic perennialists from Judaism, Islam and Christianity. The problem with the search for a universal *philosophia perennis* is that the wider the focus of the perspective the more diluted the commonality becomes. The essence towards which the perennialist points becomes so abstract, vacuous and culturally non-specific (in order to fit all examples) that it becomes unrecognisable to the adherents of the particular traditions themselves.

The 'reverse-colonialism' of the West at work in the essentialism of neo-Vedānta is clearly an attempt to establish a modern form of Advaita not only as the central philosophy of Hinduism but also as the primary candidate for the 'Universal Religion' of the future. For Vivekānanda, Hindu culture had been saved from the ravages of a pernicious and hedonistic materialism by the arrival of the Buddha. Over time, however, Buddhism degenerated, largely because it did not offer a belief in God, and 'materialism came to the fore' again.

> Then Shankaracarya arose and once more revivified the Vedanta philosophy. He made it a rationalistic philosophy ... By Buddha the moral side of the philosophy was laid stress upon, and by Shankaracarya, the intellectual side. He worked out, rationalised, and placed before men the wonderful coherent system of Advaita.[90]

This historical conflict between good (spirituality) and evil (materialism) continues to this day, Vivekānanda stressed throughout his lectures and writings, particularly when addressing Western audiences. It is the task of neo-Vedānta, therefore, to colonize a materialistic and depraved Europe with Hindu spirituality:

> The salvation of Europe depends on a rationalistic religion, and Advaita- non-duality, the Oneness, the idea of the Impersonal God, – is the only religion that can have any hold on any intellectual people.[91]

Buddhism, according to Vivekānanda, was the first missionary religion but did not attempt to convert by force. This establishes an important historical precedent for Vivekānanda for the missionary activity of Vedānta in the modern world. This relatively new and now exported form of Vedānta has over time become an internationally focused and decontextualized spirituality, thanks largely to the efforts of Vivekānanda and his Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission, the influence of the Theosophical Society (with its own peculiar mixture of occultism, spiritual evolutionism and pseudo-Vedāntic perennialism) and continued Western interest in the 'Mystic East'.

With the founding of the Vedānta Society in the United States by Vivekānanda in 1897, the twentieth century has seen the development of Vedānta in the West as an imported example of the 'mysticism' of the Hindu religion that has proved particularly amenable to modern Western interests in non-institutional and privatized forms of spirituality. Note, for instance, the following description of Vedānta taken from a popular introduction entitled *Vedānta, Heart of Hinduism*, written by Hans Torwesten in 1985:

> Vedanta is above all a spiritual outlook, an attitude of mind, and not so much a closed religion with well-defined doctrines. There is no ceremony by which one 'joins' Vedanta. It is true that adherents of Vedanta tend to share certain convictions. Most, for example, believe in reincarnation and the Law of Karma; devote themselves to meditation; believe in the innately divine nature of man, the Atman, and in a transcendent, supra-personal 'ground' behind Creation – the latter considered by most as mere *maya* (illusion).[92]

One wonders what relationship this 'universal religious system'[93] has with the more traditional concerns of the Śaṅkarācārya lineages (*sampradāya*) and monasteries (*maṭha*) of traditional and modern India. Torwesten's location and description of Vedānta (actually a form of neo-Advaita) is heavily skewed towards California rather than Śringeri or Kanchi. Indeed, the universalism of neo-Advaita (as initially expounded by Vivekānanda and subsequently by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan) seems ultimately to transcend itself – becoming identical with the *philosophia perennis*. Thus Torwesten says:

Just as the radical Zen master goes beyond Zen, so the true Vedantin – the one who has arrived at the heart of Vedantic wisdom – in the end no longer knows what Vedanta is ... At the highest level all words and concepts disintegrate. In this 'poverty of the spirit' the Vedantic mystic finds himself eye to eye with a Meister Eckhart, a Johannes Tauler, a Zen monk chuckling to himself, a humble Sufi mystic, and probably also an ancient seer of the era of the Upanishads.[94]

The neo-Vedāntic conception of Hinduism (what has sometimes been called 'neo-Hinduism') has been a powerful influence in both modern Indian and modern Western conceptions of Hindu religion and culture. We can see how this emphasis upon the spirituality of India and the material superiority of the West allowed Hindus to turn Western colonial discourses to their own advantage. The West may have material prosperity and power, but it lacks the inner spiritual life that is present in Indian culture. Clearly this is a tactical response to the Western, colonially inspired sense of superiority (though without questioning whether such stereotypes of 'East' and 'West' are appropriate). In this sense at least, however, Swāmi Vivekānanda was a great visionary and prophet, for it is precisely the lure of the exotic and 'mystical' nature of the East and the belief that it can provide Westerners with some much-needed spirituality that underlies the contemporary interest of many Western new religious movements and New Age groups in the religions of the East. The rise of Hindu- and Buddhist-inspired groups throughout the West, much of contemporary New Age mythology as well as media advertising and popular culture in general, demonstrates the ongoing cultural significance of the idea of the 'Mystic East', and the continued involvement of the West in a romantic and exotic fantasy of Indian religions as deeply mystical, introspective and otherworldly in nature.

5 The modern myth of 'Hinduism'

1 Friedhelm Hardy, 'A radical reassessment of the Vedic heritage: the *Ācāryahṛdayam* and its wider implications', in Vasudha Dalmia and H. von Stietencron (eds), *Representing Hinduism: The Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1995, p. 48.

2 Peter Harrison, *'Religion' and the religions in the English Enlightenment*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 3.

3 See Mark Juergensmeyer, 'What the Bhikkhu said: reflections on the rise of militant religious nationalism', in *Religion* 20, 1990, pp. 53–76.

4 With regard to our current discussion, Cantwell Smith states that, 'The term "Hinduism" is, in my judgement, a particularly false conceptualization, one that is conspicuously incompatible with any adequate understanding of the religious outlook of Hindus.' See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1991 (original 1964), p. 61. As McCutcheon notes, however, Cantwell Smith privileges private faith over cumulative tradition, which is then viewed as 'free, homogenous and original'. See Russell McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse of Sui generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 15. More recently, Friedhelm Hardy has suggested: 'That the global title of "Hinduism" has been given to [this variety of religions] must be regarded as an act of pure despair.' *The Religions of Asia*, London, Routledge, 1990, p. 72.

5 H. von Stietencron argues that this usage of the term is attested to in Old Persian cuneiform inscriptions from the time of Darius I, who expanded his empire as far as the Indus in 517 BCE. See H. von Stietencron, 'Hinduism: on the proper use of a deceptive term', in Günter D. Sontheimer and Hermann Kulke (eds), *Hinduism Reconsidered*, New Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1991, p. 12.

6 Romila Thapar, 'Imagined religious communities? Ancient history and the modern search for a Hindu identity', in *Modern Asian Studies* 23.2, 1989, p. 224 (reprinted in Thapar, *Interpreting Early India*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1992). See also Narendra K. Wagle, 'Hindu–Muslim interactions in medieval Maharashtra', in Sontheimer and Kulke (eds), *Hinduism Reconsidered*, pp. 51–66, and Joseph T. O'Connell, 'Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava symbolism of deliverance from evil', in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 93.3, 1973, pp. 340–3.

7 Thierry Verhelst, *Cultures, Religions and Development in India: Interviews Conducted and recorded by Thierry Verhelst, 14 to 23-1-1985*, a PhD working group on Religions and Cultures, Brussels, Broederlijk Delen, Mimeo, p. 9, quoted in S.N. Balagangadhara, *'The Heathen in His Blindness': Asia, the West and the Dynamic of Religion*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1994, p. 16.

8 Partha Chatterjee, in fact, argues that the notion of 'Hindu-ness' has no specifically religious connotation to it and that 'The idea that "Indian nationalism" is synonymous with "Hindu nationalism" is not the vestige of some premodern religious conception. It is an entirely modern, rationalist, and historicist idea. Like other modern ideologies, it allows for a central role of the state in the modernization of society and strongly defends the state's unity and sovereignty. Its appeal is not religious but political. In this sense the framework of its reasoning is entirely secular.' See Partha Chatterjee, 'History and the nationalization of Hinduism', in *Social Research* 59.1, 1992, p. 147.

9 R.E. Frykenberg, 'The emergence of modern "Hinduism" as a concept and an institution: a reappraisal with special reference to South India', in Sontheimer and Kulke (eds), *Hinduism Reconsidered*, p. 31.

10 Romila Thapar, 'Imagined religious communities?', p. 223.

11 This has led Frits Staal, for instance, to argue that 'Hinduism does not merely fail to be a religion; it is not even a meaningful unit of discourse. There is no way to abstract a meaningful unitary notion of Hinduism from the Indian phenomena, unless it is done by exclusion.' See Frits Staal, *Rules Without Meaning: Rituals, Mantras and the Human Sciences*, New York, Toronto Studies in Religion, Vol. 4, Peter Lang, 1989, p. 397.

12 David Kopf, 'Hermeneutics versus history', in *Journal of Asian Studies* 39.3, May 1980, p. 502.

13 See Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, II, xxvii, 1880, p. 304. See Frykenberg, 'The emergence of modern "Hinduism"', p. 43, note 7. Clearly the term is in provenance by this time since we find Charles Neumann using the term 'Hindooism' in 1831, while explaining the sense in which Buddhism is to be understood as 'a reform of the old Hindoo orthodox Church' (Neumann, *Catechism of the Shamans: On the Laws and Regulations of the Priesthood of Buddha in China*, London, Oriental Text Fund, 1831, p. xxvi).

14 Dermot Killingley, *Rammohun Roy in Hindu and Christian Tradition: The Teape Lectures 1990*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Grevatt & Grevatt, 1993, p. 60.

15 In fact one could argue that in focusing one's critical attention upon Orientalist texts the textualist paradigm which underlies them remains largely unchallenged. See for instance, Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (eds), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, p. 5, where this point is made in passing but never properly addressed.

16 Frykenberg even goes as far as to suggest that Christian missionary activity was probably the largest single factor in the development of a 'corporate' and 'revivalist' Hinduism in India. See Frykenberg, 'The emergence of modern "Hinduism"', p. 39. See also Vinay Dharwadker, 'Orientalism and the study of Indian literatures', in Breckenridge and van der Veer (eds), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, pp. 158–85 for an insightful discussion of the ways in which the various forms of 'Indian literature' were studied according to the European literary standards of the time. Dharwadker discusses the nature of nineteenth-century European philology and its presuppositions (e.g. pp. 175, 181). Dharwadker also draws attention to the Sanskritic bias of the Western Orientalists. See also Rosane Rocher, 'British Orientalism in the eighteenth century: the dialectic of knowledge and government', in Breckenridge and van der Veer (eds), pp. 220–5 (especially p. 221), and Peter van der Veer, 'The foreign hand: Orientalist discourse in sociology and communalism', in Breckenridge and van der Veer (eds), p. 40.

17 Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Cultures of rule, communities of resistance: gender, discourse and tradition in recent South Asian historiographies', in *Social Analysis* 25, 1989, p. 105.

18 See Breckenridge and van der Veer (eds), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, p. 7.

19 See Romila Thapar, 'Imagined religious communities?', pp. 220–1. See also Balagangadhara, *'The Heathen in His Blindness'*, pp. 16–17 and chapters 3 and 4 in general.

20 Rocher, 'British Orientalism in the eighteenth century', p. 242.

21 H. von Stietencron, 'Hinduism', pp. 14–15.

22 Christopher A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 155–8.

23 Brahmanization, or the general process whereby non-brahmanical forms of Indian religion are colonized and transformed by hegemonic brahmanical discourses, can be distinguished from the more general process of Sanskritization. The confutation of the two stems from a mistaken association of

Sanskritic culture exclusively with the *brāhmaṇa* castes. As Milton Singer has suggested Sanskritization may follow the *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or even the *śūdra* models. See Milton Singer, 'The social organization of Indian civilization', in *Diogenes* 45, 1964, pp. 84–119. Srinivas, in his later reflections upon Sanskritization, also points to the Sanādh brahmins of Western Uttar Pradesh as evidence that the culture of the brahmins is not always highly Sanskritic in nature. See M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1966, p. 20. While brahmanization in the widest sense, then, cannot be universally equated with Sanskritization, throughout this chapter I shall use the term 'brahmanization' as a short-hand term for Sanskritic brahmanization – that is, to denote a particular species of Sanskritization.

24 The ideological constructs and colonial nature of brahmanical discourses, as represented in distinctions between *vaidik* (i.e. derived from the Vedas), *shastrik* (derived from the *śāstras*), and *laukik* (worldly) forms of knowledge, clearly demonstrate the sense in which the imperialist thrust of Orientalism is not an isolated historical or even an exclusively Western phenomenon. For a discussion of this, see Sheldon Pollock, 'Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and power beyond the Raj', in Breckenridge and van der Veer (eds), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, pp. 78; 96ff.; 107; 117, note 1.

25 For a discussion of this in relation to the politics of translation, see Richard Burghart, 'Something lost, something gained: translations of Hinduism', in Sontheimer and Kulke (eds), *Hinduism Reconsidered*, pp. 213–25. See also Peter van der Veer, 'The foreign hand', p. 23, 26–7, 40; Bernard Cohn, 'Notes on the history of the study of Indian society and culture', in Milton Singer and Bernard Cohn (eds), *Structure and Change in Indian Society*, Chicago, Aldine, 1968, pp. 3–28; Jonathan Parry, 'The brahmanical tradition and the technology of the intellect', in Joanna Overing (ed.), *Reason and Morality*, London, Tavistock, 1985, pp. 200–25. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, provides a cogent discussion of the political implications of linguistic and cultural translation in the light of inequalities of power between the contexts of the translator and the translated (pp. 189–99). Asad notes that, 'To put it crudely, because the languages of third world societies ... are seen as weaker in relation to Western languages (and today, especially to English), they are more likely to submit to forcible transformation in the translation process than the other way around' (p. 190).

26 See Khushwant Singh in *Sunday*, 23–29 December 1990, p. 19, quoted in Gerald Larson, 'Discourse about "religion" in colonial and postcolonial India', in Ninian Smart and Shivesh Thakur (eds), *Ethical and Political Dilemmas of Modern India*, New York and Basingstoke, St Martin's Press and Macmillan, 1993, pp. 189–90.

27 Frykenberg, 'The emergence of modern "Hinduism"', p. 34. For discussions of the active part that native Indians played in the construction of Orientalist discourses, see Nicholas B. Dirks, 'Colonial histories and native informants: biography of an archive', and David Lelyveld, 'The fate of Hindustani: colonial knowledge and the project of a national language', both in Breckenridge and van der Veer (eds), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, pp. 279–313 and 189–214.

28 Romila Thapar, 'Syndicated Moksha', in *Seminar* 313, September 1985, p. 21.

29 Ibid., p. 228.

30 See Daniel Gold, 'Organized Hinduism: from Vedic truth to Hindu nation', in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds), *Fundamentalisms Observed*,

Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991, pp. 531–93, for an outline of contemporary 'fundamentalist' and 'nationalist' trends in India.

31 See Hans Bakker, 'Ayodhyā, a Hindu Jerusalem: an investigation of "holy war" as a religious idea in the light of communal unrest in India', in *Numen* 38.1, 1991, pp. 80–109.

32 I am using *epistēme* here in a broadly Foucauldian sense to denote that which 'defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in a theory or silently invested in practice'. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, New York, Pantheon, 1973, p. 168.

33 H. von Stietencron, 'Hinduism', pp. 20–1.

34 Van der Veer, 'The foreign hand', pp. 42–3.

35 See Partha Chatterjee, 'History and the nationalization of Hinduism', pp. 111–49 and *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, London, Zed Books Ltd, 1986; Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993. Of relevance here also is the work of David Lelyveld on the role that Hindustani and Hindi played in the failed colonial project of constructing a national language in India; see Lelyveld, 'The fate of Hindustani'. See also Arjun Appadurai's discussion of the way in which the quantification process initiated by gathering of statistical information for the Census, etc., functions as a means of constructing homogeneity; see Appadurai, 'Number in the colonial imagination', in Breckenridge and van der Veer (eds), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, especially pp. 330–4.

36 For a comprehensive discussion of the colonial roots of Indian nationalist consciousness, see Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, and 'History and the nationalization of Hinduism'. See also the work of other members of the Subaltern Studies Group. For further discussion see Chapter 9 of this volume.

37 David Ludden, 'Orientalist empiricism: transformations of colonial knowledge', in Breckenridge and van der Veer (eds), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, p. 274. In relation to this a number of commentators have suggested that the problems associated with 'communalism' are legacies of British imperial rule. Thus Aditya Mukherjee argues that 'Indian society was not split since "time immemorial" into religious communal categories. Nor is it so divided today in areas where communal ideology has not yet penetrated ... However, communalism as it is understood today ... is a modern phenomenon, which took root halfway through the British colonial presence in India – in the second half of the nineteenth century.' See A. Mukherjee, 'Colonialism and communalism', in Sarvepalli Gopal (ed.), *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi Issue*, New Delhi and Calcutta, Penguin, 1990, p. 165. See also Romila Thapar, 'Imagined religious communities?', p. 209, and Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990. See also Appadurai, 'Number in the colonial imagination', pp. 314–40; Ludden, 'Orientalist empiricism', pp. 266–7; van der Veer (1993), 'The foreign hand', p. 39; Sheldon Pollock, 'Deep Orientalism?', p. 107; 123, note 42. From a Western secular perspective 'the problem of communalism' is understood as evidence of the existence of old religious allegiances that are in conflict with the secular perspective of modern nationalism. However, for a critique of the hegemony of the secular nationalist model of the West, see Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War*.

38 Romila Thapar, 'Imagined religious communities?', p. 230. Daniel Gold suggests that 'Postcolonial Hindu fundamentalism can thus appear as a new colonialism of the victors. In representing an emergence of Indic group consciousness in new

forms shaped by the colonial experience, it can easily lead to a tyranny of the majority. For it keeps the Western idea of religious community as an ideally homogenous group, but abandons the ideas of equality among communities and protections for minorities introduced with secular British administration.' See Gold, 'Organized Hinduism', p. 580.

39 Julius J. Lipner, 'Ancient Banyan: an inquiry in to the meaning of "Hinduness"', in *Religious Studies* 32, 1996, pp. 109–26. Lipner's use of '*Hindutā*' reflects his explicit avoidance of the term '*Hindutva*' which has been appropriated in the political arena by Hindu nationalists (see pp. 112–13).

40 Ibid., p. 110.

41 Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1988, p. 333.

42 Wilhelm Halbfass, 'The Veda and the identity of Hinduism', in Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian Thought*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1991, p. 15.

43 See Halbfass, *India and Europe*, ch. 18.

44 G. Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi, 'The polythetic-prototype approach to Hinduism', in Sontheimer and Kulke (eds), *Hinduism Reconsidered*, p. 192.

45 Kalpana Ram, 'Modernist anthropology and the construction of Indian identity', in *Meanjin* 51, 1992, pp. 589–90. See also Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 71–4.

46 See Ram, 'Modernist anthropology and the construction of Indian identity', pp. 594–8; Gyan Prakash, 'Writing post-Orientalist histories of the Third World: perspectives from Indian historiography', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32.2, 1990, p. 393; Ronald Inden, 'Orientalist constructions of India', in *Modern Asian Studies* 20.3, 1986, p. 440; Ronald Inden, *Imagining India*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990, especially p. 154, but see also pp. 201–4; Veena Das, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 24–54; Declan Quigley, *The Interpretation of Caste*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994, ch. 3; Mary Searle-Chatterjee and Ursula Sharma (eds), *Contextualising Caste: Post-Dumontian Approaches*, Sociological Review monograph, Oxford, Blackwell, 1994. While it is true that Dumont's account of the centrality of caste in Indian culture does function as a means of contrasting Indian culture with modern Western conceptions of itself as socially fluid and egalitarian, it is important to bear in mind that the emphasis upon caste as a defining feature of Indian culture did not begin with the Western Orientalists and was a major preoccupation of earlier accounts of India, such as that provided by the Muslim scholar al-Bīrunī.

47 See Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, London, Penguin, 1991, p. 188; 'Orientalism and after: an interview with Edward Said', in *Radical Philosophy* 63, Spring 1993, pp. 26–7.

48 O'Hanlon, 'Cultures of rule, communities of resistance', pp. 105–106.

49 Jane Miller, *Seductions: Studies in Reading and Culture*, London, Virago, 1990, pp. 118–22. See also Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation*, New York and London, Routledge, 1996.

50 John Mitchell, *An Essay on the Best Means of Civilising the Subjects of the British Empire in India and of Diffusing the Light of the Christian Religion Throughout the Eastern World*, Edinburgh, W. Blackwood, and London, T. Cadell & W. Davies, 1805, pp. 79–80. This work received an award from the University of Glasgow, bequeathed by the Rev. Claudius Buchanan, Vice-Provost of the College of Fort-William in Bengal.

51 Ibid., pp. 88–9.

52 Tejaswini Niranjana, 'Translation, colonialism and rise of English', in *Economic and Political Weekly* 25.15, 14 April 1990, p. 774. See, for instance, Jones' approval of Henry Lord's (1630) description of the Banians as 'maidenly and well-nigh effeminate, of a countenance shy and somewhat estranged, yet smiling out a glazed and bashful familiarity'. See also Peter Marshall, *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 250.

53 John Strachey, *India*, 1888, cited in Claude Alvares, *Decolonizing History: Technology and Culture in India, China and the West, 1492 to the Present Day*, Goa, India, The Other India Press, and New York, Apex Press, 1991, p. 187. See Inden, *Imagining India*, pp. 86–7, 123 for a brief mention of the feminization of India in the Western imagination.

54 Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995. See also Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, 1983, ch. 1; Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*, London, Duke University Press, 1995.

55 Ram, 'Modernist anthropology and the construction of Indian identity', p. 590. See O'Hanlon, 'Cultures of rule, communities of resistance', p. 111.

56 See, for instance, Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972; Dale Spender, *Man-Made Language*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, e.g., p. 23.

57 Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clement, *The Newly Born Woman*, translated by Betsy Wing, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1986, p. 68.

58 Veena Das, 'Gender studies, cross-cultural comparison and the colonial organization of knowledge', in *Berkshire Review* 21, 1986, p. 73. For a psychoanalytically inspired account of the West's projection of a the 'feminine' onto India, see Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, ch. 1.

59 For a critique of notions of 'modernization' and 'development' and the ideology of progress underlying them, see Mark Hobart (ed.), *An Anthropological Critique of Development: The Growth of Ignorance*, London, Routledge, 1993. See also Aijaz Ahmed, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literature*, London, Verso, 1992.

60 Alvares, *Decolonizing History*, pp. 55–64.

61 Ibid., p. 67.

62 Susan J. Hekman, *Gender and Knowledge: Elements of a Postmodern Feminism*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990, p. 94.

6 'Mystic Hinduism'

1 Diderot' s article on 'Bramines', in *Encylopédie*. This is a literal paraphrase of Bayle's 1738 article 'Brachmanes', in his *Dictionaire historique et critique*, with Diderot's own addition of the reference to opium, cited in Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1988, pp. 59–60.

2 S.N. Balagangadhara, *'The Heathen in His Blindness': Asia, the West and the Dynamic of Religion*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1994, pp. 133–6.

3 In 1815, Friedrich Schlegel, for instance, describes Anquetil's work as a 'bungling work' and 'one of the most turbid sources of information on ancient India', contrasting it with the authenticity of H.T. Colebrooke's translations from the original Sanskrit (see F. Schlegel, *Werke* VI, 131–2). Similarly, Schlegel's Sanskrit teacher, British Orientalist Alexander Hamilton, suggests that the quality of Anquetil's work is 'greatly diminished, by coming through the medium of a Persic translation'. See Rosane Rocher, *Alexander Hamilton (1762–1824): A*

Chapter in the Early History of Sanskrit Philology, American Oriental Series 51, New Haven, American Oriental Society, 1968, pp. 24ff.

4 *Oupnek'hat* I, p. 792.

5 Ibid., p. 711. Translation in Halbfass, *India and Europe*, p. 67.

6 A. Schopenhauer, *Parerga und Paralipomena*, Vol. II, section 184, from the edition of Schopenhauer's works begun by Paul Deussen, 1911–42, quoted in Halbfass, *India and Europe*, p. 106.

7 *Oupnek'hat* I, p. viii. In this respect, Anquetil was no doubt further convinced of the remarkable correspondences between Christianity and the ancient Vedas, by his continued acceptance of the authenticity of the spurious *Ezourvedam*, a text purporting to be a French 'translation' of an ancient Hindu Veda. Anquetil remained a staunch advocate of the authenticity of the text despite its exposure as a Jesuit missionary composition by Pierre Sonnerat in 1782.

8 A similar approach can be found in the romantic and Christianized conception of the *Upaniṣads* provided in Jean Mascaro's hugely popular Penguin Classic edition of the *Upaniṣads* (an anthology of texts in English translation, published in 1965 and reprinted consistently since then).

9 Charles Wilkins, *The Bhagvat-Geeta or Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjoon in 18 Lectures with Notes*, London, C. Nowse, 1785, pp. 23–4.

10 *The Works of William Jones*, Vol. 1, 1799, p. 363.

11 Note, for instance, that Mohandas Gandhi's own interest in the *Gītā* was inspired by Western interest from groups such as the Theosophists, for whom the *Gītā* represented a central example of the perennial philosophy in India.

12 See, for instance, *Bhagavad Gītā* VII. 21; IX. 23; X. 20–1. See also the frequently quoted verse from the *Ṛg Veda*, which states that 'Him, who is the One existent, sages name variously' (I. 164.46). For a discussion of inclusivism in early Advaita Vedānta see Richard King. *Early Advaita Vedānta and Buddhism: The Mahāyāna Context of the Gauḍapādīya-kārikā*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 194–203.

13 Wilkins, *The Bhagvat-Geeta*, p. 24. See also p. 143, note 44, where Wilkins argues that the *Gītā's* rendering of *sannyās* as one who forsakes the hope of reward is motivated by an attempt to 'unite the various religious opinions which prevailed in those days'.

14 Ibid., p. 25.

15 Ibid., p. 139, note 6

16 Anquetil-Duperron himself rendered the term *'upaniṣad'* as the Latin *'secretum tegendum'*, meaning 'a secret to be kept'.

17 It is generally accepted that the earliest stratum contains the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya Upaniṣads*. These are said to contain material that is pre-Buddhist, placing them at some time before the sixth to fourth century BCE (depending upon the dates of the Buddha). The *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya* and *Kauṣītaki* are probably next in chronological composition and these too seem to contain some pre-Buddhist material, dating from around the fifth or fourth centuries BCE. These are followed by the verse *Upaniṣads*, including the *Kena* (probably the oldest of the verse *Upaniṣads*), the *Kaṭha*, *Īśa*, *Śvetāsvatara* and *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, all of which were probably composed in the last few centuries BCE. Finally, we have the prose *Upaniṣads* – the *Māṇḍūkya* and the *Praśna* dating from the first two centuries CE. There are also other texts such as the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*, a composite text constituting part of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* and the *Maitrayānīya* (or *Maitrī*) *Upaniṣad*.

18 See Halbfass, *India and Europe*, p. 134.

19 Quoted in Halbfass, *India and Europe*, p. 51.

20 Note that by 'brahmanical élite' I am not proposing that the *Upaniṣads* were the product of brahmins alone. Much has been made of the *kṣatriya* contribution to Upaniṣadic thought. See Patrick Olivelle, *Upaniṣads*, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. xxxiv.

21 Indira Chowdury-Sengupta, 'Reconstructing spiritual heroism: the evolution of the Swadeshi Sannyasi in Bengal', in Julia Leslie (ed.), *Myth and Mythmaking*, Collected Papers on South Asia No.12, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1996, pp. 124–42. On British conceptions of the Bengali male as effeminate, see Chapter 5 of this volume.

22 Swami Nikhilananda, *Vivekananda: A Biography*, New York, Ramakrishna Centre, 1953, p. 167.

23 Paul J. Will, 'Swami Vivekananda and cultural stereotyping', in N. Smart and B. Srinivasa Murthy (eds), *East–West Encounters in Philosophy and Religion*, Mumbai, Popular Prakashan, Long Beach Publications, 1996, pp. 384–5.

24 See Halbfass, *India and Europe*, pp. 70–1.

25 Ibid., pp. 77–8.

26 See, for instance, Schelling's 1809 work, 'Philosophical investigations on the essence of human freedom' ('*Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*').

27 F.W.J. Schelling, *Sämmlichte Werke* I. 6, 38, quoted in Halbfass, *India and Europe*, p. 102.

28 Quoted in Halbfass, *India and Europe*, p. 60. This is of course, the source of Marx's famous assertion that religion is the opiate of the masses.

29 See Ignatius Viyagappa, *G.W.F. Hegel's Concept of Indian Philosophy*, Rome, Università Gregoriana, 1980, p. 224.

30 See Dorothy M. Figueira, *The Exotic: A Decadent Quest*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1994, pp. 72–80; Viyagappa, *G.W.F. Hegel's Concept of Indian Philosophy*, ch. 1.

31 G.W.F. Hegel, *Sämmlichte Werke* (Kritische Ausgabe, Bd XVa), p. 290. English translation in Ignatius Viyagappa, *G.W.F. Hegel's Concept of Indian Philosophy*, p. 192.

32 Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe*, p. 95. See also Figueira, *The Exotic*, pp. 72–3.

33 A. Schopenhauer, *Senilia*, 1858, quoted in Halbfass, *India and Europe*, p. 111.

34 Rudolf Otto, *Mysticism East and West: A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism*, 1932, London, Quest English edition, 1987, p. 167.

35 Ibid., pp. 168–70.

36 Ibid., p. 173.

37 Ibid., p. 175.

38 Ibid., p. 177.

39 Ibid., p. 182.

40 Ibid., p. 185.

41 Ibid., p. 205.

42 Ibid., passim, but see also especially pp. 129, 193 and Appendix IV.

43 Ibid., p. 213.

44 See, for instance, Otto's explicit reference to Eckhart's German '*Gemuts-mystik*' on p. 204.

45 See Herman Tull, F. Max Müller and A.B. Keith, '"Twaddle", the "stupid" myth, and the disease of indology', in *Numen* 38.1, pp. 42–3.

46 Paul Hacker, 'On Śaṅkara and Advaitism', 1964, reprinted in Wilhelm Halbfass (ed.), *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedānta*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1995, p. 30.

47 T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Ramana Mahārshi: The Sage of Aruṇācala*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1977, p. 126.

48 See Śaṅkara's commentary on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.5.1 and 4.5.15. Note that even Śaṅkara's immediate disciples are less rigid in their adherence to the exclusivity of the *brāhmaṇa* castes. See Sureśvara's *Vārttika* (verse 1,651) to *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.5.1 and Ānandajñāna's commentary upon this, where both accept that *kṣatriyas* are able to take up a renunciate lifestyle.

49 Hacker, 'On Śaṅkara and Advaitism', p. 31.

50 William Cenkner, *A Tradition of Teachers: Śaṅkara and the Jagadgurus Today*, Delhi, South Asia Books, 1983, p. 110.

51 Dhar, Niranjan, *Vedānta and the Bengal Renaissance*, Calcutta, Minerva Associates, 1977. Dhar, described on the dust cover of his book as a 'rational humanist', argues that Vedānta has been an historic obstacle to the development of 'rationalism' in India. Although not a Marxist, Dhar argues that Vedānta is the 'opium of the people', and is constituted by 'a metaphysical-mystical potion concocted by princes, landlords and priests to hold the masses down'. The secular rationalism of the author is prevalent throughout the work, as is Dhar's anti-Vedāntic polemic, but is especially evident in Chapter 6 which contains a particularly virulent and scientistic attempt to pathologize the religious experiences of Ramakrishna.

52 See H.T. Colebrooke, 'Essays on the Vedas or sacred writings of the Hindus', in *Asiatic Researches*, 1805, pp. 31–2.

53 David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization, 1773–1835*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1969, pp. 58–9. William Jones, however, read Vedāntic texts with '*Brahmen* of the *Vedānti* school'. Rosane Rocher suggests that this may refer to Rādhākānta, the brahmin responsible for transforming Jones' negative appraisal of Bengali pundits. See Rosane Rocher, 'Weaving knowledge: Sir William Jones and Indian pundits', in Garland Cannon and Kevin R. Brine (eds), *Objects of Enquiry: The Life, Contributions, and Influences of Sir William Jones (1746–1794)*, New York and London, New York University Press, 1995, p. 79, note 52.

54 Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*, pp. 46–7.

55 Letter from Henry Dundas to Marquis Wellesley, 4 September 1800, Cheltenham, in Edward Ingram (ed.), *Two Views of British India: The Private Correspondence of Mr Dundas and Lord Wellesley: 1798–1801*, Bath, Adams & Dart, 1970, p. 287.

56 See Wellesley's letter to Dundas, 7 March 1801, in Ingram (ed.), *Two Views of British India*, p. 326. See also letter dated 18 August 1800 from Wellesley to Dundas (Ingram (ed.), *Two Views of British India*, p. 282–3).

57 Lord Wellesley, *Minute on the Foundation of a College at Fort William*, 10 July 1800, reprinted in M. Martin, *The Despatches: Minutes and Correspondence of the Marquess Wellesley, K.G.; during his Administration in India*, Vol. II, W.H. Allen, 1837, p. 346. Quoted in Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*, p. 47 and in Dhar, *Vedānta and the Bengal Renaissance*, p. 36, note 2.

58 David Kopf, 'The historiography of British Orientalism, 1772–1992', in Cannon and Brine (eds), *Objects of Enquiry*, 1995, p. 156.

59 Jyotsna G. Singh, *Colonial Narratives, Cultural Dialogues: 'Discoveries' of India in the Language of Colonialism*, London and New York, Routledge, 1996, pp. 68–9.

60 Halbfass pinpoints the *Informatio de quibusdam moribus mationis indicae* (1613), composed by Italian Jesuit Robert Nobili (1577–1656) as the first clear reference

to Śaṅkarācārya ('Ciancaraciarien') as the founder of the Advaita tradition of Vedānta (*māyāvāda*, rendered '*maiavadae*') in European literature. See Halbfass, *India and Europe*, p. 40.

61 Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*, pp. 168–9; 176–7.

62 Ibid., pp. 199–200.

63 Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogical Imagination*, edited by Michael Holquist, translation by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1981, pp. 293–4, quoted in Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p. 8.

64 Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1978, p. 94.

65 Ibid., p. 93.

66 Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*, p. 114.

67 Ketu H. Katrak, 'Indian nationalism, Gandhian 'Satyagraha,' and representations of female sexuality', in A. Parker, M. Russo, D. Sommer and P. Yaeger (eds) *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, New York and London, Routledge, 1992, p. 395. Katrak, in fact, argues that Gandhi's non-violent philosophy evolved from 'his personal observations of passive resistance from his mother and wife' (p. 396), but that his 'uses of female sexuality were channelled through his evocations of woman's obedience and nurturance as wife and mother', and that he failed to recognise the extent of women's struggle against patriarchal oppression (p. 397).

68 Ibid., p. 397.

69 For a generally positive appraisal of Gandhian protest as an authentic subversion of British colonial discourse, see Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, London, Zed Books, 1986. For a critical review of this see Sumit Sarkar, 'Orientalism revisited: Saidian frameworks in the writing of modern Indian history', in *Oxford Literary Review* 16, 1994, pp. 205–24. Ashis Nandy is less laudatory in his appraisal of the extent to which Gandhi effectively represented the subaltern groups of India, but agrees nevertheless that he 'successfully articulated in politics the consciousness which had remained untamed by British rule in India'. See Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 100.

70 Richard G. Fox, 'East of Said', in Michael Sprinker (ed.), *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1992, pp. 151–2.

71 Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life*, London, 1927, Unwin Paperback, 1988, p. 18.

72 Ibid., p. 25.

73 Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (speech delivered 20 January 1963, Calcutta) and reprinted in Radhakrishnan, *Our Heritage*, Delhi, Hind Pocket Books, 1973, p. 97.

74 Gaudapāda is understood by the Advaita traditions to be Śaṅkara's *paramaguru* – the teacher of his teacher. For a detailed analysis of this text, its philosophical position, questions of authorship and its relationship to the prevailing Mahāyāna Buddhist schools of the day, see King, *Early Advaita Vedānta and Buddhism*.

75 *Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā* III.17–18 and IV.4–5.

76 Inclusivism akin to that of the *Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā* can be found in the *Paramārtha-sāra* (for a brief discussion of the date of the *Paramārtha-sāra* see King, *Early Advaita Vedānta and Buddhism*, p. 260n). This theme re-emerges strongly in the post-Śaṅkarite *Yogavāsiṣṭha* (final version c.tenth to eleventh century CE; see, for instance, the translation in Swami Venkatesananda, *The*

Concise Yogavasistha, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1984, p. 178), and provides a systematic basis for an inclusivist account of rival perspectives in later Advaita thought, with the notion of the different levels of attainment (*adhikāri-bheda*) among humans. On this view, different levels of knowledge require the acceptance of a diversity of approaches (usually classified, following the *Gītā*, in terms of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna*, and resulting in the production of a variety of conceptions of the ultimate reality).

77 Vivekānanda, 'Unity', in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekānanda*, Vol. VIII, Calcutta, Advaita Ashrama, pp. 250–1.

78 Theos Bernard, *Hindu Philosophy*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1947, Reprint 1985, p. 5.

79 Swāmi Vivekānanda, *Complete Works*, Vol. I, pp. 21–4. See also VIII.103, 287; III.528–9; III.526; II. 478; IV. 135–6.

80 Vivekānanda, 'Vedic religious ideals', in *Complete Works*, Vol. I, p. 347. Compare this with IV.135 – 'Buddhism is one of our sects'. In V.309 the Buddha is described as a *saṁnyāsin* of the Vedānta. He started a sect but the ideas now called Buddhism were not his, for they were ancient (i.e. deriving from Vedas). See also V.82 – the practical 'yoga-perception' form of Vedanta, Vivekānanda says, is called Buddhism.

81 'True Buddhism' (report in *Brooklyn Standard Union*, 4 February 1895) in Vivekānanda, *Complete Works*, Vol. II, p. 509. See also V.225, 227; III.230.

82 Vivekānanda, *Brooklyn Standard Union*, 27 February 1895, *Complete Works*, Vol. II, pp. 510–11.

83 Ibid., III.275

84 For a detailed analysis of the philosophical differences between Buddhism and Vedānta traditions, see King, *Early Advaita Vedānta and Buddhism*, passim.

85 'The Real and the Apparent Man' (lecture delivered in New York), *Complete Works*, Vol. II, pp. 272–5. In fact according to the letter that Vivekānanda wrote to Swarup(ānanda), dated 9 February 1902 (Vol. V, pp. 172–3), Vivekānanda claims that Mahāyāna Buddhism, as well as being a form of Advaita, is also the oldest school of Buddhism. He states that 'A total revolution has occurred in my mind about the relation of Buddhism and neo-Hinduism. I may not live to work out the glimpses, but I shall leave the lines of work indicated, and you and your brethren will have to work it out.' (p. 173).

86 Vivekānanda, 'The Essence of Religion' (report of a lecture given in America), *Complete Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 254–8.

87 'The Way to the Realisation of a Universal Religion' (lecture delivered in Universalist church, Pasadena, California, 28 January 1900), *Complete Works*, Vol. II, p.374.

88 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 367.

89 For Vivekānanda, each 'world religion' is said to have cultivated particular qualities of the Universal Religion. Thus Islam fosters an appreciation of the equality of brotherhood, Christianity is praised for its pure spirit of anticipation (awaiting the coming of the kingdom of God), while Hinduism is to be lauded for its great spirituality. *Complete Works*, Vol. II, pp. 371–2.

90 'The Absolute and Manifestation' (lecture delivered in London, 1896), in *Complete Works*, Vol. II, p. 139.

91 Ibid.

92 Hans Torwesten, *Vedanta, Heart of Hinduism*, 1985, English translation, Grove Press, 1991, pp. 12–13.

93 Ibid., p. 14.

94 Ibid., pp. 14–15.