

Constituting a Self through an Indian Other.  
A Study of Select Works by Stefan Zweig and Hermann Hesse

by

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## Abstract

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This study explains how “India” can sometimes be used in German-language literature in non-Orientalist terms. As I closely analyze Stefan Zweig’s *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders: Eine Legende*, his essay “Die indische Gefahr für England,” and Hermann Hesse’s *Siddhartha* all within a postcolonial theoretical framework, I argue that these texts that either take place in India or contend with Indian themes are less about India than about coming to terms with self-identity. With Zweig’s work, I demonstrate how India is used as a means toward self-reflection and self-critique. Accordingly, I turn to Zweig’s fraught relationship to the Austro-Hungarian Empire as well as interest in internationalism to verify, through historical and biographical analysis, how these texts that are ostensibly about an Other are inexorably a means of constituting a Self. Since with Zweig’s texts I establish that “Indienliteratur” can be read in postcolonial terms, I move in a different direction with my reading of Hesse’s “German-Indian” story by *not* taking recourse to locating its cultural identity. I borrow analytical developments I make previously on the relationship between individual and community/national identity in order to engage with identity on a philosophical scale. I examine how *Siddhartha*, a text that condemns every kind of teaching, paradoxically helped teach individualistic identity formation in the era of U.S. Counterculture.

*To Amma, Appa, Ajay*

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## Introduction

In broad terms, this dissertation is a study of the constitution of a Self through an Other and ensuing inescapable relationships of power. In narrower terms, through the examination of three German-language texts published in the early twentieth century that feature a contact with Indian themes, this dissertation is a study of the constitution of a Self through an Indian Other and an ensuing discourse of European hegemony. The constructively vexing problem of hegemony that continues to erupt at the sites of contact between West and East, Occident and Orient, Empire and Colony sets a crucial context within which I read these texts. In the process of understanding the Self and Other on narrative and historical levels, I implicitly reach to theories that offer explanations to questions about identity, including New Historicism, Close Reading, Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, Narratology, Reader Response Theory, Cultural, Colonial and Transnational Studies.<sup>1</sup> Explicitly, however, I reach to Postcolonial Theory because it is best suited to address the problem of hegemony tied to issues of identity. A postcolonial lens can help focus a text's complicity with Orientalism and its reach beyond it; its historical connectedness to the European colonization of India as well as its historical distinctiveness (as a German-language text) from literatures stemming from Empires with vastly greater networks of colonies; and its quests for self-identity through its "work on the *mechanics* of the constitution of the Other" amidst its (sometimes ironic) "invocations of the *authenticity* of the Other" (Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" 90).

This dissertation could thus be categorized either thematically (German-Indian Studies) or theoretically (Postcolonial Studies). While these two frames give my work a particular orientation, I take steps to push their boundaries not only because I remain wary of the creation of yet another Area Studies Program with its own set of contestable borders,<sup>2</sup> and not only because postcolonialism has come under attack for its lack of theoretical cohesion,<sup>3</sup> but because the issues that I contend with are influenced by and relatable to numerous other theoretical standpoints and geopolitical situations. It has been my privilege to work with instructors and colleagues who do not secure their scholarship or their pedagogy to any clear-cut theoretical underpinning, but who recognize that theories, as well as Area Studies Programs, provide

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<sup>1</sup> I do not see the implementation of these theories as mutually exclusive.

<sup>2</sup> At the 2013 German Studies Association conference in Denver, the largest panel grouping (with seven sessions) appeared under the title, "Asian German Studies." An important issue discussed during these panel sessions was the purpose of "Asian German Studies." While the supposed intention is to expand the field of German Studies to be ever more inclusive, perhaps even reflective of the growing multiculturalism within contemporary German-language literature and culture, the problem of exclusion based on selective geopolitical and linguistic frameworks seems to merely establish another limiting field of scholarship.

<sup>3</sup> In *Absolutely Postcolonial* Peter Hallward argues against the methods of Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and argues rather compellingly, not to mention antagonistically (in tone at least), that the postcolonial discourse cannot offer any viable theories with which to work because it is a discourse of non-relational particularities and not a theory that can be applied on a broader scale. According to Hallward, in order to conceive of a postcolonial theory, the usual associations of plurality and fragmentation are to be abandoned in favor of fundamental singularity, which marks postcolonial theory as the "dissolution of relationality" and "the expression of a non-relational, self-creative, or self-constituent force" (Hallward 329). In crude terms, postcolonialism is a self-indulgent and narcissistic practice. I do not fully agree with the claims of this book because of the more recent turns in postcolonial scholarship (my own included) which seek relationality (e.g. historical or political) even within a discourse of particularities. Incisive and vindictive, this book is useful for anyone making investigations into postcolonialism. My attempts to relate the early 20<sup>th</sup> century literature I examine through a postcolonial lens to contemporary politics are an answer to Hallward's claim against the relationality of postcolonial literature.

positions from which to begin, from which to derive some preliminary orientation for or stimulus toward an inquiry.

On appropriate occasion, I reach to issues in contemporary politics. These political interjections are the result of dealing with literature that is in the clutches of politicized discourse, that is, with authors whose personal political struggles bled into their work, with readerships that have taken up these works as political manifestos, and with themes that are politically salient. Since my intellectual purview, my understanding of scholarship, and my classroom discussions about literature and culture are strengthened, even enlivened, by issues in contemporary politics, I seek to invigorate Postcolonial/German-Indian Studies with direct reference to the contemporary contexts upon which such a study has bearing. This practice is more apparent in the second part of this dissertation and is my attempt to adjust the boundaries of literary studies. I intend neither impudence nor foolhardiness with this practice. On the contrary, I am careful to sustain a focus on the literature being examined, however with an eye to encourage active social compassion through modes of self-reflection and self-critique that I highlight in the analysis of both literature and my role studying it.

### **The Insufficiency of Orientalism**

The three texts that I examine in this dissertation are Stefan Zweig's story, *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders: Eine Legende* (1921), his essay "Die indische Gefahr für England" (1909), and Hermann Hesse's internationally renowned *Siddhartha* (1922). I argue that this German-language literature presents "India" in terms other than those offered by Orientalism, while still remaining aware of the ways in which "India" may be manipulated and misappropriated as it is carried across into European culture. This methodology of recognizing both the exploitative and cooperative nature of textual, cross-cultural transference is a key tenet of Postcolonial Studies.

My work is influenced largely by theorists who, without reverting to simple binaries, grapple with changing relationships of power and problems of perspective in colonial and postcolonial contexts. For example, in her essay "Time and Timing: Law and History," Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak recognizes G.W.F. Hegel's shortcomings in his use of the *Bhagavadgītā*, but prefers to pose questions that do not ask whether Hegel's understanding of the *Gītā* is correct or not: "I repeatedly attempt to undo the pious opposition between colonizer and colonized implicit in much colonial discourse study. Therefore I must show that there are strategic complicities between Hegel's argument and the structural conduct of the Gita" (Spivak 104). What Spivak accomplishes here is a reading of Hegel's reception of the *Bhagavadgītā* alongside the *Bhagavadgītā* itself that does not focus on Hegel as European intellectual colonizer, but focuses on questions of time and history. In general, Spivak's work does not neglect the oppressive histories of colonialism, but recognizes that ever-shifting structures of power make the detection of clear binary oppositional hegemonic frameworks a tricky enterprise. Furthermore, her work and the work of postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha<sup>4</sup> tell us the ways that scholarship can be complicit in organizing and imposing hegemonic relationships when it insists on a particular

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<sup>4</sup> The texts I examine in the following chapters achieve what postcolonialism has come to illuminate, namely that some western texts infused with the stuff of the Orient may not be seeking to dominate the Orient, but, as Homi Bhabha writes in *The Location of Culture*, demand "an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present" (Bhabha 10).

reading of a text, such that one reading eclipses not only other readings, but also the potential for other readings.

Although it may seem old hat to bring up Edward Said's *Orientalism* today, especially after his own review of his thesis in his 1985 essay "Orientalism Reconsidered" (Said), his arguments from his 1978 book still dominate textual analyses of works about the Orient, not to mention continually reinstitute the East/West divide. *Orientalism*, according to Said's analysis, is a term comprised of three key interdependent meanings: the academic,<sup>5</sup> the imaginative,<sup>6</sup> and the institutional.<sup>7</sup> The institutional component is Said's path-breaking discovery and his central subject of analysis; it is an "enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively" (Said 3). Often overlooked are the doors that Said's reimagined intellectual history keeps open for alternate analyses. His work does not succumb to his fears of distortion or inaccuracy, but rather reflects, as he suggests, his contemporary reality (Said 8–9). Thus, while his work defines the European/non-European power divide through the analysis of innumerable texts that boldly or surreptitiously assert the dividing line between East and West, I attempt to carry out what Said himself deems as "the most important task," that is, "to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a nonrepressive and a nonmanipulative, perspective" (Said 24).

Said writes:

Everyone who writes about the Orient must locate himself vis-à-vis the Orient; translated into his text, this location includes the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kind of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text—all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf. (20)

What Said's argument lacks, however, and what recent turns in postcolonial discourse illuminate, is the possibility that this "speaking in its behalf" can be an ironic stance, that an account of the Orient may suggest that it cannot possibly *not* be Orientalizing and as such, criticizes the very audacity of representing the Other. As Said's argument unfurls, there is a glimmer of this possibility of irony as he writes of the necessary exteriority of the Orientalist:

Orientalism is premised on exteriority, that is, on the fact that the Orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West. He is never concerned with the Orient except as the first cause of what he says. What he says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to

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<sup>5</sup> "The most readily accepted designation for Orientalism is an academic one... Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient—and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist—either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism" (Said 2).

<sup>6</sup> "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and [...] 'the Occident'" accepted by "a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators [...]" (Said 2).

<sup>7</sup> "[...] Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" (Said 3).

indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact. The principal product of this exteriority is representation [...]. (20–21)

Said begins to describe the Orient as a representation that cannot be anything but the Orient of the European imagination. Such a description of the Orient as a representation hints at self-reflection:

The value, efficacy, strength, apparent veracity of a written statement about the Orient therefore relies very little, and cannot instrumentally depend, on the Orient as such. On the contrary, the written statement is a presence to the reader by virtue of its having excluded, displaced, made supererogatory any such *real thing* as “the Orient.” (21)

Said insists that there can be no way for a person of the West to assume the perspective of a person or character from the Orient. When we do encounter ostensible, assumed Oriental perspectives in the texts he examines, he calls this assumption an act of force, the complicity with imperial power, and the suffocation of the actual voice of the Orient.

But is such an assumption always an act of force? That is, what if a text prefigures Said’s critique, but does so ironically and self-critically, in the guise of the very type of text which Said examines and deems complicit with the forces of imperial power? What about the possibility for self-reflection and self-critique in texts about an Orient that are not really about the Orient, but about something they presumably know, plausibly the Self, in these cases, the West?

Certainly not all western texts about an Orient are self-reflective. The texts and writers that Said examines lack self-reflection because they treat this imagined place as the real thing over which they assert their authority and expertise. The distinction that I highlight is with some texts and writers that recognize the imagined nature of the Orient through western eyes, thereby using the Orient in a self-reflective, even self-critical, manner, in part to reflect upon the very use of the Orient in western texts. I initially turned to Said’s *Orientalism* because it is the dominant theory for engaging with non-contemporary texts whose premises traffic between cultures across the West/East divide. The problem with Orientalism is that it strongly demarcates the cultural border between West and East or West and the Rest. To show, then, the porous nature of cultural borders even in the early twentieth century, I prefer a postcolonial discursive framework, since, whilst indebted to Said’s work, it exposes the fallacies of a generalizing theory like Orientalism.

Most work in Postcolonial Studies deals with the literature of the post-colony, and the literature I examine in this dissertation is not that. A key characteristic of my work is the addition to more recent scholarship which seeks to rethink texts once relegated to the colonial paradigm. The postcolonial discourse facilitates the discovery of texts that effectively question the colonial paradigm, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly. In this process of questioning, these texts that orchestrate the meeting of cultures and draw their common/uncommon border concurrently bore through that very demarcation. Postcolonial discourse does not forget the practices of hegemony that nurtured the cruelty of the colonial world (indeed, Said’s *Orientalism* will always be a crucial part of the debate); it seeks to illuminate alternate, nuanced hegemonic relationships as well as discover (though mostly futile) efforts at escaping hegemony altogether.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> To clarify, postcolonial discourse does not censor lingering practices of colonial hegemony. It seeks to question how the relentless definition of all cultures (western or eastern) by geopolitical borders disregards cases of cooperative cultural interaction. Thinking along lines that separate cultures by national or state or city or town or provincial allegiances proves continually important for staking claim to land, to things, to property, to resources, to

## The Expanding Postcolonial<sup>9</sup> Discourse

Gabriele Dürbeck and Axel Dunker, in their 2011 estimation of Postcolonial Studies within the field of German Studies, explain that

Wichtig für postkoloniale Studien ist [...] die Reflexion auf die jeweilige Perspektive—“who speaks, from where, and for whom”—, womit die Voraussetzungen der eigenen Position, ihre Geschichte und ihre möglichen blinden Flecken (wie etwa ein eurozentrischer Blick in Studien aus europäischen Ländern) bewusst gemacht werden sollen.<sup>10</sup> (Dunker and Dürbeck 8)

In the following chapters, I commit to this emphasis on the reflection of perspective. I therefore align my readings of early twentieth century “Indienliteratur” with recent turns in postcolonial discourse which argue against “the elision of diversity and heterogeneity” existing in Said’s definition of *Orientalism* (Lemon) and therefore ask us to examine Europe not en bloc. If one main criticism in *Orientalism* is Europe’s treatment of the Orient as an undifferentiated, manipulatable mass, then one main criticism of *Orientalism* is the homogenous treatment of the West. Robert Lemon’s recently published book, *Orientalism as Self-Critique in the Habsburg Fin de Siècle* (2011), is one such work of postcolonial scholarship that differentiates Austria-Hungary’s relationship to the East. Lemon’s book is not an attack on Said’s important work, but rather a dissatisfaction with the persistence and ubiquity with which Said’s early theoretical apparatus has been, for decades, thrust onto literature that has little to do with the implementation of orientalist hegemonic structures. Drawing upon Lemon’s work, I argue that certain texts that deal with a so-called Orient can do so without necessarily making a claim about or staking claim to that Orient, that the narrative elements in some German-language texts that

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people, and even to literature. But allegiances are ever changing, cultures are becoming ever more entangled, nation states are becoming governed by an international corporate culture and the international reaction against it. Accordingly, the defining national canons of the very departments from which I will receive my degree and that will receive me as a professional colleague are a constant source of concern. The crisis that Terry Eagleton detects in 1983 in the illuminatingly polemic concluding chapter, “Political Criticism,” of his *Literary Theory* has not yet been resolved: “The present crisis in the field of literary studies is at root a crisis in the definition of the subject itself” (Eagleton 214). Though unresolved, the past decades’ politicization of literary studies has, at the very least, brought us to recognize the positions of privilege and power amassed in the processes of selecting texts and theories worthy of literary analysis and worthy of canonical inclusion in Area Studies Programs.

<sup>9</sup> I choose to use *postcolonialism* instead of *post-colonialism*, because a “simple hyphen has come to represent an increasingly diverging set of assumptions, emphases, strategies and practices in post-colonial reading and writing. The hyphen puts an emphasis on the discursive and material effects of the historical ‘fact’ of colonialism, while the term ‘postcolonialism’ has come to represent an increasingly indiscriminate attention to cultural difference and marginality of all kinds, whether a consequence of the historical experience of colonialism or not” (Ashcroft 7–13).

<sup>10</sup> There are numerous such reports on and definitions of the term, *post-colonial/postcolonial*, including theories ascribed by it and to it and most importantly, the discursive turn that now defines it: “Immer wieder wird in der Forschung bemerkt, dass Postkolonialismus kein homogener Begriff ist. Mindestens drei konkurrierende Begriffe lassen sich unterscheiden. Erstens bezieht er sich auf alle Kulturen, die seit dem Zeitpunkt der Kolonisierung bis heute durch den imperialen Prozess in Mitleidenschaft gezogen wurden, und betont damit die universale Prozessualität der kolonialen Konstellation. Zweitens wird postkolonial im Sinne von ‘post-independent’ gebraucht und bezeichnet den politisch-historischen Zeitraum nach der Unabhängigkeit einstiger Kolonien sowie den Prozess der Dekolonialisierung nach 1945. Und drittens wird postkolonial in einem diskurskritischen Sinn verwendet als ein Set diskursiver Praktiken, die sich dem Kolonialismus, kolonialistischen Ideologien und ihrem Fortbestehen bis heute widersetzen” (Dunker and Dürbeck 8).

are “Indian,” for example, are in fact put to question. As stated forthright in the opening paragraph, Robert Lemon’s book builds off of studies by Ziauddin Sardar and Lisa Lowe that critique the created “illusion of a unified and constant European/Western identity” and posit a “pluralist discourse that can even encompass critical representations of the West” (Lemon 1).

Twenty years after Said’s groundbreaking publication, Ziauddin Sardar published a book with the same title, *Orientalism*, that tests Said’s theory against time and argues that “nowadays, the subject of Orientalism is not limited to what is conventionally seen as the ‘Orient’ but also includes Europe, the home of its origins, itself” (Sardar vii). What Sardar contests is not the fixation of Europe on an “Orient” but the fixed nature of that “Orient.” He notes that especially in recent times, there is a great difficulty in situating works by authors like Salman Rushdie and V.S. Naipaul within Said’s definition of Orientalism. Even Said writes, in the 1994 “Afterward” to *Orientalism*, of “the most interesting developments in post-colonial studies” which include the “re-reading of the canonical cultural works [...] to re-investigate some of their assumptions, going beyond the stifling hold on them of some version of the master-slave binary dialectic. This has certainly been the comparable effect of astoundingly resourceful novels such as Rus[h]die’s *Midnight’s Children* [...]” (Said 351). Still, Sardar argues that Rushdie’s Muslim background and Naipul’s Indian-Trinidadian background do not exempt their work from an “all-pervasive, intrinsic and deeply rooted” ignorance on Islamic and Indian matters respectively (Sardar 89). So what are these stories, if they are so ignorant of the subjects they deal with? According to Sardar, they are reflections of the “intellectual concerns, problems, fears and desires of the West”:

The most common allegation made in defence of Orientalism as a rationalized ‘scientized’ enquiry is that an object worthy of study, an object that is the Orient, actually exists. An examination of the history of Orientalism as it has actually operated shows this claim to be false, because its predication and assumptions turn out to be illusory. The history of Orientalism shows it is not an outward gaze of the West toward a fixed, definite object that is to the east, the Orient. Orientalism is a form of inward reflection, preoccupied with the intellectual concerns, problems, fears and desires of the West that are visited on a fabricated, constructed object by convention called the Orient. What that Orient is, is a shifting, ambiguous compendium, a thing that identifies whatever the writer, inscriber or supposed observer wishes it to be at the moment. (Sardar 13)

Sardar’s argument effectively shifts the focus of the Orient onto its so-called creators.

Robert Lemon draws on this refocusing to examine the Orient of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Austria-Hungary. Specifically, while analyzing stories by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Robert Musil and Franz Kafka, he engages closely with fiction of a *particular* time and place, allowing him to “address those factors *peculiar* to Austria-Hungary” with respect to literature “marked by self-reflection and self-critique” (Lemon 1–2). Thus, in the examination of particular works by these Austro-Hungarian authors, Lemon is able to take Sardar’s argument one step further. In Hofmannsthal’s early works that refer to an “Arabia” or “China,” for example, Lemon finds not only a self-reflective stance, but also a questioning of “the basic viability of imperialism and [a challenging of] received notions of national identity” (Lemon 15). Just as Sardar destabilizes the notion of a fixed Orient, so does Lemon destabilize the notion of a fixed West. Lemon’s arguments hinge upon the distinct situation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and its relation to an Orient. He builds off of previous studies, like Todd Kontje’s *German Orientalisms*, that also seek to destabilize the notion of a fixed West (Kontje). In *German*

*Orientalisms*, Kontje “adopts Thomas Mann’s term ‘Das Land der Mitte’ (the country of the center) to describe Germany’s position within a ‘symbolic geography’ and thus signals an interest in overturning the customary dichotomy between Occident and Orient” (Lemon 7). Scholarship in the last decade has shown the significance of differentiating what constitutes “the West” in order to argue the self-reflective relationship between the projected Orient and its particular projector. For Lemon and Kontje, the division is of a German-speaking West, wherein the distinction between Germany and Austria-Hungary is critical for their arguments about the stance of certain texts toward these particular states’ engagement with particular parts of the East.

### **The Significance of Nuance**

As one might read or hear in contemporary scholarship, an often cited word in these recent turns in postcolonial discourse motivated by such factors of *particularity* and *peculiarity* is *nuance*. This word has developed to refer both to a self-reflective approach to reading literature (“to take a nuanced look”) as well as to identify culture through the scrutiny of borders that create formulaic and essentialist groupings (“to study the nuances”). In other words, we as readers are asked to acknowledge our own as well as the texts’ roles as particular and peculiar, evident in the conglomeration of experiences that lead to the individual reader and individual text. Such a sense of individuation excuses neither reader nor text from categories to which they have been ascribed. On the contrary, every one of the many layers and levels of ordering, every categorized component part, that creates either the individual reader or individual text is each an avenue of inquiry upon their meeting. These avenues of inquiry are then proliferated by the meeting of reader and text, and once again proliferated by the meeting of multiple readers and multiple texts.

What I take from these examples in recent postcolonial scholarship which elicit a methodology of *nuancing*, then, is that the litero-critical component to scholarly writing can be to constellate a selection of these avenues of inquiry, not as a mere exercise in association, but as a conscious, careful and analytical gathering of questions spawned by the meeting of reader and text. Accordingly, such nuancing allows scholars to argue, like Lemon, for the special role of works which defy categorization conforming to lines drawn by colonialist/imperialist/orientalist hegemony. These categorical lines, the line separating East and West being the most prominent, have created separations, and subsequently generalizations (even if unintended), that are not entirely reflective of the shades of experience of a text (how a text is conceived, how a text is received, read and reread in various contexts). Such lines have been and continue to be effective in mapping the exploitative, Amero/Eurocentric authority over the East, but have cut across or navigated around those texts that, though emerging in “a West” and referring to “an East,” incidentally contribute to challenging hegemony. In many cases, these texts do not enter this challenge on their own, but are picked up by scholars who find in them useful phrases, ideas, concepts, and most importantly tendencies that propel new discussions that reach beyond geopolitical generalizations.

Part of Robert Lemon’s and Todd Kontje’s intention as postcolonial scholars dealing with German-language literature is to define the Germany and the Austria, in historical terms, that is reflected in the “eastern landscape.” Kontje, in response to Said’s explained neglect of German colonialism—“at no time in German scholarship during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century could a close partnership have developed between Orientalists and a protracted,

sustained *national interest* in the Orient” (Said 19)—deftly asserts the not-so-innocent significance of protracted and repeated German colonialism, beginning with “the first Crusade against Muslim ‘infidels’ that began in 1095.” He continues:

If by *national interest* Said means a direct material stake in foreign colonies in the East, he is certainly correct: Germany not only had no official colonial policy until 1884, but “Germany” itself did not exist as a unified nation-state until 1871. If, however, we define *national interest* more broadly as an intellectual effort to locate and preserve a sense of communal identity, then we can indeed speak of a German national interest in the East. In fact, the very lack of a unified nation-state and the absence of empire contributed to the development of a peculiarly German Orientalism. German writers oscillated between identifying their country with the rest of Europe against the Orient and allying themselves with selected parts of the East against the West. (Kontje 2–3)

Kontje’s book travels through the many stages of the German “community identity.” In each temporally defined stage, from Medievalism to Early Modernism to Baroque to Romanticism to Fascism to Postmodernism, Kontje defines and redefines the community identity—the Self, the nation—according to its involvement in an Orient. In fact, Kontje is less keen on engaging with texts that take place in the East, focusing rather on texts that refer to the East but “make use of the Orient in their effort to define what is German” (Kontje 13). In reading this emphasis of his work, it is clear to me that I am working toward something else: although I also engage with definitions of “community identity”—what is Austrian, for example—shaped by the use of the Orient, I am invested in how a text that engages an Orient can also mistrust conventional definitions of community identity and even highlight, as Benedict Anderson reveals, the imagined quality of such definitions (Anderson).

Texts that challenge dominant conceptions of community or national identity can prompt questions from a comparatist view as that envisioned by Mary Louise Pratt in the mid-80s and currently carried out in Postcolonial Studies, which has the determination “to encourage, rather than devalue, cultural work engaged with the present, with ongoing shifts in culture and with challenges to the legitimacy of critical cultural knowledge” and “to encourage rather than devalue cultural work that relinquishes Continentalism and engages with the current global organization of the world and of culture in the world,” where “‘escaping’ the constraints of national literatures could mean something of great and immediate value” (Pratt, “Comparative Literature as a Cultural Practice” 35). In working with literature under the auspices of Area Studies Programs, I have neither been, nor may I ever be, able to *fully* escape the constraints of national literatures. In order to understand and take steps toward unfastening these constraints, I have chosen to examine “Indienliteratur” that is embroiled in debates on identity and nationality, and that has, as Dunker and Dürbeck write, an “inherent potential for resistance.” This literature draws attention to

eine politisch-programmatische sowie kulturtheoretisch basierte Analyseperspektive, die in kritischer Absicht hegemoniale Strukturen und asymmetrische Machtverhältnisse in (post-) kolonialen Konstellationen und deren künstlerische Transformation und Inszenierungsweisen in Texten aufdeckt und auf ihr inhärentes Widerstandspotenzial hin befragt. Soziale Gegensätze in Verbindung mit Kategorien wie Klasse, Rasse, Geschlecht und Nation sollen dadurch abgebaut werden. (Dunker and Dürbeck 9)

## What to Expect

The first part of this dissertation, consisting of three chapters, is a new and thorough reading of Stefan Zweig's *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders: Eine Legende*, first published in 1921 in the Fischer Verlag journal, *Neue Rundschau*. The first chapter continues the discussion of postcolonialism, however as a theoretical reference to understanding Zweig's story. By analyzing the narrative framework of the story—its genre and epigraph—and by exploring its cultural-historical background, I address how this story about one figure's personal journey is also a story of understanding cultural boundaries.

The following two chapters tackle the story on a narrative level. In the second chapter, I argue that the self-reflection that occurs in the post-war trauma of the story's protagonist, Virata, is a reflection of the post-WWI Austrian condition. I also make comparisons to other texts from the time period—including those by Wilfred Owen, Rabindranath Tagore, Sigmund Freud, and Walter Benjamin—to underscore the critique of culture (in national terms) prevalent among writers of the early twentieth century. In the third chapter, I argue that this story is self-critical of its own engagement with India. I move through select representations of India in German-language literature to which this text implicitly makes reference—from medieval literature to the work of Arthur Schopenhauer—in order to suggest that Zweig's small story is an important work of Modern philosophy.

The second part of the dissertation, consisting of two chapters, is inherently more political because of the texts and contexts with which I work. The fourth chapter is focused on an essay written by Zweig in response to an assassination of a British officer by an Indian national. This essay was written before *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders*, even before the outbreak of WWI. Therefore, as I seek to understand Stefan Zweig's response to the mounting British fear of an Indian uprising, I work with postcolonialism not only as a theoretical discourse, but also as the political fact of a non-colonial world.

The fifth and final chapter deals with Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*. This chapter departs considerably from the previous four chapters which have Zweig at their focus. I initially chose this text because it was published at the same time as Zweig's *Die Augen* and has remarkably similar themes. But engaging with *Siddhartha* has sparked a different line of inquiry because unlike Zweig's story, this text is internationally renowned, gained cult status during the Counterculture movements of the 60s, and has inspired volumes of scholarly work. Since this text has already acquired a kind of postcolonial status, I veer into questions of identity less on a cultural scale than on a philosophical scale. Whereas I build up to the argument that *Die Augen* is a philosophical text, in this “stand-alone” chapter, I take as my baseline that *Siddhartha* is a philosophical text. I argue that its paradoxical philosophy complements the paradoxical tenets of the U.S. Counterculture that had adopted it as a manifesto. With this chapter on *Siddhartha*, I am the most intrepid with my approach to treating a literary text not merely as a reflection of its time of emergence and most direct with my approach to analyzing a “German-Indian” text without taking recourse to locating its cultural identity.

## Chapter 1

### Reading Stefan Zweig's *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders: Eine Legende* Through a Postcolonial Lens

Stefan Zweig's<sup>11</sup> *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders: Eine Legende* (1921) is a story written in early twentieth century Austria but set in the Punjab Delta in the years before the Buddha walked the earth. It is one of Zweig's lesser known stories, but one that exemplifies his personal struggle with his role as a writer in a world undergoing massive and violent political shifts. In the years following the First World War, when Zweig became a self-professed pacifist (actually defeatist) and began to confront questions of identity after the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, he wrote the story, *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders: Eine Legende*. This is a story, according to Zweig, that he wrote to help him return to self-reflection and self-recovery after the bewildering years of war and migration. In a letter to his contemporary Hermann Bahr, Zweig writes:

[...] diese Arbeit ist eine der ersten nach den verwirrten Jahren des Krieges und der Wanderungen. Ich hoffe jetzt langsam wieder die Welt mir zurückzufinden, die hinter der lärmenden Coulisse der politischen so lange verborgen war und die Salzburger Stille ist wohl angetan, einem zu dieser Selbstbesinnung und Selbstrückgewinnung zu helfen. (Zweig and Beck, "Nachbemerkung des Herausgebers" 202)

Due to the correspondence between the war-rattled protagonist Virata's quest for pacifism and Stefan Zweig's own post-WWI anti-war attitudes, I analyze this text—conventionally understood as Orientalizing—according to biographical and cultural-historical data that illustrate its themes as self-reflective and self-critical. Alongside this analysis, I address the questions that this story poses about the relationship between self-identity and action, questions that transform this short story into a complex work of philosophy on the impossibility of harmless action and on the restrictedness of perspective.

In this chapter, I focus my analysis on the narrative framework of this story—its unique genre and its epigraph—because it opens up inquiries into cultural identity. A work of German-language fiction labeled as a legend stemming from the Punjab Delta, *Die Augen* calls attention to literature's ability to both create and dismantle cultural borders. By first addressing questions

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<sup>11</sup> Some pertinent biographical information: Stefan Zweig (1881–1942) is one of the most widely read Austrian authors and was, in the early twentieth century, the most widely published author in the world. His work, which includes novels, novellas, journalistic essays, poetry, drama, and biographies, has been translated into numerous languages. Much of his work deals with the issues of humanism, human-based morality and a concern for people. In the early years of the 20th century, caught up in the fervor of patriotism, Zweig enlisted in WWI, but he soon thereafter denounced patriotism in favor of pacifism. His works reflected this shift to pacifism especially as he became a champion for a pan-European identity. He had grand plans for a pan-European collective of writers and artists and thinkers who would create a strong international culture. As a result, Zweig has one of the most impressive records of correspondence (over 25,000 letters) with contemporary writers and artists including Martin Buber, Albert Schweitzer, Rainer Maria Rilke, Luigi Pirandello, Richard Strauss, Joseph Roth, Sigmund Freud, Hermann Hesse, Virginia Woolf and Romaine Rolland. Zweig, who did not consider himself religious, was of Jewish heritage. Forced into exile upon Hitler's rise to power, Zweig went to England, then fled to New York City, and finally settled in Petropolis, Brazil, where he and his wife, giving up hope for the future of Europe, committed suicide.

about cultural identity on the metanarrative level, I set the stage to work closely, in the following two chapters, with analogous questions about self-identity on the narrative level.

### **The Oxymoronic New Legend**

The title of this story purports that it is a legend. In “A Survey of Legend Theory and Characterization,” Timothy R. Tangherlini sums up the Euro-American century-and-a-half’s characterization of legend as:

typically, [...] a short (mono-) episodic, traditional, highly ecotypified, historicized narrative performed in a conversational mode, reflecting on a psychological level a symbolic representation of folk belief and collective experiences and serving as a reaffirmation of commonly held values of the group to whose tradition it belongs. (Tangherlini 385)

Here, I consider an *atypical* legend that problematizes this characterization. Although containing the aesthetic hallmarks of a legend—it is short, episodic, in a conversational mode—this atypical legend confounds its traditional, highly ecotypified,<sup>12</sup> historicized aspect. There is nothing in the title of this story to indicate the confounding nature of this categorization of genre. The title by itself does not necessarily make us wonder: Oh, a legend, I wonder where it’s from! But one needs not look further than the opening motto, where the concepts of folk belief, of collective experiences, of commonly held values, and of tradition seem to stem from a distant time and place. We learn that this legend is not necessarily European. Although the motto of this story is a German translation of two verses from the Sanskrit epic, *Bhagavadgītā*, a closer read of the narrative reveals that the legendary events to which it refers are not necessarily the events of India.

So here, in this question of cultural belonging, begins the confounding nature of this legend. As this text confounds the meaning of *legend* itself, it opens up a large, continually relevant discussion about cultural claims as well as understanding culture and identity as, according to Stuart Hall, “constituted discursively” (Hall and Gay).<sup>13</sup> The term *legend* as it is used here is not a mere fictional ruse to believe this a legend of India. On the contrary, this use of *legend* destabilizes the term’s own cultural focus—neither entirely European nor Indian—such that one can begin to engage with allegorical elements of this narrative that bridge an ancient India with a contemporary Europe. As the cultural focus is further destabilized, is blurred in the twists of the story, even the allegorical elements—primarily signaling post-WWI trauma and the

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<sup>12</sup> According to various theorists surveyed by Tangherlini, “ecotypification” is used to describe the specificities of culturally based values and beliefs from which a legend stems.

<sup>13</sup> Questions of cultural identity continue to dominate not only the landscape of the humanities, but also the landscape of human life, especially as fields of scholarship coalesce (many area studies programs integrating or reorganizing according to theoretical or thematic rather than geopolitical purpose); as nations and states continually divide (Sudan and South Sudan and the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh) and clash (Israeli/Palestinian, Indian/Pakistani, North/South Korean and Crimean conflicts); as hybrid cultures form (hyphenated citizenry) and transform (the term *Black* in some cases preferred to *African-American*); and as quashed cultures reclaim power over their own characterization (the preference of some indigenous peoples of America to be known according to their tribe, language group, or dwelling). While the material scope of this thesis does not encompass these excursive turns, its questions are informed by an underlying query about the definitions of culture and identity, and how those definitions can simultaneously bring people together and tear them apart.

collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—can be stretched to a relationship that is not defined by the East/West, ancient/modern divide. Instead, the allegorical elements relate to questions driven by post-war concerns, regrets and confusions that are not entirely fettered by a specific time or place, yet associated to time and place. Hence, I prefer to understand *legend* through a different description than the conclusive one provided above, also surveyed in Tangherlini’s essay. Lee Doo Hyon “mentions that [...] elasticity is one of the unique characteristics of the genre,” that “legend has an elastic form; it expands, contracts and survives great variation” (Tangherlini 377).

In this case, Stefan Zweig’s legend has survived variation to such a degree that it is more accurately a mutation. As conception, in biological terms, can be understood as a result of genetic combination and mutation of parent material, Zweig’s text is a combination and mutation of parent cultures. I agree with the existing scholarship on this text that asserts that this legend is new, drawing upon themes in Sanskrit literature which resonate with an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Austrian condition. But as a new legend—an oxymoronic idea—this story builds a tension as the question of belonging persists.

Even the very nature of the translated Sanskrit motto prompts the question: How exclusively Indian is the *Bhagavadgītā*? Translated and retranslated, read and reread, commented upon and an inspiration for, praised and derided for centuries by numerous writers across the globe,<sup>14</sup> what prevents the *Bhagavadgītā* from also being Persian... or German... or French... or English? How can an argument for shared cultural belonging be made without resorting to an endorsement of cultural (mis)appropriation, especially regarding cultures with an established history of hegemony? In destabilizing *legend*, this text casts doubt upon cultural belonging, especially as cultures meet at physical or fictional borders. Zweig’s text relies on the unique elasticity of the legend genre to demonstrate the porosity of cultural identity, or in other words, the contrived nature of cultural belonging.

### **The Book as the Gateway to the World**

But it is not merely the genre of legend that provides the elasticity to build, stretch, even break down cultural borders. With sanguinity in the face of new assertive technologies—“das Grammophon, der Kinematograph, das Radio”—Zweig, in a later 1937 essay, “Das Buch als Eingang zur Welt” in *Begegnungen mit Menschen, Büchern, Städten*, eulogizes the book itself as a material genre that, like the wheel, connects the entirety of humanity together across the lonely separation of geographical space.

[...] durch das Buch ist keiner mehr ganz mit sich allein in sein eigenes Blickfeld eingemauert, sondern kann teilhaft werden alles gegenwärtigen und gewesenen Geschehens, des ganzen Denkens und Fühlens der ganzen Menschheit. Alle oder fast alle

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<sup>14</sup> I am most familiar with the *Gītā* in the contexts of German intellectual history. Bradley L. Herling gives journeying agency to the text in *The German Gītā*, where the *Gītā* encounters the West as foreign. I welcome his bold reference to the *Gītā* as a “heroic wanderer [...] that has become one of the most prominent and well known expressions of Hindu thought and belief. The foreign land that the *Gītā* encountered was Germany, where it appeared originally in the waning years of the eighteenth century and eventually drew the attention and interest of some of the most prominent intellectuals of the time, including Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Schlegel, August Wilhelm Schlegel, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Given the prominence of these figures in the Western intellectual tradition, a detailed examination of their encounter with the *Gītā* offers a response to the question [...]: how was this Indian text first constituted as an object of Western knowledge?” (Herling vii).

geistige Bewegung unserer geistigen Welt ist heute auf das Buch gegründet, und jene einverständliche, über das Materielle erhobene Lebensgestaltung, die wir Kultur nennen, wäre undenkbar ohne seine Gegenwart. Diese seelenausweitende, diese weltaufbauende Gewalt des Buches in unserem privaten und persönlichen Leben, sie wird uns eigentlich höchst selten bewußt und fast immer nur in ausgesparten Augenblicken. (Zweig, “Das Buch als Eingang zur Welt” 305)

The book has such a talismanic, biological power over the reader’s perception that the times and places within the text are inextricably interwoven with the times and places where the text is read, all stitched together to the reader’s inner-experience. The book itself, for Zweig, is (for better or for worse) a fierce, border-breaking instrument:

So weiß ich noch genau den Tag, den Ort und die Stunde, wo mir in entscheidender Weise aufging, in wie tiefer und schöpferischer Art unsere innere private Welt mit jener anderen sichtbaren und zugleich unsichtbaren der Bücher verflochten ist. Ich glaube, diesen geistigen Erkenntnismoment ohne Unbescheidenheit erzählen zu dürfen, denn obschon persönlich, reicht diese Erlebnis- und Erkenntnisminute weit über meine zufällige Person hinaus. (Zweig, “Das Buch als Eingang zur Welt” 306)

Just as “Orient und Oskident, Süd und Nord, Ost und West” were brought closer through the invention of the wheel, such that “jedes Land lebte nicht mehr allein, sondern in Beziehung zur ganzen Welt,” so too does the book overcome “die tragische Erlebnis- und Erfahrungsbegrenztheit der irdischen Einzelseele” (Zweig, “Das Buch als Eingang zur Welt” 305).

The idea of the book as the gateway to the world can be traced throughout Zweig’s life. He had been for a long time personally and professionally invested in the transnational force of literature. In the years around the publication of *Die Augen*—1919–1923—Zweig initiated an ambitious, massive book project, eventually to be called *Bibliotheca mundi*, with the publishing house Insel Verlag (Buchinger 128–172). This project, for which Zweig was one of its managing editors, was intended to gather the canonical books of world literature into a series under a single uniform format. Most importantly, these books were to be left untranslated. Zweig’s correspondences with the publisher expose his intrepid eagerness to set this book series in motion, which, as he argues, would quench the German thirst for French, British, Italian, Spanish, and Greek literature purely in their original languages (in later correspondence the list grows to include American, Swedish, Danish, Flemish, Hungarian, Serbian, and Czech literature). Such a project would consequently be a lucrative endeavor.

From the very first letter to the publisher, Zweig accepts the irony of culling, selecting—in some ways, curating—the great works of great literature from the narrow vantage point of the German-speaking world:

Ich traue mir sehr die Fähigkeit zu, eine solche Ausgabe mustergiltig zu leiten, die Texte zu überwachen, mit Freunden die Correcturen zu lesen. Ich will mich ja ganz von der Großstadt zurückziehen und habe endlich Muße zu einem solchen Werk, das in monumentalen [!] Stil die Idee meines Lebens, die Internationale der Kunst, für Deutschland verwirklicht. Selbstverständlich muß die Auswahl in dem Sinne sein, was *Uns* von der Auslandsliteratur lebendig ist [...]. (Buchinger 141)

Over the years, the project proved to be so disappointing in sales and so inordinately time-consuming that Zweig resigned to the publisher's decision to put an end to it. Zweig writes in a letter to the publisher: "Ebenso wie ich Ihnen vor drei Jahren leidenschaftlich zugeraten habe ausländische Literatur zu bringen, so würde ich Ihnen heute auf das eindringlichste abraten" (Buchinger 163). Furthermore, the boldness of this omnibus of international literature had found its critics, even amongst Zweig's supporters. After the publication of a few books in the series, Zweig's contemporary Hugo von Hofmannsthal writes in the *Neue Freie Presse*:

Indem der Insel-Verlag im gegenwärtigen Augenblick darangeht, in drei Publikationsreihen den literarischen Reichtum der anderen großen Nationen neben den deutschen hinzustellen..., so hat er damit eine große und im strengsten Sinne deutsche Gebärde; diese haben zu können, supponiert von der Nation, als deren Vertreter ein Verleger wie jeder andere geistig Hervortretende sich nicht nur empfinden darf, sondern empfinden muß, ... eine gereinigte Seelenverfassung ..., den nur in dieser Verfassung ist man der vollen Gerechtigkeit gegen fremden Wert ... fähig. (Buchinger 157)

Stefan Zweig's belief in literature as a harbinger of peace and transnational unity did not wane inexorably after the premature closure of the *Bibliotheca mundi* project. His early postwar eagerness was checked by his growing attunement to the complexities of establishing European unity. Zweig wrote *Die Augen*, then, as a way to come to terms, however equivocally, with his own place in a changing Europe and a changing world.

### Epigraphic Incongruity

The epigraph in Stefan Zweig's *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders: Eine Legende*:

Dieses ist die Geschichte Viratas, den sein Volk rühmte mit den vier Namen der Tugend, von dem aber nicht geschrieben ist in den Chroniken der Herrscher, noch in den Büchern der Weisen, und dessen Andenken die Menschen vergaßen.<sup>15</sup> (9)

There is an incongruity in this epigraph. A story is told, a history recovered, based on a memory that is forgotten. It is an account of what is neither written nor remembered. Wherefrom, then, has it emerged? In accordance with colonial and some early postcolonial critique, these opening lines could be read as a presumptuous gesture to record in a western tongue a people unable to realize the value of their own stories or history. It is a self-conceived imperialist intellectual privilege that can write the memory another has forgotten and can thereby discount the Other's judgment in cultural production entirely. Accordingly, it would be an appropriation of ideas in line with German intellectual writing from the "Oriental Renaissance," a term that gained prominence in Raymond Schwab's eponymously titled book *Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880* (Schwab).

But something else is happening here. This opening epigraph informs us of two concerns: first, there was once a renowned and well-respected person named Virata who slipped into

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<sup>15</sup> "This is the story/history of Virata, celebrated by his people with the four names of virtue, about whom nothing is written in the chronicles of kings or in the books of the wise, and whose remembrance the people forgot" (translation my own).

oblivion, and second, Virata exists in this text alone. Historical analysis of other texts confirms the second concern: while there have been other Viratas in Indian texts and tales (like the well-known King Virata from the *Mahābhārata*), and while thematic elements from these and other texts and tales resurface here in Zweig's *Die Augen*, to date, no such Virata is known to exist outside of this text.<sup>16</sup> Logically, however, there can be nothing to confirm the first concern: How can one find a Virata that has slipped into oblivion? Some scholars, like Vridhagiri Ganeshan, have tried to locate the Virata from Zweig's text in other texts and have come to the conclusion that this Virata, as well as this legend itself, is un-Indian (Ganeshan 307–327). Just a glance at the subtitles in Ganeshan's chapter on *Die Augen* indicates his search for authentication: “Die Quelle,” “Es ist keine ‘indische’ Legende,” “Das Indische an dieser Legende,” “Das Nichtindische bei Virata.”<sup>17</sup> Although this kind of scholarship is useful for staking claims on culture, for delineating the boundaries of national literatures, or even for my arguments about *Die Augen*'s ambiguous relationship to national culture, it fails to recognize the logical impossibility setup by the first demand in the epigraph, which tells us that this Virata, who (until this story) had slipped into oblivion, cannot possibly be affirmed by historical or textual comparison.

By historical or textual comparison, we may see the oblivion (the nonexistence of this Virata in other material), but we may not see that which slipped into it (the Virata found only in this text). Thus, it is within a very particular framework that this story/history can emerge and exist. As it cannot and must not depend on historical verification by other texts, its framework must be its own fictional arc, which tells the story of a slowly fading figure. Towards the end of his analysis of Zweig's story, Ganeshan does point to this self-emergent framework. In appropriately highlighting Gertrud Teller's conclusion that the character of Virata is in no way dependent on historical narratives, Ganeshan posits the universality of Zweig's story.

Zweig wirkt als Dichter in einer Krisenepoche des europäischen Geistes. Es ist nicht “Die Welt von Gestern,” in der es noch Kultur, Freiheit und Menschenwürde gab. So projiziert er, angeregt durch die andersartige indische Geisteswelt, ein aktuelles europäisches Problem und seine Ansichten in die Gestalt Viratas, um zu zeigen, daß diese Problematik, obwohl seinerzeit europäisch, doch überall in der Welt jederzeit und immer wieder auftauchen kann. Friderike Zweig hat diese Legende treffend als die ‘persönlichste Legende’ Zweigs bezeichnet. Teller (Teller) verweist darauf, daß, während es Zweig nicht möglich war, in den Biographien über die historischen Persönlichkeiten, die er schrieb, einen Lösungsvorschlag zu der Problematik Geist und Materie, die ihn lebenslang beschäftigte, anzubieten, er es in dieser Legende tun kann, weil Viratas Leben keineswegs von historischen Tatsachen abhängig ist. (Ganeshan 326)

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<sup>16</sup> Vridhagiri Ganeshan notes the overlap between Zweig's Virata and the historical King Asoka: “Daß er sich von den anderen jubelnden Kriegerern absondert und ‘schweigend aber und wie ein Träumender’ sitzt und über den Sinn des Kriegers nachdenkt, erinnert uns an die Gestalt des indischen König Asoka, der in der indischen Geschichte als der König hervorging, der nach einem blutigen Krieg die Waffen für immer niederlegte, in dem Buddhismus Zuflucht fand und lebenslang Gewaltlosigkeit prädigte” (Ganeshan 312).

<sup>17</sup> Commenting on Ganeshan's treatment of German-language literature influenced by Indian themes, Kamakshi P. Murti asks what is more important, “die Schöpferkraft des Dichters, oder eine wirklichkeitgetreue, sachliche, vom Inder zu überprüfende Darstellung” (Murti 15).

As Teller and Ganeshan note, *Die Augen* experiments with form in order to posit a creative solution to the problem of identifying culture through rigid national histories. The epigraph is at once an expression of this problem and a solution thereto.

The incongruity in the epigraph is remedied upon the recognition that this whole story/history is new, even its forgottenness. This account of what is neither written nor remembered insists on self-emergence. And through this creation of a legend, a critical dimension comes into view, wherein these opening lines begin to quietly challenge the colonial/early postcolonial reading: the act of retelling, having become highly creative, becomes a critique on retelling itself. Any story/history written *anew* is in fact a *new* story/history.

### A Critique on Retelling

But even if we take *Die Augen* to be a critique on retelling—more specifically, a critique on the narrative integrity of stories about other people and places—it is not exempt from contributing to the continuation of a polemic engagement with India because this critique is, as I mention above, quiet. The clues indicating this text’s newness are hidden under the veil of legend. *Die Augen* emerged during a time of highly increased publication of translations and retellings of Indian stories, therefore hiding its newness under a second veil, that of categorization by association. In German-speaking Europe, the years after World War I saw a burgeoning interest in India, particularly with the tenets of Buddhism, that, to be reductive, center on the recognition of suffering in the world and the search to release oneself from suffering through mindfulness and meditation. There was a great output of widely-read translations from the Pali canon like Karl Eugen Neumann’s *Reden Gotamo Buddhos* in 1921 (Neumann); the erection of The House of Buddhism in Berlin in the early 1920s by famed Buddhist convert and scholar Paul Dahlke (“Das Buddhistische Haus - Berlin-Frohnau - Startpage”); and the emergence of Buddhism in popular literature. For example, in the same years that Stefan Zweig wrote *Die Augen*, Hesse published his *Siddhartha*, a story about the search for Enlightenment (Hesse, *Siddhartha; Eine Indische Dichtung*), and Bavarian silent film maker Franz Osten was preparing the first full-length feature film on India to be filmed entirely in India. Osten’s film, *The Light of Asia*, was a film about the life of the Buddha that wholeheartedly took up the themes of Buddhism (Schönfeld).

By also making reference to the Buddha narrative and by integrating, even quoting, elements from the *Bhagavadgītā*, *Die Augen* does have a stake in the reproduction and portrayal of Indian thought. *Die Augen* seems then to present little to distinguish itself as a new telling and not a retelling. Furthermore, should it succeed in distinguishing itself as a new story/history, there remain problems with the invention of a story/history about another: a highly creative, new story/history can promulgate and create unshakeable stereotypes. Take, for example, the “Orientals” of the same era, produced in neighboring Germany. These were hugely popular silent films about the East with a tenaciously orientaling subject matter and setting. Joe May’s *Das indische Grabmal* (1921) and Fritz Lang’s *Der müde Tod* (1921) seem to our current, academic perspective as absurdly over-the-top, obviously fictional, sensational, and certainly problematic. Replete with actors in black-face, floating yogis and snake charmers, these films produced and whetted the appetite for exoticism. But even if Zweig’s text were considered exoticizing and orientaling, it is critical of and markedly different than these sensational representations of the Other, since one of the central considerations of this text is a philosophy of action which

problematizes one's engagement with the Other, a philosophy which might be much more difficult to find in the Orientals.

The first step that I take, then, by turning up the volume on the quiet critique set up by the epigraph, is to raise the following questions: Is it even possible to tell another's story? Is the telling of another's story effectively the telling of one's own story? These questions open a window to criticizing and understanding *Die Augen*'s very stake in the reproduction and portrayal of Indian thought. Since the opening lines of *Die Augen* posit the inaccuracy, or even falsity, of material produced in "the West" retelling events in "the East," that such material is in and of itself new and manipulative, then we can begin to make the important distinction between this and many other texts in German that arguably build a more definite, historical representation of "the East."

There are innumerable examples of such texts that seek to codify the East in terms of Western thought. One of the most important treatises that paved the way for the study of India in Germany is Friedrich Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808), which is divided into four instructive chapters: "Von der Sprache," "Von der Philosophie," "Historische Ideen," and some select translations under "Indische Gedichte" (Schlegel). Zweig's story, on the other hand, questions the dominant ways in which history is constructed and construed and questions our belief in and adherence to models of chronology and of cause and effect supplied primarily by Western, now increasingly global, traditions of time. As an invented legend, this story privileges the uncertainty of truthfulness, believability, and historicity over the certainty of truth, belief and history.<sup>18</sup> It challenges the structures of hegemony<sup>19</sup> that have made it acceptable to assert particular representations of the Other as truths, and at the same time, helps to challenge the dominant analysis of western texts dealing with the East.

## Groundwork for Narrative Analysis

The focus in the plot of *Die Augen* is the interaction between Self and Other. I contend that the philosophy of action carried out by the main character, Virata (who struggles with the responsibility of the Self's action on the Other), challenges solid definitions of culture and identity. For purposes of orientation, I offer here a plot summary of *Die Augen*.

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The king is in peril, for his brother-in-law has lured his best warriors and closest counsel to join a crusade against him. Virata, a hunter and a warrior—known as "Flashing of the Sword" ("Blitz des Schwertes")—and a loyal subject to the king, leads an army of slaves on a night operation against the sleeping, more powerful enemy. Virata is victorious. In the morning light, Virata sees his brother amongst the slain, whose stare becomes engraved in his mind. Instead of accepting the king's laudatory favors, Virata, troubled by his deed, gives up the sword. Impressed by Virata's integrity, the king installs him as court judge. He is known far and wide to

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<sup>18</sup> Hermann Bahr writes of *Die Augen*: "Eine Selbstüberwindung, und von der reinsten Art, ist die Legende Zweigs, der ihren Helden auf die Probe seiner eigenen Maximen niemals die Probe bestehen, auch die wahrsten nicht, ja gerade die wahrsten am wenigsten" (Zweig and Beck, "Nachbemerkung des Herausgebers").

<sup>19</sup> Zweig's *Die Augen* is not an archetype of literature that challenges western hegemony. This text is unique for its equivocal nature that does not suggest any restructuring of power relationships because such restructuring would merely lead to another kind of hegemony. Instead, the text is a practice in questioning and examining all forms of hegemony as the main character tries to escape hegemony altogether.

judge so fairly, that he is given a new epithet, “Wellspring of Justice” (“Quelle der Gerechtigkeit”). One day, a criminal from a foreign land is brought to Virata to be tried. Virata sentences him to eleven years of solitary confinement for each of the eleven he has murdered. The foreign criminal confronts Virata, testing Virata’s power of judgment: From afar, how does Virata know what is right from wrong? Without experience, how does Virata know that solitary confinement is a just punishment for his deed? As the criminal is being carried away, Virata sees in his eyes his brother’s stare, and he silently considers the criminal’s protestations. Virata sneaks away to the dark dungeon where the criminal lies enchained and sets him free; Virata takes his place to understand the punishment. In a kind of sensory deprivation chamber, after some initial struggle, Virata soon experiences an inexplicable oneness with the All. But this gives way to immense fear as he feels the perpetuity of his situation. The king hears of Virata’s self-imprisonment and comes to rescue him. Despite the king’s appraisal, Virata feels that no judgment can be made without unfairness, and he relinquishes his courtly position for the life of a householder. As husband and father, Virata lives peacefully, and he becomes a trusted advisor in his community. As such, he is honorably known as “Field of Good Counsel” (“Acker des Rats”). To advise is better than to command; to mediate is better than to pass sentence. One day, his two sons come home beating and dragging a slave through the dirt. Virata is stunned, sees in this slave’s eyes his brother’s stare, and sets this and all his slaves free, for no life should be subordinate to another. His sons argue with him, insisting that their livelihood is dependent upon the work of laborers, that by setting the slaves free, Virata has sentenced his sons to a life of hardship. Seeing that every action, even those taken in care, ensnares him in guilt, indebtedness, or wrongdoing, Virata, desperate to live without an imprint, takes leave of his family to live as an ascetic in the woods. He lives here blissfully, and his countenance reflects his state. Passersby notice him communing with nature and name him “Star of Solitude” (“Stern der Einsamkeit”). One day, he is called out of his solitude and while walking through a village with crowds gathering around him, some approaching him to kiss his clothing, one woman’s eyes filled with indignation catches his gaze: his brother’s stare returns. In utter disbelief, for he is sure that she is unknown to him, he goes to speak with her. She informs him that her husband, lured by Virata’s example of leaving house and home, followed him into the forest. Now she and her dying children suffer in poverty. Soon thereafter, the king comes to pay a visit to Virata, the enlightened one. Virata rejects his praise once more, and begs the king to take him into his service again. It is here, in servitude, as custodian of the king’s dogs, that Virata lives out his days, where he is forgotten.

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I argue that Virata’s meeting with the Other and search for identity is a metonymic personification of that which the narrative framework brings to light, namely the meeting of one culture with another culture and the search for cultural identity. As a conclusion to this chapter, and to set the stage for the analysis of self-reflection (Chapter 2) and self-critique (Chapter 3) on the narrative level, I explore below the correspondence between the fictional ancient Indian landscape and the post-WWI Austrian condition.

## The Eastern Empire

Robert Lemon's *Orientalism as Self-Critique in the Habsburg Fin de Siècle* is pivotal for showing the unique position of Austria-Hungary in the orientalist discourse, which is a position under scrutiny in *Die Augen*. Just as it is important for Todd Kontje to show how *German Orientalisms* differ from their French and British counterparts, it is important for Lemon to show the differing course of Austrian Orientalism from its German counterpart. Lemon, however, is not invested in charting the region's involvement with the East over the ages, but concentrates his analysis on the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. It is noteworthy that both Kontje and Lemon argue that the geographical locations of Germany and Austria, respectively, play a role in their relationship with the East. Kontje uses Thomas Mann's phrase "Land der Mitte" ("country of the center") to show that Germany is not as West a country as France or England. Similarly, and perhaps more convincingly, Lemon uses the German-language designation of Austria—*Österreich*—to show that Austria is not as West a country as Germany. Nevertheless, when distinguishing the Orientalist stance of the Habsburg Monarchy, which ruled over lands under Austria and Hungary, he does not deny its colonial holdings: the geographical proximity of these colonies to the Viennese throne (the primary capitol) does not exempt the Monarchy from playing into colonial history. Such proximity was, in fact, a propagandistic tool used by the Monarchy to keep these lands united and to expunge any idea of colonization:

Firstly, as the name *Österreich* or "eastern empire" suggests, Austria traditionally had a foot in both the East and the West, occupying a liminal position vis-à-vis the Orient and serving as a gateway to the Ottoman Empire. [...] The eastward sprawl of the Dual Monarchy resulted in a multi-ethnic empire, which in 1910 encompassed, in descending order of population, German Austrians, Hungarians, Czechs, Poles, Ruthenians, Romanians, Croats, Slovaks, Serbs, Slovenes, and Italians. Not surprisingly, this patchwork of peoples produced internal divisions between "East" and "West" that transcended the customary orientalist notion of a global dichotomy between two clearly demarcated hemispheres. At the turn-of-the-century many Viennese Germans-speakers held that the Orient began not at the border with the Ottoman Empire, but rather at the doors of their Slavic, Jewish, and (following the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908) Muslim compatriots. To unite these increasingly restive minorities, Austria-Hungary offered the Habsburg myth, the notion of a supra-national allegiance to the imperial throne. This unique conception of imperialism marks the most important distinction between the Dual Monarchy and the other European powers. For Britain, France, and, belatedly, Germany, imperialism represented the overseas expansion of nationalist ideology. In contrast, as a contiguous territory devoid of overseas colonies, the Habsburg authorities conceived of imperialism as a matter of domestic, rather than foreign policy, a foundational myth that did not harness, but rather repressed the nationalist energies of its diverse population. (Lemon 2)

As we learn in history books, it is this repression of nationalist energies that sparked the Great War in "the powder keg of Europe," that on June 28, 1914, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip, the young Bosnian Serb nationalist, catapulted most of Europe and much of the rest of the world into war (Keegan 48–49). The few years prior to and following this outbreak witnessed the crumbling of European empires, a result,

as some historians argue, of the complex network of alliances made, broken, and remade between empires as well as between factions or sovereignties within empires against their respective thrones.



(Andrein)

Stefan Zweig was working in this politically turbulent milieu, and *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders* reflects that turbulence, from the Habsburg supra-national myth to its dissolution. The world was witnessing the backlash of oppressive empire, and Stefan Zweig was well aware of it. *Die Augen* was published after the war, at a time of supposed peace, wherein the world geopolitical map was recarved: four empires—German, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian—were dismantled by those that remained and expanded (and by some standards still remain).

It is possible to chart correspondence between the events of *Die Augen* to the events of the Great War or to read the first scene of a King struggling to keep his kingdom intact as a depiction of the Austro-Hungarian struggle: there is a strong allegorical element in this narrative, in which the nation-self is reflected. Such correspondence continues in the allusion to a Dual

Monarchy and the unrest therein: a king from the dynastic clan, the Rajputs, entrusts half his kingdom to his brother-in-law who gathers the discontented populace for an uprising against the King.

While the reflection of the Austro-Hungarian national community occurs here in this eastern landscape—a trope charted in remarkable depth by Lemon concerning stories by Zweig’s contemporaries—I read in this text another, more powerful reflection: not just the reflection of a national community, but the reflection of the *critique* of nation prevalent in the early twentieth century. This critique of nation is accomplished through the figure of Virata, the main character, and his post-war trauma. The brunt of *Die Augen* and its moments of self-reflection occur in this post-war trauma, where the focus of the initial events that reflect political turbulence quickly shifts to Virata’s personal journey. In many ways, the critique of nation that emerges in examining Virata’s journey is not just a reflection of a general critique of nation emergent in the early twentieth century, but also pointed at the quavering stability of nationality in the region: the newly forming national republic had already undergone many transformations either through military force, diplomacy, war, or treaties. First came the military, forceful annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908 (not to mention the already complex network of nationalities under the Dual Monarchy), then the outbreak of war and the measured collapse of Austria-Hungary, then the loose formation of the rump state of German Austria, to the First Austrian Republic written into form by the Treaty of St. Germain (Keegan). As a response to these vexing transformations, Virata’s personal journey expresses, as I draw out in my reading, a defiant resistance to national concerns.

## Chapter 2

### Self-Reflection in *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders*

The moment that self-reflection surfaces is the moment where the significance of the title, *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders*, becomes clear. Self-reflection becomes significant when Virata meets the familial Other, his brother in blood but enemy in battle. He meets his brother's gaze, however, not in the shadows of the night-raid, but in the scrutiny of the slain:

Da er aber des letzten Antlitz zu sich wandte, ward es ihm dunkel vor dem Blicken, denn sein älterer Bruder Belangur, der Fürst der Gebirge, war dies, den jener zur Hilfe gezogen und den er nächstens unwissend erschlagen mit eigener Hand. Zuckend beugte er sich nieder zu des Hingekrümmten Herzen. Aber es schlug nicht mehr, starr standen die offenen Augen des Erschlagenen, und ihre schwarzen Kugeln bohrten sich ihm bis in das Herz. Da ward Viratas Atem ganz klein, und wie ein Abgestorbener saß er zwischen den Toten, abgewandten Blicks, daß nicht das starre Auge jenes, den seine Mutter vor ihm geboren, ihn anklage um seiner Tat.<sup>20</sup> (13)

A direct result of this meeting of eyes is a reconsideration of Self. Virata is shaken; his success on the battlefield is defeated by immediate post-war trauma, by the sudden reflection on the act of killing his brother. As this moment of self-reflection gives significant pause to Virata, it also opens the entire narrative to a metanarrative reflection of post-war concerns. This text was written in the aftermath of a war which forced the confrontation with Self and its reconstitution. I write, then, of self-reflection on two levels. The first level is that within the narrative, wherein Virata's personal journey of coming to terms with his Self is of importance. The second level, analogous to the first, is the entire narrative as the reflection of the coming to terms with a national Self being reconstituted. These two levels are bridged by and entangled in the figure of the post-war soldier.

In this chapter, I will examine the theme of self-reflection through Virata's post-war journey, which itself is a reflection of the post-WWI historical context in which *Die Augen* was written, where the traumatic atrocities of bloodshed carried home by surviving soldiers put to question the very nations that placed them on the front, that progressed owing to their loss. I contend that this story's concern for the war-traumatized soldier is bound to the early twentieth century critique of nation, especially nations' control over individual freedoms and morality. By comparing Zweig's text to those of his contemporaries—including those of Wilfred Owen, Rabindranath Tagore, Sigmund Freud, and Walter Benjamin—I demonstrate how *Die Augen* relates to the international skepticism of nations that are dominated more by their exclusionary political ideologies than their sense of community. Although *Die Augen* does not offer a clear

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<sup>20</sup> But when he looked upon the last of the dead men, Virata's eyes grew dim, for he saw before him the face of his elder brother, Belangur, the Prince of the Mountains, who had come to the aid of the usurper, and whom Virata had struck down all unwitting. Trembling he stooped to feel for the heart-beat of the misguided man. The heart was stilled forever; the dead man's eyes encountered his with a glassy stare—dark eyes which seemed to pierce his very soul. Hardly able to breathe, Virata sat down among the dead, feeling as if he himself were one of them, and turning away his eyes from the accusing gaze of his mother's first-born" (Zweig, "Virata, or The Eyes of the Undying Brother" 378–379).

solution to retain community identity while asserting individual freedom, it nevertheless reveals the value of the messy struggle to limit national influence.

### **Camaraderie across Enemy Lines**

In Benedict Anderson's introduction to *Imagined Communities*, the abstraction that is the nation, or more loosely, the "community," is figuratively embodied by the soldier, or more loosely, the people willing to die for the community. He ends his introduction with the following consideration:

Finally, [the nation] is imagined as a *community* because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings. These deaths bring us abruptly face to face with the central problem posed by nationalism: what makes the shrunken imaginings of recent history (scarcely more than two centuries) generate such colossal sacrifices? (Anderson 7)

As we read in this excerpt, the soldier is enveloped by and subordinate to the nation, which is arguably a necessary power dynamic. The nation is the cause for which the soldier fights; the soldier's fight becomes an act of nationalism through his/her willingness to die, that is, full and unquestionable service to the nation.

What happens to the nation and to nationalism when the soldier loses his or her nerve? This is a question that is picked up by many post-war stories, wherein the soldier's main cause, the community for which he or she fights, is made suspect by the trauma of war, by the physical and psychological loss of nerves. In these stories, confrontations on the battlefield not only shake up the soldier, but his or her cause. The imagined nation and reinforced nationalism are subordinated to the troubles of the soldier, thus a reminder that they cannot exist without the unwavering support of the individuals who create and sustain such limited, "shrunken imaginings." It is also a reminder that "the nation-community is," in fact, "embodied metonymically in the finite, sovereign, fraternal figure of the citizen-soldier" (Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone" 37). Through the focus on one soldier's journey and his relinquishing the sword, the bold statement made by *Die Augen* is the reshuffling of the hierarchy between soldier and nation, so that the national self is propelled to reflect beyond its pressing abstract reconstitution as imagined community to the specifics of one soldier's traumatic experience. Virata's experience of fraternity in the eyes of the brother he killed destabilizes the notion of the nation, for here, "deep, horizontal comradeship" is found in enemy lines.

Generally, one of the major criticisms of Zweig's work voiced by his contemporaries is its sentimentality (Liska 213). Zweig's literature, according to those contemporary critics, appealed "directly and unmediatedly to the emotions"; it was averse to "cerebral and critical intellectualism" and the brotherhood that it championed was beyond politics (Liska 213). Its popular, affective appeal, while manifest in the brotherly fraternity of *Die Augen*, is, however, not without its critical component in the careful construction of Virata's halted action. Zweig's literature does have a political agenda. In 1918, before *Die Augen*, Zweig writes an article titled "Bekanntnis zum Defaitismus" for the pacifist journal, *Die Friedens-Warte*, in which he entreats:

Hören wir alle für eine Weile auf, vom Staate und vom Stande auf zu denken, von unserm Stande und von unserm Staat! Denken wir einzig vom Menschlichen her, vom einzelnen Menschen. [...] Sucher wir unsere Brüderlichkeit jenseits von Politik, denken wir abseits von Geographie und Geschichte—nein, denken wir überhaupt nicht. Fühlen wir nur! (215)

Camaraderie—or Zweig’s “Brüderlichkeit”—across lines administered in battle, lines both representative of and extensions of national boundaries, is a common theme to be taken up by literature. Such stories, while emotionally charged and arguably averse to “cerebral and critical intellectualism,” are in fact highly political in their anti-political motivations. They often assert a stance against the reigning, violent political status quo.

The use of fiction to fight for brotherhood beyond borders is exemplified in the post-Partition stories of India and Pakistan, like “The Last Salute” by Saadat Hasan Manto, where along the then new disputed Kashmiri border “[t]he friends of yesterday had been transformed into the enemies of today” (Manto 189).<sup>21</sup> The poignant ending to this story brings two school friends face to dying face, eye to dying eye. A timelier piece, a renowned poem by Wilfred Owen, published in 1919, called “Strange Meeting,” also focuses on the power of eyes to connect otherwise enemy soldiers. In its attention to eyes that carry a deathly, familiar stare, this poem resonates strongly with *Die Augen*, and thereby amplifies the reshuffling of the hierarchy between soldier and nation. There is but one-half line afforded the nation in a forty-four line poem, the rest of which, elegiac in tone, describes the misfortune of two soldiers meeting in death, finding there the camaraderie unavailable to them in a life commandeered by the pitiful, senseless sway of national separation. Its haunting use of pararhyme—“the matching of final and initial consonants of a word with different vowels” (Auger 218–219)<sup>22</sup>—in couplet form, foregrounds the two soldiers’ connectedness-in-death fraught with a dissonant past, a sentiment carried by the title, “Strange Friend” and especially the line, “I am the enemy you killed, my friend” (Owen 408). The bemused passing from life to death, from enemy to friend, is the focus of this powerful poem, but in its relation to my analysis of *Die Augen*, the one-half line on nation, especially in its here cursory manifestation, gathers great significance. I refer to this section:

Now men will go content with what we spoiled.  
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.  
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress,  
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress. (Owen 408)

Almost an aside, this reference to nations, juxtaposed against the ranks of men—of soldiers—and their dithering between content and discontent, is a dismissive one. Nations do not dither. They go about their conceptual business as soldiers go about their blood-stained struggle. In this way, the “though” here connotes “all the same,” suggesting that nations plow forward with little

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<sup>21</sup> “They had grown up together in the same village in the Punjab. They were the same age, had gone to the same primary school, and their fathers had been childhood friends. They had joined the army the same day. In the last war, they had fought together on the same fronts” (Manto).

<sup>22</sup> This is a device often associated with Wilfred Owen.

regard to the individuals who are its members, who make the sacrifices for nations' unstoppable progress.

## Dismissing Nation

The dismissal of the nation is what we are dealing with in *Die Augen*, as well. In explicit terms, nation does not take priority in this legend. It is referred to through allusion and analogy and is less significant than the story of an individual, Virata, and his post-war trauma. Virata's post-war journey gradually becomes a reflection of a post-war society coming to terms with the reintegration of returning traumatized soldiers, whose trauma puts nationhood, more generally, into question.<sup>23</sup>

In the essay, "What is post-traumatic stress disorder?," Nancy C. Andreasen, the physician and scholar who coined the term, describes how the trauma of the post-WWI soldier raised heightened awareness of the social repercussions of war. These social repercussions become the basis for the Modern critique of nation that is reflected in *Die Augen*. The reflections that begin as specific to Austria-Hungary and the nation to emerge in its stead develop into general reflections on the critique of nation, a critique which had been gaining significance in early twentieth century Modernism. Using the poetic to recount the emergence of PTSD, Andreasen quotes "Strange Meeting" to drive home that "[i]n this context of brutal bloodshed and omnipresent fear, a new and somewhat unfamiliar type of disability emerged that had not been described in previous wars [...]" (Andreasen 240). Although this medical article focuses on the correspondence between traumatic brain injury (TBI) and PTSD, that the corporeal wounds of war are the result of both physical *and* mental shock, the introductory paragraphs also point to the important revision that post-war trauma asked of the nation, namely the shift from the political focus to a social one:

Combat techniques in World War I introduced new types of combat stress that had not existed during previous wars. Soldiers engaged in trench warfare were relatively immobile and therefore more vulnerable. They were also chronically exposed to new and perversely lethal threats, such as poison gas, machine gun fire, mortar attacks, land mines, and tanks. Casualties were devastating, and fatality rates were frightening. Men watched their friends die beside them, and they confronted the possibility of their own demise on a daily basis. Alternatively they might be maimed and consigned to a life of chronic disability. As the war progressed, the high casualty rate made it clear that Britain and continental European countries were losing many of an entire generation of young men—a social loss from which they would be slow to recover. (Andreasen 240)

The dominant political aspect of nation—its most extreme manifestation as a nightmarish war—was robbing its social aspect; society was losing its bearings as its very members were dying. It was the social aspect with which many nineteenth and twentieth century Modern thinkers

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<sup>23</sup> Referring to Zweig's autobiography, Donald Prater shows the powerful influence that the traumatic events of WWI had on Zweig's recognition of "the extraordinary likeness between captor and captured and their natural fraternization": "The terrible misery of the civilian population and of the Jews in the ghettos, eight or twelve to a room below ground level; the extraordinary likeness between captor and captured and their natural fraternization; the suffering and squalor of the hospital trains, with their almost total lack of drugs and bandages; the shelled cities and looted shops, 'whose contents lay about in the middle of the street like broken limbs or torn-out entrails' [...] all made an indelible impression. More, it kindled in him the urge actually to fight against the war" (Prater 82).

invested their writing in order to reevaluate and redefine the political, and subsequently nation itself. Many thinkers who were in correspondence with Zweig, including (but certainly not limited to) Rabindranath Tagore and Sigmund Freud, regarded the nation's political aspect as divergent from its social aspect, where the political was inflected with the governmental apparatus's drive for geographical boundary assignment as well as its drive for lawful claims on property based on exclusive and exclusionary ideologies. In this manner, because of the high level of power and potential for violence ascribed to it, the political aspect of nation slowly became synonymous with nationalism.

### ***Die Augen and Tagore***

"Nationalism in India," an essay written at the turn of the century by Rabindranath Tagore, begins with similar concerns for the social aspect of nation being lost to the dominant political aspect. The first lines read: "Our real problem in India is not political. It is social. This is a condition not only prevailing in India, but among all nations" (Tagore, "Nationalism in India" 97). India, at the time this essay was written, was still under British political control, and one reads in this essay a major struggle with imperial power. Unexpectedly and momentarily, the struggle that is emphasized is not so much that with imperial power as with the concept of the bounded nation created by imperial power. The fear of the strength of this intensifying concept is what grips Tagore in this essay, for as talk of independence floats in the air, initial enthusiasm gives way to skepticism, not of independence, but of what may come after.

Rabindranath Tagore is India's most well-known Modernist writer, the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature (1913).<sup>24</sup> He was certainly not unknown to Stefan Zweig. His and Zweig's paths crossed a number of times, in writing and especially at a significant, albeit short, meeting on the platform of the Salzburg train station: "On meeting Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet [...] Zweig was to find [...] an area of common ground, which enabled him to see, if not with clarity, at least with some understanding the other side of the Indian picture" (Allday 82). Zweig writes to his publisher, Kurt Wolff: "Vielen Dank für Ihre Mitteilung über das Reiseprogramm Tagores, die es mir ermöglichte, ihm heute während des Übertrittes auf dem Bahnhofe Salzburg eine halbe Stunde Gesellschaft zu leisten und so danke ich Ihnen den großen, starken Eindruck dieser großen Persönlichkeit" (Wolff 414).<sup>25</sup> This meeting on June 15, 1921 occurred in the same year that *Die Augen* was published. In that same year, Kurt Wolff published a German translation of Tagore's famed work, *Sadhana*, a kind of introduction to Indian philosophy through the eyes of a Modernist. Later in this same letter to Wolff, Zweig indicates that he will write an essay on Tagore's *Sadhana*, to be published in a literary magazine: "[...] hoffentlich werden Sie bald lesen können wie ich über dieses schöne Buch 'Sadhana' denke: ich habe dem Literarischen Echo einen Aufsatz darüber versprochen da die großen Tageszeitungen ja momentan mit Tagore überfüllt sind" (414).<sup>26</sup> I illuminate these

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<sup>24</sup> "The Nobel Prize in Literature 1913 was awarded "to Rabindranath Tagore 'because of his profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, by which, with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought, expressed in his own English words, a part of the literature of the West'" ("The Nobel Prize in Literature 1913").

<sup>25</sup> "Thank you for sharing Tagore's travel itinerary with me, which gave me the opportunity to spend a half-hour in his company during his transfer at the Salzburg train station and so I thank you for the great and strong impression left me by this great personality." Translation my own.

<sup>26</sup> "[...] hopefully you will soon be able to read what I think about this fine book *Sadhana*: I promised to write an essay about it for the "Literary Echo" since the big daily newspapers are overflowing with Tagore." Translation my own.

intersections of Zweig with Tagore in order to bring to light the tendency in Zweig's writing toward ideas less nationally exclusive than globally relevant. However, this tendency is curbed by a more prominent occurrence in his writing, that of ambivalence, a constant dithering between cultural specificity and universality.<sup>27</sup>

My goal here is not to suggest a path of influence between Tagore and Zweig, but to illuminate a confluence of ideas that become important in reading Zweig's *Die Augen*, so that when Zweig writes a couple years prior to *Die Augen*—"[...] uns ist Politik nicht das Erste, sondern das Letzte, uns ist das Leiden der Menschen wichtiger als die kommerzielle Blüte der Nationen [...]" (Zweig and Beck, "Nachbemerkung des Herausgebers" 200)<sup>28</sup>—we can see heavy correspondence with those thinkers across the globe who take issue with the nation. Here are two passages from Tagore's writings—first "Nationalism in India," then from *Sadhana*—that show this correspondence.<sup>29</sup> From "Nationalism in India":

I am not against one nation in particular, but against the general idea of all nations. What is the Nation?

It is the aspect of a whole people as an organized power. This organization incessantly keeps up the insistence of the population on becoming strong and efficient. But this strenuous effort after strength and efficiency drains man's energy from his higher nature where he is self-sacrificing and creative.

For thereby man's power of sacrifice is diverted from his ultimate object, which is moral, to the maintenance of this organization, which is mechanical. Yet in this he feels all the satisfaction of moral exaltation and therefore becomes supremely dangerous to humanity. He feels relieved of the urging of his conscience when he can transfer his responsibility to this machine which is the creation of his intellect and not of his complete moral personality. By this device the people which loves freedom perpetuates slavery in a large portion of the world with the comfortable feeling of pride of having done its duty; men who are naturally just can be cruelly unjust both in their act and their thought, accompanied by a feeling that they are helping the world in receiving its deserts; men who are honest can blindly go on robbing others of their human rights for self-aggrandizement, all the while abusing the deprived for not deserving better treatment. We have seen in our everyday life even small organizations of business and profession produce callousness of feeling in men who are not naturally bad, and we can well imagine what a moral havoc it is causing in a world where whole peoples are furiously organizing themselves for gaining wealth and power. (110–112)

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<sup>27</sup> This ambivalence is apparent in his essay on Tagore's *Sadhana* (Zweig, "Rabindranath Tagores 'Sadhana'"). The essay takes the strange form of a dialogue between a young writer who is skeptical of Tagore's popularity and literature and an old writer who is supportive of Tagore's genius. Martin Kämpchen recently gave a lecture on Tagore's relationship to the publisher Kurt Wolff (Kämpchen) and Reinhold Schein has written on the Zweig-Tagore connection in "Stefan Zweigs Reise nach Indien und sein Ausflug in die indische Philosophie" (Schein 35–61).

<sup>28</sup> "[...] for us, politics is not the first but the last concern, for us, the troubles of people are more important than the commercial blossoming of nations." Translation my own.

<sup>29</sup> One must note that both these passages are embedded in long discourses on culture, politics and philosophy with a plethora of ideas about those concepts, some of which diverge from one another, though do not necessarily contradict.

Tagore's essay confronts the nation by calling it a machine, insinuating thereby its ruthlessness. The cogs of this machine are the people, and they lose their moral compasses for the sake of the machine's efficiency. Tagore lays out his fear clearly: that the mechanical satisfaction of serving one's nation colonizes the people's moral sense, such that the nation subsumes morality.

This sentiment is reiterated in Tagore's *Sadhana* in the chapter, "Individual and Universe." In this reiteration, however, the critique is directed toward "civilization"—what Sigmund Freud might call *Kultur*—which is here none other than the social aspect of nation. The critique is directed here toward civilization because it is held under the strong command of nation's political aspect. According to Tagore, civilization is the physical, intellectual, and moral mold shaped by the nation, and in its current state, civilization is utterly dominated by the political ideal of man's supremacy over his environment. From *Sadhana*:

Civilisation is a kind of mould that each nation is busy making for itself to shape its men and women according to its best ideal. All its institutions, its legislature, its standard of approbation and condemnation, its conscious and unconscious teachings tend toward that object. The modern civilisation of the west, by all its organised efforts, is trying to turn out men perfect in physical, intellectual, and moral efficiency. There the vast energies of the nations are employed in extending man's power over his surroundings, and people are combining and straining every faculty to possess and to turn to account all that they can lay their hands upon, to overcome every obstacle on their path of conquest. They are ever disciplining themselves to fight nature and other races; their armaments are getting more and more stupendous every day; their machines, their appliances, their organisations go on multiplying at an amazing rate. This is a splendid achievement, no doubt, and a wonderful manifestation of man's masterfulness which knows no obstacle, and which has for its object the supremacy of himself over everything else. (9–10)

If Tagore's work asserts nation's chokehold on morality and its domination over *Kultur*, then Zweig's *Die Augen* is the attempt to release that hold (by the dominant, political, nationalist agenda) via the fictional journey of the main character Virata. Virata is decidedly a major obstacle in this entire nation-apparatus that Tagore describes. Although Virata is embedded in an ostensible ancient, imperial Indian setting, upon considering the convergence of Zweig and Tagore at the time *Die Augen* was written, Virata can be seen as an impediment to the power of the Modern nation in its control of turning out perfectly efficient citizens, as well as in its control over authoritative morality (his path unfolds at odds with the state) and in its control over civilization (he takes stances that reshuffle the social system). He is a soldier shaken by post-war trauma who experiences the mechanical efficiency that civilization has become as a deficiency. The will of the nation which controls civilization is irreconcilable with Virata's individual will, and he therefore seeks to live outside of civilization's influence. Because he recognizes himself in his brother's stare—in death, it projects from enemy lines—Virata's sense of loyalty to a community which precludes such recognition for the sake of mastery, efficiency, and conquest is utterly shaken. When man's masterfulness stumbles upon a major obstacle, where his supremacy is checked, the reevaluation of nation (which drives such mastery) is due. At this obstacle, exemplified by Virata, nation is no longer an unstoppable machine. Its gears come to a grinding halt because here is a cog—a soldier shaken by post-war trauma—that removes itself from its position, seeking to find a purpose in, of and for itself. This cog, unsurprisingly, has great difficulty accomplishing this.

## **Die Augen and Freud**

In the years prior to publishing *Die Heilung durch den Geist* (1931)—a study of Franz Anton Mesmer, Mary Baker Eddy and Sigmund Freud—Zweig already had established a relationship with Freud. They had known each other personally and were in correspondence; “Zweig and Sigmund Freud were friends and mutual admirers—Zweig even delivered a eulogy at Freud’s funeral—and one of his eternal themes was the workings of the human mind” (Rohter). Interestingly, Freud’s work was a link between Zweig and India, since Zweig’s “close association with Sigmund Freud did much to confirm his spiritual and psychological approach which he learned from India” (Allday 82). In fact, much of Zweig’s work, including *Die Augen*, contains psychological undertones. Zweig once wrote that his “main interest in writing has always been the psychological representation of personalities and their lives, and this was also the reason which prompted [him] to write various essays and biographical studies of well-known personalities” (Allday 82).

In 1930 Zweig writes a review of Sigmund Freud’s *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* for the *Berliner Tageblatt*. Although written almost a decade after the publication of *Die Augen*, Zweig praises Freud’s psychoanalytic study of civilization for some similar features found in his own work: for addressing the deep psychological problems of the time whilst escaping the impulse to offer comforting counsel (Zweig, “Freuds Neues Werk: Das Unbehagen in der Kultur”). I turn now to a passage from Sigmund Freud’s *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* whose concerns echo those in Tagore’s writing.<sup>30</sup> This passage tells of the close-to-impossible extrication of the individual from civilization, or *Kultur*. As I see it, Virata’s journey to exist outside of civilization’s influence is a fictional account of the irreconcilable struggle between the individual and his or her civilization as explained in this passage:

Die individuelle Freiheit ist kein Kulturgut. Sie war am größten vor jeder Kultur, allerdings damals meist ohne Wert, weil das Individuum kaum imstande war, sie zu verteidigen. Durch die Kulturentwicklung erfährt sie Einschränkungen, und die Gerechtigkeit fordert, daß keinem diese Einschränkungen erspart werden. Was sich in einer menschlichen Gemeinschaft als Freiheitsdrang rührt, kann Auflehnung gegen eine bestehende Ungerechtigkeit sein und so einer weiteren Entwicklung der Kultur günstig werden, mit der Kultur verträglich bleiben. Es kann aber auch dem Rest der ursprünglichen, von der Kultur ungebändigten Persönlichkeit entstammen und so Grundlage der Kulturfeindseligkeit werden. Der Freiheitsdrang richtet sich also gegen

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<sup>30</sup> Here is an additional passage from *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* that shows crossover between Freud and Tagore. “Wir anerkennen also die Kulturhöhe eines Landes, wenn wir finden, daß alles in ihm gepflegt und zweckmäßig besorgt wird, was der Ausnützung der Erde durch den Menschen und dem Schutz desselben vor den Naturkräften dienlich, also kurz zusammengefaßt: ihm nützlich ist. In einem solchen Land seien Flüsse, die mit Überschwemmungen drohen, in ihrem Lauf reguliert, ihr Wasser durch Kanäle hingeleitet, wo es entbehrt wird. Der Erdboden werde sorgfältig bearbeitet und mit den Gewächsen beschickt, die er zu tragen geeignet ist, die mineralischen Schätze der Tiefe emsig zutage gefördert und zu den verlangten Werkzeugen und Geräten verarbeitet” (Freud). “We recognize, then, that countries have attained a high level of civilization if we find that in them everything which can assist in the exploitation of the earth by man and in his protection against the forces of nature—everything, in short, which is of use to him—is attended to and effectively carried out. In such countries rivers which threaten to flood the land are regulated in their flow, and their water is directed through canals to places where there is a shortage of it. The soil is carefully cultivated and planted with the vegetation which is suited to support; and the mineral wealth below ground is assiduously brought to surface and fashioned into the required implements and utensils” (Freud and Strachey 39).

bestimmte Formen und Ansprüche der Kultur oder gegen Kultur überhaupt. [...] Ein gut Teil des Ringens der Menschheit staut sich um die eine Aufgabe, einen zweckmäßigen, d. h. beglückenden Ausgleich zwischen diesen individuellen und den kulturellen Massenansprüchen zu finden, es ist eines ihrer Schicksalsprobleme, ob dieser Ausgleich durch eine bestimmte Gestaltung der Kultur erreichbar oder ob der Konflikt unversöhnlich ist.<sup>31</sup> (Freud)

Virata's urge for freedom, instigated by the deathly stare of his brother's eyes, is directed against a civilization under the control of a dominant, violent political apparatus. On the battlefield, a civilization draws its boundaries in spilled blood. In *Die Augen*, as the Rajput civilization develops in this bloody way, it imposes incompatible restrictions to Virata's sense of Self which is inclusive of the family he sees across enemy lines. As Virata becomes increasingly aware of the violent side to civilization's development, he makes ever greater attempts to assert his individual freedom, to completely distinguish and thereby extricate himself from the very civilization that has made him aware of his individuality. Because his sense of Self extends beyond the boundaries of this one civilization, he feels no longer under its dominion.

In the deathly stare of his brother, Virata pauses to reexamine, then relinquish his position as soldier—a move, to put it tritely, that asks, “What, exactly, does one fight for?” Virata's post-war condition is thus one of profound self-reflection, an attempt to figure out what he should be fighting for, if anything. In the post-WWI landscape, such a question had powerful implications for defining the boundaries of cultural and national identity as well as the relation between concepts of community and individual identity. What follows is Virata's journey of self-rediscovery fraught with delineating the boundary of Self as distinct from civilization. His actions on this journey thereby question the imposition of civilization—especially its obligation to morality—on his individual freedoms.

### **Relinquishing the Sword, Crossing Boundaries**

Stories reflecting upon WWI, or upon war, often depict the struggle with this questioning that emphasizes the fraught relationship between the protagonist and the community fought for. In these stories, individual soldiers' actions, and thoughts on actions, that breach the allegiance to a strictly defined community are underscored. In *Die Augen*, Virata states to a King upset by his giving up the sword, “Ich erschlug meinen Bruder, auf daß ich nun wisse, daß jeder, der einen Menschen erschlägt, seinen Bruder tötet” (17).<sup>32</sup> If families and alliances are to extend into

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<sup>31</sup> “The liberty of the individual is no gift of civilization. It was greatest before there was any civilization, though then, it is true, it had for the most part no value, since the individual was scarcely in a position to defend it. The development of civilization imposes restrictions on it, and justice demands that no one shall escape those restrictions. What makes itself felt in human community as a desire for freedom may be their revolt against some existing injustice, and so may prove favorable to a further development of civilization; it may remain compatible with civilization. But it may also spring from the remains of their original personality, which is still untamed by civilization and may thus become the basis in them of hostility to civilization. The urge for freedom, therefore, is directed against particular forms and demands of civilization or against civilization altogether. [...] A good part of the struggles of mankind center round the single task of finding expedient accommodation—one, that is, that will bring happiness—between this claim of the individual and the cultural claims of the group; and one of the problems that touches the fate of humanity is whether such an accommodation can be reached by means of some particular form of civilization or whether this conflict is irreconcilable” (Freud and Strachey 42–43).

<sup>32</sup> “I have slain my brother, and this has taught me that everyone who slays another human being kills his brother” (381–382).

enemy territories, then the bounded control of civilization (and especially its defense through war) is an ineffective form of civilization that does less to accommodate the claims of the individual than to impose dire restrictions on those claims, that does less to nurture what Freud refers to as the individual's "original personality" than to sculpt that personality according to its standard. Is there any kind of civilization that effectively reconciles the conflict between the claims of the individual and the claims of the group? Is there any way out of civilization's influence? Although "no" is the answer provided by Virata's journey, Virata's attempt is an imperative alternate view that illustrates the limits of civilization's power.

A catchphrase for The Great War was "the war to end all wars." The unparalleled atrocities and the continued fighting made cynics of this promising phrase, who later retorted with their own sarcastic version: "This war, like the next war, is a war to end war" (Stimpson 365). Virata's personal journey of self-rediscovery—in effect, an attempt to escape from the constraints of a state needing to define and defend its border—is a reflection of that cynicism. Virata's journey is applicable on a grand, repeating scale, and becomes especially salient for understanding Zweig's relationship to the newly formed national communities in the aftermath of WWI. *Die Augen*, then, posits an alternate view of the nation, where the importance of defining a nation crumbles under the untold loss of lives, the reach across enemy lines, and the reconstitution of self. If the soldier-figure Virata, as the embodied metonym of the nation-community, struggles, so, too, should the nation. As Virata initially sets out on a struggle-filled journey, nation, in its stalwart nationalist-dominated form (here represented by a monarchy that survived the war), proves ever resilient. By continually ignoring the requests and mandates of the king, Virata desperately tries to extract himself from action and its consequence, from civilization, from nation, from nationalism. One could assert that his attempts, however, are in vain because the state continually shapes his path. Here, the power of the nation seems unmatched.

The "failed" attempt to match that power, however, is crucial for recognizing the actual plurality of the nation often silenced to the cries of nationalist rhetoric. Amartya Sen's recently published *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture, and Identity* (2005), while focused on India, illuminates the powerful role of the skeptic in the discourse on nation more generally. In reading Sen's work alongside *Die Augen*, Virata seems to embody the role of the skeptic. Sen argues against the traditionalist view held by Hindu nationalists who define India according to "a narrowly Hindu view of Indian civilization." Usurping the idea of tradition from the traditionalists, Sen argues for a tradition of heterodoxy: "India is an immensely diverse country with many distinct pursuits, vastly disparate convictions, widely divergent customs and a veritable feast of viewpoints" (Sen ix). He writes,

The roots of scepticism in India go back a long way, and it would be hard to understand the history of Indian culture if scepticism were to be jettisoned. Indeed, the resilient reach of the tradition of dialectics can be felt throughout Indian history, even as conflicts and wars have led to much violence. Given the simultaneous presence of dialogic encounters and bloody battles in India's past, the tendency to concentrate only on the latter would miss something of real significance. (Sen xii)

Sen seeks to revisit India's history via the privileging of dialogic encounters over bloody battles. Such a focus on the importance of dialogue is not only the basis of the *Bhagavadgītā* (the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield), but also of *Die Augen*. Thus, while one

may claim Virata's struggle as a failed attempt at challenging his civilization, I find it more productive to view his struggle as a definitive, skeptical voice among many voices that compose his civilization. It is less important, then, that Virata succeeds in his quest to completely remove himself from civilization. In fact, his "failure"—his unforgettable dissident voice—is a more effective way to reform nation than a "success" would have been. If he were to have found a way to extract himself and be forgotten, the dominant nationalist narrative will have also claimed success, for the dissident voice would have been erased. But Virata is remembered, and his struggle composed of acts of defiance is told. To reform the idea of nation, should it persist, the soldier and his post-war journey cannot be forgotten.

Virata relinquishes his position as soldier in a dramatically defiant, symbolic act. The liminal geography that he chooses to give up the sword—on the border between home and enemy lands—is indicative of where he stands, literally and figuratively, in relation to the national border:

In der Mitte der Brücke hielt er inne und sah lange hinab in das fließende Wasser zur Rechten und zur Linken, —vor ihm aber und hinter ihm hielten, daß sie den Raum wahrten, staunend die Krieger. Und sie sahen, wie er den Arm hob mit dem Schwerte, als wollte er es schwingen wider den Himmel, doch im Sinken ließ er den Griff lässig gleiten, und das Schwert sank in die Flut.<sup>33</sup> (15)

It is important to note both the topographical character of the border in question as well as the architectural element that spans it. This border is demarcated by a river, but also *is* the river. Applying the sense of flux posited by Heraclitus—that a river's course is ever shifting, its water ever changing—to the national border here is apt because this border as a geopolitical boundary is now erased, for the enemy territory has since been subsumed. Like the step in the river, you can never encounter the same border twice. That Virata chooses the bridge to loosen his grip on the sword that killed his brother, to let the sword sink into the river's flow, is his sign to his warrior-witnesses that there is no side to which he belongs other than his own, for no political state motivated by nationalist ideology could account for the basic conundrum that wherever the enemy, there, too, the family.

It becomes clear, when we understand the complexities lurking beneath Virata's basic conundrum, that there is a need for a position such as Virata's. The power of a civilization trapped in the sphere of influence of all-pervasive nationalism<sup>34</sup> is checked by the figure who

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<sup>33</sup> "Halting in the middle of the bridge, he gazed for a long time to right and to left over flowing waters, while the soldiers who had crossed in front of him and those who had still to cross and who, by their commander's orders, were keeping well to the rear, marvelled as they looked at him. They saw him raise his sword, as if to threaten heaven, but when he lowered his arm, his fingers loosed their grip, and the weapon sank into the river" (380).

<sup>34</sup> It is often noted in history books that "nationalism and its many ramifications influenced every aspect of the Habsburg monarchy" (Williamson 29). Moreover, "a thread running through [...] the modernization of Austria is the rise of *nationalism*. It was without doubt a vital factor in the emergence of the condition of modernity. For Ernest Gellner nationalism is a value system that arises out of a single transition, namely, from pre-industrial to modern society. In the first period the rise of the nation-state is the single factor that most disrupts the continuance of the multi-ethnic empire. The nationalist program, with its promise of a new (albeit illusory) wholeness, destroyed the coherence and values of the old Catholic Habsburg center. For Gellner the closing decades of the empire are about the struggle between two ways of thinking: one individualistic, universal, and open; the other organic, ethnic, closed. That is for him an abstract way of expressing the conflict between a multi-ethnic empire supported by bureaucrats, liberals, and nouveaux riches (often Jewish) and ethnic communities fostered by populists, schoolmasters, and local institutions" (Spencer 51–52).

seeks to stand outside it all. The bridge upon which Virata stands, therefore, is not just a symbolic bridge to assert a liminal space, the need for which impels his journey: he seeks to take this space that flexes the sphere of civilization's influence—the ever-shifting border—everywhere he goes; it is also very much a fictional iteration of the multiple bridges, architectural and figural, that connected the multiple nationalities within the Habsburg empire before the outbreak of WWI.

As a bridge that connects nationalities, it contains in its representational structure elements of a bridge that also connects hemispheres. The bridge upon which Virata stands is now touching upon an annexed region. This annexation can be compared historically to the 1908/09 annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the last added region to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As such, it is also the bridge to the East because the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, with its predominantly Muslim population, signaled “the re-emergence of the eastern question in the twentieth century. The colonial scrambles in the Far East and Africa of the late nineteenth century had now moved dangerously closer home” (Williamson 80). The ensuing post-annexation crisis, the problems of monarchy as well as the problems facing a collapsed monarchy all make their way into Virata's defiant act: giving up the sword is giving up the national border as it stands and expands, in all of its various historical manifestations.

### **The Problem of Hemispheres**

As the story moves forward, we see, however, that the king is reluctant to give up his valuable vassal as easily as Virata gives up his sword.

Muß ich dich missen im Kriege, so will ich dich nicht entbehren in meinem Dienste. Da du Schuld kennst und Schuld wägt als ein Gerechter, sollst du der oberste meiner Richter sein und Urteil sprechen auf der Treppe meines Palastes, damit die Wahrheit gewahrt sei in meinen Mauern und das Recht gehütet im Lande.<sup>35</sup> (17)

Installed as court judge, Virata is known far and wide as justice itself. His fairness begins with the condemnation of the death penalty, but soon Virata discovers that judgment of any sort, regardless of fairness, has with it the unforeseeable potential for great harm. As Virata continues on his journey, not only judgments made, but also advice given, steps taken, meditation practiced, breath breathed all become laden with the same potential for harm. He seeks to elude such harmful repercussions of action by seeking to evade action altogether. But a first step in this journey toward actionlessness is to realize the subjectivity of fairness and morality. Such a realization, that the judgments he pronounces are not faultless, occurs in a second moment of self-reflection. This is also a moment, like that of giving up the sword, which brings geopolitical demarcations to question.

In this instance, it is not merely Austria and the Austrian struggle with its national border that is at stake, but the question of hemispheres. Already, with the allusion to the Bosnian annexation and with it the intimation of the approaching East, the question of hemispheres, West and East, has entered this story. But here, in the position of court judge, the critique of nation is

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<sup>35</sup> “If I must indeed do without your aid in war, I cannot dispense with your services in another field. Since, yourself a just man, you know and can appraise wrongdoing, you shall be the chief among my judges, and shall pass sentence from the threshold of my palace, so that truth may prevail within my walls and right be maintained throughout the land” (382).

tied up with the critique of the geopolitical hemispheric map. Through this critique, the global map is, in a sense, first reversed and then decentered. What emerges from this reversal and decentering is a possibly universal ontological question of action echoing multiple intellectual traditions that are either explicitly integrated (e.g., the quotes from *Bhagavadgītā*) or implicitly intimated (e.g., Schopenhauer's "will" and Nietzsche's "eternal recurrence") or even prefigured (e.g., postcolonialism).

A criminal is brought to Virata's court. As this criminal is being carried away, Virata sees in his eyes his brother's stare. Virata is forced through this familiar stare and the impetuous, yet reasonable response of the criminal to examine his sense of Self. On account of this Virata reaches a practical impasse, but a philosophical revelation. The impasse is twofold. First, this criminal claims that amongst his own, the fair punishment for murder is death. Since Virata has sworn against killing, the criminal's words confuse him and challenge his conviction against capital punishment:

Du nimmst mir mein Leben und nimmst es grausamer, als es die Häuptlinge unseres Stammes tun, den sie den wilden nennen. Warum tötest du mich nicht? Ich habe getötet, Mann gegen Mann, du aber läßt mich einscharren wie ein Aas ins Dunkel der Erde, daß ich faule an den Jahren, weil dein Herz feig ist vor dem Blute und deine Eingeweide ohne Kraft. Willkür ist dein Gesetz und Marter dein Spruch. Töte mich, denn ich habe getötet.<sup>36</sup> (22)

Secondly, the criminal growls that Virata, having never been in solitary confinement, has no idea of the extent of that punishment; and Virata recognizes a truth in these words.

Gerecht gemessen? Wo aber ist dein Maß, du Richter, nach dem du missest? Wer hat dich geißelt, daß du die Geißel kennst; wie zählst du die Jahre an den Fingern spielerisch, als ob sie ein gleiches wären, die Stunden im Licht und die verschütteten im Dunkel der Erde? Hast du im Kerker gesessen, daß du weißt, wie viele Frühlinge du nimmst von meinen Tagen? Ein Unwissender bist du und kein Gerechter, denn nur wer ihn fühlt, weiß um den Schlag, nicht wer ihn führt; nur wer gelitten hat, darf Leid messen. Schuldige vermißt sich dein Hochmut zu strafen und bist selbst der Schuldigste aller, denn ich habe im Zorne Leben genommen, im Zwange meiner Leidenschaft, du aber tust kalten Blutes mein Leben von mir und mißt mir ein Maß, das deine Hand nicht gewogen und dessen Wucht sie nie geprüft.<sup>37</sup> (23)

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<sup>36</sup> "Nay, but you are taking my life, and are taking it more cruelly than do the chiefs of my tribe whom these lowlanders term savages. Why do you not kill me? I killed, man to man; but you bury me like a corpse in the darkness of the earth, to rot as the years pass; and you do it because your craven heart fears to shed blood, and because your bowels are weak as water. Your law is caprice, and your sentence is a martyrdom. Slay me, for I have slain" (387).

<sup>37</sup> "A just measure? But what, O Judge, is the measure by which you measure? Who has scourged you, that you may know what scourging is? How is it that you can tick off the years upon your fingers, as if a year passed in the light of day were the same thing as a year prisoned in the darkness of the earth? Have you dwelt in prison, that you know how many springs you are taking from my days? You are an ignorant man and no just one, for he only who feels the blow knows what a blow is, not he who delivers it; and none but the sufferer can measure suffering. In your pride you presume to punish the offender, and are yourself the most grievous of all offenders, for when I took life it was in anger, in the thralldom of my passion, whereas you rob me of my life in cold blood and mete me a measure which your hand has not weighed and whose burden you have never borne" (387–388).

What emerges noteworthy for his philosophical revelation at this practical impasse is that this criminal and the captors who bring him to trial are foreign. How can one sentence, or even judge, those who act according to different laws? This question specifically concerning jurisprudence and more generally judgment is made complex because the foreignness here is complicated. The criminal is from “the tribe of the Kazars, the wild men who dwelt beyond the rocky hills and served other gods”<sup>38</sup> (384), but his captors have come from the East. The plaintiffs tell Virata, “We are herdsmen, Lord, living peacefully in an eastern land. He whom we bring you is the most evil of an evil stock, a wretch [...]”<sup>39</sup> (384).

Virata is placed in a conflicted position, asked to judge according to two different sets of laws, one to his West and one to his East, weighed against a third: his own. The western wretch, the *Untier* of the Khazar tribe, is a figure that not only brings difficult questions to Virata, but whose own characterization (his background and representation) in the story brings provocative questions for analysis. At first, this depiction of the West as uncivilized seems a reversal of the European intellectual trope of Western superiority over Eastern barbarism. This small gesture of Western criminality becomes a substantial criticism of European civilization, labeling the West as a murderous, abusive, and evil place. Furthermore, the vilification of the West as barbaric in relation to the acclaim for the East as civilized—Virata is a fair and honest judge practicing in the Punjab region (east of the Khazars, east of Europe), further east of which is a respectful, peaceful tribe of herdsmen—is a reflection of the contemporary sentiment of some late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Modern European thinkers (e.g., Schopenhauer, Freud and Nietzsche) lamenting the ruin of Western civilization.

Dormant in this gesture of Western criminality is another criticism of the West through a mordant self-portrayal of Western anti-Semitism. The reference to the Khazar race is the unearthing of the Jewish question. A few decades prior to the publication of *Die Augen*, Ernest Renan, French writer and scholar who also posed the pressing question about nation in his well-known essay, “What is a nation?” (Renan, “What Is a Nation?”), asserted therein a new origin of the Jewish people in the Khazar race, writing that “Eastern European Jews were in fact not Europeans at all but were ‘Asiatics’” (Barkun 136).<sup>40</sup> This position on origin was and is contested in and outside the Jewish community, and this position on Europeanism is strongly contested by those defining Europeanism not along race lines; but Renan’s claim made an impact that is being contended with here.<sup>41</sup> That is, the conflation of the West with the Khazar region, a region typically placed east of and inferior to the Eurocentric worldview, draws the connectedness of anti-Semitism to anti-Europeanism. For Zweig, who worked deliberately to conceive, at least through literature, a united Europe, to be anti-Semitic was to be anti-European. The contempt with which the Khazars are treated in this story, then, is a reflection of the anti-

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<sup>38</sup> “[...] einen Jüngling vom Stamme der Kazaren brachten, der Wilden, die über den Felsen hausen und andern Göttern dienen” (20).

<sup>39</sup> “Hirten sind wir, Herr, friedlich wohnende im östlichen Lande, dieser aber der Böseste des bösen Stammes, ein Untier [...]” (20–21).

<sup>40</sup> “The earliest suggestion that Khazar ancestry played a role in Ashkenazi Jewry appears to have been in a lecture given by Ernest Renan, ‘Judaism as Race and as Religion,’ on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1883. Although the conversion of the Khazar ruling group was well known, Renan seems to have been the first to suggest that Khazar converts may have been numerous enough to constitute a major proportion of Eastern European Jewry. Renan’s suggestion was consistent with his long-standing belief that a racial distinction separated Jews from Aryans” (Barkun 136–137).

<sup>41</sup> Zweig was certainly aware of Renan and his work. He wrote an introduction to the German edition of Renan’s *Jugenderinnerungen* (Renan, *Jugenderinnerungen*) and wrote a laudatory essay for the centennial anniversary of Renan’s birth (Zweig and Beck, “Ernest Renan. Zum Jahrhunderttage seiner Geburt 27. Februar 1823”).

Semitic contempt with which Jews were treated in Zweig's time. Renan's claim is thus refuted through the conflation of the Khazar region with the West (the insistence on Jewish inextricability from Europeanism) in this negative relatedness (if a part is vilified, the whole is subject to vilification).

While the reversal of hemispheres occurs in locating the criminal and the Khazars to the west, the erasure of hemispheres occurs in trying to locate the criminal's captors to the east. Aside from cardinal direction, there is little that tells us wherefrom these captors arrived: "We are herdsmen, Lord, living peacefully in an eastern land" (Zweig, "Virata, or The Eyes of the Undying Brother" 384). Just as "India" is excluded in this entire narrative, this second exclusion of specificity of location lends the map considerable flexibility. As this story already takes place in the East, where is this land east of the East? A simple answer would be the Far East, further east than the East, further east than the Middle East. But due to the vagueness of place throughout this story, I am more inclined to circumnavigate the globe. Travelling east of the East, one ends up in the West.<sup>42</sup> Here, the East becomes the West not in a reversal, but in a coming-full-circle. With this conflation of both the criminal (through map reversal) and the peaceful (through circumnavigation), comes a complexity of civilization that can be aligned with that of Zweig's geopolitically immediate neighborhood. The regions in the neighborhood of *Österreich* are complex, containing within them concerns ostensibly both western and eastern.

Likewise, this text pushes not necessarily for a reorientation, but for a rethinking of orientation, such that the map becomes difficult to draw as its center becomes difficult to find. What region is *to the east*, and what is *to the west*? This disorientation is a result of the flickering of place. If we are to assert that this story is set in India, because of its reference to temples, to the Punjab Delta, to the Buddha, to bamboo, to names like Birwagher and Virata, then we cannot forget to account for decades of theory that assert that such a setting is inherently European, a mere imagination of landscape. If we accept that this story's concerns suggest a European self-reflection found in the eastern landscape—arrived at through mirroring, reversing, and circumnavigating—which is a noteworthy practice (like in the scholarship of Kontje and Lemon), then we must also accept that the European tradition is entwined (for better or for worse) with that eastern landscape: things-Indian—whether imagined or actual—are here brought westward as things-European are projected eastward. This cartographical shift of the West and the East, that these regions are not static but in flux,<sup>43</sup> complicates judgment based on regional politics. And this is what Virata is faced with.

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<sup>42</sup> There are some noteworthy parallels between the maps drawn/erased by thinking "east of the East" in this story and "west of the West" in Kafka's *Das Schloß* (*The Castle*), written at the time of *Die Augen* (Kafka, *Das Schloss*). Kafka's novel brings to fore landscapes under scrutiny made intentionally obscure. Like Virata who stands on the middle of a bridge with a simultaneously inward and outward gaze, K. arrives as a figure in Kafka's *Das Schloß* pausing on a wooden bridge: "Lange stand K. auf der Holzbrücke die von der Landstraße zum Dorf führt und blickte in die scheinbare Leere empor." ("K. stood on the wooden bridge leading from the road to the village for a long time, looking up at what seemed to be a void" (Kafka, *The Castle*.) *Das Schloß* is, in a sentence, a story about an alienated land surveyor's attempt at accessing an all-controlling, yet inaccessible bureaucracy. K., the "Landvermesser," is meant to survey the land belonging to the owner of the castle, Graf Westwest. K. never meets the count, never accomplishes his goal, which reveals, especially taking the elusive "Westwest" into consideration, the problems of land surveying, a technique of mapping land in order to draw terrestrial boundaries for ownership.

<sup>43</sup> One of the distinctive qualities of *Die Augen* is how it puts geopolitical and hemispheric borders to question not unlike questions posed by contemporary world literature. In the German-language literature realm (itself a realm continually changed by multiple other languages), Yōko Tawada's stories, e.g. *Where Europe Begins* (*Wo Europa anfängt*), continually probe our definitions of West and East, of Europe and Asia, depending on point of departure and direction of movement. In fact, for the protagonist of *Wo Europa anfängt*, her "Weltkugel war bestimmt nicht

## The Ill-fated Possibility of Universalism

The easy alternative to regional politics (either politics between regions or politics within a region) is universal law. But even such universalism has to be contended with. Virata, as Wellspring of Justice, is positioned not necessarily between the criminal to the west and the captors to the east, but above them. He is in an authoritative position to pass judgment, to sentence, according to laws meant to be applicable to all. Thus far, I have shown that Virata's development (from loyal soldier to judge) through moments of self-reflection has destabilized the concept of nation, sliced through national boundaries, and muddled the map. Through this process, a universal code of ethics emerges, which Virata defines and implements.<sup>44</sup> But the criminal's plea for justice (not only his own but also for the justice of justice—"A just measure? But what, O Judge, is the measure by which you measure?") is a direct critique of universalist ideals meant to account and be appropriate for all civilizations, all people. His philosophy of morality, his ethics, is hereby challenged by this foreign criminal, who incidentally carries in his stare the eyes of Virata's brother. Again, self-reflection through the eyes of the Other (a simultaneously foreign and familiar look) shakes Virata's foundation as Virata sentences the criminal to years of torture and solitary confinement. From Virata's ensuing internal torment, theories that consider the cleft between relativism and universalism surface paramount, thereby making the map-muddle just as problematic as the map marked by definable boundaries.

### Reading Virata's Quandary through Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence": Universal Ethics or Moral Relativism?

It may be that only through the experience of the other under conditions of suspended judgment do we finally become capable of an ethical reflection on the humanity of the other, even when that other has sought to annihilate humanity. (Butler 45)

—Judith Butler, "Against Ethical Violence," *Giving an Account of Oneself*

In "Critique of Violence"<sup>45</sup>, published the same year as *Die Augen* (1921), Benjamin problematizes judgment by writing about its forceful counterpart, violence. The whole hypothetical premise of these contemplations on violence admittedly butts heads with certain variable realities, like the distinction between universality and relativity, which are purposely left

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rund gewesen, sondern wie ein Abendhimmel, in dem die fremden Orte wie Feuerwerk blitzten" (Tawada 81). The large breadth of literature on and about the Turkish-German connection is another contemporary example.

<sup>44</sup> One could draw upon Zweig's strong predilection toward the works and authors of world literature, as in his arguably semi-successful attempt at a library of world literature, as a means to show the tendency in this novella toward universal ideals that muddle, may even erase, the distinction between East and West as they are commonly understood. "Der Kosmopolit Stefan Zweig und der national gesinnte Liebhaber klassischer Literatur Anton Kippenberg treffen aufeinander. Ihr umfangreicher Autor/Verleger-Briefwechsel ist im Zeitraum von 1918 bis 1923 vor allem von einem Großprojekt bestimmt: der Buchreihe ›Bibliotheca mundi‹. Werke der Weltliteratur in Originalsprachen sollten sich in einer ›Weltbibliothek‹ unter dem Dach des Insel Verlags vereinen" ("Ausstellungsreihe"). The Deutsche Literaturarchiv-Marbach held an exhibit in 2011 showcasing material from this attempt at creating a library of world literature. In the "Ausstellungstext," we learn from Zweig's correspondence with Anton Kippenberg of his penchant for resurrecting Goethe's idea of world literature. To read more about Goethe's idea of world literature, see "Goethes Idee der Weltliteratur. Eine historische Vergegenwärtigung" by Hendrik Birus (Birus).

<sup>45</sup> The article in the German original is "Zur Kritik der Gewalt." (Benjamin, "Zur Kritik Der Gewalt")

constant in order to parse violence at the order of means (Mittel) rather than ends (Zweck). Let me explain. Benjamin writes that a thing can only be violent if it is considered in moral terms. So it is these moral terms—law, legality, justice, justness—that are actually critiqued in order to understand violence. In order to critique these moral terms, he focuses on one of two opposing modes of thinking on violence: he focuses on violence determined by history (positive law) rather than by nature (natural law). Here is the distinction he draws between positive law and natural law: “Natural law attempts, by the justness of the ends, to ‘justify’ the means, positive law to ‘guarantee’ the justness of the ends through the justification of the means” (Benjamin, “Critique of Violence” 63). To paraphrase: in natural law the idea is to *establish* a particular end/new law via whatever means necessary, even if those means are in conflict with the end/law-in-place; by their necessity those means circumvent the mark of violence. Those using those means to establish a new law may refer to their actions as liberating revolutions, overthrows of despotic governments, or movements for rights. Alternately, in positive law the idea is to *sustain* a particular end/law-in-place via means working with that end/law-in-place.

Benjamin focuses on positive law because here the ends are held constant or excluded, and “the central place is given to the question of the justification of certain means that constitute violence” (Benjamin 63). But as much as he tries to exclude the ends or keep the ends constant, the ends continually interpose and prove variable in any of his non-hypothetical examples of violence; natural law is ever prevailing. Governments, for example, will often use whatever means necessary to sustain a particular end/law-in-place, which itself then changes because of the use of whatever means necessary. A palpable contemporary example is the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay. How did/does the detainment of prisoners that are denied protections under Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions in effect change US Government’s law-in-place? As a result, “the validity of positive law [is] called into question” (Benjamin 68).

It is when positive law is called into question that Virata’s dilemma and Benjamin’s text begin to converge. The question of legality of means under positive law is inseparable from the question of justness of ends under natural law. At first, Virata deliberates a sentence for the criminal brought to him; he deliberates the means with which to punish the criminal. There are parameters of legality within which his sentence will operate, which will sustain his law-in-place. But these parameters/the law-in-place/the end/positive law is called into question when the criminal contests his sentence, claiming that his punishment is not a fair measure against his deed. The specific law-in-place that is put to question is capital punishment: the criminal claims that in his land, the only fair punishment for murder is death. Benjamin writes:

[...] since the validity of positive law has been called into question, capital punishment has provoked more criticism than all others. [...] The opponents of these critics felt [...] that an attack on capital punishment assails not legal measure, not laws, but law itself in its origin. For if violence, violence crowned by fate, is the origin of law, then it may readily be supposed that where the highest violence, that over life and death, occurs in the legal system, the origins of law jut manifestly and fearsomely into existence. (68)

Since his experience on the battlefield, Virata has become a practicing critic of capital punishment. Ironically and thereby influentially,<sup>46</sup> the foreign Khazar criminal (as the sentenced)

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<sup>46</sup> In *Interpretations of Conflict: Ethics, Pacifism, and the Just-War Tradition*, Richard B. Miller turns to Richard Rorty to assert that “Ironists, Rorty notes, have continuing doubts about their moral vocabularies because they are impressed by rival vocabularies provided by a culture of moral pluralism. But rather than whimsically running to the

is a fiery opponent to the criticism of capital punishment. With his protestations appealing for the termination of his own life, the criminal intends to protect “law itself in its origin.” The criminal directly challenges Virata’s progressive stance on capital punishment and undermines the claim that capital punishment is “the highest violence.” The criminal considers years of confinement and torture as a higher violence than death.

To question the general validity and generalizing tendency of law is, according to Benjamin, uncommon. This is true to an extent. But just by following the so-called major turns in human history, one notices that such turns often pivot around questioning the generalizability of law. The WWI period in which Benjamin and Zweig were writing, for example, is now well known as a time wherein law’s general validity was put to the test. Insinuated in Benjamin’s conclusions in this text is the failure of law’s general validity: “For ends that in one situation are just, universally acceptable, and valid are so in no other situation, no matter how similar the situations may be in other respects” (68). While Benjamin’s text shows us that the particularity of situation dictates the applicability of “just, universally acceptable, and valid” laws, Zweig’s text shows us the impossibility of “just, universally acceptable, and valid” laws. While Benjamin’s “Gewalt” may lead us through questions that (should) stunt the uninhibited sentencing of criminals, Zweig’s *Die Augen* leads us to believe that there is no fair measure in the sentencing of criminals, especially in cases of confused jurisdiction.

In this manner, I turn to the above subheading: Universal Ethics or Moral Relativism? Because Virata’s naïve hope for universal ethics is challenged, it seems that his only alternative is an impasse posed by moral relativism: I cannot judge you and you cannot judge me. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines moral relativism as follows:

The term ‘moral relativism’ is understood in a variety of ways. Most often it is associated with an empirical thesis that there are deep and widespread moral disagreements and a metaethical thesis that the truth or justification of moral judgments is not absolute, but relative to some group of persons. Sometimes ‘moral relativism’ is connected with a normative position about how we ought to think about or act towards those with whom we morally disagree, most commonly that we should tolerate them.<sup>47</sup> (Gowans)

Moral relativism posits the irreconcilable differences not just in different groups’ moral judgments, but also in how those moral judgments are setup. Differences exist not just in the ends, but also in the means to those ends; between cultures, moral differences are systemic. Given such difference, in Virata’s position as judge, what sentence conferred could appeal to the criminal’s and the captors’ and his own morality? If Virata sentences the criminal to torture and years of imprisonment, then the criminal will feel unjust violence fall upon him. If Virata carries out capital punishment as per the criminal’s behest, then Virata will feel violence against his own

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other side or building up the fortress walls, ironists ‘play off vocabularies against one another,’ using different self-descriptions and alternative idioms to clarify their own. Ironists, Rorty suggests, are the dialecticians of postmodernity. They respect their close rivals because they see that neither they nor their rivals have a corner on the ethical market. Ironists recognize that moral ambiguity is synonymous with moral complexity, not lack of moral resolve” (Miller 246).

<sup>47</sup> “Moral relativism has the unusual distinction—both within philosophy and outside it—of being attributed to others, almost always as a criticism, far more often than it is explicitly professed by anyone. Nonetheless, moral relativism is a standard topic in metaethics, and there are contemporary philosophers who defend forms of it: The most prominent are Gilbert Harman and David B. Wong” (Gowans).

moral codes. If the criminal is set free, the captors will feel that the criminal's violence against them will remain unchecked.

Virata does, however, make a decision and metes out the aforementioned sentence. The prisoner is dragged away, his eyes fill with indignation, fear, and tears. In these eyes, Virata sees his brother. It is too late for Virata to publicly reconsider his verdict and too early for mind-changing self-reflection to set in. But after a sleepless night of pacing, he asks the king:

Du hast mich zum obersten deiner Richter gesetzt. Sieben Jahre richte ich in deinem Namen und weiß nicht, ob ich recht gerichtet habe. Gönn mir einen Mond lang Stille, damit ich einen Weg zur Wahrheit gehe, und gönne mir, daß ich den Weg verschweige vor dir und allen andern. Ich will eine Tat tun ohne Unrecht und leben ohne Schuld.<sup>48</sup>  
(26)

Incognito, he later confronts the criminal in the darkness of the dungeon and makes a personal proposal:

Ich habe dir wehe getan mit meinem Wort, aber auch du hast mir ein Weh getan mit deinen Worten. Ich weiß nicht, ob mein Spruch gerecht gewesen, aber eine Wahrheit war in deinem Wort: es darf keiner messen mit einem Maße, das er nicht kennt. Ein Unwissender war ich und will wissend werden. Hunderte habe ich gesandt in diese Nacht, vielen habe ich vieles getan und weiß nicht um meine Tat. Nun will ich es erfahren [...].<sup>49</sup> (29)

After this admission of hurt, wrongdoing, ignorance and willingness to learn, Virata makes a surreptitious deal with the criminal: "Für einen Mond will ich an deine Stelle treten, damit ich wisse, wieviel ich zugezählt an Sühne" (29).<sup>50</sup> In this deal, law is taken into individual hands; a deal is made outside of state authority.

Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" provides a way to read this deal that Virata makes. Virata explains to the criminal that through the sentencing he had made as judge, both he and the criminal experienced hurt, experienced violence. Benjamin ponders whether there can be a way to regulate "conflicting human interests" without violence. If law is involved, if legal contracts must be drawn, then the possibility of violence (that is, of a dissatisfied party), according to Benjamin, is inevitable. Benjamin writes that

[...] law nevertheless appears [...] in so ambiguous a moral light that the question poses itself whether there are no other than violent means for regulating conflicting human interests. We are above all obligated to note that a totally nonviolent resolution of conflicts can never lead to a legal contract. For the latter, however peacefully it may have

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<sup>48</sup> "You have made me the chief among your judges. For six years I have passed judgment in your name, and know not whether I have judged justly. Grant me a month of rest and quiet that I may find the road to truth; and permit me, in this manner, to keep my own counsel from you and all others. I wish to do a deed free from injustice and to live without sin" (389).

<sup>49</sup> "I hurt you with the words of my judgment, and you have likewise hurt me with your words. I do not know if my decision was just; but there was truth in what you said, for no one ought to measure with a measure he does not know. I have been ignorant, and would gladly learn. I have sent hundreds into this abode of darkness; much have I done to many persons, without knowing what I did. Now I wish to find out [...]" (391).

<sup>50</sup> "For a month I shall take your place, that I may be taught how much I have exacted by way of atonement" (391).

been entered into by the parties, leads finally to possible violence. It confers on each party the right to resort to violence in some form against the other, should he break the agreement. Not only like that; like the outcome, the origin of every contract also points toward violence. (69)

The one kind of situation, however, that Benjamin posits as least likely to engender violence is the kind that Virata has entered on a personal level with the criminal: outside of the court's jurisdiction. Benjamin does point without a doubt to the possibility of nonviolent conflict resolution. This is found in the "peaceful intercourse between private persons," which is the only "pure means" in political affairs where "motives are clearly visible" (70). Because motives are so clear, persons could be able to reconcile differences such that they are not mutually disadvantageous or violent. Such pure means of conflict resolution are direct; they do not reach indirectly through law to arrive at agreement. While Virata's deal with the criminal is an attempt at carrying out these pure means, such an ideal is shown to be implausible. Even as Virata is making this deal with the criminal, the third party captors are not privy, robbing them of their voice in the matter. Furthermore, Virata's time in solitary confinement places him more deeply mired in the quandary which has unsettled him since his first moments of self-reflection on the battlefield: Is it possible "to do a deed free from injustice and to live without sin?"

The major problem in this question, as well as in Benjamin's proposal of purity of means, is the requirement of the absolute. The terms "free" and "without" and "pure" point to a universal ethics that might be plausible in theory but is implausible in practice. If we avoid talking in terms of "pure" means, but rather in terms of means *tending* toward pure means, if Virata's task were to *strive* to do a deed with *the least* injustice and live with *the least amount* of sin, then we can look upon Virata's deal with the criminal not as a failure but as an attempt at remedying the law. Since ends are shown to be unfixed—the law-in-place is often shown to be unlawful, unfair, out-of-date—the way to prescribe moral judgments is not to mete out sentences based purely on precedence or purely on theoretical absolutes, but to negotiate between the relative and the universal, knowing the inevitability of some violence. The problem that emerges is, of course, how to minimize that violence. When more individuals are involved, and when groups of individuals are represented by higher authority, the potential for greater violence is greater because "it is different when classes and nations are in conflict, since the higher orders that threaten to overwhelm equally victor and vanquished are hidden from the feelings of most, and from the intelligence of almost all" (Benjamin 70). Things are vastly different when "nations are in conflict" because the layers and levels of representation in national politics obfuscate and dictate the ideas of too many individuals, often enforcing both a sense of stability and a havoc-wreaking paradigm.

### **Self-Reflection as Self-Critique:**

#### **"Moral Ambiguity is Synonymous with Moral Complexity, Not Lack of Moral Resolve"<sup>51</sup>**

Virata's struggle between relativism and universality is the struggle between the political and the apolitical. If there were such a thing as universal ethics, it would stand outside the realm of politics. Politics is built upon difference; at one reductive level, it requires differing opinions on morality. As I have suggested in this chapter, despite the desire for universality, difference abounds not just in good and bad, but in how one comes to believe good and bad, right and

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<sup>51</sup> For full quote, see footnote 28.

wrong, Self and Other, familiar and foreign, local and global, East and West... Halfway through *Die Augen*, we already see the ill-fated attempt at universality. Through moments of self-reflection, this text attempts to find the Self in the Other and the Other in the Self, both on narrative and metanarrative levels. While such *finding* does occur—Virata does see the familiar in the foreign, and one can read Austrian conditions onto Indian landscapes—it does not result in the kind of unity that would do away with binary confusion. On the contrary, either old confusions in new form or unforeseen confusions arise. But we do not have to see this attempt as a failure, but an important dialectical moving that narrows the binary differential (for better or for worse). Stefan Zweig’s rather political proclamations of apolitical possibility—for example, his adherence to defeatism (a subcategory of pacifism), that one is not limited to pro- or anti-war commitment but can be against the idea of war altogether—are, like Virata’s journey, fraught with moral ambiguity, which “is synonymous with moral complexity, not lack of moral resolve” (Miller 246).

In “Stefan Zweig: The Legacy of World War I and the Tasks of Exile,” Lionel B. Steiman aptly remarks:

While despairing of humanity, [Zweig] refused to discard the ideology of ultimate human perfection. But while placing all his faith in ideas and ideals, he dismissed as “politics” all attempts to implement them.

Zweig epitomized his dilemma as early as 1922 in *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders*, a story which seems to demonstrate the impossibility of any action that is ethically pure. Good and evil are everywhere intermixed; neither exists anywhere unto itself. The only alternative open to one who cannot accept that every action involves some injustice is total withdrawal. Zweig was not recommending this as a solution, but his story does highlight the manifold complexities of the problem, and the apparent futility of trying to solve it. (Steiman 76)

Though impossible, apoliticism/universalism becomes approachable by trying to reach beyond the scope of one’s own judgment (as the only means available), testing the boundaries of self, trying to understand these boundaries with each difference rather than with the eradication of all difference.

So here emerges a possible answer to a very pertinent and persistent question regarding the place of this narrative: If *Die Augen* deals with post-war European conditions, why is it set elsewhere? As with Virata’s encounters with the familiar in the foreign and with “Austria” in “India,” it is when the stability or solidity of Self is shaken that it can be reorganized. This story leads us away from a colonizing view of finding Self in the Other to a more destabilizing one, where the palpable presence of Self outside the Self, or, in the Other, does not expand the Self but dislocates it. The question that still remains is why this particular Other, why in a purported ancient India? This question I answer in the next chapter on self-critique. In this first chapter, self-reflection itself has become a way of critique. But the self-critique expounded in the following chapter is distinct from this in that it is not a critique arrived at through finding Self in the Other (not through self-reflection) but it is a critique of the longstanding practice of German-language literature’s engagement with India, of which this text is also part.

## Chapter 3

### Self-Critique in *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders*

In his autobiographical book *Die Welt von Gestern* (*The World of Yesterday*), published posthumously in 1942, Stefan Zweig writes about his impressions of India when he traveled there in 1908/09, exposing his suspicions of history and especially its abuse. His impressions are confessedly shocking. India is not the Romantic India of stories, but a rude reminder and a warning: “Dank dieser Beobachtungen sah ich Indien nicht [...] als etwas ‘Romantisches,’ sondern als eine Mahnung” (214).<sup>52</sup> He writes:

[...] auf dem Schiff nach Indien aber begann sofort diese kühle, unsichtbare und darum nicht minder grausame Form der gesellschaftlichen Ächtung. Zum ersten Mal sah ich die Pest des Rassenreinheitswahns, der unserer Welt verhängnisvoller geworden ist als die wirkliche Pest in früheren Jahrhunderten.<sup>53</sup> (213)

According to Zweig biographer Elizabeth Allday,

India was the springboard from which Zweig was forced to dive into the deep end of realism. Perhaps more than any other single influence, his visit there at last forced him to take the pen into his hand and with it compose [...] his own thoughts and reactions to what he was now compelled to admit existed beyond the hot-house climate of ‘civilized’ Europe.<sup>54</sup> (Allday 81)

In this encounter with realism, Zweig is struck by unexpected analogy, where the caste system of India is analogous to the European systems of racial distinction. The craze for racial purity, as he calls it, is an abuse of the kind of history that seeks to find racial origins. When racial origins are used to determine racial purity, which in turn is used to determine racial superiority, history as the medium for finding racial origins becomes a major weapon used in the subordination of one to another. Allday continues, “for Zweig the glory of the bejewelled temples, and the fabulously maintained palaces of the princes and the British Raj faded rapidly beneath the gloomy system of caste which so obsessed him. In the ancient and hidebound acceptance of such a social evil he saw the plight of all minority groups” (Allday 81).

I contend that Zweig’s *Die Augen*, by challenging the power of history, is an attempt to temper the racial purity mania that so unnerved him and of which he became acutely aware on his journey through India. If history’s power lies in its truth-value, what happens to history if its truth-value were put to question? Zweig’s engagement with history does not lead to a complete dismissal but a critical awareness of it—he was, after all, a well reputed biographer and literary

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<sup>52</sup> “Because of this impression I did not see India as something ‘romantic’ [...] but as an admonition” (Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* 183).

<sup>53</sup> “[...] on the ship going to India a cool, invisible but none the less horrid social exile had set in. This was my first sight of the pest of the racial purity mania which has become more dangerous for our world of today than the actual plague had been centuries ago” (183).

<sup>54</sup> “Even Darjeeling, that sacred refuge of the British Raj, was scarcely bearable; and after several somewhat hurried investigations into acknowledged areas of disease and squalor, he withdrew, sick at stomach and heart. India was to leave him scarred, frustrated and even more concerned with humanity’s eternal problem” (Allday 65).

historian. He takes issue not with history per se but with history that is deterministic. In a previous chapter I argue that *Die Augen* is an oxymoronic new legend: a legend that tells a history that doesn't exist. Its epigraph states with a matter-of-fact and confident tone that it is the story/history of Virata, despite its emergence from the depths of forgottenness with no verifiable transmission link. In this chapter I argue that the oxymoronic new legend turns ironic, and that there is a clear purpose for this irony: to confront deterministic history and to emphasize the story in history, the fiction in nonfiction, *die Geschichte in der Geschichte*.

There is a long-standing tradition of representing India in German-language literature.<sup>55</sup> There is no doubt that the important era reaching from Classicism to Romanticism was bound to the discovery of Sanskrit and a scholarly (philological, literary and philosophical) relationship to India. Schools of Indology (Bonn); treatises on India (Schlegel), on language (Herder), on Eastern philosophy and religion (Hegel); themes in poetry (Novalis's blue flower); and the structure of drama (Goethe's *Faust*) are some of the hallmark examples of Indian influence on German thought. While this literary representation of India is diverse, certain Romantic notions built upon philologically based theories on language and race proved deterministic. Building on the European discovery of Sanskrit in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the subsequent veneration of its kinship to the German-language, Romantic yearnings for a return to a lost paradise in India later morphed into fodder for nationalist and racist ideals.

The irony lurking beneath the "discovery" of Virata in the epigraph of *Die Augen* confronts the truth-value of similar discoveries of eastern culture by western writers and scholars. When such discoveries are put to question, so too are the ideologies that are built upon them. Furthermore, the irony of retelling a story that never existed confronts claims to knowledge and meaning. In the tradition of representing India, some claimed to know India as what it was, perhaps a paradise or a hell. Those that did not claim to know what it was, claimed to know what India meant. Schopenhauer, for example, claimed that he explains the Sanskrit terminology in his philosophy better than the Sanskrit texts from which he takes them. The use of India in *Die Augen*, then, serves as the foundation for both the criticism of deterministic history as a weapon for racial superiority and for the critique of the indisputable knowledge of the Other.

*Die Augen* differs greatly from the texts that Edward Said uses as examples for his thesis in *Orientalism*, which use the Orient, e.g., India, to gain European self-worth. Orientalist texts distinguish the West as "rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion" and the Orient as "none of these things" (Said, *Orientalism* 49). *Die Augen* still uses the Orient, but unlike Orientalist texts, it uses India to gain a critical perspective on the Self. It recognizes the Orientalist stance from which it cannot escape. This text is therefore what I refer to as ironically complicit, that is, it uses India to critique its own engagement therewith. This critical perspective leads, then, to the recognition of one's grasp and limits. Zweig's text and strictly Orientalist texts both have an interest in the Self. However, unlike with Orientalist texts that use India for self-aggrandizement, *Die Augen* uses India for self-restriction. In other words, *Die Augen* does not engage with India in order to assert an all-knowing European narrative. On the contrary, it engages with India in order to assert the limitedness of a European perspective.

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<sup>55</sup> Some of the groundbreaking publications on the influence of Indian culture on German thought include Leslie A. Willson's *A Mythical Image: The Ideal of India in German Romanticism* (Willson), Friedrich Wilhelm's "The German Response to Indian Culture" (Wilhelm), and Ekbert Faas's "Faust and Sacontala" (Faas).

The limited Self is restricted by all that which it knows, outside of which there will always be an impenetrable, possibly greater, Other. I draw out this concept of the limited Self in *Die Augen* not just on account of the irony in the epigraph, but also because on the narrative level, the recognition of the limitedness of the Self is the most important lesson for Virata. Virata is continually confronted with perspectives in conflict with his own. Instead of treating these outside perspectives as an Orientalist text would treat the Orient, Virata uses them to reflect on his own perspective. Jumping back to Zweig's personal reflection on his journey to India, we see a very similar reaction taking place when confronted with perspectives outside his own. Upon his return from India, Zweig reconsiders his European worldview and denies Eurocentricity: "Manches Kleinliche, das mich früher über Gebühr beschäftigt hatte, begann ich nach meiner Rückkehr als kleinlich anzusehen und unser Europa längst nicht mehr als die ewige Achse unseres Weltalls zu betrachten" (Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern* 214).<sup>56</sup>



Der Indien-Reisende Stefan Zweig in einem Hotelbus. Trivalur bei Madras, 1908.

Here we see Zweig, confronted by a non-European world view, in a protected bus with its reardoor open to village onlookers near Madras. . (Renoldner, Holl, and Karlhuber)

Following a simplified chronology of the representation of India in German-language literature, the remainder of this chapter details how *Die Augen* both fits into that representation and critiques it.

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<sup>56</sup> "Many a detail that had formerly occupied me unduly seemed petty after my return, and I ceased to regard our Europe as the eternal axis of the universe" (184).

## Medieval Critique: Necessarily a Christian Legend?

The at times oddly organized syntax in *Die Augen* cannot be overlooked. Markedly different than many of Zweig's other texts, its feigned, archaic style evokes some of the first-known depictions of India in German-language literature. As the style evokes medieval literature, it brings to light not only how India was understood, but also the purposes India served, particularly as an undiscovered land in need of salvation. For medieval Europe, India was just beyond the limits of the discovered world. In the nascent, emergent image of India understood in light of Feirefiz's wife Secundille, Queen of India in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (c. 1210), India becomes a land upon which the dream of a universal Christianity can expand. Just as India was outside of the discovered world, but inside the map of Christendom, so too is *Die Augen*, though set well before Christ, often read as a story of a man's attempt at absolution from Original Sin.<sup>57</sup> Though set in the time before the Buddha, which is well before Christ ("In den Jahren, ehe noch der Erhabene Buddha auf Erden weilte und die Erleuchtung der Erkenntnis eingoß in seiner Diener [...]") (9)<sup>58</sup>, *Die Augen* has been read by Zweig's contemporary Hermann Bahr as a highly Christianized legend. In a letter to Zweig, Bahr asks of *Die Augen*, "Aber ahnen Sie denn, wie tief katholisch diese 'Geschichte von der Erbsünde' ist? Ja noch mehr: ich würde wenn ich den Autor nicht kennte, jede Wette halten, das es ein Jesuit sein muß" (Zweig and Beck, "Nachbemerkung des Herausgebers" 200).<sup>59</sup> Zweig circumvents this question in his response to Bahr, focusing rather on the elements which I incidentally pick up in my reading of the text, namely questions relating to postwar identity. Nevertheless, since Christian elements are evident, and made evident by scholars such as Vridhagiri Ganeshan,<sup>60</sup> one can see the expansion of the Christian myth even onto stories purportedly outside of the realm of Christian possibility. Unlike Bahr, Ganeshan concludes that despite this story's necessary Christian undertones, it is neither fully Christian nor Indian:

Virata bemüht sich lebenslang nur das Gute zu verkörpern. Dies kann nur christlich verstanden werden, aber nicht indisch. Denn das Indische wertet das Gute und das Böse im Menschen gleichermaßen als Bestandteile des menschlichen Wesens. [...] Von einer Parteinahme fürs Christentum oder den Hinduismus bei Zweig kann keine Rede sein. Der Dichter scheint den religiösen Fragen tolerant gegenüberzustehen. Ihn interessieren vor allem die Probleme des Menschen aus menschlicher Perspektive. Zweig hat sich für religiöse Diskussionen wenig interessiert. (Ganeshan 324)

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<sup>57</sup> This statement builds upon an argument put forth by Saba Mahmood in relation to modern texts. Mahmood argues that the presence of Protestant Christianity "became embedded in more secular ideas of what it means to be modern" (Mahmood). Likewise, I argue that it can be difficult to read this story outside the grip of the Christian narrative, even when it asserts its non-Christianity.

<sup>58</sup> From the opening lines: "In the days before the sublime Buddha lived on earth to fill his servants with the light of his knowledge [...]" (Zweig, "Virata, or The Eyes of the Undying Brother" 375).

<sup>59</sup> "But do you fathom how deeply Catholic this 'story of original sin' is? Moreover, if I didn't know the author, I would bet against anything that he must be Jesuit." Translation my own.

<sup>60</sup> "Einige Elemente dieser Legende lassen Assoziationen mit der christlich biblischen Gedankenwelt aufkommen. Virata schlägt in der Nacht seinen Bruder. Eigentlich wird bei Zweig die biblische Geschichte des Brudermordes von Abel und Kain etwas verändert dargestellt. Er ist eigentlich wie der biblische Abel, der als Gerechter gilt" (Ganeshan 323).

The sense of an inherently Christian underlying structure does feel at times inescapable. When I introduced *Die Augen* in a colloquium in Berkeley, pairing the story with passages from the *Bhagavadgītā* and with passages from P.T. Raju's *The Philosophical Traditions of India*, our discussion inevitably dealt with this story as a Christian allegory. Nevertheless, I steered our discussion to mirror Ganeshan's turn in the quote above, drawing out the tension between this story's necessary Christianity and its disinterest therein. While Ganeshan first writes that Virata's embodiment of the good can only be understood in Christian terms, he later writes that there is no way to read this story as Zweig's espousal of Christianity.

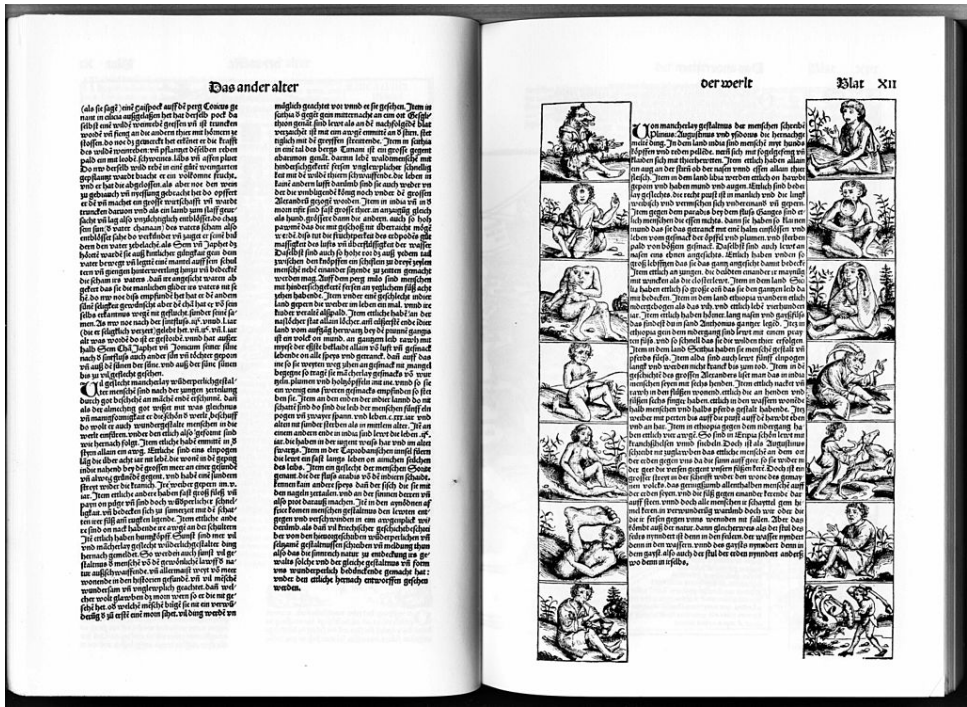
I read the tension that arises from this non-Christian text's purportedly inherent Christian references as a criticism of the inescapable dominant structures that run through narratives such as this. Hermann Bahr's question to Zweig is telling of the very historical tradition with which *Die Augen* is dealing and of which it is critical, for whatever attempt is made to write a story of India, of the Other, there is little escape from motives driven by conditions at home: even in this case of a Viennese Jewish author writing a Buddha-like narrative, the (Jesuit) Christian reading is insistent.<sup>61</sup> *Die Augen*'s stylistic evocation of medieval German-language literature dealing with India is an ironic mark of this long inescapable tradition of the predominance of Christian thought on worlds outside of Christian possibility.

### **Early Modern Critique: Not a Chronicle**

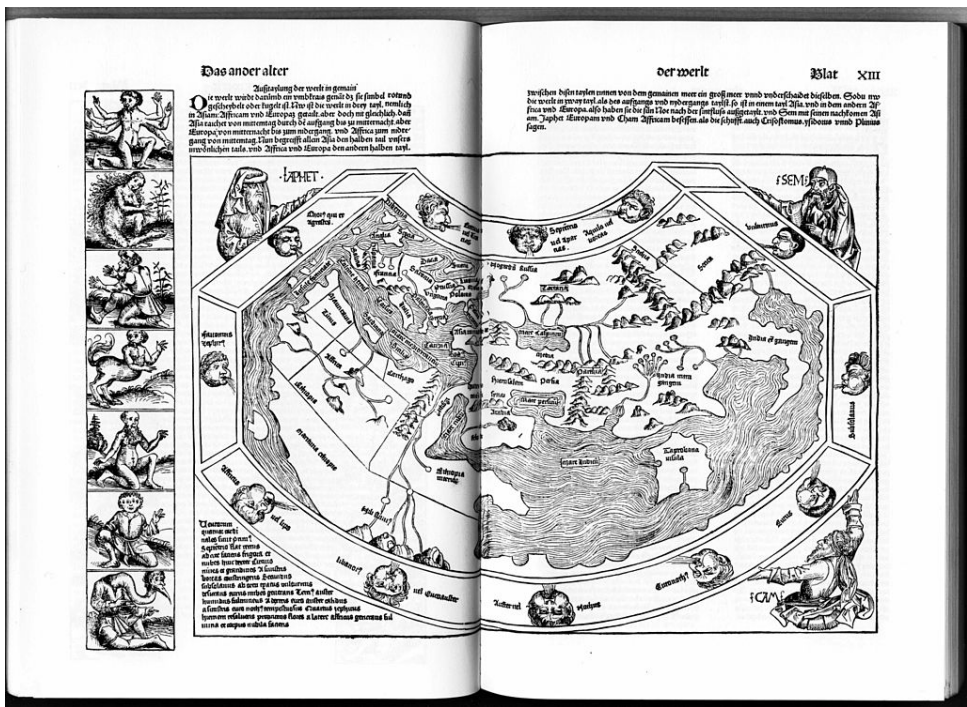
If *Die Augen*'s feigned, archaic style points to medieval literature, then the mention of chronicles in *Die Augen*'s epigraph, "von dem aber nicht geschrieben ist in den Chroniken der Herrscher," could point to the world chronicles of the Early Modern Period. *Die Schedelsche Weltchronik*, or the *Nürnberg Chronicle* (1493), perhaps the most famous of the chronicles, was an ambitious project of creating a history of the world accompanied by a plethora of illustrations. Pages twelve and thirteen of this chronicle are pages whose text, quoted from Pliny, becomes the source for three columns of illustrations of exceptionally fantastic creatures that supposedly depict the people of the world. Included amongst these creatures are those from India: the dog-headed who speak in a barking tongue; one-eyed carnivores; those that live like cloister people along the Ganges, who eat nothing, but whose tiny mouths require them to drink through a straw; six-handed beasts; those that live naked and uncouthly in the water; and those that are half-man, half-horse (Schedel, *The Nuremberg Chronicle*).

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<sup>61</sup> For example, one can make ready comparison between Virata's four virtues ("den sein Volk rühmte mit den vier Namen der Tugend") and the four Christian virtues: Fortitude, Justice, Prudence, and Temperance. No doubt there is a correlation between these Christian virtues and the positions that Virata holds: Fortitude/Soldier, Justice/Judge, Prudence/Householder, and Temperance/Ascetic. But one could also turn to a comparison to the four "brahmavihāras" ("sublime attitudes" or literally, "abodes of brahma") of Buddhism. All four attitudes relate to Virata's goal in every position. These four attitudes, which Virata seeks throughout his path, are Loving-kindness, Compassion, Empathetic Joy and Equanimity. Furthermore, it has been documented that Zweig was reading Karl Eugen Neumann's translations of Buddhist texts around the time of writing *Die Augen*.



(Schedel, "Blatt XII")



(Schedel, "Blatt XIII")

In this depiction, even creatures of Indian mythology are gravely distorted. But through this depiction, a new fashioning of Pliny's myth is available, with accompanying illustrations that create an indelible impression and add a complex visual dimension to Wolfram's medieval image of India. Because they appear in a chronicle of world history, these gravely distorted illustrations become a kind of truth for the sake of completing the world image, if not for sensational value. *Die Augen*, with its descriptions dripping with Indian references, though a far cry from the Early Modern depictions, still participate in the continual completion of the image of India, such that even similes function according to this image: "Weit vom Lande kamen die Bauern im Wagen der Büffel [...Viratas] Ruhm wuchs, wie der junge Bambus wächst, aufrecht und hell in einer Nacht" (20).<sup>62</sup> Unlike the Early Modern depiction meant to inform, *Die Augen*—which is meant to question—affords its reader access to such descriptions via the ambiguous plausibility set up by its genre and epigraph.

Even descriptions of India to appear in German Idealism—like those in Hegel's lectures on world history—present the lesser-known Other with indisputable expertise. When Hegel addresses the history of the Orient, his reduction of it showcases his strong prejudice; his convictions undermine the very dialectic model he espouses in his philosophy. In part, this is a result of the limits of genre. When he gives lectures on the geographical basis of history, his examples point to a pompous and overconfident understanding of the world's regions. His lecture on India paints India clearly dissociate from Europe, leading to a furtive hierarchical set-up with European civilization in the obvious superior role (Hegel).

The descriptions of India in *Die Augen*, however, are as real as a new legend can possibly purport. Even these descriptions lose their efficacy in contributing to the idea of India as we learn that "India" is not once mentioned in this entire narrative. The lack of explicit labeling of "India" is at variance with the definability achieved by a world chronicle or world history. The ambiguity of this new legend, even as it repeats conventional representations of the image of India, offers flexibility to the very idea of India; it recognizes the heavy-handed involvement of those fashioning this idea, or in other words, the hubris of the Self when representing the Other.

## Entertaining and Rejecting Romanticism

*Die Augen*'s ironic complicity—between contribution to and critique of the use of India in German-language literature—is nowhere more apparent than in its comparison to the German Romantic incorporation of Indian Antiquity. There is a scene in *Die Augen*, which I discuss below as I relate it to works of Novalis, that strikingly corresponds to the Romantic reversal of Enlightenment ideals. In order to gain access to Indian Antiquity, Romanticism relied heavily on Enlightenment ideals and methodologies it sought to surpass: on scientific method, archaeology and philology. Without these methods, the influx of Indian thought into Romanticism may not have been.<sup>63</sup>

A precursor to Romanticism, Johann Gottfried Herder was a defining figure in popularizing India in the German-speaking world. Well before he was given a copy of Kalidasa's *Śakuntalā*, a moment that drastically changed the course of German literature's relationship to the concept of India, Herder had already shown a zeal for foreign literatures and had an eye

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<sup>62</sup> "From the remotest parts of the country, the peasants would come in buffalo carts [...Virata's] fame grew as the young bamboo grows [...]" (385).

<sup>63</sup> While I recognize my generalization of German Romanticism here, I do find as a tenet of this literary movement a discovery and reuse of Indian Antiquity's proclivity toward the irrational/alter-rational, supernatural and mystical.

pointed eastward as a veritable source of all language, as is apparent in his essay, *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1772).<sup>64</sup> In Herder's reaction to *Śakuntalā*, over the course of just a few decades, one notices that Herder's essay on the origin of language had rapidly become a source in itself for questions not just on the origin of language, but on the origin of race, culture, and spirit. It was in this rational, scientific, intellectual milieu that the Romantic tradition was born.

What emerges noteworthy here is how this development through rationalist thinking led to a movement that turned its back to Enlightenment ideals. The very image of India that had been redefined and acclaimed through philological sciences and its production of not only translations but a whole new field of Indology had become a source of alternative logic and of writing dominated less by the intellect than by feeling and instinct. Enmeshed in this movement were at times divergent approaches that had in common a longing for origin. Hence, magical landscapes from German folk stories coincided with the revived interest in Greek and Roman Antiquity of Weimar Classicism, which coincided with the unfamiliar made familiar mythologies of Sanskrit texts. The result of this amalgam of ideas were stories that, in completely refashioning their source material, hinted toward an origin to be found in the disintegration of reason, in stories that were perplexing and throbbing with both psychological neuroses and passionate feeling.

As I write earlier, Zweig's text can be read as critical of the discovery of Sanskrit as the origin of a Germanic race, raising questions about the truth-value of such discoveries, thereby bringing to attention the political consequences of origin-seeking. As *Die Augen* is critical of that philological and archaeological venture, one can begin to note how this text, although it calls upon the Romantic tradition, is just as much critical of the Romantics' origin-seeking agenda as it is of the Romantics' predecessors'. This critique is a manifestation of Zweig's comment about the "Rassenreinheitswahn," that India is not something Romantic, but should be understood as a warning.

Nevertheless, *Die Augen*—since it also refashions source material, refers to the disintegration of reason, and throbs with postwar neurosis—entertains a prominent Romantic motif. Novalis's work provides the best examples of this motif that I find in *Die Augen*. Much of Novalis's work debuted in the literary journal *Athenaeum* (1798)—created by the Brothers Schlegel, both strongly influential in the budding field of Indology—which promoted the distinct poeto-philosophical program of the Romantic school of thought: to bring polarities such as the inner and outer, the higher and lower into harmony or equilibrium. The inspired and at times wearisome process of bringing these polarities into equilibrium could be carried out, according to Novalis's *Hymnen an die Nacht* (*Hymns to the Night*) and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, only in darkness, in the reversal of the Enlightenment reliance on reason through light.

*Hymnen an die Nacht*, which appeared in *Athenaeum* in 1800, extinguishes the reliance on the established metaphor of light, for through light is born a distinction precluding harmony.

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<sup>64</sup> This essay marked a pivotal change in contemplations on language, for it pointed to a natural rather than divine origin of language. Herder's essay propelled the maturing trend of rationalist thinking into an emergent field of philology, which grew into a prominent field of study by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Inaugurated by Sir William Jones in England, this scientifically rigorous thinking about language led to a deep investigation into Sanskrit, which revealed a whole system of connections between Sanskrit and Germanic languages. With such news of linguistic affinity came the urge to translate Sanskrit texts, and in 1791 "came the full vindication of [Herder's] faith," when Georg Forster sent a copy of his German translation of *Śakuntalā*—"an authentic work of Sanskrit literature accessible in his mother tongue, a work which revealed with unmistakable immediacy those noble human qualities which he proclaimed as expressive of Indian civilization" (Taylor 130–131).

*Hymnen* opens the gate to an all-encompassing darkness, wherein a hidden creative power bears the key to a harmonious soul (where torment and contentment reside together). Novalis's all-encompassing darkness is relived in the darkness of the dungeon that breaks open Virata's spiritual awareness in *Die Augen*. The parallels in imagery, tone and experience are remarkable. It is as if Virata is experiencing Novalis's *Nacht*, perhaps made possible because, according to *Hymnen*, "zeitlos und raumlos ist der Nacht Herrschaft" ("Night's power is without time and space") (Novalis).<sup>65</sup> The following passage is from the scene which I had, in my summary, referred to as a kind of sensory deprivation chamber where Virata experiences an inexplicable oneness with the All:

Nun saß er still und spürte die Stunden an den Tropfen nur, die niederfielen von der Wand und das große Schweigen teilten in viele kleine Zeiten, die still wuchsen zu Tag und Nacht, wie ein Leben aus tausenden von Tagen selbst wieder wächst zu Mannheit und Alter. Niemand sprach auf ihn, Dunkel stand starr in seinem Blut, aber von innen stieg nun bunt Erinnerung in leisem Quell, floß mählich zusammen in einen ruhenden Teich der Schau, darin sein ganzes Leben gespiegelt war. Was er verteilt erlebt, rann nun in eines, und kühle Klarheit ohne Wellenschlag hielt das gereinigte Bild in der Schwebung des Herzens. Nie war sein Sinn so rein gewesen wie in diesem Gefühl reglosen Schauens in gespiegelte Welt.

Mit jedem Tage nun ward Viratas Auge heller, aus dem Dunkel hoben sich die Dinge ihm entgegen und vertrauten seinem Spüren die Formen. Und auch innen ward alles heller in gelassener Schau: die lindere Luft der Betrachtung, wunschlos hinschwellend über den Schein eines Scheines, die Erinnerung, spielte mit den Formen der Verwandlung wie die Hände des Gefesselten mit den zerstreuten Kieselsteinen der Tiefe. Selbst sich entschwunden, reglos gebannt, unkund der Formen eigenen Wesens im Dunkel, spürte er stärker des tausendförmigen Gottes Gewalt und sich selbst hinwandern durch die Gestalten, keiner anhängend [...] Ihm war als sank er mit jeder Stunde tiefer ins Dunkel hinab, zu Stein und schwarzer Wurzel und doch trüchtig neuen Keims, Wurm vielleicht, dumpf wühlend in der Scholle oder Pflanze, aufstrebend mit stoßendem Schaft, oder Fels nur, kühl ruhend in seliger Unbewußtheit des Seins.<sup>66</sup> (31–33)

Although the dungeon in *Die Augen* is akin to the night in Novalis's *Hymnen* as well as to the cave in Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, this line of correspondence between *Die*

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<sup>65</sup> Translation my own.

<sup>66</sup> "Henceforward he sat without moving, and noted the passage of time only by the falling of the water-drops from the rocky roof. The great silence was subdivided into many little spaces, which were pieced together to form day and night as out of thousands of days our life grows to manhood and old age. None came to speak with him, and the darkness entered into his very soul. Yet within, the manifold springs of memory were opened. Flowing gently, they filled a quiet pool of contemplation wherein his whole life was mirrored. What he had experienced bit by bit, coalesced now into a unity. Never had his mind been so limpid as during this motionless insight into a reflected world. / Day by day Virata's vision grew clearer; things shaped themselves in the darkness, displaying their forms to his gaze. In like manner everything grew clearer to the eye of inward vision. The gentle delight of contemplation, spreading unsolicited beyond the illusive appearances of memory, played amid the forms of changing thought as the prisoner's hand played with the irregularities in the walls of his rocky cell. Withdrawn from self, and in the darkness and solitude unaware of the intimacies of his own nature, he grew ever more conscious of the might of the multiform divinity, and was able to wander freely amid these constructions of the imagination, in perfect independence [...] Perhaps it was the life of the worm, blindly burrowing in the clods; or perhaps that of a plant, striving upwards with its step; or perhaps only that of a rock, cool, quiet, and blissfully unconscious of its own being" (393–394).

*Augen* and Romantic thought comes to a decisive end. Whereas the lyrical “ich” of *Hymnen* seeks a return to his origin in darkness and whereas Heinrich finds a book prophesying his life in the dark cave, the darkness for Virata ceases to open a spiritual awakening but shackles him instead to a dismal and maddening fate. This switch from the alter-rational enlightenment through darkness to the imprisonment by the same indicates that while *Die Augen* engages with Romantic ideals, it does not adhere to them. The descent into unconsciousness, into what Virata experiences as evolutionary beginnings and the erasure of taxonomical distinction, is arrested by the shock of “ein irdischer Gedanke” (“a worldly thought”), namely that of the experience of time *in* timelessness, that this dungeon experience could be an eternal one. The experience of alter-rational timelessness and eternity is freeing, but the experience of timelessness through rational time is shackling. This torment is thus a criticism of Virata’s initial Romantic-like spiritual awakening, for here emerges the realization that timelessness is bound by time, even in depths robbed of the instruments to count it. *Die Augen* therefore engages with these Romantic tropes both sincerely as a possibility of a freeing experience, but also critically as a discursive counterpoint in a rational argument.

This discursivity is a central concern of *Die Augen* and a central concern of the period that gave rise to it. Accordingly, when hulled of its Medieval, Early Modern and Romantic coverings, *Die Augen* squarely addresses major concerns of Modern literature. In the foreword to *Indien: Wunder und Wirklichkeit in deutschen Erzählungen des 20. Jahrhunderts*, a compilation of 20<sup>th</sup> century German-language texts referencing India, Gerhard Koch binds the works of Zweig to that of his contemporaries in the fields of literature and philosophy:

Und der Held von Stefan Zweigs Legende, [...] der Buddhist Virata, steht seinerseits näher bei Sören Kierkegaard als bei Gotama Buddha.

Die Vorliebe für indische Legenden und Mythen, die sich zur “Einkleidung” metaphysischer Fragestellung eigneten, ist eines der spezifischen Kennzeichen der deutschen Indienliteratur seit der Jahrhundertwende. [...] In der gesamten europäischen Literatur hat die Bearbeitung bzw. Neuinterpretation alter Sagen- und Mythenstoffe eine lange Tradition; insofern stellte das Verfahren nichts neues dar. Aber in einer Zeit der Umwertung aller Werte war der Schwenk von den bislang favorisierten Stoffen aus der griechisch-römischen Antike auf die indisch-asiatischen Überlieferungen ein Ausdruck des Protestes gegen die abgewirtschaftete humanistisch-abendländische Kultur.<sup>67</sup> (Koch 12–13)

What Koch writes as particular to 20<sup>th</sup> century “Indienliteratur” finds its beginnings in the writing of German Romantics. However, there is a key difference between the Romantic engagement with India and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century engagement, which Koch indicates by deploying Nietzsche’s philosophical *geflügelte Worte*, “Umwertung aller Werte” (“transvaluation of all values”). While the Romantics, like Novalis, were keen on finding harmony between their own questions and those of the various Antiquities—both western and

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<sup>67</sup> “And the hero of Stefan Zweig’s legend, [...] the Buddhist Virata, stands for his part closer to Sören Kierkegaard than to Gautama Buddha. / The fondness for Indian legends and myths suited to the ‘clothing’ of metaphysical questioning was one of the particular hallmarks of German Indian-literature since the turn-of-the-century. [...] The adaptation, that is the new interpretation, of the stuff of old myth has a long tradition; to this extent this practice offers nothing new. But in a time of the transvaluation of all values, the shift of the hitherto favorite material from Greco-Roman to Indo-Asian Antiquity was the stamp of protest against the ruined humanistic-occidental culture.” Translation my own.

eastern—the philosophers and writers of the *Jahrhundertwende* “Indienliteratur” were critical of the nature of that harmony, preferring a discursive, or dialogic, model which left questions unresolved. The swing away from Greco-Roman toward Indo-Asian Antiquity, as Koch puts it, is a protest against the ruined humanistic, occidental culture. Continuing with Koch’s analysis of this trend, we read that this protest against the Occident did not come with an unregulated embracing of the Orient, but rather with a critical meeting therewith<sup>68</sup>: thus the fulfillment of the “Umwertung *aller* Werte.”

## Veritas

In Zweig’s legend, the swing away from a Greco-Roman past is not an abandoning thereof. It is less a protest against everything Greco-Roman than pointedly against the Greco-Roman ideal used to create ideologies about nationhood that enforce attitudes of superiority. In fact, this text also criticizes that same use of Indo-Asian Antiquity. Thus, as the thematic pendulum swings “orientally,” it still carries with it an occidental pull, which may explain why so many readers of the legend have found in it a Christian narrative. Just as this text is obviously influenced by Indian themes, it is also altering the concept of India with a carrying over of occidental ideas onto an Indian landscape. The mutability of this text—that it is at times “eastern” and at times “western” depending on which aspects of the text are foregrounded and how those aspects are read—is encapsulated in the name and character of the protagonist.

Earlier I write of the non-existence of this particular Virata in Indian texts and tales, that the stories of Virata in the *Mahābhārata*, for example, have little to do with the Virata of *Die Augen*. I am brought, therefore, to the question of naming, of the letters that form and inform the word, Virata. Many studies disclose the importance in fiction of nomenclature, itself a process of modification of tradition, a refashioning of legend. Most notable among the examples that would benefit this exercise include the relationship of the name, Gregor Samsa, in Franz Kafka’s *Die Verwandlung* to the Sanskrit term, “Samsara” (Ryan) as well as of the name of the dog Strohmian in Ludwig Tieck’s *Der Blonde Eckbert* to the anagram from which the name purportedly stems, “Romantisch” (Koschorke). As the scholarly work on nomenclature of fictional characters shows, this focus on nomenclature provides new bases for narrative analysis.

Similarly, in *Die Augen*, I read in the name, Virata, less the story of the King Virata of the *Mahābhārata* than the fable of Veritas (Latin) or Alethea (Greek). Virata is a character who is in search of many things, particularly a life without impact. From another view, this search for a life of no impact is a search for a kind of unassailable truth. By living in this truth, he can do no wrong; his presence can have no deleterious (false) effects on the world around him, for through this truth, he would live in equilibrium with his surroundings. It is important to remember, however, that he never finds this equilibrium. So how does “Virata” relate, then, to “Veritas,” or truth? The nature of truth related in one of Aesop’s fables is particularly salient for understanding Virata’s truth. According to this fable, truth is not static, it is mutable, it walks, it changes. Since the fable, Aesop’s “Prometheus and Truth [Veritas],” is relatively short, I provide it here in full before further analysis:

Prometheus, that potter who gave shape to our new generation, decided one day to sculpt a statue of Truth, using all his skill so that she would be able to regulate people's

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<sup>68</sup> His primary example is of Fritz Mauthner, the philosopher and skeptic of language, and his critique of the Buddhism-mania that swept Europe in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in his *Der letzte Tod des Gautama Buddha* (1913).

behaviour. As he was working, an unexpected summons from mighty Jupiter called him away. Prometheus left cunning Trickery in charge of his workshop (Trickery had recently become one of the god's apprentices). Fired by ambition, Trickery used the time at his disposal to fashion with his sly fingers a figure of the same size and appearance as Truth with identical features. When he had almost completed the piece, which was truly remarkable, he ran out of clay to use for her feet. The master returned, so Trickery quickly sat down in his seat, quaking with fear. Prometheus was amazed at the similarity of the two statues and wanted it to seem as if all the credit were due to his own skill. Therefore, he put both statues in the kiln and when they had been thoroughly baked, he infused them both with life: sacred Truth walked with measured steps, while her unfinished twin stood stuck in her tracks. That forgery, that product of subterfuge, thus acquired the name of Falsehood, and I readily agree with people who say that she has no feet: every once in a while something that is false can start off successfully, but with time the Truth is sure to prevail. (Aesop 244)

In the comparison of *Die Augen* with “Prometheus and Truth,” the coincidence of syllabic and consonantal rhyme between the names Virata and Veritas accrue significance in symbolic meaning of the narratives of which they are part. The recycling of these sounds in these names is a glimpse into Nietzschean “eternal recurrence,” such that Virata’s search for truth becomes more than a mere search, but perhaps the embodiment of truth itself. Veritas, the embodiment of truth in this Aesop’s fable, is a figure that is distinguished from falsehood by one key feature: its feet. Falsehood cannot move; it is static. Truth, however, has feet and “walks with measured steps.” Virata, like Veritas, is constantly on the move, measuring his steps, his actions, with care. In his search for a life with no impact he moves from one position to the next. In each position, he is known for his virtue—as soldier, judge, householder/adviser and ascetic—but in each position, just as he settles into it, he finds himself confronted with falsehood, and then moves on. This particular allusion to Greco-Roman Antiquity’s Veritas refashioned into Virata helps to emphasize truth as movement, as recurrence, and as ambivalence.

### ***Die Augen* as Modern Philosophical Text: a Comparison with Schopenhauer’s Sanskrit Terminology**

Many narratives are present in *Die Augen*. In one sense, this story calls forth the Buddha and *Mahābhārata* narratives. But many readers, including Hermann Bahr and Vridhagiri Ganeshan, point to the Christian narrative as Virata contends with his feelings of guilt. In addition, by looking closely at the name Virata, an underlying presence of Greco-Roman Antiquity comes into focus. Furthermore, both the Latin root “vir” and the Sanskrit root “vīr” refer to a man, a hero, a husband and a person of courage, honor and nobility. Virata who holds all of these characteristics undeniably calls upon this common root to describe an ostensibly universal problem of action. This multiplicity recalls once again the Romantic tradition, exemplified in the figure of the singer in the fifth hymn of *Hymnen an die Nacht*, who melts together Greek, Christian and Indian Antiquities. But in its early 20<sup>th</sup> century contemporary context, *Die Augen* is less about the harmonious melting of geographies and disparate Antiquities for the purpose of positing some vague origin than it is for the purpose of undoing origin in time and space. With many works of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, even when thematic, philosophical or rhetorical elements from different cultures are placed together and seemingly

melt into one idea, the emphasis is on concurrence and recurrence, not single point of origin. The full title of Zweig's novella points to this concurrence and recurrence via the story's main recurring element, Virata's brother's eyes, and thereby recalls Nietzsche's *geflügelte Worte*: "die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen" ("the eternal recurrence of the same").

The philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer is akin to *Die Augen*'s critical stance to the tradition of which it is part. Schopenhauer's selective engagement with Sanskrit texts and his use of Sanskrit terminology to expound his philosophy, especially in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (*The World as Will and Representation*), is not a Romantic admiration for Indian thought. He does not use Sanskrit in order to find therein an origin of the Self. For Schopenhauer, the Self originates and ends in the Self, it is everywhere in everything the Self knows. The Sanskrit terminology as well as the way he uses it helps him explain this. Schopenhauer moved in a definitively different direction than his influential predecessor Hegel, for he discounted the teleological and historical emphasis posited by Hegel. Hegel, perhaps more doggedly so than Schopenhauer, was against the Romantic vision of India "as the forgotten basis and hidden depth of [...] European identity" (Halbfass 435). But Hegel's commitment to the present is different than Schopenhauer's, for while Hegel claims no glorification of origin, his view of India "from the peak of his own time" is still the development away from crude beginnings in a historically postulated origin.<sup>69</sup> As I discuss below in bringing together Schopenhauer's philosophy with Zweig's *Die Augen*, Schopenhauer's philosophy deals a powerful blow to the course of history, postulating that the peak of one's own time is all there ever was/is, making hierarchies as Hegel posits difficult to espouse when there is no Other in time or space. This gives Schopenhauer the freedom to take and establish new meaning to ideas traditionally understood as coming from India. Zweig uses this freedom established by Schopenhauer, but also questions the efficacy of a complete erasure of history, without which one could quickly forgo any responsibility to or respect for the Other.

Nietzsche's work, like Schopenhauer's, also deals a blow to history. It is well-established that Nietzsche read Schopenhauer's work avidly, at least at a young age.<sup>70</sup> Nietzsche's concept of "eternal recurrence" is related to Schopenhauer's use of Sanskrit, not to mention concepts within Sanskrit texts Nietzsche had quoted. Incidentally, Zweig may have followed Nietzsche's example to use Sanskrit verse as a motto for his book. Zweig uses translated verses of the *Bhagavadgītā* for the motto of *Die Augen* as Nietzsche had used a translated verse from the Rg Veda for the motto for *Morgenröthe* (*Daybreak*), his 1881 aphoristic critique on the prejudices of morality.<sup>71</sup> Nietzsche was also unafraid to refashion legend, thereby dealing with historicity in his *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) as Zweig does with *Die Augen*. Furthermore, like in *Die Augen*, when attempting to identify a regional home for Nietzsche's

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<sup>69</sup> "Hegel sees India from the peak of his own time and his philosophical system which is meant to summarize and consummate the history of European thought. In his view, his European horizon transcends all Asian horizons. Asian thought is comprehensible and interpretable within European thought, but not vice versa. The question of an adequate standpoint for the evaluation and comparison of different cultural traditions has been decided by the course of history itself, and it has been decided in favor of Europe" (Halbfass 436).

<sup>70</sup> One could refer to Nietzsche's essay, "Schopenhauer als Erzieher" ("Schopenhauer as Educator") to claim Schopenhauer's influence on Nietzsche, but "this essay is not about Schopenhauer [...] Were we to seek for it in this essay, it would be hard to find evidence that Nietzsche ever read Schopenhauer. And yet we know that he did. We know that his first encounter with Schopenhauer brought on a total overturn, a rebirth, of his personality. We also know that Nietzsche struggled with his teacher, a disciple must who has any originality, and overcame him [...]" (Vivas).

<sup>71</sup> "Es gibt so viele Morgenröten, die noch nicht gelehrt haben" (Nietzsche).

legend, one is caught between *Zarathustra*'s obvious references to Zoroastrianism and latent references to so much more.

Schopenhauer's use of Sanskrit terminology and especially his explication of his own use thereof provide a way to understand Stefan Zweig's use of Indian themes. When Arthur Schopenhauer turns to India, turns to the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, he does not find in them inspiration, but rather a reflection of his thought. Accordingly, he incorporates terminology found therein into his philosophical design.

In 1819, when Schopenhauer introduces the term, *Maja/maya*, which gathers central significance in his *Die Welt*, he recognizes a lineage to which his philosophy belongs, but in so doing, also dismisses a path of influence. It is a lineage in a flat, chronological sense, but not in the influential sense:

Das Wesentliche dieser Ansicht ist alt: Herakleitos bejammerte in ihr den ewigen Fluß der Dinge; Platon würdigte ihren Gegenstand herab, als das immerdar Werdende, aber nie Seiende; Spinoza nannte es bloße Accidenzien der allein seienden und bleibenden einzigen Substanz; Kant setzte das so Erkannte als bloße Erscheinung dem Dinge an sich entgegen; endlich die uralte Weisheit der Inder spricht: "es ist die Maja, der Schleier des Truges, welcher die Augen der Sterblichen umhüllt und sie eine Welt sehen läßt, von der man weder sagen kann, daß sie sei, noch auch, daß sie nicht sei: denn sie gleicht dem Traume, gleicht dem Sonnenglanz auf dem Sande, welchen der Wanderer von ferne für ein Wasser hält, oder auch dem hingeworfenen Strick, den er für eine Schlange ansieht." (Diese Gleichnisse finden sich in unzähligen Stellen der Veden und Puranas wiederholt.) Was Alle diese aber meinten und wovon sie reden, ist nichts Anderes, als was auch wir jetzt eben betrachten: die Welt als Vorstellung, unterworfen dem Satze des Grundes.<sup>72</sup> (Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* 36–37)

In this passage, Schopenhauer discerns a completely different relationship to India or to the cultural/spatial/temporal Other. Everything, however historically viewed, is a mirror of one's own thought. This is not the "ideal mirror" as posited by the Romantics. For J.G. Herder, the Orient, and especially India, becomes what Nicholas A. Germana calls an ideal mirror, reflecting precisely what Herder wanted to see (Germana). For Schopenhauer, on the other hand, the Orient is merely a part of the world mirror, not an idealized form. Furthermore, distinctions created by time and space, which are important for Enlightenment models of history, are no longer important. Wilhelm Halbfass, renowned scholar in the field that compares India with Europe, writes that

Schopenhauer did not try to validate his teaching by referring to the authority of the Indian sources; instead, he presented his own thought as the standard and fulfilment of

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<sup>72</sup> "In essence this view is old; in it Heraclitus lamented the eternal flux of things; Plato spoke with contempt of its object as that which forever becomes, but never is; Spinoza called it mere accidents of the sole substance that alone is and endures; Kant opposed to the thing-in-itself that which is known as mere phenomenon; finally the ancient wisdom of the Indians declares that 'it is Maya, the veil of deception, which covers the eyes of mortals, and causes them to see a world of which one cannot say either that it is or that it is not; for it is like a dream, like the sunshine on the sand which the traveller from a distance takes to be water, or like the piece of rope on the ground which he regards as a snake.' [...] But what all these meant, and that of which they speak, is nothing else but what we are now considering, namely the world as representation subordinated to the principle of sufficient reason" (Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* 7–8).

the Indian teachings. [...] he tried to bring ‘sense into the matter’ (‘Verstand in die Sache’) of Indian thought and uncover its true meaning and implications, which had been hidden to the Indians themselves. Accordingly, Indian philosophy appears not so much as a source of inspiration or revelation, but rather as a mirror and medium of self-representation and self-confirmation. (Halbfass 175)

This use of Indian philosophy is indicative of a major tenet of Schopenhauer’s philosophy; it is the enactment of his concept of representation. I am not going to comment here on the correctness of Schopenhauer’s interpretation and use of Indian terminology and themes. Due to the solipsistic framework of the philosophy he sets up, there can logically be no misinterpretation. I do, however, comment on how he uses Indian terminology because it helps to read *Die Augen* as a text that borrows from Schopenhauer’s critique of history but questions the solipsism of Schopenhauer’s philosophy because it excludes the possibility of the existence of an Other.

Schopenhauer uses Sanskrit in transliteration rather than in translation not just as a mark of an increased awareness of Indian philosophy in European scholarly circles, but as a challenge to the customs and canons of Western philosophy. In the analysis of “Schelling and Schopenhauer,” Halbfass writes that

Schopenhauer showed an unprecedented readiness to integrate Indian ideas into his own European thinking and self-understanding, and to utilize them for the illustration, articulation and clarification of his own teachings and problems. With this, he combined a radical critique of some of the most fundamental presuppositions of the Judeo-Christian tradition, such as the notions of a personal God, the uniqueness of the human individual and the meaning of history, as well as the modern Western belief in the powers of the intellect, rationality, planning and progress. (180)

We can find, then, a resemblance to Schopenhauer’s critique of the Judeo-Christian tradition in *Die Augen*. Just as Schopenhauer’s philosophy carries traces of Heraclitian, Platonic, Spinozan, Kantian and Indian philosophy, *Die Augen* carries traces of Judeo-Christian, Buddhist, Indian, Greco-Roman and post-war narratives. Unlike with Schopenhauer, *Die Augen* does not explicitly state its use of these various narratives; readers of this legend and scholars writing about this legend have found these multiple narratives to be implicit. Schopenhauer’s explicit equalization of his various sources, ultimately all sourced in/from the Self, help us to view *Die Augen* as a text performing similarly, but on an implicit level.<sup>73</sup> *Die Augen* is, like Halbfass describes Schopenhauer’s philosophy, the uncovering of the story of Virata, “which had been hidden to the Indians themselves.” Schopenhauer cannot possibly read the texts incorporated into his philosophy incorrectly. Such a stance is freeing for the European thinker who wants to incorporate Indian themes in order to better understand his/her own views, not in order to say something definitive about India.

With *Die Augen*, Zweig took the freedom that Schopenhauer forged with his use of Sanskrit. To reiterate, Schopenhauer was certainly not the first Western writer or thinker to feel justified and qualified to deal with Indian themes. The freedom that I refer to is the freedom to understand these Indian themes as indistinct from one’s own thought. Before the epigraph, the

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<sup>73</sup> This kind of equalization of sources is in many ways an early version of Reader Response Theory, which, in its most extreme form, contends that the understanding of any text begins and ends with the reader.

motto that opens *Die Augen* is two quotes from the *Bhagavadgītā*, borrowed from Leopold von Schroeder's German translation of the *Gītā* published as "Des Erhabenen Gesang" in 1915 (Schroeder). Unlike with Schopenhauer who uses Sanskrit in transliteration, Zweig uses it in translation. This difference is less important here than the similarity in how they use the Indian text. Just as Schopenhauer removes Sanskrit terms out of their context and moves them into his philosophy, Zweig removes the translated text and moves it to begin his story. Noteworthy is the change that Zweig makes to the translated text: there is an elided line from the translated verse. As yet another level of distortion, this elision emphasizes the freedom that Zweig takes as he contorts the *Gītā* to fit the themes of his story. The *Gītā* is used as a motto, carrying ideas that mirror those in the story. Here is the second motto to *Die Augen*:

Was ist denn Tat? was ist Nichttun? –  
 Das ists, was Weise oft verwirrt.  
 Denn achten muß man auf die Tat,  
 achten auf unerlaubtes Tun.  
 Muß achten auf das Nichttun auch –  
 der Tat Wesen ist abgrundtief.

Bhagavad-Gita, 4. Gesang<sup>74</sup> (7)

This is the verse as it stands in von Schroeder's translation:

4. 16 Was ist denn Tat? was ist Nichttun? – das ist's, was Weise selbst verwirrt;  
 Drum will die Tat ich künden dir, wodurch du kommst vom Übel frei.  
 4.17 Denn achten muß man auf die Tat, achten auf unerlaubtes Tun,  
 Muß achten auf das Nichttun auch, – der Tat Wesen ist abgrundtief. (Schroeder)

This elision is the point at which Schopenhauer's (and subsequently Zweig's) freedom to use Indian themes is checked. As I explain below, this is the point at which Zweig surreptitiously problematizes Schopenhauer's equalization of sources as well as his own use of Indian themes. While Zweig took the freedom that Schopenhauer forged with his use of Sanskrit, here, that freedom turns into a criticism of itself.

The elision of "Drum will die Tat ich künden dir, wodurch du kommst vom Übel frei"/"Hence to you I speak of Action, whereby you shall be free from evil" is an elision of the possibility of freedom from evil. The elision of this line is an assertion that action cannot be evil-free. Consequently, this elision becomes a criticism of Schopenhauer's solipsistic philosophy because action will always have an effect on an Other, often unintended, and sometimes deleterious. In a great reduction of Schopenhauer's philosophy, if the world is understood as the representation of the Self, then the Self/Other divide is merely an illusion. This divide is non-essential and the Self is all that remains. The Self's perceptions are its projections, and all phenomena are part of the Self. In such a world, how can action ever be false or wrong or evil? Morality requires forces in opposition, not in concordance—e.g., good *versus* evil—and as such, morality cannot exist in Schopenhauerian terms. Evil, or any terms of morality, requires a duality, necessitating the Self/Other divide that Schopenhauer dismisses as illusion.

<sup>74</sup> "Then what is Action? What is Non-Action? -- / That is what often bewilders the wise. / For one must pay heed to Action, / as to impermissible Action. / Also pay heed to Non-Action -- / the nature of Action is abyssal." Translation my own.

Schopenhauer does refer to morality in *Die Wille*. Morality, however, introduced more cogently in the sections on asceticism, exists in the illusionary world, not behind it. Morality exists in Schopenhauerian philosophy as a major hurdle in seeing past the illusion. When the Self retreats from the illusionary world, e.g., in ascetic practice, then morality and the illusion of which it is part cease to have great significance. Halbfass writes in “Schelling and Schopenhauer” that, according to Schopenhauer,

We can transcend the world by withdrawing the will from it, i.e., in radical soteriological self-transformation. However, we cannot objectify or explain theoretically this practical, soteriological step. The will exists, insofar as we are attached to, and engaged in, the world of representations which is its projection. It is released from existence, insofar as we are no longer committed to the world, and disengage ourselves from the network of means and ends, as well as from all claims of theoretical, representational mastery and domination. (179)

The elision of the line in the verse Zweig borrows points back toward the critical divide between Self and Other, thereby questioning the efficacy of a solipsistic philosophy. The critical divide is first made important through this elision and then on the narrative level through Virata’s multiple encounters with the Other.

Virata’s main goal in this narrative is to live without causing any harm to anyone. In a sense, as he tries not to have an impact on the world around him, he is also trying to escape duality altogether in a Schopenhauerian sense. He wants his actions to have no consequence. But even in his last and arguably most successful attempt to accomplish this, which could be seen as the fictional experimentation of Schopenhauer’s theories about asceticism, he is confronted with the Other. Even his ascetic practice as a forest monk, seemingly without any impact on human society, is challenged one day as he walks through a village and encounters a woman he does not know. In this scene, we learn that the solipsistic realm of representation, that illusionary world that Schopenhauer postulates as singular and as only Self, will be forever checked by the world outside the Self. The unknown woman here represents that outside world and perspective. Virata believed his ascetic practice to be the ultimate retreat into evil-free action. It turns out that his life as forest monk does not just have an unknown impact on the Other, but also has an unexpected murderous impact on the Other. Here is the passage with the conversation between Virata and the unknown woman:

“Ich bin nicht, den du meinst. Ich lebe abseits von den Menschen und trage keines Schicksals Schuld. Dein Auge verkennt mich.” Aber ihr Haß fuhr hinter ihm her.

“Wohl erkenne ich dich, den alle kennen! Virata bist du, den sie den Stern der Einsamkeit nennen, den sie rühmen mit den vier Namen der Tugend. Aber ich werde dich nicht rühmen, mein Mund wird schreien wider dich, bis er den letzten Richter der Lebendigen erreicht. So komm, da du fragst, und sieh, was du an mir getan.”

Und sie faßte den Erstaunten und riß ihn in das Haus, stieß eine Türe auf zu jenem Raum, der nieder und dunkel war. Und sie zog ihn zur Ecke, wo auf dem Boden etwas auf einer Matte reglos lag. Virata beugte sich nieder, und schauernd fuhr er zurück: ein Knabe lag dort tot, und seine Augen starrten zu ihm auf wie einst die Augen des Bruders in der ewigen Klage. Neben ihm aber schrie, geschüttelt von Schmerz, das Weib: “Der

dritte, der letzte war es meines Schoßes, und auch ihn hast du gemordet, du, den sie den Heiligen nennen und den Diener der Götter.”

Und als Virata fragend das Wort aufheben wollte zur Abwehr, riß sie ihn weiter: “Hier, sieh den Webstuhl, den leeren! Hier stand Paratika, mein Mann, des Tages und webte weißes Linnen, kein besserer Weber war im Lande. [...] Da vernahm er—wollte Gott, nie wäre der Fremde gekommen—von einem Jäger, daß einer wäre im Lande, der hätte Haus und Habe gelassen, um einzugehen als Irdischer in den Gott, und hätte ein Haus gebaut mit den Händen. Da wurde der Sinn Paratikas dunkler und dunkler, er sann viel des Abends, und selten sprach er ein Wort. Und eines Nachts, da ich erwachte, war er von meiner Seite gegangen in den Wald, den sie den Wald der Frommen nennen und wo du weiltest, um Gottes gedenk zu sein. Aber da er sein gedachte, vergaß er unser und vergaß, daß wir lebten von seiner Kraft. Armut kam in das Haus, es fehlte den Kindern an Brot, eines starb hin nach dem andern, und heute ist dies, das letzte, gestorben um deinetwillen. Denn du hast ihn verführt.”<sup>75</sup> (54–55)

The plight of the unknown woman of this passage, emblematic of the unknown Other, is analogous to the unknown reader of this text who may find its use of Indian themes orientalizing. However, the central philosophy of *Die Augen* contends that the incorporation of Indian themes in order to better understand one’s own views must inevitably face criticism for misrepresentation. This should not prevent the use of Indian themes. It should, however, encourage awareness of perspectives other than or outside one’s own, which Schopenhauer’s philosophy does not support. The contortion of the *Gītā* verse (especially because of the specific line elided) makes us aware of that very act, not only in this text, but in any European text that reaches to the Orient for ideas. It shows us that while freedom may be had in incorporating Indian themes, one can never assume immunity from misrepresentation or exploitation, and that “cultural appropriation [...] is inescapable when cultures come into contact” (Rogers 474).<sup>76</sup> Instead, one can recognize, like Virata, the significance of the Other in shaping the Self.

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<sup>75</sup> “‘I am not the person you suppose. I live far from the haunts of men, and have no part in anyone’s destiny. You mistake me for another.’ But she screamed after him in her hatred: ‘Full well do I know you, as all know you! You are Virata, whom they call the Star of Solitude, whom they extol with the four names of virtue. But I will not extol you. My mouth will cry aloud against you until my plaint reaches the last judge of the living. Come, since you have asked me; come and see what you have done.’ Grasping the sleeve of the amazes Virata, she dragged him into the house and opened the door leading into a dark low-ceilinged chamber. She drew him towards the corner where a motionless form was laying upon a mat. Virata stooped over the form, and then drew back shuddering, for a boy lay there dead, a boy whose eyes stared up at him like the accusing eyes of the undying brother. Close behind him stood the woman racked with pain, and she moaned: ‘He was the third, the last fruit of my womb; and you have murdered him as well as the others, you whom they call saint, and servant of the gods.’ When Virata wished to open his mouth in protest, she broke out once more: ‘Look at this loom. Look at the empty stool. Here sat Paratika, my husband, day after day, weaving white linen, for there was no more skilful weaver in the land. [...] Then came a hunter—would to God he had never set foot in the village—from whom Paratika had learned of one who had left house and possessions to devote himself, while still leading this earthly life, wholly to the service of God. With his own hands, said the hunter, he had built himself a hut. Paratika grew more and more reserved. He meditated much in the evenings, and rarely spoke. One night I awakened to find that he had left my side and had gone to the forest in which you dwell that you may meditate on God, the forest men call the Abode of the Pious. But while he thus thought of himself, he forgot us, and forgot that he lived by his labour. Poverty visited us; the children lacked bread; one died after another; today the last of the three has died, and through your act. You led Paratika astray’” (412–413).

<sup>76</sup> With the intent of describing appropriation in less evaluative terms, Richard Rogers defines cultural appropriation broadly “as the use of one culture’s symbols, artifacts, genres, rituals, or technologies by members of another culture—regardless of intent, ethics, function or outcome” (Rogers 476). He distinguishes four categories of

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appropriation: cultural exchange, cultural dominance, cultural exploitation, and transculturation. I bring his understanding of cultural appropriation in relation to Zweig's text to illustrate, as distinct from Schopenhauer's philosophy, *Die Augen*'s emphasis on recognizing the agencies of both Self and Other.

## Chapter 4

### The Fear of Postcolonialism

“Sie können England nicht verstehen, solange Sie nur die Insel kennen”, sagte [Walther Rathenau] mir. “Und nicht unseren Kontinent, solange Sie nicht mindestens einmal über ihn hinausgekommen sind. Sie sind ein freier Mensch, nützen Sie die Freiheit! [...] Warum fahren Sie nicht einmal nach Indien und nach Amerika?”<sup>77</sup>

—Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern*

#### The Indian Threat to England

On July 1, 1909 in a professed act of patriotism to his Indian motherland, Madar Lal Dhingra,<sup>78</sup> a nationalist revolutionary studying in England, assassinated Sir William Curzon Wylie, political aide-de-camp to the Secretary of State for India. Twelve days later, Stefan Zweig responded to this event in the Viennese newspaper, *Neue Freie Presse*. As with much of Stefan Zweig’s published works with political undertones, his newsprint response is less an overt political statement, less a disapproval or sanction of Dhingra’s act, than a quest to understand the act, its motivations and ramifications. Twenty-seven and recently returned from an influential journey through India and other parts of South and Southeast Asia, the writer here is a younger Zweig dealing with his own set of patriotisms to the status quo. He incorporates here his travel-induced awakening to the shortcomings of Eurocentricity as well as to the restive potential of a people kept suppressed, but he nonetheless remains reluctant to surrender support to the liberation of England’s biggest colony.

His focus consequently shifts to the moment of tension incited by Dhingra’s act, that is, the mounting fear of an Indian uprising and the analysis of that fear. In many respects, the analysis of fear is a concession to an imminent shift in balances of power. The mere possibility of British Imperialism leaves Zweig in utter awe, and in the attempt to understand how a handful of merchants and a resourceful conquistador laid claim to such a large territory, he begins to essentialize the conquered Indian as submissive and the British ruler as edifying. And in a latent comparison to Austria-Hungary which surfaces in the very last paragraph, Zweig seems to be prescribing a better way to rule, perhaps unwittingly transposing the Austro-Hungarian myth of integration onto a landscape of subjugation. In this way, Zweig does criticize the British for the way of their rule, but does not criticize the rule itself, for a blanket denunciation of the rule would require a denunciation of Austro-Hungarian imperialism, as well. For a young Zweig grappling with visions of a postnational Europe and even loyalty to the Habsburg supranational myth, the collapse of the British Empire could cause repercussions that would split asunder European populations along nationalist lines. Through the analysis of the Indian threat to Britain,

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<sup>77</sup> “You cannot understand England,” said [Walther] Rathenau, “as long as you just know the island, nor our continent of Europe unless you have been outside it at least once. You are a free man, make use of your freedom. [...] Why don’t you go to India, and to America?” (Prater 40). “Such was the challenging question put to Zweig by Walther Rathenau during a late-night conversation in Berlin. On that June evening in 1907 the two of them had talked at length about literature, politics and foreign countries [...] Rathenau said that one could only understand Britain if one had viewed the colonial system from a different perspective” (Matuschek 85).

<sup>78</sup> According to some records, his name is spelled Madan Lal Dhingra.

Zweig is forced to confront the borders of his own vision of a postnational Europe: would erasing borders in the spirit of European inclusion require a supervising rule of power?

This chapter first situates Zweig's essay in the milieu of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Viennese literature. This helps to explain the complexity of Zweig's politically guarded response in his analysis of a squarely political act. Is Zweig's focus on fear, his reluctance to disapprove or sanction Madar Lal Dhingra's act, and his awestruck and elaborate metaphorical descriptions of British rule over India indebted to the ostensibly apolitical scene of Viennese Modernism? To what extent is Zweig's stance here actually apolitical? Even though this essay does not denounce colonial rule, I contend that it questions the viability and sustainability of colonial rule. As such, it refers to the cusp of a major geopolitical shift from colonial to postcolonial structures and begins to reflect, even if Eurocentrically, on the cultural legacy of British colonialism in India. Identifying the postcoloniality of this text reveals the self-reflective and self-critical elements of this essay as well as its incipient curiosity for hybridity. It also reveals a theme picked up in many of Zweig's writings: the resistance to viewing the world through a fixed hegemonic lens. Zweig was not naïve about this pursuit to look beyond contentious dynamics of power. Many of Zweig's fictional protagonists, including the previously at-length analyzed Virata of *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders*, characterize this struggle to dodge conscription into hegemony. Often considered a baffling blip in Zweig's personal history, his patriotic avowal during WWI in fact primed a pendular swing toward his postwar disavowal of pugnacious nations and adherence to "defeatism," an extreme version of pacifism.

Also in this chapter, due to strikingly similar content and language, I compare Zweig's examination of British fear in the wake of this assassination to the contemporary landscape of fear that has emerged and proliferated in the wake of terrorist attacks. I argue that the fear of terrorism, as with the early twentieth century British fear of an Indian uprising, creates a militant governmental response that has become a necessary tool in securing national consciousness. Like Zweig who describes the watchful British eye over India's Hindu populace with suspicion, in my polemic of the twenty-first century fear of terrorism, I turn to contemporary political issues in the United States and Germany to call attention to the "useful" persuasiveness of fear for governmental implementation of mass surveillance.

## **Postcolonialism in the Midst of Viennese Modernism**

Postcolonialism does not just refer to ideas and things *after* the colonial era. While this field of study may have emerged at a time when the most stubborn colonial structures were crumbling, it has become a field that has become difficult to define temporally and spatially because the formal closure of the colonial era spanned three centuries over variously experienced and understood relations between all kinds of colonizers and colonized peoples (Loomba 12–13). Even ideologically, the term postcolonialism has been duly contested: "if the inequities of colonial rule have not been erased, it is perhaps premature to claim the demise of colonialism" (Loomba 12). Postcolonialism highlights everything from the bitter aftereffects of colonial rule in decolonized territories to the visions of postcoloniality during the colonial era. It includes the many ignored or misrepresented texts written during the colonial era that in fact question and criticize the colonialist hegemonic binary. Of course this would include the ever-important texts of struggle and revolt written by the colonized. But unexpected glimmers of postcolonialism can be found even in texts written from centers of power. In the more complex colonialism of early

20<sup>th</sup> century Austria-Hungary—with its comparative lack of overseas colonies<sup>79</sup> and Habsburg myth of supranational alliance—a new approach to literature known as Viennese Modernism emerged, a major tenet of which was to cultivate freedom from inherited, oppressive political structures. A common assessment of this literary period is its disinterest in politics, but in finding unexpected glimmers of postcolonialism in the works of turn-of-the-century Viennese authors, scholars have begun to illuminate that very disinterest as self-reflection and subsequent self-critique, both hallmarks of postcolonial literature. Even Zweig who attempts to write this essay on the 1909 British-Indian conflict in a distanced, non-participatory tone makes a reference to the close-to-home Austro-Hungarian-Bosnian 1908–09 conflict. As I explain later, this reference is an important key to unlocking the political undertone to his entire essay.

Susanne Zantop and others define postcolonial literature as that which, from all angles, is critical of its own position in a hegemonic system (Lützel). Drawing on this definition, Robert Lemon explores in his *Imperial Messages: Orientalism as Self-Critique in the Habsburg Fin de Siècle* how Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Robert Musil and Franz Kafka use Oriental themes in a self-reflective and self-critical manner. In Hofmannsthal's early works that refer to an "Arabia" or "China," for example, Lemon finds not only a self-reflective stance, but also a questioning of "the basic viability of imperialism and [a challenging of] received notions of national identity" (Lemon 15). Likewise, Stefan Jonsson, in *Subject Without Nation: Robert Musil and the History of Modern Identity*, examines Robert Musil's novel *The Man Without Qualities* for clues that point to postcoloniality within Viennese Modernism. He writes

Although the Austro-Hungarian Empire had no overseas colonies, it ruled over a vast array of nationalities, and in terms of *cultural* diversity and conflict it is therefore comparable to the major colonial powers. The rapid modernization of the empire and its eventual collapse in 1918 triggered an intense intellectual activity commonly discussed under rubrics such as "fin-de-siècle Vienna" or modernite viennoise. Behind these labels, I would like to suggest, we find a historical experience that is structurally akin to a phenomenon that was to affect other European states only later, the experience of postcoloniality. Indeed, Austria's postimperial culture was characterized not only by explosive conflicts between a residual feudal system and an emerging capitalist society, but also by the struggle between a crumbling imperial regime and various movements of what we today would call identity politics [...]. (Jonsson x)

Jonsson goes so far as to argue that the historical foundations of postcolonialism are found in Viennese Modernism. As I explore Stefan Zweig's essay, "Die indische Gefahr für England," we learn once again that the rumbles of revolt on the global scale struck a chord in the writers of Vienna who began to reexamine Austria-Hungary as a colonial power. Political concerns, especially in the form of self-reflective questions on ethnicity and nationhood, were not absent in this ostensibly apolitical period of cultural production.

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<sup>79</sup> While without extensive overseas colonial holdings like Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, the Dutch Republic and even Germany, Austria-Hungary was not devoid of overseas colonial interests, and was greatly benefitting from the exploits of its European neighbors. It had briefly taken ownership over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands from 1778–1783 (Lodrick), claimed unpopulated land near the North Pole now known as Franz Josef Land (The Editors) and had control of concession territories in Tianjin, China from 1902–1917 (Boxer, Baruch).

Unlike postcolonialism, Viennese Modernism is a period of literature, art and culture that is strongly bound spatially and temporally—1890–1910 Vienna. It is often argued that, especially in comparison to the “eminently political” *Vormärz* literary period, Viennese Modernism, “with its aesthetic foundation in *l’art pour l’art*, was curiously apolitical even in its passive anticipation of change” (Seeba, *Denkbilder* 28). For his entire life, Stefan Zweig, who considered himself a part of the intellectual milieu of Young Vienna, struggled with the extrication of art from politics. How could this distancing be achieved, and would not such an extrication be a political statement in itself?

Skipping momentarily forward past Viennese Modernism, toward the maddening end of the Great War, we see this struggle clearly in Zweig’s relationship to war. He writes, “I think I have expunged all trace of nationalism from my heart; and yet I suffer, because Austria accepts everything, because she no longer defends herself” (Prater 106). Caught in a time of violent geopolitical shifts, Zweig took an extreme stance to find a solution to this struggle. A proponent of humanism over national patriotism, Zweig banded together with a pacifist group of writers and artists who wished to create a unity outside of national concerns. Their art would be the antidote to war. But unlike the pacifists who were writing against war, Zweig took a step further and was writing against the *idea* of war altogether: “By temperament submissive and by nature conciliatory, Zweig was repelled by the activists of peace almost as much as he was by the trumpeters of war. Having no affinity with activists in either camp, he was torn by his all-embracing but conflicting sympathies” (Steiman 74). Zweig laid out his stance in a treatise on defeatism, an extreme form of pacifism. In “Bekanntnis zum Defaitismus,” he writes “We want neither victory nor defeat for anyone, we are enemies of victory and friends of renunciation; Europe must be released from her torment, at any price” (Prater 103). Vivian Liska, in “A Spectral Mirror Image. Stefan Zweig and his Critics,” writes, “in explaining his reluctance to take political action Zweig consistently invoked values deriving from his liberal humanist creed: freedom, dignity, and a universalist ethos that prevented him from joining warring parties or taking sides for what he perceived to be particularist causes” (Liska 211).

His stance, which went so far as to glorify the defeated (“to seek the renewal of the spirit in defeat itself”), put him at odds with his strongest pacifist allies such as Romaine Rolland, who responded, “I am no Buddhist or Tolstoyan non-resister, I do not see myself in the role of the conquered” (Prater 103). Rolland wrote in his diary: “I say to the power that hurls me to the ground: ‘You will not conquer the spirit, it will conquer you’” (Prater 103). In this manner, Zweig’s pacifist friends alerted him of the danger and impossibility of a complete separation from politics. The pacifists stood up against nationalism, whereas the defeatists ran away from nationalism, as if to say, “If we forget politics, it will cease to exist” (Steiman 73). For some,

Zweig’s personal wealth, his worldwide success, and his privileged social position as an influential and distinguished man of letters were held against him when he refused to join the political struggles of his time. Zweig indeed repeatedly expressed his reluctance to participate in political action and his refusal to “contaminate” literature with political concerns. He was accordingly attacked for selfishness, cowardice, and lack of solidarity with those who were less protected and fortunate than himself, with the poor and the jobless, the oppressed and the prosecuted, and above all with his suffering fellow Jews. (Liska 210)

Portraits of Zweig written in the 1980s and 1990s highlight Zweig's continued apoliticism as irresponsibility, placing him at variance with writers "in the early 1930s who were actively fighting the rise of fascism" as well as with "disappointed friends" or "émigrés [...] who were begging Zweig for help. Since that time many documents have emerged that prove Zweig's discrete generosity and support for friends and acquaintances, and new readings of his work [like my own] have uncovered hidden political dimensions of his writings" (Liska 210).

Returning to the prewar period, we see that Zweig's struggle between art and politics existed before his treatise on defeatism, apparent in some of his writings from the period of Viennese Modernism, where he fully engaged with the culture of the turn-of-the-century and all its youthful glamour. Hermann Bahr's "Die Moderne," a kind of literary appeal to painterly French impressionism, inaugurated Viennese Modernism in 1890 as "the experience of temporality, of short-lived sensation, of dream-like intuitions of the ethereal, [and] of elusive time" (Seeba 25). Bahr writes against the past, insisting a modern ethos that shakes away the haunting ghosts of their forefathers, who cannot and should not have a hold on the culture of their time. Bahr writes, "Wir wollen die faule Vergangenheit von uns abschütteln, die, lange verblüht, unsere Seele in fahlem Laube erstickt. Gegenwart wollen wir sein. [...] Leer müssen wir werden, leer von aller Lehre, von allem Glauben, von aller Wissenschaft der Väter, ganz leer. Dann können wir uns füllen" (Bahr 3). Arthur Schnitzler, another prominent Viennese Modernist, also lambasted the past: "Den umheimlichsten von allen: die Vergangenheit. Diese tückische unsterbliche Vergangenheit, gegen die man sich nicht auflehnen, die man über sich ergehen lassen muß wie ein Schicksal" (Schnitzler).

Zweig, then a teenager inspired by Bahr and other members of Young Vienna who were "living proof that it was not necessary to be advanced in years to be great in achievement" (Prater 10), found in the new century a hope for something new. Stefan Zweig and his schoolmates felt the pressure of the past that Bahr and Schnitzler were beginning to write against: "[...] the old State, ruled by an aged emperor and almost equally aged ministers, was instinctively against youth, with its desire for haste and radical change [...]" (Prater 7). But unlike Bahr's extreme case in *Die Moderne*, Zweig was not against all that came before. While he may have been critical of the old State, his cherished collection of autographs of cultural icons (including at that time those of Goethe, Wieland, Anzengruber, and Beethoven) point to an inspiration from authors past (Prater 13). Indeed, Zweig was also caught by the other, quite contradictory feature of Viennese Modernism, which was "marked by a conservative, nostalgic sense of imminent loss of trust and purpose to the acceleration of time, historical fluctuation and political uncertainty" (Seeba 25). We find Zweig's criticism of the past, then, in his then incipient interest for international literature; for Zweig, internationalism became a mark of that purportedly apolitical motto of Viennese Modernism, art for art's sake. The connection between the criticism of the past and internationalism becomes ever clearer when we see that, later in life, Zweig confronted the past when used for deterministically genealogical or nationalistic purposes, when stories of exclusive origins trumped those of postnational brotherhood.

A young Zweig may have hoped to look beyond geopolitical and linguistic borders to think beyond politics. As a successful translator during the first decade of the new century, Zweig was taken by the Europeanness of the works he translated. Their reach beyond national borders coincided with his vision of the future. His focus was on the art of the words, not dissimilar to the focus of his *Sprachskepsis* contemporaries, whose questions about identity arguably had less to do with national politics than with reflections on language. But even *Sprachskepsis*, a cornerstone of Viennese Modernism, was tied up with nationality and can be

seen as significantly political, especially in retrospect. The lamentation over the failures of language “is undoubtedly involved in the kind of identity crisis that was experienced, recognized and often suffered [more] by Jewish modernists than by their non-Jewish contemporaries” (Seeba 40). Although “his Jewishness [was] of secondary importance,” Zweig found himself repeatedly confronted with those intent on establishing his Jewishness as integral to his identity: later in life, Zweig fled London soon after the Machtergreifung of Austria, bearing witness to his books catching fire in the Nazi book burnings. In early twentieth century Austria-Hungary, however, the concept of internationalism, possibly even postnationalism, grabbed Zweig’s interest as a foil to identity politics that would emerge in the wake of what he and his contemporaries seemed to portend: the end of Empire.

In his autobiographical reflection on this time, Zweig situates himself squarely in the legendary cafés of Vienna, the happening site of Modernism. Here, in this café culture of art for art’s sake, internationalism was an optimistic tool that helped orient the intellect. In *Die Welt von Gestern*, he writes:

Aber unsere beste Bildungsstätte für alles Neue blieb das Kaffeehaus. [...] So wußten wir alles, was in der Welt vorging [...] nichts hat vielleicht so viel zur intellektuellen Beweglichkeit und internationalen Orientierung des Österreichers beigetragen, als daß er im Kaffeehaus sich über alle Vorgänge der Welt so umfassend orientieren und sie zugleich im freundschaftlichen Kreise diskutieren konnte. (57–58)

For all the insistence upon and belief in a separation of art from politics and of literature from nationalism, the turbulence of European colonialism shook politics into ubiquity, such that internationalism was put to question as an apolitical endeavor. Now,

with feverish anxiety the habitués of the coffee houses and beer gardens [...] discussed the political and military manoeuvres to the east, their music and their chess games forgotten [...] Zweig was acutely aware of the impending conflict: “I cannot explain it otherwise than by this surplus of force,” he later wrote in his autobiography, “a tragic consequence of the internal dynamism that had accumulated in those forty years of peace, and now sought violent release.” (Allday 88–89)

Zweig’s hope for postnational Europeanness had to deal with questions about Europe’s reach and about Europe’s internal divisions. Which geopolitical and linguistic borders were to be transgressed, which to be upheld? As Yōko Tawada may contentiously ask, where did Europe begin and end? Even if Zweig’s incipient interest in internationality was wishfully apolitical, politics had crept in. As Viennese Modernism was drawing to a close at the eve of the Great War, Zweig’s writings on international topics were emboldened by an increasingly political agenda.

Stefan Zweig’s extensive travel catalyzed the emergence of international politics into his purview. He traveled the world and was challenged by his encounters, often feeling an increased sense of foreignness, which may belie his epistolary admission in 1909 that “The globe itself is still my homeland” (Prater 37). He traveled extensively in the first decade of the 20th century, all over Europe as well as to South and Southeast Asia and Algiers. In 1911 and 1912 he travelled to the US, Panama and the Caribbean. As his distance from continental Europe stretched, so did his sense of familiarity. England, too, seemed notably different. People and places felt foreign to him

and he felt foreign to them, a feeling which may have reached its climax in his report on Benares, India. He writes, “Und Fremdheit, unüberwindbare Fremdheit, das ist das letzte Empfinden gegenüber allen den Gefühlen dieses Volkes” (Zweig, “Benares.” 178). Zweig did not come away from India with the Romantic image he had been primed to receive. Instead, India awakened in him an attunement to the stark inequities that divide the world, often the result of identity politics. As I explain in the previous chapter, he found the caste system of India abhorrent, and likened it to the craze for racial purity in the West. If India, and the other places he visited, were so foreign to Zweig, why was he such a strong proponent of internationalism?

Internationalism and especially postnationalism signaled an end to identity politics, heralded the end of the concerns for war, for victory or defeat, for the need to defend identities wrapped up with inherited ideologies. Certainly this was a stance easier acquired from the seat of bourgeois luxury, from the cafés of Vienna that were far-removed from the restive territories under Viennese authority.

His mental vision of Europe was frontierless, one country blending almost unnoticeably with another; and the whole gathered together in an amalgamation of brotherhood based on an ever-increasing devotion to culture. For a while he determinedly shut his eyes to the undercurrents of discontent which had disturbed him only recently, and succeeded in deluding himself that Austria and Germany, indeed the whole of Europe, represented a social paradise even for the armies of the workless and underprivileged. (Allday 62)

When, upon Zweig’s recent return from India, an Indian nationalist killed a British officer in London, Zweig was confronted with his internationalist/postnationalist vision. He responds in an essay that seeks less to understand India or Europe per se, but to get at a beguiling and disturbing hallmark of human behavior salient for most European cultures with colonial histories: the impulse to dominate, to subjugate, to conquer and to colonize. More beguiling, yet equally disturbing, however, is the counter-impulse that challenges Zweig’s notion of a peaceful international/postnational Europe: the impulse to overthrow, to revolt, to emancipate and to liberate oneself—the postcolonial question.

### **The Fascination with Empire**

In 1909, Zweig writes a postcolonial text called, “Die indische Gefahr für England. (Anlässlich der politischen Mordtat eines jungen Hindu).” I refer to it as postcolonial because its main concerns are about a shifting balance of power. It is therefore important to note that this text is neither postcolonial in a temporal sense (it is not a text written after the end of a colonial era) nor in a wholly postmodern sense (it is not a text that seeks to dismantle notions of hierarchical structures of power). Unlike most texts we may ascribe to postcolonialism, this one does not look upon the shifting balance of power from the perspective of hope felt by those fighting for independence. Instead, this text looks upon the shifting balance of power primarily from the perspective of surmounting fear felt by the colonizer recognizing an imminent major geopolitical change. But this text cannot be considered colonial, that is, wholly supportive of colonialism. Despite Zweig’s acclaim of certain aspects of British rule in India, his awestruck disbelief in the sheer magnitude of this rule, his probing of unjust colonial practices and his concern for the displaced “Mischling” disclose his doubts about the efficacy of colonial rule.

Zweig begins this essay with the description of a single act, the assassination by Madar Lal Dhingra of Sir William Curzon Wyllie, the Aide-de-Camp of the British Viceroy to India. But the essay becomes an exercise in understanding repercussion, as if to recall the “shot heard ‘round the world,” Emerson’s poetic rendition of the beginnings of the American Revolution, later to be ascribed to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and the start of the Great War. Madar Lal Dhingra’s shot, indeed four shots that killed Wyllie and two more not-premeditated shots that struck and killed Dr. Cowas Lalcaca, did not directly erupt into a full-blown uprising, but propelled the growing anti-colonialist sentiment in India and elsewhere into European awareness, portending a coming storm, feeding a hungry fear. Zweig writes, “Und ängstlich horchen nun alle nach Osten, ob von dem fernen Riesenreiche grollendes, gefährliches Echo käme, das lang gefürchtete Gewitter: der Aufstand Indiens” (9). The echoing sound of the shots that killed the ADC in London is itself an echo of a much greater rebellious force.

Zweig recognizes the complexity of the colonial relationship. But he gets caught in the sheer possibility of colonialism, especially with regard to the rule of such a vast land and large populace as India under a few British officers. He seems transfixed by the “Eroberung eines solchen Riesenreiches durch eine Handvoll Kaufleute und einen genialen Konquistador” (9). So taken by this structure of power, he makes a visual comparison to impressive Mughal structures in order to clarify his fascination with the possibility of the British Empire: “Ich weiß nicht, ob in Indien trotz der herrlichen, oft traumhaft schönen Bauten der Mogulen etwas geistig Faszinierendes gibt, als die sinnfällige Unwahrscheinlichkeit und ebenso sinnfällige Tatsächlichkeit des englischen Imperiums” (11). This comparison highlights the relationship of British Colonial India to that which preceded it, Mughal India. The Mughal Empire left its mark on India, leaving behind structures like the Taj Mahal that would come to represent India on an international scale well beyond Zweig’s time. Zweig wrote two poems reflecting on his travels to India, one of which is titled, “Taj Mahal.” In this poem, Zweig treats the Taj Mahal not unlike his fascination with the British presence in India. The Taj Mahal is a structure that is unbelievably grandiose, a great presence that must be tempered by its *Schein*—what it appears to be—in order to grasp it.

The poem begins with the reflection of the Taj Mahal in a pond, seemingly a toy in its mirror-image miniaturization; and it ends with the petrification of emotional pain, where the Taj Mahal, shining like a tear that has turned to marble, is seemingly a dream. In the middle of the poem, however, there is an exclamation to its profundity, a command that calls its reader to recognize its architectural grandeur and that it is, in fact, an authoritative structure, not a toy, not a dream: “Und sieh, es ist ein Bau!”

Taj Mahal

*Grabdenkmal Muntaz Mahals in Delhi*

Im Teiche, wo klarspiegelnd und genau  
Die weißen Formen sich als Bild verkleinern,  
Scheint er ein Spielzeug. Zart und elfenbeinern,  
Wie unter mattem Glas liegt er zur Schau;  
(Man hätte beinah Furcht, ihn zu zerbrechen).

Und dann ein Blick: Und sieh, es ist ein Bau!  
Aufregend, blendend, makellos und steinern

Steigt er empor, löst blinkend seine Flächen  
Vom Blättergrün und steigt in immer reinern  
Bewegungen empor ins blanke Blau,

Auf, auf ins Licht, und strahlt im Sonnenfunkeln,  
Als atmeten aus seiner Brust noch jene  
Vergangnen Herzen in der kühlen Krypte  
(Der große Fürst und die geliebte Frau).

Doch abends scheint er Traum. Wie eine Träne,  
Die marmorn wurde, glänzt er in das Dunkel  
Den Schmerz um die entschwundene Geliebte. (Zweig, "Taj Mahal" 149)

In this poem, the Taj Mahal is depicted as both solid and breakable, likened to delicate glass that one is afraid to shatter.

In Zweig's essay, we see an analogous depiction of the British Empire as it is compared to Mughal structures. The Empire is solid, has an unfathomable stronghold on hundreds of millions of people via a minority population of stationed British officers. But it is also breakable, has to withstand the thunder of revolt, a storm portended by Dyingra's shots. Zweig writes also of the British Empire's own structures, the unexpected architectural landscape that dominates one's arrival to India, so overpowering that from a distance, as one approaches by sea, one's first impression is of England. Though their human presence is limited in number, their mark is indelible.

[...] diese Wenigen geben dem heutigen Indien die Signatur. Das Schiff, das in den Hafen von Bombay steuert oder den niederen Hooghly hinauf nach Kalkutta, sieht zuerst hohe Kathedralen, stattliche Bauten im englisch-gotischen Stil, Docks wie Glasgow und Liverpool: die Front, die Stirne, der erste Eindruck gegen die Ferne ist England.

What Zweig recognizes as the appearance (*Schein*) of India is at once this image of England and the disbelief therein, indicating therewith the precariousness of empire. He is, by calling attention to massive structural symbols of empires past, prophesying the British Empire's impermanence. Even though these structures—here, the cathedrals and docks—may remain as England's signature upon India, England's reign is bound to be hollowed out from within their walls. Like the Taj Mahal which entombs not only a dead love but the memory of empire at its cultural zenith, these British structures will also become tombs of a colonial past.

Zweig's fascination with the British Empire is not an unfettered approval of empire. It has more to do with the simultaneous implausibility and actuality of empire. Nevertheless, Zweig's awestruck reaction to the British Empire is an unwillingness to recognize the problems of conquest. And in order to understand the possibility of empire, he shrewdly holds India accountable for her own subjugation. He writes, "Diese Organisation, dies Bändigen eines ungeheuren Widerstandes durch Politik, Gewalt und geistige Superiorität, ist für einen modernen Menschen das größte Wunder in Indien" (11). He tries to reason through his wonder, referencing thereby historical patterns of colonization, times when India was subjugated under the Mughals, the Mongols, the Marathas, the Persians, the French, the Portuguese, and finally the British. He concludes that the Indian, especially "the Hindu race," is accustomed to subjugation. His

reasoning therefore falls heavy on the shoulders of the culpable Indian and circumvents any blame to conquest: “Seit Jahrhunderten ist diese durch Mangel an Fleischgenuß, durch die Passivität ihres religiösen Empfindens geschwächte Rasse gewohnt, die Beute von Invasionen zu sein” (13). Here, India’s passivity has become blameworthy for its history of subjugation. In a great twist of fate, not to mention twist of connotation, India’s “passivity”—in the form of non-cooperation and non-violence—later became a key weapon in the fight for national independence.

Though he regards the Indian as weak, Zweig also points to the impossibility of treating “the” Indian en masse, especially with respect to understanding an Indian perspective on British occupation of India. Is Dhingra’s act of murder really a portent of a collective uprising, or merely the act of a nationalist fanatic? In either case, tension has mounted: “Aber wieder ist die Spannung gewachsen, unterirdisches Rollen erschüttert das Land. Die indische Gefahr ist wach geworden” (12). With an astute hint of postmodernism, he writes:

[...] es ist kaum möglich, zu bestimmen, wie weit sie organisiert oder vereinzelt, untätig oder vorbereitet ist, unmöglich zu sagen, wie der Inder über die englische Herrschaft denkt. Vor allem weil “der” Inder ein nicht existierender Begriff ist. Indien ist ein Konglomerat differenter Rassen. Über hundert Sprachen werden gesprochen, 70 Millionen Mohammedaner, viele Millionen Buddhisten sind den Hindus eingesprengt, die Hindus selbst durch die Schranken der Kasten in unsagbarem Abstand von einander gehalten. (12)

For Zweig, the diversity of India’s populace makes the formation of a unifying anti-colonial group unimaginable. Whereas previous failed uprisings, like the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, had been formed on the basis of religious intolerance, a new uprising seeking success would require unification across religious, caste and race lines. A new uprising would require the very kind of unification that the British have used to keep the Indian under control. According to Zweig, the British hold onto the concept of “the” Indian for ease of suppression. For this very reason, the act of one Indian nationalist is cause for great alarm: “Daß Unruhe im Lande stärker und stärker wühlt, erkennt man eigentlich nur an der steigenden Unruhe der Engländer, an den Konzessionen der Regierung und dem Wetterleuchten der Attentate” (13).

### **Terrorism, Fear, Surveillance... and Nationhood**

Zweig’s description of rising fear is not unlike contemporary rhetoric used to grapple with terrorism. In this section, by drawing a comparison between the threat to empire of Zweig’s time and the threat to nation of our time, I explain how our fear of terrorism is indebted to our sense of national security, as the early 20<sup>th</sup> century British fear of an Indian uprising was indebted to their sense of imperial security. Terrorism wreaks havoc to borders: imperial, national, or otherwise. When destructive acts threaten the control over an environment to which one feels a right, a palpable, systemic fear arises. The search for a responsible party ensues in the wake of this fear. Even though Dhingra was caught and tried, Zweig observes in his essay that “the” Indian emerges as a source of general fear because Dhingra was identified as a visible bolt of lightning signaling the arrival of a much larger storm.

In contemporary discourse, “the” terrorist often emerges as a scapegoat image of the enemy. In the post 9/11 landscape, as a few particular culprits were identified, their

characteristics became emblematic of “the” terrorist. “The” terrorist thereby persistently shoulders the characteristics of a few fanatics, and is unfortunately frequently pegged as the foreign-language speaking, long-bearded, turbaned, headscarfed Muslim/Sikh/Middle Eastern/Person of Color other. As a result, under the ruse of “intelligence gathering,” whole groups of people are watched. The same questions that Zweig asked as he assumed the perspective of the British could be asked from the perspective of many national governments trying to explain their local and international surveillance measures.

Zweig writes about surveillance after explaining the spark that led to the Sepoy Mutiny, the religious-based revolt of 1857. He writes that poorly paid, Hindu soldiers were forced to work with rifle cartridges smeared with cow fat, and “Nun ist dem Hindu die Kuh, die Milch spendende ‘Mutter des Menschen,’ das heiligste Tier” (13). The bloody revolution failed, and its result was heavy surveillance: “Seither wurde mit doppelter Sorgfalt das religiöse Gefühl geachtet” (13). Similarly, in the aftermath of 9/11, brandishing the irrational idea that the perpetrators of the attacks spoke on behalf of all Muslim communities, U.S. government surveillance of Muslim-American citizens and residents proliferated. Fear-mongering conceived the need for heavy surveillance through the **Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001**, otherwise known as The Patriot Act. The use of a backronym—“a specially constructed acronym created to fit an existing word” (“Backronym”)—for the Patriot Act underscores the intention of redefining citizenship via a politics of fear.

In New York City, hit particularly hard by the attacks, the reaction was severe, and the New York Police Department created what was known as the Demographics Unit: “The goal was to identify the mundane locations where a would-be terrorist could blend into society. Plainclothes detectives looked for ‘hot spots’ of radicalization that might give the police an early warning about terrorist plots” (Apuzzo and Goldstein). In other words, “Detectives were told to chat up the employees at Muslim-owned businesses and ‘gauge sentiment’ about America and foreign policy. Through maps and photographs, the police noted where Albanian men played chess in the afternoon, where Egyptians watched soccer and where South Asians played cricket” (Apuzzo and Goldstein). Only recently has the NYPD abandoned the “secretive program that dispatched plainclothes detectives into Muslim neighborhoods to eavesdrop on conversations and built detailed files on where people ate, prayed and shopped [...]” (Apuzzo and Goldstein). Nevertheless, anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. still runs deep. Furthermore, even if these programs intended to keep surveillance on particular non-majoritarian religious, ethnic, or racial groups are discontinued, on the basis that “[a]fter years of collecting information [...] the police acknowledged that it never generated a lead” (Apuzzo and Goldstein), widespread government surveillance of civilian activity continues. This surveillance, spearheaded in the U.S. by the National Security Administration, while professedly still targeted, is so rampant that it has caused major international scandal in recent years, with global leaders like Angela Merkel likening U.S. intelligence gathering to that of the Stasi of former East Germany (Sanger and Smale). With the advent of bulk data collection, a new approach to combating terrorism develops. If the surveillance of particular groups is suspended, and widespread surveillance takes its place, then the currently practiced solution to combating terrorism is to assume that everyone is a threat.

While Merkel chided the Obama Administration for spying on its ally, the German government has its own track-record of surveillance which has disturbed many of its citizens. In 2005, three marketing agencies in Hamburg launched a massive media blitz, an advertising

campaign entitled, “Du bist Deutschland,” devised to ignite a debate within Germany about patriotism (Ax). In many ways, this campaign—including pervasive TV spots,<sup>80</sup> internet ads, posters, and even announcements on food packaging—departed from conservative conceptions of “das deutsche Volk” in favor of a multicultural and multiethnic Germany: “Die Kampagne bemüht sich um ein verloren geglaubtes ‘Wir-Gefühl,’ das wichtig ist für die aktive Gestaltung der gemeinsamen Zukunft” (Rüter). While the campaign had a significant appeal and high approval rating, its critics launched attacks not only on the motives of a political campaign funded principally by private advertising companies and private business, but also on its resonance with a 1934 rally poster that bore Hitler’s stern face above the statement, “Denn du bist Deutschland” (Freiburg and Haas). Perhaps the strongest criticism, however, came from a 2009 internet video parody of the well-known TV spot, which sought to highlight the increasingly unrestrained surveillance society as the German government’s most exercised method of establishing national consciousness. Receiving far more media attention than any other of the innumerable satires of the campaign, this parody, entitled, “Du bist Terrorist,” took cues from the original campaign in order to expose a hidden, yet influential aspect of national culture that resonated strongly with the public. The website, where the video can be found, makes the following claims:

Gemeinsam für ein sicheres Deutschland. Die Kampagne „Du bist Deutschland“ war 2005 der Beginn einer positiven Stimmungswelle im ganzen Land. Diese gebündelte Energie hat sich 2009 umgekehrt, denn nun bist du potenzieller Terrorist und wirst überwacht. (“DuBistTerrorist.de ~ Deutschland Aus Politikeraugen”)

In this parody, the map of Germany is populated by cartoon symbols of Germany’s approximately 82 million citizens, each followed by the watchful eye of a surveillance camera.

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<sup>80</sup> See original TV Spot: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bq\\_MRWewv80](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bq_MRWewv80)



Webpage of the newer, 2007/08 “Du Bist Deutschland” campaign focused on children.  
 (“Du Bist Deutschland ~ Deutschland Aus Kinderaugen”)



Webpage of the 2009 “Du bist Terrorist” satire.  
 (“DuBistTerrorist.de ~ Deutschland Aus Politikeraugen”)

Ilija Trojanow, a contemporary Bulgarian-German writer recently denied entry into the United States upon the eve of an address he was meant to give at the 2013 German Studies Association in Denver, ostensibly on account of his and Julie Zeh's co-authored controversial book, *Angriff auf die Freiheit: Sicherheitswahn, Überwachungsstaat und der Abbau bürgerlicher Rechte*, wrote therein that the contemporary globally widespread culture of mass surveillance is, by no means, fictional. Fear has taken hold of national governments as their primary operating standard: "Dies ist keine Science-fiction. Wir wiederholen: *Keine* Science-fiction. Dies ist nicht 1984 in Ozeanien, sondern das Jahr 2009 in der Bundesrepublik" (Trojanow and Zeh 10). However we try to distance Orwell's dystopia as the mark of fiction, Big Brother has managed to climb out of 1984 and—in the name of security—keep its watchful eye on our every recorded move, even on these words soon to be uploaded onto a cloud and tucked away in digital library stacks.

The makers of the "Du bist Terrorist" video as well as Trojanow and Zeh are certainly not alone in their concern and reproach for national governments that thrive on a politics of fear. Indeed, the impulse to identify a threat through surveillance is a concept that is as old as the concept of nation itself. In a short essay defining the term *nation*, Wolfgang Kaschuba writes, "Nationales Denken ging stets von einem klaren 'Eigen und Fremd' aus, von einem permanenten und unauflösbaren Gegensatz des 'Wir und Die'" (Kaschuba 1). Nationhood is, to a large degree, formed, even upheld, as a means to separate from an Other. The Other ("die Anderen"/"them") is as integral to nationhood as the Self ("wir"/"us"), and surveillance measures are thus installed to ensure the continued existence of the Other.

But what happens when this Other is increasingly difficult to identify? How can one defend itself or fight against an unknown or unknowable Other? How is it possible that the Other is among/within/one of us? In the U.S., the exponential rise in surveillance measures and the relatively recent formation of the Department of Homeland Security are two important signals of the colossal role that fear plays in defining nationhood. These copiously funded governmental structures founded and expanded in the years following 9/11 are not just responding to "real" threat, but are institutionalizing threat, thereby perpetually instituting fear. It no longer matters whether the Other is identifiable; actually, the unidentifiable Other is far more effective as a tool to generate national consciousness. The U.S. government always keeps a steady flow of identifiable Others, including, but not limited to illegal immigrants, undocumented workers, and criminals. But these Others—society's pariahs—do not hold the nation in their target, and therefore do little to generate a fear great enough for the national stage. On the other hand, in contemporary, international political parlance, "the" terrorist is construed as an omnipotent entity whose sole target is to obliterate the nation-state, to annihilate the nation as a whole and at its core, pariahs and all. In fact, the greater and more unidentifiable "the" terrorist is construed, the greater its efficacy in bringing together a nation as diverse as the United States. It may seem contradictory when surveillance measures are directed toward the very people such measures seeks to defend. But to establish "the" terrorist Other among us is the shrewdest tactic in indefinitely shoring up national consciousness. As the biggest Other, "the" terrorist, becomes nebulous in its great mass, its amorphousness, and its pervasiveness, the mere notion of it is enough to awaken both national sentiment and international efforts at sustaining national sentiment with nations fighting terrorism together. The maintained presence of a simultaneously nebulous and neighborly terrorist via a system of mass surveillance and a politics of fear keeps the citizen on constant alert. If the national threat is ever-present, so too will be that which is threatened—the nation.

It may seem that we have gone far afield, but my point here is that the massive, unidentifiable threat that Stefan Zweig highlights in his analysis of England's reaction to Madar Lal Dhingra's act is analogous to terrorism in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>81</sup> Just as a terrorist act is deemed a powerful threat to national security, so too was Dhingra's act deemed a threat to imperial security. Uncomfortable as it may be, drawing a comparison between the British reaction to Dhingra's act and contemporary reactions to acts of terrorism not only exposes a common fear, but puts to question the borders that modern nation-states seek so direly to protect. To what extent are modern nation-states, though ostensibly without extensive colonial holdings, involved in imperial practices? By no means is this comparison an exoneration of acts of terrorism. On the contrary, such a comparison is intended to question the militant nature of acts implemented by powerful nation-states in the name of security, justice, and goodwill. When Dhingra was placed on trial, eighteen days after the assassination and six days after Stefan Zweig's essay appeared in *Neue Freie Presse*, he pleaded not guilty, even though he admitted to have killed the ADC. He pleaded not guilty because he did not view his act to have been a crime. In his view, the assassination was justly executed as an act of patriotism to his country. He asks, if his act is considered unjust, how do the British view their own killings of Indian people? He sought no defense lawyer because he did not "acknowledge the authority of the Court" (*MADAR LAL DHINGRA*).<sup>82</sup> Here is, in full, the provocative statement he presented while on trial:

I do not want to say anything in defence of myself, but simply to prove the justice of my deed. As for myself, no English law court has got any authority to arrest and detain me in prison, or pass sentence of death on me. That is the reason I did not have any counsel to defend me. And I maintain that if it is patriotic in an Englishman to fight against the Germans if they were to occupy this country, it is much more justifiable and patriotic in my case to fight against the English. I hold the English people responsible for the murder of 80 millions of Indian people in the last fifty years, and they are also responsible for taking away £100,000,000 every year from India to this country. I also hold them responsible for the hanging and deportation of my patriotic countrymen, who did just the same as the English people here are advising their countrymen to do. And the Englishman who goes out to India and gets, say, £100 a month, that simply means that he passes a sentence of death on a thousand of my poor countrymen, because these thousand people could easily live on this £100, which the Englishman spends mostly on his frivolities and pleasures. Just as the Germans have no right to occupy this country, so the English people have no right to occupy India, and it is perfectly justifiable on our part to kill the Englishman who is polluting our sacred land. I am surprised at the terrible hypocrisy, the farce, and the mockery of the English people. They pose as the champions of oppressed humanity—the peoples of the Congo and the people of Russia—when there is terrible oppression and horrible atrocities committed in India; for example, the killing of two millions of people every year and the outraging of our women. In case this country is occupied by Germans, and the Englishman, not bearing to see the Germans walking with the insolence of conquerors in the streets of London, goes and kills one or two

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<sup>81</sup> In early 20th century Europe, "terrorism" was on the rise, especially in Russia and neighboring nations. Political unrest in the years before and after the Revolution of 1905 was marked by the blood of government officials and civilians alike.

<sup>82</sup> In light of this, we see how Zweig may have incorporated Dhingra's denial of British authority into *Die Augen des ewigen Bruders*, when the criminal is brought to trial before Virata. See end of Chapter 1.

Germans, and that Englishman is held as a patriot by the people of this country, then certainly I am prepared to work for the emancipation of my Motherland. Whatever else I have to say is in the paper before the Court I make this statement, not because I wish to plead for mercy or anything of that kind. I wish that English people should sentence me to death, for in that case the vengeance of my countrymen will be all the more keen. I put forward this statement to show the justice of my cause to the outside world, and especially to our sympathisers in America and Germany. (*Madar Lal Dhingra, Killing > Murder, 19th July 1909.*)

In his short statement, after which the judge found him guilty of murder and sentenced him to death, Dhingra points to the reality and history of oppression that could no longer be thrown aside as the irrational visions of a fanatic. Indeed, Dhingra's special emphasis on the deaths of his countrymen, the habit of siphoning capital out of India to support the wealthy standards of life in England, the exploitative luxuries of the British living in India, and even the analogy to the threat of German occupation are all topics Zweig covers in his essay, which he wrote before Dhingra's statement was given. Dhingra was not relating unknown problems. He had indeed become, as Zweig writes ominously at the beginning of his essay, the echo of a revolution that had already begun: "Und ängstlich horchen nun alle nach Osten, ob von dem fernen Riesenreiche grollendes, gefährliches Echo käme, das lang gefürchtete Gewitter: der Aufstand Indiens" (9). Dhingra's statement upset centuries of British control which began with the arrival of the East India Company in 1612 and lasted through the subsequent more entrenched establishments of Company Rule and then the British Raj.

Although his tactics remain questionable, even condemnable, especially in comparison to the efficacy of Gandhian nonviolent noncooperation, through the retrospective lens of a postcolonial world it is objectionable not to agree with the Dhingra's embattled plea for emancipation. While nonviolent methods of resistance are touted as an ideal, many modern nation-states that fought for freedom from the clutches of colonialism nonetheless eulogize their violent beginnings and praise their militant heroes. In *War Talk*, Arundhati Roy's collection of political essays, she reminds us that many power-hungry countries have rewritten their histories to emerge smelling sweet after surviving a terrible past (Roy, *War Talk* 87). She reaches to Noam Chomsky's essay, "The Manufacture of Consent," to uncover a persistently censored facet of U.S. American history:

During the Thanksgiving holiday a few weeks ago, I took a walk with some friends and family in a national park. We came across a gravestone, which had on it the following inscription: "Here lies an Indian woman, a Wampanoag, whose family and tribe gave of themselves and their land that this great nation might be born and grow."

Of course, it is not quite accurate to say that the indigenous population gave of themselves and their land for that noble purpose. Rather, they were slaughtered, decimated, and dispersed in the course of one of the greatest exercises in genocide in human history... which we celebrate each October when we honour Columbus—a notable mass murderer himself—on Columbus Day.

Hundreds of American citizens, well-meaning and decent people, troop by that gravestone regularly and read it, apparently without reaction; except, perhaps, a feeling of satisfaction that at last we are giving some due recognition to the sacrifices of the native peoples.... They might react differently if they were to visit Auschwitz or Dachau and

find a gravestone reading: “Here lies a woman, a Jew, whose family and people gave of themselves and their possessions that this great nation might grow and prosper.” (Roy, *War Talk* 86–87)

Roy does not spare her reader her indictment of the nation-state founded on silenced histories of violence. Not surprisingly, she is a hugely controversial figure in India, and her politics are branded hysterical and especially anti-national. To being accused of being anti-national, she responds,

While this accusation does not fill me with indignation, it’s not an accurate description of what I do or how I think. An anti-national is a person who is against her own nation and, by inference, is pro some other one. But it isn’t necessary to be anti-national to be deeply suspicious of all nationalism, to be anti-nationalism. Nationalism of one kind or another was the cause of most of the genocide of the twentieth century. Flags are bits of colored cloth that governments use first to shrink-wrap people’s minds and then as ceremonial shrouds to bury the dead. (Roy, *War Talk* 47)

These controversial writers are refusing the complacent support that nation-states demand of their citizenry. To be clear, they do not in any way make allowances for terrorism. On the contrary, in an article written for *The Guardian* in the wake of the 2008 bombings in Bombay, Roy writes, “Terrorism is a heartless ideology” (Roy, “The Monster in the Mirror”). However, what Roy asks is to place terrorist acts in historical, geographical, and economic contexts in an attempt to understand why they are launched, even if we may never understand those who have no respect for human life. She warns against thinking of a terrorist act as merely “a hateful, insane scourge that spins on its own axis, in its own orbit and has nothing to do with the world around it” (Roy, “The Monster in the Mirror”). Such thinking spurs retaliation, begins wars. Instead, she insists, “The only way to contain (it would be naïve to say end) terrorism is to look at the monster in the mirror” (Roy, “The Monster in the Mirror”). It would be inordinately sweeping to claim that the modern-nation state is responsible for all this terror. Nevertheless (I write this with the risk of tending toward the manifesto), as we look in the mirror and see therein the insidious monster of nationalist ideology, we could use more provocation than our surveillance governments allow, so that we may be unafraid to think in ways that undermine the oppressive nationalist structures of which we are part.

In this way, by relating colonialism/postcolonialism to nationalism/postnationalism, I leave this section with a series of questions that might help us understand young Zweig’s reluctance to condemn the British Empire’s grip on India. Will there be a world that will look upon acts of terrorism as having been, like Dhingra’s act was to Zweig, an echo of a great revolution in the name of a postnational world? Without being immediately restrained by national governments informed by mass surveillance, what would a nonviolent rebellion against the border-patrolling, fear-mongering, and even war-instigating modern nation-state look like? Is it still too naïve—or dangerous—to venture to think past a world of nations into which we are born and which we are taught to accept? In a hundred years, or a thousand years, will our national narrative sound as inescapable as the colonial narrative that ruled for centuries? What power of world organization would emerge in a postnational world? Are we merely caught in an endless series of hegemonic shifts? How will we be seen to have shown compassion to those

from whom we take, whom we exploit, we oppress, we bomb? Will we look back and view our victimization in the wake of acts of terrorism as hypocritical?

### **The European Master Narrative**

Dhingra, like many who were instrumental in paving the road to Indian independence—Gandhi and Nehru included—were students at British universities. The British-educated Indian, according to Zweig, was learning the very language of power being used against him. While profusely extolling British cultivation of an otherwise dim-witted people, Zweig still blames the British for their own veritable sense of surmounting fear. Evocative of the contemporary admonition of the international weapons trade that inevitably invites wars back to the doorstep of the weapons supplier, Zweig writes,

Wer verursacht also diese nicht abzuleugnende Unruhe und Mißstimmung, die von Jahr zu Jahr fühlbarer wird? So paradox es klingt: die Engländer selbst und eben durch ihre Bemühungen. Sie haben den Inder zum Welthandel, zum Industrialismus, zur Bildung erzogen, sie haben sie reif gemacht und ihnen damit selbst die Waffen gegen die englische Herrschaft in die Hand gegeben. (15)

Zweig recognizes that the British have lost their grip on the crown jewel of their empire, for their generosity has awakened “das nationale Gefühl” (17): “Die Gebildeten und die Vermögenden unter den Indern—sie sind die wirklichen Feinde der Engländer. Nichts hat die Stellung Englands so untergraben als gerade die Generosität und der Eifer, womit sie in Schulen europäische Bildung unter den Hindus verbreiteten” (16–17). In this vein, Zweig nurtures a European master narrative, which can be traced through Hegel’s writings on Eastern cultures and Kipling’s line turned racial phenomenon of the “white man’s burden.” According to a list of financially, commercially, and culturally successful changes, Zweig asserts that British sovereignty has, in fact, brought an everlasting benefit to India, so good, that “Man kann ruhig sagen, daß es niemals, unter keinem der Eroberervölker, den Einwohnern Indiens ähnlich gut gegangen ist” (15). He extols the British for everything from establishing an extensive rail network to building hospitals, from attenuating poverty and increasing wealth to teaching the tolerance of women and lower castes, from instituting justice to demonstrating incorruptibility. “Denn selbst der Gereizte und Feindliche kann die grandiose Kulturleistung der Engländer in Indien nicht verringern” (14). Such a belief in a beneficial British presence is not unique to Zweig or to a European perspective and can be found in the arguments between Indian nationalists deciding the nature of an independent India or in the dialogues of well-to-do British-sympathizing Bombayites in Salman Rushdie’s novels. As history marches forward in the ostensibly postcolonial world, we are also goaded to salvage the “good” from colonialism, to think of what colonization has offered former colonies in terms of advancement, progress, health, wealth and global relevance.

The most difficult challenge faced any cultural theorist or essayist, Zweig included, is to express disagreement with and especially disapproval of another culture’s ways of being without taking on the rightfully problematic “white man’s burden.” It seems, however, that Zweig, at this early point in his life, takes on that burden fully, and the postcolonial moments of self-reflection and self-critique come not from a petition to colonialism but the recognition of colonialism’s imminent end. He seeks, then, to understand the escalating fear of Indian independence by

answering why the British are failing to keep “die Achillesferse Englands” under control (20). Within this inescapable framework, Zweig finally writes more in the critical, yet sympathetic vein readers of Zweig have come to expect from his writings. For example, Zweig’s sympathy for the “farbiger Soldat” who is not trusted with loaded weapons and artillery is a means to understand less the plight of the discriminated soldier and more the fear of mutiny. How can a native soldier, the “Eingeborener,” after the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, be trusted with a loaded gun (20)? In this essay, Zweig implies a change to this discriminatory practice. If trust can be gained between the high-ranked British officers and their Indian militia, which would require trusting Indian militia with weapons, then the fear of mutiny might be expunged. Simply, the possibility of mutiny would be replaced by trust. In this instance, in order to remedy discriminatory practices, Zweig does not advocate democracy but recommends a way to uphold and secure hierarchy, to reestablish trust in British power. To be sure, Zweig is critical of the opulence of the British presence; he is critical of the British need for expensive comforts and entourages of servants; and he is especially critical of the British lack of integration. “Denn das ist die tragische Schuld der Engländer, daß sie heute, nach hundertfünfzig Jahren, in Indien immer noch eine Kaste über den Kasten geblieben sind” (18). But even if opulence and a lack of integration are criticized, the tragic element here, to underscore the point that Zweig is making in this essay, is not that the British have remained a caste above the colonized (Zweig never calls for them to step down), but that such a hierarchy will be impossible to maintain unless they do a better job as colonizers. The actual tragedy, according to Zweig, is that the British power is under attack; they are guilty, “die tragische Schuld der Engländer,” not for their lack of humanism, but for bringing about their own demise.

Zweig also shows sympathy for the “Mischling,” “Half-Cast,” “Mischblut” (18). He is concerned for the fate of the children of British officers and Indian women. Zweig reports that while they may lead worry-free lives as students in England, upon their return to India they are shunned, for they can neither fully integrate into the dominant British establishment nor into the families of their Indian mothers. Their in-betweenness is a problem for distinguishing a national consciousness. Where do they fit amidst the calls for independence under the slogan, “Indien für Inder?” (18). Pointing to an important distinction between India and other British colonies, Zweig shows how the hybrid British-Indian lingers in unfortunate homelessness:

Denn die Engländer sind nie Anglo-Inder geworden, sind immer Engländer geblieben. Nicht wie in Amerika, Australien, Rhodesia haben sie sich amalgamiert, sind sie selbst geworden, sondern wie Deportierte leben sie dort [in Indien] und zählen die Jahre der Heimkehr [...] Heimat heißt für sie immer noch England. (18–19)

Zweig’s sympathy for the “Mischling” highlights his concern for those whose ties are less national than international, for those whose sense of Heimat might be torn between a colonial power and a colony. While Zweig does not explicitly advocate a rebellious solution to the plight of the Mischling or to Indians under British rule, this essay shows us that he favors the latter of the two options being entertained by the British Parliament: either annihilate all revolutionary feelings or afford true equal access to British citizenship. To reiterate, neither option would abolish colonial rule.

## Conclusion

Despite reports to the contrary—including his own—Zweig’s incipient interest for internationalism was political. Prior to writing this essay he had stayed in England twice (1904 and 1906) and left both times with a sense of foreignness (Prater 29–33). If his personal distance from the British is used to argue in favor of his apolitical investment into an analysis of the *fear* of hegemonic restructuring (and less the restructuring of hegemony itself), we need only look to the end of his essay to argue for Zweig’s strong, yet surreptitious personal and political investment into the question of colonialism and the fear of postcolonialism. In my view, the whole essay is clearly political, especially as I grapple with young Zweig’s racist remarks. Nevertheless, Zweig’s identification with a postnational European ideal that excludes England informs the distanced tone of this essay, which carries a non-participatory sentiment, that of the non-British, non-Indian writer thinking about the escalating British-Indian conflict. For Zweig, “England was not then, and never became in his eyes, a part of Europe, the Europe whose intellectual unification was to be his highest aim and the connecting thread of his life’s work” (Prater 33). As a result of this outside perspective, he allows himself to be caught in wonder. He is in awe of this political, colonial phenomenon happening beyond his political concerns, and is trying to figure out how it functions. But one illuminating moment in his essay shows us that even his distanced, wonder-filled tone is not immune to personal, political concerns.

At the end of the essay, he writes, “Nur wenn man die Furcht vor der indischen Gefahr nicht übersieht, kann man die Furcht Englands vor dem deutschen Krieg, die Intervention zu Gunsten der Mohammedaner in der bosnischen Angelegenheit verstehen” (21). We can read here the relation he draws between the British fear of an Indian uprising to the British fear of an impending German War (anti-German sentiment escalated after an Anglo-French diplomatic alliance, the Entente cordiale, was drawn in 1904), which reflects upon his own feelings of isolation in England as a German-speaking visitor. But the more important relation he draws here is to the Bosnian crisis of 1908/09, which was the change from Austro-Hungarian administration to complete annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina through military force, the expansion of empire and the deepening of an already colonial relationship. As he draws this relation, he inadvertently connects British colonialism with Austro-Hungarian colonialism. In an instant, Zweig’s entire essay examining the British fear could be read as an extended analysis of the surmounting fear in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Zweig’s reluctance to openly advocate for Indian independence could be read as his reluctance to see the Austro-Hungarian Empire crumble. Possibly to his chagrin—even though most of Zweig’s biographers argue “[f]or the greater part of his life Stefan Zweig regarded [...] his Austrian nationality as scarcely more than an administrative formality” (Prater 6)—Zweig’s pre-WWI exercise in understanding repercussion and understanding fear of an uprising are sooner salient for Zweig’s immediate political setting than for the British-India conflict he so carefully analyzed.

## Chapter 5

### *Siddhartha*, the Paradox, and the Counterculture

The 60s Counterculture's fixation on Hermann Hesse's work led to a parallel scholarly fixation on its global reception and impact. It is as if the then immensely popular public response to Hesse's work, the scholarship that dealt with its global reception, and the subsequent institutionalization thereof<sup>83</sup> were orchestrated to amplify Hans Robert Jauß's contemporary ideas on reception theory. In 1967 at the University of Konstanz, Jauß gave his inaugural lecture on recalibrating literary history according to processes of reception: "Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft" ("Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory") (Friedrich 619). His argument here is to expand literary analysis beyond the narrow historical moment of textual production in favor of engaging the inclusive present of textual *re*production: a text lives uncountable lives, unfathomable incarnations, most of which surpass the life breathed into it by its so-called original author and first set of readers and critics. Jauß intends neither to extract a text from its historical emergence nor to immerse it in a contemporary moment. According to Jauß, for the future of literary analysis, a text should be seen as a continual, non-linear, non-singular evolutionary event with respect to its socially formative function. A text thereby takes into account both its position in a particular, narrow, historical context as well as its talismanic merit with an unknowable potential for personal and social restructuring. In so doing, Jauß brings the reader—actually readers—into focus. The audience no longer occupies a passive role. Readers are active participants who duly challenge "the prejudices of historical objectivism" and help replace "the traditional approach to literature [...with] an aesthetics of reception and impact" (Jaus 9). He writes, famously:

In the triangle of author, work and reading public the latter is no passive part, no chain of mere reactions, but even history-making energy. The historical life of a literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its audience. For it is only through the process of its communication that the work reaches the changing horizon of experience in a continuity in which the continual change occurs from simple reception to critical understanding, from passive to active reception, from recognized aesthetic norms to a new production which surpasses them.<sup>84</sup> (8)

Worldwide, scholars heeded this call to advance the study of literature through the examination of a current reading public; the immense and rather sudden global popularity of Hesse's work in the 60s served as a prime model for Jauß's enterprise. Instead of looking at Hesse's work in

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<sup>83</sup> By "institutionalization" I refer to its entrance (albeit contentious) into literary canons, its influence over the establishment of cultural institutes (e.g. the inauguration of The Magic Theater in 1967), as well as the scholarly derision it endured (as flung by critics of "Hesse-mania").

<sup>84</sup> "Im Dreieck von Autor, Werk und Publikum ist das letztere nicht nur der passive Teil, keine Kette bloßer Reaktionen, sondern selbst wieder eine geschichtsbildende Energie. Das geschichtliche Leben des literarischen Werks ist ohne den aktiven Anteil seines Adressaten nicht denkbar. Denn erst durch seine Vermittlung tritt das Werk in den sich wandelnden Erfahrungshorizont einer Kontinuität, in der sich die ständige Umsetzung von einfacher Aufnahme in kritisches Verstehen, von passiver in aktive Rezeption, von anerkannten ästhetischen Normen in neue, sie übersteigende Produktion vollzieht" (Jauß 126).

terms of the years he was writing them, scholars began to look at Hesse's work primarily in terms of its Counterculture reception.

But soon enough, scholars got stuck once again in the very stagnant tradition of scholarship that Jauß was trying to rattle, stuck in a new historical moment, wherein Hesse's work became inextricable from, even synonymous with, the Counterculture. As Jefford Vahlbusch points out, scholarship on Hesse's work became so drearily monotonous that the eminent Hesse scholar Theodore Ziolkowski lambasted this fixation on reception, pointing obsoletely at Jauß's reception theory. At the "1977 international symposium in Marbach am Neckar that marked the centennial of Hesse's birth," Ziolkowski, himself the author of numerous articles on the Hesse-reception—such as "Saint Hesse among the Hippies" (1969); "Hesse's Sudden Popularity with Today's Students" (1970); "Hesse and Film: the Seduction of a Generation" (1973); and "The Hesse Phenomenon" (1975)—"declared that 'the astonishing Hesse trend in the USA' had been 'nattered to death' ('zu Tode geschwätzt') and 'analyzed *ad nauseum*'" (Vahlbusch 133). Moreover, this fixation entrenched the Hesse-naysayers in their discredit of Hesse's literary merit; if Hesse's work could receive such widespread, popular support—as proven by scholars who intended to show its influence on a generation of hippies, beatniks and radicals—it must lack the subtlety of expression required for critical works of literature deserving of scholarly attention (Cornils 1–2).<sup>85</sup>

While Jauß's work is by no means infallible, it is anything but obsolete—its merit lies in its insistence on innovation, especially that scholarship not dismiss the reader's history as part of a legitimate critical encounter with a text. In some sense, Jauß is calling for a quasi-postmodern reading of literature, one that engages a text in its evolving historical, possibly communal context as well as through its current, possibly expressly individual context. He writes, "A literary work is not an object which [...] offers the same face to each reader in each period. [...] A literary work must be understood as creating a dialogue, and philological scholarship has to be founded on a continuous re-reading of texts, not on mere facts" (10).<sup>86</sup>

The implementation of reception theory stagnated when the Counterculture was established as unalterable fact (as a conglomerate reading public devoid of nuance) and when Hesse's work presumably offered the same face to each reader in this period.

In the remainder of this chapter, with profound recourse to the paradox, I wrestle with the major problem of reception theory: to build a theory based on reception requires generalizations about readership that efface the very individual recipient of a text that this theory is meant to liberate. I therefore argue for the possibility to refer to the Counterculture as both a common reading public and as an unsystematic collection of individualists. In other words, I argue that the

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<sup>85</sup> "The view that Hesse is somehow not worthy of 'serious' literary engagement is rapidly changing, as a new critical edition of his works, a reevaluation of his political thought in the context of global environmental developments, and an appreciation of his seemingly simple yet profound message give rise to research around the world. [...] [H]is writings are eminently suited to literary study: they offer moments of sublime beauty and important clues for the understanding of the human psyche" (Cornils 2).

<sup>86</sup> "Das literarische Werk ist kein für sich bestehendes Objekt, das jedem Betrachter zu jeder Zeit den gleichen Anblick darbietet. Es ist kein Monument, das monologisch sein zeitloses Wesen offenbart. Es ist vielmehr wie eine Partitur auf die immer erneuerte Resonanz der Lektüre angelegt, die den Text aus der Materie der Worte erlöst und ihn zu aktuellem Dasein bringt: »parole qui doit, en même temps qu'elle lui parle, créer un interlocuteur capable de l'entendre«. Dieser dialogische Charakter des literarischen Werkes begründet auch, warum das philologische Wissen nur in der fortwährenden Konfrontation mit dem Text bestehen kann und nicht zum Wissen von Fakten gerinnen darf. Philologisches Wissen bleibt stets auf Interpretation bezogen, die sich zum Ziel setzen muß, mit der Erkenntnis ihres Gegenstandes den Vollzug dieser Erkenntnis als Moment eines neuen Verstehens mit zu reflektieren und zu beschreiben" (Jauß 128).

Counterculture's relationship to *Siddhartha* gives us a way to understand an intriguing paradox of the Counterculture, how this movement has been treated en masse even though it is made of "many different people doing many different things" (Roszak xiii). Furthermore, I illuminate the paradoxical "teachings" and paradoxical language of *Siddhartha* in order to demonstrate how this text consistently refutes that which it espouses, a tension-filled quality that is important for understanding the role *Siddhartha* played for the Counterculture.

### **The Paradox of Siddhartha's Teachings and the Paradox of Counterculture**

From Hesse's *Siddhartha*:

There is in fact—and this I believe—no such thing as what we call 'learning.' There is, my friend, only knowing, and this is everywhere; it is Atman, it is in me and in you and in every creature. And so I am beginning to believe that this knowing has no worse enemy than the desire to know, than learning itself.<sup>87</sup> (17)

The paradox of the Counterculture movement, as it were, is in these lines as they traverse the historical moment. This quote from Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* carries a message: the bane of knowledge is the desire for it, that desire which is here and often elsewhere synonymized with learning. *Siddhartha* is a story that follows the trajectory of a boy reaching the limits of learning, the limits of knowledge-seeking, along its manifold paths. Some paths he treads longer than others, and each is rejected by or rejects him: scholarship, religion, philosophy, business, love, family and asceticism. Some scholarship appropriately assesses this rejection as a critique of these various cultural things, but all too often this scholarship ignores the rejection/critique of learned spiritualism, too. It is not just the State that is being contended with in Hesse's stories, but everything that requires education. In defining "the American Youth Movement" and its gripe against the State, Egon Schwarz once argued the sameness of Hesse's so-called "grievances" and those of the "American radicals":

[...] another, perhaps the real, target of Hesse's attacks: the state and ultimately any authority except the spiritual authorities freely chosen by the individual himself. The state comes in for unrelenting criticism. Modern industrialism is assailed in all its aspects: capitalism, nationalism, institutionalized religion, militarism, war, every manifestation of bourgeois aggressiveness are unremittingly rejected. (982)

In his analysis, Schwarz circumvents the critique of the spiritual; but in *Siddhartha*, even lessons in spirituality, including the freely chosen ones, are put to question. For instance, the "Atman" that *Siddhartha* explains as the only knowledge—in essence, the spiritual experience of the self—cannot be taught, learned or transmitted. While *Siddhartha* admits at times to have been taught, he also insists that what he has been taught is of no special value. Toward the end of the story, *Siddhartha* tells his old friend Govinda that what he had learned from the Buddha, for example, is no more or less special than what he is currently learning from the rock next to him.

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<sup>87</sup> "Es gibt so, so glaube ich, in der Tat jenes Ding nicht, das wir "Lernen" nennen. Es gibt, o mein Freund, nur ein Wissen, das ist überall, das ist Atman, das ist in mir und in dir und in jedem Wesen. Und so beginne ich zu glauben: dies Wissen hat keinen ärgeren Feind als das Wissenwollen, als das Lernen" (Hesse, *Siddhartha; Eine Indische Dichtung* 20).

So in matters of spirituality as in matters of the State, one can be taught *how to know* by anyone or anything, that is, one can *learn* from anyone or anything, but such learning does not impart knowledge. Moreover, if one nonetheless feels knowledge gained, wisdom will remain elusive.

Said Siddhartha, “I have had thoughts, yes, and insights, now and again. Sometimes, for an hour or a day, I have felt knowledge within me, just as one feels life within one’s heart. There were several thoughts, but it would be difficult for me to hand them on to you. You see, my Govinda, here is one of the thoughts I have found: Wisdom cannot be passed on. Wisdom that a wise man attempts to pass on always sounds like foolishness.”

“Do you speak in jest?” Govinda asked.

“It is no jest. I am saying what I have found. One can pass on knowledge but not wisdom. One can find wisdom, one can live it, one can be supported by it, one can work wonders with it, but one cannot speak it or teach it.”<sup>88</sup> (118–119)

At this late stage of the story, after Siddhartha has already repudiated at length the possibility of transferring knowledge, it may seem contradictory that he flippantly speaks of knowledge as transferable and so distinct from wisdom. This very flippancy, however, is significant because it demonstrates Siddhartha’s distrust of words and his customary conflation of knowledge, wisdom and spiritual enlightenment. The focus, here, is thus on the impossible process of transfer from one to another of that which occurs through self-discovery and personal experience. This is the acclaim of the highly individualistic path. In sum, but in no simple way, this text asserts a rejection of learning—of guidance, of teaching and of being taught, and of training—in all its aspects and for all its goals, including knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual enlightenment.

However, is not this assertion—of the rejection of learning—a lesson? Does not *Siddhartha* teach individualism? Considering the historical moment of the Counterculture, this text, which rejects learning, became itself a guide to a movement. Since this is a *Bildungsroman* that not only rejects *Bildung*, but rejects itself, as *Roman*, should not *Siddhartha*, too, have been rejected by the Counterculture?

If the first paradox occurs within the text (the paradox of learning knowledge or gaining wisdom), a second paradox crystallizes when the very individualism that this text paradoxically teaches binds its readers together into a movement. *Siddhartha* became known as a Bible of the Counterculture,<sup>89</sup> hailed holier than the New Testament.<sup>90</sup> Narrated in deceptively simple, hypnotic prose, this story seems to call its readers to follow Siddhartha’s path, invite readers to transform into devotees. As the Buddha’s namesake, the title of the story alone suggests such an invitation. But *Siddhartha* is far more involute. In fact, it does not invite followers; it sends them away, as in the case of Siddhartha’s childhood friend Govinda intent on following Siddhartha’s

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<sup>88</sup> “Ich habe Gedanken gehabt, ja, und Erkenntnisse, je und je. Ich habe manchmal, für eine Stunde oder für einen Tag, Wissen in mir gefühlt, so wie man Leben in seinem Herzen fühlt. Manche Gedanken waren es, aber schwer wäre es für mich, sie dir mitzuteilen. Sieh, mein Govinda, dies ist einer meiner Gedanken, die ich gefunden habe: Weisheit ist nicht mitteilbar. Weisheit, welche ein Weiser mitzuteilen versucht, klingt immer wie Narrheit.”

“Scherzest du?” fragte Govinda.

“Ich scherze nicht. Ich sage, was ich gefunden habe. Wissen kann man mitteilen, Weisheit aber nicht. Man kann sie finden, man kann sie leben, man kann von ihr getragen werden, man kann mit ihr Wunder tun, aber sagen und lehren kann man sie nicht.” (113)

<sup>89</sup> “[...] not just in a figurative sense [...]” (Koester 62).

<sup>90</sup> “Noch einmal den ‘Siddhartha,’ die Henry Miller ‘eine wirksamere Medizin als das Neue Testament’ nannte” (Matussek, “Ich mach mein Ding” 125).

brazen footsteps. The name “Siddhartha,” which translated from the Sanskrit means “one who has achieved the goal,” in the context of this story tells us that Siddhartha has already and always reached his goal, that the trials he faces are not lessons in any teleological sense, but are a mere unfolding of his own knowledge which is always present. This Siddhartha comes in stark contrast to the other “historical” Siddhartha Gautama—the Buddha (who does make an appearance in this story)—who was a sage and who set out to teach the Middle Path to liberation. Despite the individualistic nature of the path taken by Siddhartha in Hesse’s story, it became—for a generation of *Eigensinnigen*—a model to emulate not unlike the Buddha’s (Matussek, “Ich mach mein Ding” 125). Siddhartha’s path awakened a craving for spiritual enlightenment that could be satiated through the teachings of individualism. As Siddhartha’s *Eigensinn*, or self-will, taught its followers how to chart an obstinate, revolutionary path against authority, it also, in effect, took a paradoxical collective turn.

It was Timothy Leary and Ralph Metzner’s praise of “Hermann Hesse: Poet of the Interior Journey” in *The Psychedelic Review* that sped up *Siddhartha*’s rise to fame and that helped give an emphatically individualized self-will a paradoxical sense of community. They claim that “[m]ost readers miss the message of Hesse. Entranced by the pretty dance of plot and theme, they overlook the seed message. [...] the seed, the electrical message, the code is in the core” (169). Dutifully, Leary and Metzner do not reveal the core, do not unpack the seed, but recapitulate scenes from Hesse’s stories to inform of the seed’s existence. It is impossible to unpack the seed for one another; such a seed is as distinct as each reader is from the next. But they insist that such a seed exists in Hesse’s work, and that it exists for each reader. They write: “But always—Hesse reminds us—stay close to the internal core. [...] The [internal] flame is of course always there, within and without, surrounding us, keeping us alive. Our only task is to keep tuned in” (181). In their highly spiritual, laudatory rendering of *Siddhartha*, Leary and Metzner descriptively engage the ineffable nature of the internal core, thereby establishing a core for each reader, though they do not have access to the nature of each core. Each reader of Hesse has access only to his/her own core, which lies at the nexus of Hesse’s text and the reader. In their essay, Leary and Metzner establish a kind of spiritual collective experience of reading Hesse, crafting camaraderie among the radically individual. While each path of reading Hesse is distinct, each with a distinct reader and distinct core, their collective experience is built upon their readership: individuals reading Hesse together, seeking an internal core together. Readers of Hesse are at once free to discover themselves and the world in whichever ways they see fit (in ways that often challenge authority... which may or may not include psychedelic drugs and pilgrimages to India) and find solace in belonging to a group of *Eigensinnigen*, more commonly known as the Counterculture.

### **The Paradox of Language**

With regard to the “seed message” of *Siddhartha*, Leary and Metzner infer that we can think of a seed, we can reference a seed, be guided to a seed, but cannot know a seed through language, even though through language we learn *about* the seed. They thereby pick up on the rift between learning and knowledge prevalent in *Siddhartha*. In so doing, they point in particular to the role of language in shaping this rift, for language, the tool used to teach and learn that a seed exists in the first place, cannot be used to know the seed. This tension with the efficacy of language is highlighted in the very last chapter of *Siddhartha*.

*Siddhartha* consistently refutes the very teachings it espouses; it rails against any form of learning. In the last chapter, Govinda implores Siddhartha to share his path with him, so that Govinda, too, may traverse the path to spiritual enlightenment as Siddhartha seemingly has. Siddhartha, however, warns Govinda that no teaching is teachable, resting his case on the inefficacies of language. Siddhartha even warns against his own attempts at teaching language's failures, because language is required to do so. When Siddhartha explains that language breaks the world into oppositional frameworks, he is, in a way, speaking with a Heideggerian vocabulary: as language discloses something, it conceals something else. Language can never reveal the whole picture. Siddhartha tells Govinda,

Everything is one-sided that can be thought in thoughts and said with words, everything one-sided, everything half, everything is lacking wholeness, roundness, oneness. When the sublime Gautama spoke of the world in his doctrine, he had to divide it into Sansara and Nirvana, into illusion and truth, into suffering and redemption. This is the only way to go about it; there is no other way for a person who would teach.<sup>91</sup> (119)

Siddhartha's distressed explanation of language's failure is at once the exoneration thereof. There is no way other than through language—through some semblance of signs—to teach or tell anyone anything. Language thus becomes the metonym for teaching, which, as with all else, Siddhartha rejects. He uses it nevertheless to communicate with Govinda.

Initially, Govinda has difficulty understanding Siddhartha. Just as Siddhartha had forewarned, Siddhartha's wisdom sounds to Govinda more like foolishness. But this is the very essence of Siddhartha's words—that they cannot transmit any wisdom; they are foolish, by virtue of their being told through words:

Words are not good for the secret meaning; everything always becomes a little bit different the moment one speaks it aloud, a bit falsified, a bit foolish—yes, and this too is also very good and pleases me greatly: that one person's treasure and wisdom always sounds like foolishness to others.<sup>92</sup> (121)

At the very end of this final scene, there is a notable perspectival shift from Siddhartha to Govinda, echoing the very chapter title, "Govinda." Siddhartha is no longer speaking, but we are witness to Siddhartha through Govinda's inner conflict. Govinda secretly thinks, as "his heart filled with conflict":

His doctrine may be strange, his words may sound silly, but his gaze and his hand, his skin and his hair, everything about him radiates a purity, radiates a calm, radiates a gaiety

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<sup>91</sup> "Einseitig ist alles, was mit Gedanken gedacht und mit Worten gesagt werden kann, alles einseitig, alles halb, alles entbehrt der Ganzheit, des Runden, der Einheit. Wenn der erhabene Gotama lehrend von der Welt sprach, so musste er sie teilen in Sansara und Nirwana, in Täuschung und Wahrheit, in Leid und Erlösung. Man kann nicht anders, es gibt keinen andern Weg für den, der lehren will" (114).

<sup>92</sup> "Die Worte tun dem geheimen Sinn nicht gut, es wird immer alles gleich ein wenig anders, wenn man es ausspricht, ein wenig verfälscht, ein wenig närrisch – ja, und auch das ist sehr gut und gefällt mir sehr, auch damit bin ich sehr einverstanden, dass das, was eines Menschen Schatz und Weisheit ist, dem andern immer wie Narrheit klingt" (116).

and kindness and holiness that I have beheld in no other person since the final death of our sublime teacher.<sup>93</sup> (124)

Though late in the story and though via the perspective of a supporting character, this experience of an inner conflict is the climax, the major turning point which leads to Siddhartha's final disappearance into formlessness, likened here to the enlightened state of the Buddha. Govinda begs Siddhartha for just one more word, one more lesson in his search for ultimate knowledge: "Grant me just one word more, O Revered One; give me something that I can grasp, that I can comprehend! Give me something to take with me when we part. My path is often difficult, Siddhartha, often dark" (124).<sup>94</sup> In response, seeing "eternal not-finding" ("ewiges Nichtfinden") in Govinda's eyes, Siddhartha asks Govinda to kiss him on his forehead. "'Bend down to me,' he whispered softly in Govinda's ear. 'Bend down here to me! Yes, like that, closer! Even closer! Kiss me on the forehead, Govinda!'" (124).<sup>95</sup> What follows is remarkable, not merely for the hierophanic description, but for the explicit continued presence of "words" in Govinda's experience of Siddhartha's formlessness, of his being without words.

For Govinda, what was before an inner conflict is now a harmonious simultaneity. When Govinda kisses Siddhartha, there is a transfer of knowledge described like no other in the entire story. Considering the motif of the impossibility of teaching knowledge or wisdom, this transfer of knowledge is unorthodox. It is, in fact, less a transfer than a revelation. Using a framework borrowed from Mircea Eliade's *The Sacred and the Profane*, knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment had been, through their elusiveness, ineffability and desirability, in many respects consecrated, whereas learning and words belonged to the realm of the profane. In the moment of bowing to and kissing Siddhartha's forehead, Govinda is witness to hierophany, a manifestation of the sacred (Eliade 12).<sup>96</sup> At this hierophanic moment, one might expect "words" to retreat into the background or even to vanish altogether, for they have been the very bane of Govinda's search for (not to mention Siddhartha's own search for and experience of) knowledge and wisdom. But words remain. The paragraph that introduces Govinda's experience of Siddhartha's formlessness shows the necessity of paradox for hierophany. In the hierophanic moment, words are at once meaningless and meaningful because they are no longer just words signaling polemical concepts, indescribable experiences, or impossible objects; words are imbued with cosmic sacrality and signal *all* at once, simultaneously manifesting that which they reveal and conceal. In this moment of knowledge revelation, words do not disappear, but are integrated into an entirety of experience. There are two important elements in this final scene that underscore the simultaneity of words and knowledge in Govinda's hierophany: the word, "while" ("während") and the punctuation mark, ":".

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<sup>93</sup> "Mag seine Lehre seltsam sein, mögen seine Worte närrisch klingen, sein Blick und seine Hand, seine Haut und sein Haar, alles an ihm strahlt eine Reinheit, strahlt eine Ruhe, strahlt eine Heiterkeit und Milde und Heiligkeit aus, welche ich an keinem anderen Menschen seit dem letzten Tode unseres erhabenen Lehrers gesehen habe" (118).

<sup>94</sup> "Sage mir, Verehrter, noch ein Wort, gib mir etwas mit auf meinem Weg. Er ist oft beschwerlich, mein Weg, oft finster, Siddhartha" (119).

<sup>95</sup> "'Neige dich zu mir!' flüsterte er leise in Govinda's Ohr. 'Neige dich zu mir her! So, noch näher! Ganz nahe! Küsse mich auf die Stirn, Govinda!'" (119).

<sup>96</sup> Hierophany has a long history in Indian tradition, and would be closely related to the Sanskrit term *darśana*, which refers to the moment of witnessing cosmic universality through the particular. It is a paradoxical vision of formlessness through form.

[While] Govinda, perplexed and yet drawn by great love and foreboding, obeyed his words, bent down close to him, and touched his forehead with his lips, something wondrous happened to him. While his thoughts were still lingering over Siddhartha's odd words, while he was still fruitlessly and reluctantly attempting to think away time, to imagine Nirvana and Sansara as one, while a certain contempt for his friend's words was even then battling inside him with tremendous love and reverence, this happened:

He no longer saw the face of his friend Siddhartha; instead he saw other faces, many of them, a long series, a flowing river of faces, by the hundreds, by the thousands, all of them coming and fading away, and yet all of them appearing to be there at once, all of them constantly changing, being renewed, and all of them at the same time Siddhartha [...].<sup>97</sup> (124–125)

The use of “while”/“während” indicates that the words that Siddhartha had told Govinda did not *lead* to this hierophany, did not *teach* Govinda how to receive Siddhartha's knowledge, but were amplified by the experience of Siddhartha's enlightened state. Siddhartha's words and teachings were very much awlirl *during* the hierophany, hence the added use of the colon before the long, richly descriptive plethora of things and ideas that are Siddhartha, all sensed by Govinda. The colon is a sign of equivalence. Immediately after the colon, the description of Siddhartha's formlessness continues for forty-two lines, traversing the animate and inanimate, feminine and masculine, objects and ideas, times and spaces, verbs and adjectives, animals and gods; this is a description that seeks to surpass dualities through multitudes.

Along the axis of the colon, Siddhartha's teachings and words which linger with Govinda are equated with the description of Siddhartha's dissolution. This equivalence does not invalidate Siddhartha's previous rejection of words and teachings, does not suddenly deem learning and the use of words a suitable path to the discovery of ultimate knowledge. In fact, the equivalence reinforces that rejection because, in this revelatory moment, words do not *lead* to knowledge, they just exist with it. When used as a way to knowledge, words and teachings are mere obstacles. But in the moment of revelation, in the occurrence of ultimate knowledge, words and teachings are as much a part of ultimate knowledge as anything else; words and teachings become something else, yet remain what they are. This is the paradox of language that Siddhartha had been preaching, which Govinda only now understands through hierophany. Mircea Eliade describes the paradox existent in the hierophany in the following way:

It is impossible to overemphasize the paradox represented by every hierophany, even the most elementary. By manifesting the sacred, any object becomes something else, yet it continues to remain itself, for it continues to participate in its surrounding cosmic milieu. A sacred stone remains a stone; apparently (or, more precisely, from the profane point of

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<sup>97</sup> “Während aber Govinda verwundert, und dennoch von großer Liebe und Ahnung gezogen, seinen Worten gehorchte, sich nahe zu ihm neigte und seine Stirn mit den Lippen berührte, geschah ihm etwas Wunderbares. Während seine Gedanken noch bei Siddharthas wunderlichen Worten verweilten, während er sich noch vergeblich und mit Widerstreben bemühte, sich die Zeit hinwegzudenken, sich Nirvana und Sansara als Eines vorzustellen, während sogar eine gewisse Verachtung für die Worte des Freundes in ihm mit einer ungeheuren Liebe und Ehrfurcht stritt, geschah ihm dieses:

Er sah seines Freundes Siddhartha Gesicht nicht mehr, er sah statt dessen andre Gesichter, viele, eine lange Reihe, einen strömenden Fluß von Gesichtern, von Hunderten, von Tausenden, welche alle kamen und vergingen, und doch alle zugleich dazusein schienen, welche alle sich beständig veränderten und erneuerten, und welche doch alle Siddhartha waren [...]” (119).

view), nothing distinguishes it from all other stones. But for those to whom a stone reveals itself as sacred, its immediate reality is transmuted into a supernatural reality. In other words, for those who have a religious experience all nature is capable of revealing itself as cosmic sacrality. The cosmos in its entirety can become a hierophany. (12)

We may now be able to assemble an answer to the question posed earlier: Since this is a *Bildungsroman* that not only rejects *Bildung*, but rejects itself, as *Roman*, should not *Siddhartha*, too, have been rejected by the Counterculture? Just as Govinda was consistently drawn to Siddhartha's words and teachings, despite producing an inner conflict, so too may readers of *Siddhartha* have been drawn to learning from this story and its disavowal of being able to teach anything, *because* it produced a conflict. Govinda's conflict arose through the paradox of understanding Siddhartha as both wise and foolish, and the mounting tension of this conflict opened up access to Govinda's hierophanic moment, co-inhabited by both the profane and the sacred. Because any reader of this story, unlike Govinda within the story, must ascertain Siddhartha's formlessness through the descriptive words formed via Govinda's perspective, the hierophany experienced by Govinda, which is Siddhartha's enlightenment, is still available to readers only through words. In order to reach Siddhartha's state of consciousness and/or Govinda's witnessing thereof, a reader must come to terms with (that is, embrace) the paradox of language, especially with regard to one "seed message" of *Siddhartha*: words can be used to inform *about* concepts of enlightenment, wisdom, or ultimate knowledge, but do not give us access to them.

### **The Nomenclature of Counterculture**

To adhere to the term *Counterculture* is in many respects to embrace the paradoxical. Counterculture readers may not have tossed *Siddhartha* aside because they may have found therein the vindication of their paradoxical struggle to collectively assert radical individualism. The interrelated paradoxes of Siddhartha's teachings, of the Counterculture, and of language all come to the fore in the nomenclature of *Counterculture*. The name of a political or cultural movement, especially one defined by its opposition to a dominant or mainstream culture, is rarely adequate to account for the range of ideologies under its scope. The scope of a movement's name is far too small, unless we allow such a name to breathe, to change, to represent at times divergent ideas. Through time, a movement's name may also become stereotyped and emblematic of a few narrow belief systems represented by the most vociferous and sensational. In the case of the term *Counterculture*, we might think of the hippie, the beatnik, or the bohemian. As these particular groupings became emblematic of the Counterculture, their particular distinguishing features were lost to the umbrella term. Yet the umbrella term—and even the inadequately named groupings encompassed beneath it—persisted.

This lack of distinction was carried forth by the kind of reception theory scholarship that insisted on treating readers en masse. Akin to reader-response theory that enforced a so-called "implied reader" or "educated reader," this scholarship effaced the very reader it attempted to give voice to, i.e. the individual one. Jefford Vahlbusch writes that "one of the most curious facts in the literature on Hesse's U.S. reception [is] the confusing failure or refusal to distinguish successfully or usefully between Beat Generation, beatniks, hippies, adolescents, other members of the counter-culture, teenagers and students" (144). Vahlbusch then comments on famed *New Yorker* writer George Steiner's 1969 article, "Eastward Ho!", which is a piece on the Hesse

reception in the United States. Vahlbusch draws an analogy between Steiner's use of a "hippie girl" as the model for all readers of Hesse and the way reception theory scholarship treated "the reader" of Hesse's work. Vahlbusch writes,

As the hippie girl is for Steiner, so Hesse's American readers are for nearly all of the scholars and journalists who have written on Hesse in the USA. Steiner does not inquire about her apparently astonishing knowledge of Hesse's most challenging novel, nor does he record her name. For Steiner, she is beyond history, context, and individual identity. He makes her an archetype for all hippies and—by his extension—for all young American readers of Hesse. Steiner creates his hippie girl as a rhetorical convenience, an "empty vessel" to be filled with such content and meaning as his argument demands. (144)

But is this failure to identify the individual readers of Hesse, or the individual compasses of the Counterculture, confusing or curious? The coalescence of disparate individuals into one umbrella term is a natural result of any movement, not just one that seeks definition from within but one that is unsurprisingly and uncompromisingly defined from without by those intending to separate themselves from it, and those intending to study it. What Vahlbusch successfully points to is the need to be aware of a movement's plural composition of *movements*.

Theodore Roszak, the historian generally credited with coining *Counterculture*, in the preface to *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflection on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* published in 1969, admits "openly that the much of what is said [in his book] regarding [the] contemporary youth culture is subject to any number of qualifications" (xiii). According to Roszak, for the sake of saying anything at all about the Counterculture—or any movement which is in fact comprised of "many different people doing many different things"—one must generalize (xiii).<sup>98</sup> More so than other social movements, late 60s and early 70s Counterculture resisted collective definition because its so-called members championed individualism. The spirit of the times, according to a recent article in *Der Spiegel* on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hesse's death, could be encapsulated in Siddhartha's smile from which emanated the notion: "You must find for yourself and yourself alone the way to wisdom. If nothing else, an effective immunization against all ideologies."<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> "I have colleagues in the academy who have come within an ace of convincing me that no such things as 'The Romantic Movement' or 'The Renaissance' ever existed – not if one gets down to scrutinizing the microscopic phenomena of history. At that level, one tends only to see many different people doing many different things and thinking many different thoughts. How much more vulnerable such broad-gauged categorizations become when they are meant to corral elements of the stormy contemporary scene and hold them steady for comment!" (xiii).

<sup>99</sup> Translation my own. "Den Weg zur Weisheit musst du für dich allein herausfinden. Immerhin eine wirksame Impfung gegen alle Ideologien" (125).



Title page of *Der Spiegel* on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hesse's death. The title of the article: "Ich mach mein Ding." (Matussek, "Ich Mach Mein Ding")

In a few words, the 60s Counterculture was a movement against the mainstream, a rejection of norms, of popularity, of mass media. It was against a culture that promoted homogeneity over heterogeneity. The irony of the Counterculture being given a name, then, lay exactly therein, that its name collectivized the professedly heterogeneous. As the 60s U.S. Counterculture established itself under this moniker, and especially as it was established by those who did not adhere to its tenets, the heterogeneity that this movement sought to promote was restricted by one organizing principle: the movement away from the mainstream. But the movement turned *away* in innumerable directions. A movement such as the Counterculture was easier defined by what it was against than the new direction it would take. Thus, while the nomenclatural aspect of such a movement can be its binding force, it can also be its undoing. There are major gains to be had from collectivizing under a name. A movement with a name gains strength and momentum sometimes harnessed for great achievements. But a movement such as the Counterculture, as it gained momentum, also gained an unwieldy, unrepresentative uniformity, especially since it held together a group of radical individualists. Hesse's work, in particular *Siddhartha*, as it gained prominence amongst all kinds of readers, helped forgive *Counterculture* its nomenclatural inadequacy by highlighting its paradoxical quality. *Siddhartha*'s paradoxical teachings, especially as *Siddhartha* discusses the inefficacies of language, helped showcase the paradox as an escape from certainty, where certainty was the symbol of the cultural authorities against which the Counterculture fought. The term *Counterculture* thus gradually became emblematic of the paradoxes of *Siddhartha*.

As a result, the paradoxical term *Counterculture* afforded its supporters a way to live along the line of tension drawn by the paradox, drawn between the particular and the universal, between the radically individual and the collective. The engagement with its own paradox afforded the Counterculture a kind of unimagined fervor that discovered new ways of being, often as a result of, using Søren Kierkegaard's terms, passionate collision seeking. Kierkegaard's description of *paradox* in *Philosophical Fragments* (even though in reference to its usefulness for the thinker) helps illustrate why the Counterculture may have thrived, passionately, by fully engaging its paradox. He writes,

[...] one should not think slightingly of the paradoxical; for the paradox is the source of the thinker's passion, and the thinker without a paradox is like a lover without feeling: a paltry mediocrity. But the highest pitch of every passion is always to will its own downfall; and so it is also the supreme passion of the Reason to seek a collision, though this collision must in one way or another prove its undoing. The supreme paradox of all thought is the attempt to discover something that thought cannot think. (Gardiner 291)

The Counterculture was, since its conception as such, always on the cusp of its own undoing; it was the attempt to "graft an oak tree upon a wildflower [...]" such is the project that confronts those [...]" who are concerned with radical social change" (Roszak 41). And at this cusp, where the individualistic scraped against the collective, was where the significant revolutions of culture sprouted, including and not limited to the movements for civil rights, women's rights, racial equality and free speech. This is where particular individual freedoms were asserted for the benefit of everyone.

The great social challenges faced and conquered by 60s Counterculture, from which we now greatly benefit, cannot be denied. Individualist thinking of the Counterculture was integral to women's liberation, anti-racist, anti-sexist struggles, where "the goal is to translate antagonism into difference ('peaceful' coexistence of sexes, religions, ethnic groups)" (Žižek, *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*, 33). The 60s Counterculture was no less a political phenomenon than a social one. As a political phenomenon, the term failed when the movement became popular, when it began to fuel the mass media, and especially when it began to espouse its own set of norms. The Counterculture became a new dominant culture to contend with, and the radical individualists (die Eigensinnigen) that banded together were, perhaps unintentionally, promoting a cause which later movements explicitly drawing upon anti-authoritarian principles of the Counterculture (e.g. Occupy) ironically had to counter. In the chapter aptly titled "Obsession for Harmony/Compulsion to Identify" in *Demanding the Impossible*, Slavoj Žižek alludes to the failure of the Counterculture by pointing out the contemporary consequences of radical individualism:

No wonder large corporations are delighted to accept such evangelical attacks on the state, when the state tries to regulate media mergers, to put strictures on energy companies, to strengthen air pollution regulations, to protect wildlife and limit logging in the national parks, etc. It is the ultimate irony of history that radical individualism serves as the ideological justification of the unconstrained power of what the large majority of individuals experience as a vast anonymous power which, without any democratic public control, regulates their lives. (6)

In response, then, to radical individualism of the Counterculture, the 99% was born as an attempt at banding together *not* as Eigensinnigen.<sup>100</sup> Individualist ideals poised to deregulate state power had, in time, backfired, gradually fueling the explosive growth of the super-wealthy and their furtive control over state regulatory practices, which the recent Occupy movement sought to topple as a means to bridge ever-widening economic inequality.

### **“The Compulsion to Identify”**

The Occupy movement and its rallying cry, “We are the ninety-nine percent!” that began in Zucotti Park was “a commitment to fighting the twinned powers of private wealth and public force” (Sanneh). What began as a local occupation of a public park in Lower Manhattan spread uncontrollably worldwide, and its temperament was quickly likened to the U.S. Counterculture movement of the 60s. The Occupy movement was different than the Counterculture mainly because it was determinedly against radical individualism, an ideology now represented by the corporate banker. But much like the Counterculture, its nomenclature created problems for the life of the movement. At its start, Occupy Wall Street had a remarkably successful anarchic<sup>101</sup> structure, with a horizontal rather than vertical organizational intention: “It inspired similar occupations around the country, creating a model for radical politics in the Obama era. And it became known, more than anything, for its commitment to horizontalism: no parties, no leaders, no demands” (Sanneh). But as it grew out of Zucotti Park, its ideals began to take root and become vertical, where the term *Occupy* stood at the helm of an unwieldy inter- and transnational movement, enabling the occupation of public plazas and government buildings for a wide range of issues, many not directly linked to economic inequality. Certainly, this gesture of occupation is an important show of force for the disenfranchised. But when, especially for more localized struggles, the idea of occupation overrides nuanced methods of affecting change, that very same show of force can draw attention to the disconcerting imperialist rhetoric of “occupation.”

Take, for example, a recent and ongoing “Occupy the Farm” movement in Albany, California intending to prevent the erection of chain supermarkets and other corporate development on some of the last plots of high grade soil in the Berkeley area. A group of occupiers forced the lock on University of California’s Gill Tract in order to “take back the tract.” They tilled the land and drew up estimable plans to not only turn the tract into an urban farm but also a center for educating the public about food justice issues. But in so doing, the occupiers both inadvertently jeopardized academic research by UC Berkeley plant biologists and alarmed an otherwise supportive neighboring family-housing community with an influx of disruptive strangers. Commotion will accompany any tent city, even the most respectful. It was not the intention of the farm movement to displace UC Berkeley researchers, nor was it their intention to lose support from the neighboring community. The alignment of the relatively small

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<sup>100</sup> “Hermann Hesse hätte die Idee der Occupy-Bewegung begrüßt, sicherlich, weil sie Sand ins Getriebe zu werfen versucht, aber doch keine Zeltstadt! Nie hätte er gemeinsam mit anderen Parolen gebrüllt! Programme, sagte er, seien für Dumme und Einladungen zum Missbrauch” (Matussek, “Ich mach mein Ding” 126).

<sup>101</sup> A tangential line of inquiry: How does the term *Anarchy* practically function? If the state is held to be unnecessary, if there is to be no law, no rule and no ruler, then how does Anarchy view its own anarchic organization? How does it view its symbols, the circle-A and the black flag, or its mottos and iconic figures, if not as ideological symbols meant to organize (even if meant to organize decentralized disorder)? If Anarchy were to catch on, would not Anarchy become the very rule against which the fight would be fought, still in the name of Anarchy? Is there a better term?

urban farm movement with a movement whose own compass had become dangerously strong silenced more acute, inventive, and subtle forms of resistance with rhetoric of force.

The battle over the plot is still underway. After being evicted by University of California police off the ag-research tract, the occupiers returned to a nearby plot, not ag-land but still officially owned by the University of California. The occupiers were met with staunch resistance by some local community members who have, in their own ways, been fighting for many years to prevent development: “Long before Occupy the Farm, some Gill Tract neighbors had been fighting the proposed development [...]” (Tepperman). While the occupiers exclaimed their allegiance to the occupy movement—“We’re tapping into a movement globally to take back land”—the counter-protestors complained of the occupiers’ alignment with this global movement, which had blinded their democratic sense—“They’re not doing it in a democratic way [...] They’re being bullies with their rhetoric. It’s like small children throwing their tantrum until they get their way” (Raguso). Using the rhetoric of the global movement (and with it incredible, unwieldy power) for this relatively small movement has turned-off many potential supporters of this cause to rethink land use.

If a movement attends to the resistance from its supporters—in this case reassess the language which drives its tactics—it may actually embolden its stance by acknowledging its shortcomings. In fact, the recent tactical turn of this farm movement involving negotiations with the University and creative protest campaigns to boycott the construction of yet another supermarket has proven to garner a larger network of support.

As Occupy grew in size, it reached many breaking points. It became ever-harder to sustain its participatory democracy and consensus rules, and it especially became ever-harder to sustain one of its early resolutions, non-violence, which had, in many ways, to do with the ideals that accompany occupation and the problems that accompany collectivizing. The purpose of bringing the nomenclature of movements under scrutiny is not to utterly denounce Occupy or Counterculture, but to question the ways in which we feel compelled to negotiate our being, our proclivities, with rhetoric that inevitably fails; that to get behind something means, to some degree, to forgo subtlety of individual expression. A movement is taken as a movement because it has some guiding principle, some moral compass, some phrase or term to point to the way things *ought* to be organized, consequently requiring some individual compromise. In the case of the Counterculture, then, a movement heavily dependent on securing individualistic ideals, in order to rescue the significance of the individual from the unwieldy uniformity of the group, *Counterculture* might need an updated definition. Taking cues from deconstructive criticism helps in this process.

[...] why use language at all if it seems to refer to a kind of stable meaning that doesn’t really exist? We must use language, Derrida explains, because we must use the tool at our disposal if we don’t have another. But even while we use this tool, we can be aware that it doesn’t have the solidity and stability we have assumed it has, and we can therefore improvise with it, stretch it to fit new modes of thinking [...]. (Tyson 253)

Analogously, if “Counterculture” is the tool at our disposal, a term ossified by history, then it may be time to improvise with it in order to better signal the innumerable ideas, ideals and ideologies under its scope. If we understand “counter” not only as a term signaling opposition in the sense of “against” or “contrary to” a mainstream culture, but also as a term that qualifies the culture of this movement of *Eigensinnigen*, then we may be able to understand “counter” in

terms of “counting.” In other words, we ought to think of the Counterculture as a movement that tallied its every member, that sought to make its every member count.

## Conclusion

Movements hold onto names, even if inadequate, because the tension between individual and collective will that nomenclature engenders delineates the very connection sought between the individual and the group. Returning to *Siddhartha*, words and teachings build an analogous tension between the particular and the universal, the profane and the sacred; words and teachings, though inadequate, delineate the connection sought between individual self and cosmic formlessness.

Many ascribe the philosophical engagement with the skepticism or crisis of language—the use of words even though they fail—to one of the major tenets of Modernity in the German-language literary tradition. In the works of the *Sprachskepsis* poets and philosophers of around 1900, language is masterfully used to illustrate its own failing.<sup>102</sup> In this paradoxical and passionate way, language is used to tighten the tension between what it reveals and conceals, bringing its users and readers to the threshold of language. Hesse’s *Siddhartha* falls in line with the writings of the Sprachskepsis poets. Consider the strong correlations in language, style and content between the paragon language-skeptic Fritz Mauthner’s *Der letzte Tod des Gautama Buddha* and Hesse’s *Siddhartha*. From *Der letzte Tod des Gautama Buddha*:

Learning is better than teaching. He who believes himself able to teach is scarcely fit to learn. Learning to be silent is the best thing to learn. I would like to be silent, but I should not be silent and I cannot be silent. There is something about the experience of enlightenment that is not speakable in human language, that is not conveyable with words. There is something about suffering, about the emergence of suffering, about the disappearance of suffering, about the path that leads to the disappearance of suffering that is not speakable in language, that is not conveyable with deficient words.<sup>103</sup>

In *Siddhartha* there is less of a distinction between “learning” and “teaching”—that is, both are repudiated. But what is profoundly common to both *Siddhartha* and *Der letzte Tod des Gautama Buddha* is the complex and paradoxical role language plays in learning, in gaining wisdom, in

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<sup>102</sup> A fitting example is: “Aber, mein verehrter Freund, auch die irdischen Begriffe entziehen sich mir in der gleichen Weise. Wie soll ich es versuchen, Ihnen diese seltsamen geistigen Qualen zu schildern, dies Emporschnellen der Fruchtzweige über meinen ausgereckten Händen, dies Zurückweichen des murmelnden Wassers vor meinen dürstenden Lippen? Mein Fall ist, in Kürze, dieser: Es ist mir völlig die Fähigkeit abhanden gekommen, über irgend etwas zusammenhängend zu denken oder zu sprechen” (Hofmannsthal, *Brief Des Lord Chandos. Poetologische Schriften, Reden Und Erfundene Gespräche*. 131). “But, dear friend, worldly ideas too are retreating from me in the same way. How shall I describe these strange spiritual torments, the boughs of fruit snatched from my outstretched hands, the murmuring water shrinking from my parched lips? In brief, this is my case: I have completely lost the ability to think or speak coherently about anything at all” (Hofmannsthal, *The Lord Chandos Letter* 121).

<sup>103</sup> Translation my own. “Lernen ist besser als lehren. Wenig tauglich zum lernen ist, wer lehren zu können glaubt. Schweigen lernen ist das beste Lernen. Ich möchte schweigen, aber ich soll nicht schweigen und ich kann nicht schweigen. An dem Erlebnis der Erlösung ist etwas, das nicht in Menschensprache sprechbar, das nicht in Worten mitteilbar ist. An dem Leiden, an dem Entstehen des Leidens, an dem Verschwinden des Leidens, an dem Wege, der zum Verschwinden des Leidens führt, ist etwas, das nicht in Sprache sprechbar, das nicht in armen Worten mitteilbar ist” (80–81).

reaching enlightenment. In both, there is an eagerness to denounce language while using it to express and communicate the ineffable and refer to realms beyond language.

There is an unsolvable mystery throughout *Siddhartha*: the boy-turned-adult claims to have learned this and that, from here and there, from lover and rock, from money and tree and holyman, from sensations and the deprivation thereof... But for everything that he learns, he learns that he has learned nothing. And between these poles of learning and not learning, he vacillates continually. At one point, on the riverbank, Siddhartha thinks:

Now that all these utterly transitory things have slipped away from me, he thought, I am left under the sun just as I stood here once as a small child; I own nothing, know nothing, can do nothing, have learned nothing. How curious this is! Now that I am no longer young, now that my hair is already half gray and my strength is beginning to wane, I am starting over again from the beginning, from childhood!<sup>104</sup> (80)

So Siddhartha embodies the paradox. At the end of his journey, he is at the beginning; in old age, he is in youth. He has learned nothing, except he has learned that he has learned nothing. In *Siddhartha*, language is used to show its own as well as learning's point of critical failure. *Siddhartha*, as guidebook, was used in an analogously paradoxical way to reject guidance. The Eigensinnigen of the Counterculture found in *Siddhartha* reasons to band together and endure because this story helped explain that the questions of language and of learning remained unsolved in their paradoxical quality. The Eigensinnigen of the Counterculture could thereby assert their own, new ways of thinking and of organizing as solutions to this mystery.

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<sup>104</sup> "Nun, dachte er, da alle diese vergänglichsten Dinge mir wieder entglitten sind, nun stehe ich wieder unter der Sonne, wie ich einst als kleines Kind gestanden bin, nichts ist mein, nichts kann ich, nichts vermag ich, nichts habe ich gelernt. Wie ist dies wunderbar! Jetzt, wo ich nicht mehr jung bin, wo meine Haare schon halb grau sind, wo die Kräfte nachlassen, jetzt fange ich wieder von vorn und beim Kinde an!" (78).

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