

## DEMONS IN HINDUTVA: WRITING A THEOLOGY FOR HINDU NATIONALISM

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*This article explores the vast body of English language works on Hinduism published since 1981 by Voice of India—an influential right-wing Hindu publishing house headquartered in New Delhi, but contributed to by Indians at “home” and in diasporic communities, as well as Europeans and North Americans. Focus on the construction of the Hindu “Self” and the non-Hindu “Other” shows the manner in which European thought, primarily represented by the contributions of colonial-era British and German indologists, but bolstered by evangelicals, Utilitarians and Arabo-Islamicists from the same era, has become an important feature of postcolonial forms of Hinduism. In particular, the influence of fin de siècle German indologist Paul Deussen, mediated by such colonial-era Hindu thinkers as Swami Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo Ghose and Mahatma Gandhi, not only defines Voice of India’s theology, but leads to the construction of a Hindu Self that is the personification of “Aryan godliness” and a non-Hindu Other that is essentialized as a “Semitic Demon.” Although closely associated with and often serving the political initiatives of the Sangh Parivar, the authors of this theology have been kept at arm’s length by the organization for reasons of political expediency. Both the growing network of contributors to and consumers of this view, and its periodic use by the Sangh Parivar, insure that it represents a significant development in the ideology of Hindutva.*

In 1948 Sita Ram Goel (d. 2003)—a clerk in a Calcutta merchant’s office—received a visit from a friend that changed his life. That friend was Ram Swarup (d. 1998)—then unemployed—whom Goel had met while studying history at Delhi University. These young men shared a common background, born into British Punjab’s *agrawal* (merchant caste) families in the 1920s. In an area known for its plethora of religious and sectarian communities, Goel and Swarup were raised in an era in which old syncretic beliefs and practices, largely represented by the shrine-based devotional cults of Bhaktism, were being challenged by the rise of less accommodative alternatives, some deploying Hindu symbolism in their nationalist agendas, others engaging in more proactive “communal” projects such as “cow protection” and the “reconversion” (*shuddhi*) of non-Hindus.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The proactively “Hindu” parties in British Punjab included Swami Dayananda’s “Arya Samaj” (f. 1875), V. D. Savarkar’s Hindu Mahasabha (f. 1915), and K. B. Hedgewar’s

Reflecting this religio-political diversity, by the time of their fateful encounter in 1948 Goel had satisfied flirtations with rightist Arya Samaji and centrist Gandhian ideals to become a member of the Communist Party of India, while Swarup was increasingly critical of the communists and sympathetic to the rightist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Their reunion was naturally marked by debate, but Goel would eventually be won over to Swarup's perspective. By 1949 Goel had quit his job to follow his friend back to Delhi, and begun writing for the *Organizer*, a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh journal. Later the same year, he and Swarup returned to Calcutta to run an anti-communist think tank and, under the latter's direction, initiated the study of Sri Aurobindo Ghose's (d. 1950) and Swami Vivekananda's (d. 1902) voluminous works on Sanskritic theology. Ten years later, in Goel's own words, "I had come back at last, come back to my spiritual home from which I had wandered away in self forgetfulness . . . I could not resist its call. I became a Hindu."<sup>2</sup>

In many respects, the personal journey which Goel describes in his autobiography echoes that of the Indian centre and its provincial middle-class constituencies in the postcolonial context: increasing abandonment of the left, ranging from the Communist Party to the socialist wing of the Indian National Congress, in favour of the right, primarily defined by the Sangh Parivar—an umbrella term for the parties and organizations associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.<sup>3</sup> An interesting feature of this transition from

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Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (f. 1925). The prime party seeking to incorporate non-Hindus, but nevertheless define the "nation" as a conglomeration of religious communities, was the Indian National Congress (f. 1885), particularly as led by Mohandas K. Gandhi. Such "communal" notions even infiltrated the "Communist Party of India" (f. 1925), the last major influence creeping into the region during Swarup's and Goel's youth.

<sup>2</sup> S. R. Goel, *How I Became a Hindu*, available at <http://www.voiceofdharma.com/books/hibh/ch8.htm>. Also see K. Elst, "Ram Swarup (1924–1998)—Outline of a Biography," available at <http://www.koenraadelt.voiceofdharma.com/articles/hinduism/ramswarup.html>; and "India's Only Communalist—A Short Biography of Sita Ram Goel," available at <http://www.koenraadelt.voiceofdharma.com/articles/hinduism/sitaramgoel.html>. A complete list of Voice of India authors and their publications is available at <http://www.voi.org>; <http://www.voiceofdharma.org>; and <http://www.voiceofdharma.com>.

<sup>3</sup> The Sangh Parivar (lit. "Family of Associations") comprises the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Vishva Hindu Parishad, Bharatiya Janata Party (formerly Bharatiya Jana Sangh), Swadeshi Jagaran Manch, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, Saraswati Shishu Mandir, Vidya Bharati, Bharatiya Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, Rashtriya Sevika Samiti and Bajrang Dal. These represent political parties and student and women's organizations, as well as educational institutions. Such organizations and parties also work closely with like-minded groups in India, such as Shiv Sena (f. 1966). Further, the Sangh Parivar has very successfully spread its ideology through the temples, business associations and student organizations of Indian diasporic communities in Europe and the Americas, some of the latter recently venturing as far as to sue the California Board of Education for

the perspective of intellectual history is the fact that the growing popularity of the Sangh Parivar's political ideology of "Hindutva"—a concept of nationhood requiring recognition of "India" as one's "fatherland" and "holy land"—did not progress hand in hand with the articulation of a singular theological perspective on Hinduism.<sup>4</sup> Goel and Swarup, however, sought to counter this perceived drawback by writing a theology and promoting it through Voice of India, an organization they cofounded in 1981, with the financial support of the commercial community from which they hailed. If Goel's political journey echoes that of the Indian centre, his intellectual drive resonates with the motivations of the provincial groups that support Voice of India and the politics of Hindutva. In his autobiography, Goel suggests that concern for the middle and lower orders of society was the first cause of his interest in Mohandas K. Gandhi (d. 1948) and then the Communist Party, while it turned him away from the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru (d. 1964), whom he derides as an elitist, haughty "Brown Sahib." Gandhi and the Communists, on the other hand, were eventually dismissed for acquiescing to the "Partition" of British India in 1947; the latter accused of turning its back on class interest by supporting the scheme, and the former critiqued for sticking to a "nonviolent" Hinduism that was incapable of halting the creation of Pakistan. Yet, reading between the lines, this pat explanation does not account for Goel officially joining the Communist Party in 1948, after Partition. A better explanation is that, post-Partition, Goel and the commercial middle classes he represented felt somewhat marginalized by an Indian centre dominated by Nehru's Leftist Congress, rendering his and other ears fertile to the ideas of people like an already right-leaning Swarup. It is in this light that Goel's long affiliation with the Sangh Parivar best resolves itself: writing for Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh publications from the 1950s to the 1980s, unsuccessfully running for a seat in Parliament on a Bharatiya Jana Sangh (f. 1952) ticket in 1957, involving himself with the incipient Vishva Hindu Parishad in 1964, and working with a think tank that would lead to the founding of the Bharatiya Janata Party (f. 1980) in the late 1970s. Voice of India, in fact, was established to provide the Sangh Parivar "a full blooded Hindu ideology of its own and process all events, movements, parties and public figures in terms of that ideology, rather than live on borrowed slogans or hand to mouth ideas invoked

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its "anti-Hindu" curriculum. See Girish Agrawa, "Sangh Spreads Its Cloak in American Campus," *Radiance* 44/51 (24 June 2007).

<sup>4</sup> The term "Hindutva" and its primary definition can be traced to the Hindu Mahasabhaite, V. D. Savarkar. See V. D. Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu* (Bombay, 1969 (reprint)). For the theological debates that divide the Sangh Parivar, despite the political consensus on Savarkar's notion of Hindutva, see Jyotirmaya Sharma, "War in the Parivar," *The Hindu*, 11 Sept. 2005.

on the spur of the moment.”<sup>5</sup> In pursuit of this goal, Voice of India has published a considerable body of English-language works centred on Swarup’s self-taught theology, mostly authored by individuals of similar middle-class/professional backgrounds, but whose origins can be traced to South Asia, Europe and North America, and whose works can be found in the academic libraries of all of the those regions in various languages besides English.<sup>6</sup> Voice of India’s readership is inestimable, but judging by the broad availability of works in print and on the Internet, as well as bids by various parties in India to have them banned (sometimes successfully) as “hate literature,” it seems clear that numbers are not insignificant, nor are subscribers restricted to any one region of the globe. As for the goal of providing an all-encompassing “ideology” for the Sangh Parivar, Voice of India works have been used by the latter’s political organs, beginning with the violently anti-Muslim campaigns of the 1980s that led to the destruction of the Babri Mosque (Ayodhya) in the early 1990s. Primarily driven by the claim that this sixteenth-century mosque was built on the site of the god Rama’s birthplace, the movement was pivotal in raising the profile of the Sangh Parivar, making an immense contribution to the Bharatiya Janata Party’s election to the prime minister’s office following the mosque’s demolition by a mob. Yet even the Bharatiya Janata Party’s leader, Lal K. Advani, is said to have chided Goel for his “strong language” in 1990.<sup>7</sup> So what is the theological centrepiece of Swarup’s and Goel’s ideology, one which has been employed to legitimate the Sangh Parivar’s political campaigns, while at the same time remaining a source of tension within the umbrella organization?

An answer is complicated by the fact that the cadre of contributors to Voice of India claim to follow directly in the footsteps of every major colonial-era Hindu intellectual. Further complicating matters, the perspectives such intellectuals uphold stem from a dialectical process initiated in the nineteenth century, involving Brahmanical traditionalism, European “Orientalism,” British colonial modes of authority, and the anticolonial pull of nationalism, not to mention the social and structural features of South Asia that offered them all fuel.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Goel, *How I Became a Hindu*, <http://www.voiceofdharma.com/books/hibh/ch8.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Non-Indian contributors include Koenraad Elst (Belgium), David Frawley (US), Bojil Korolov (Bulgaria), Michel Danino and Francois Gautier (France), and Nicholas Kazanas (Greece). Many of these individuals are associated with the Aurobindo (Ghose) Ashram in Madras. See <http://www.voi.org>; <http://www.voiceofdharma.org>; and <http://www.voiceofdharma.com>.

<sup>7</sup> Goel, *How I Became a Hindu*, <http://www.voiceofdharma.com/books/hibh/ch8.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, W. Halbfass, *India and Europe* (Albany, NY, 1988); and G. Pandey, ed., *Hindus and Others* (New Delhi, 1993). Relevant articles can also be found in K. Sangari and S. Vaid, eds., *Recasting Women* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1990); M. A. Tetreault and R. A. Denemark, eds., *Gods, Guns and Globalization* (London, 2004); A. Mehdi and

Thus contemporary scholarship has overwhelmingly concentrated on colonial-era reformulations and the mainstream movements that carry them into the postcolonial era, rather than the manner in which the forms of Hinduism first articulated in the colonial period have since evolved. This article seeks to expand the discussion by delving into the writings published by Voice of India in order to pinpoint the contributions of Orientalists in defining historical and theological concepts, explore the manner in which these were engaged by Hindu thinkers in the colonial period, and contrast both with Voice of India ideology, particularly as they relate to grand narratives about the origins and manifestations of religious “truth.” By focusing on the definitions of the nationalized Hindu “Self” and “Other” generated in each “truth”—Orientalist, colonial-era Hindu and Voice of India—light is shed on the manner in which scholarship ranging from the works of colonial-era and postcolonial intellectuals of various backgrounds and orientations have been selectively employed to add up to something new in Voice of India writings, distinguishable from the works of their Hindu antecedents by their theology and its historical placement, rather than by their overarching political ideology.

Under the political and socio-economic pressures of British rule, upper-caste Hindus eager to reform in light of European thought adopted fundamental themes from Orientalist literature, such as the essentialization of the “Occident” as rational and the “Orient” as mystical. Whereas Orientalists had quite unanimously declared the superiority of supposedly Occidental characteristics, Hindu intellectuals inverted the value attached to Occidental and Oriental traits in an obvious bid to validate the indigenous Self, while placing it in the service of nationalist aspirations that required the construction of the British as the ultimate Other. With the departure of the British in 1947, the value of this Self–Other dichotomy obviously diminished, the nascent Indian state requiring relations with its former colonizer and other Western states. By the 1970s significant numbers of Indians had also immigrated to Europe and the Americas, cementing intercontinental bonds and remitting considerable revenue back to India. Such postcolonial realignments are reflected in the participation of Indian, Indian diasporic and European/American thinkers in the rearranging of Hindutva’s Self–Other dichotomies through organizations such as Voice of India. They collectively address current conditions by constructing the “truth” of Hinduism

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R. Janaki, eds., *Communalism in India* (New Delhi, 1994); S. Bose and A. Jalal, eds., *Nationalism, Democracy and Development* (Delhi, 1997); and a volume devoted to and titled “An Intellectual History for India,” in *Modern Intellectual History* 4/1 (2007). Also see R. E. Frykenberg, “Accounting for Fundamentalisms in South Asia: Ideologies and Institutions in Historical Perspective,” in M. Marty and R. S. Appleby, eds., *Accounting for Fundamentalisms* (Chicago and London, 1994), 591–616.

as the last vestige of an ancient “universal spirituality” which Hindus alone retain in the present. Although “perennial philosophy” had been a feature of the exchange between European Orientalists and colonial-era Hindu thinkers, the crucial difference between Voice of India authors and their intellectual antecedents is that “Aryan monism,” or an “immanent” conception of God, alone stands as truth, while the multiple creeds of the Abrahamic faiths are essentialized as “Semitic monotheism,” a “transcendent” vision of divinity, and are afforded no constructive place. Rather, monotheism is regarded as the greatest “evil” standing in the way of universal spirituality, its theology described as “demonology” and its followers said to serve as the mindless minions of the “devil.” Although Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment critiques of Christianity, Romantic and indological articulations of “Hindu India” and its Sanskrit literature, Arabo-Islamicist anti-Muslim histories, and selected writings from mainstream scholarship are used to bolster the new truth, I argue that the crux of Voice of India’s theology is provided by the contents of *fin de siècle* German indology, carried forward in Vivekananda’s works and superimposed on Ghose’s and Gandhi’s deployment of precolonial Brahmanism’s “divine” Self and “demonic” Other. In the “globalized” present, the uncompromisingly anti-Abrahamic nature of Voice of India theology itself explains why Sangh Parivar politicians make use of the organization’s publications in domestic campaigns, but attempt to meet international interests that depend on relations with “Semitic demons” by keeping its primary authors at a safe distance from its official façade. Political expediency, rather than any inherent objection to Voice of India’s theology, accounts for the Sangh Parivar’s sidelining of Swarup and Goel by the early 1990s, when organs of the organization acquired political authority at the Indian centre.

That politics has overridden spiritual concerns from the beginning of the Hindutva movement is amply confirmed by the observation that the doctrines and practices presented as “Hinduism” by colonial-era Hindu intellectuals and their postcolonial heirs did not exist prior to the British colonization of South Asia. Instead, a vast array of Sanskrit texts, supplemented by variegated vernacular and oral traditions, were the norm. At their apex stood the voluminous four *Vedas*, transferred from oral to written form in the second and first millennia BCE. To these were added scores of *Upanisads*, collectively known as *Vedanta* and composed in the last half of the first millennium BCE. The literary canon also included two “epics,” the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, thousands of extant “histories” collectively termed *Puranas*, and even more treatises, or *Shastras*, on theology, ritual, polity, law, economics and other social concerns, written between the late first millennium BCE and the second millennium CE. These texts, combined with six major theological schools and the vernacular or oral supplements that had come to the fore by the Common Era,

resolved overlapping and discrete notions of animism, polytheism, henotheism, monotheism, pantheism and monism. Practice, therefore, was not only extremely diverse, but centred on castes (*varnas*), endogamous vocational groups (*jatis*), two overarching sects (Shaivite and Vaishnavite), and the innumerable regional cults associated with Bhaktism. All of these were also heavily indebted to non-scriptural customary practices and laws. Three aspects of the manner in which European Orientalists rationalized this complexity are particularly pertinent to the reconstructed Hinduism inherited by postcolonial thinkers like Swarup and Goel. First, when European scholars were exposed to the “Orient” by colonial expansion, their initial instinct was to measure the intellectual traditions encountered by the yardstick of European norms and values, assuming the latter superior. Thus each author applied a monotheistic, Biblical mode of approach, seeking a rarified and singular definition of South Asia’s religions in an often arbitrarily selected body of Sanskrit literature, making no reference to its variegated nature or to the vernacular and oral traditions that accompanied it. Indeed Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Bhaktism and various strains of Brahmanical thought were largely rolled together into the term “Hinduism.”<sup>9</sup> Second, Sanskrit texts were read under the assumption that the “Occident” and “Orient” were not only distinct, but hierarchically oppositional, realms. The “superiority” of the Occident over the Orient, therefore, was expressed through the identification of the former with values held dear, including rationalism, progress, religion, egalitarianism, masculinity and adulthood. The “inferiority” of the Orient, meanwhile, was asserted by means of its association with the diametrical opposites of Occidental traits, identified as mysticism, stasis, myth, despotism, femininity and childhood.<sup>10</sup> And third, despite the homogenization of the Orient, differences between “Orientals” were not absent from the equation. In fact, neither the value added to “monotheism” nor the idea of “progress” over time translated into a sympathetic reading of “Muslims” in relation to “Hindus.” As the writings of the Utilitarian James Mill (d. 1836) attest, by the early nineteenth century it was conventional to accuse Muslim “invaders” of ending a Hindu “Golden Age” by undermining Hindu political sovereignty,

<sup>9</sup> For works specifically on British Orientalism and South Asia see T. Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (New York, 2002); R. Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford, 1992); R. King, *Orientalism and Religion: Post-colonial Theory, India and the “Mystical East”* (London, 1999); T. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley, CA, 1997); S. Sugirtharajah, *Imagining Hinduism* (New York, 2003); and R. Roher, “British Orientalism in the Eighteenth Century: The Dialectics of Knowledge and Government,” in A. C. Breckenridge and P. van der Veer, eds., *Orientalism and the Post-colonial Predicament* (Delhi, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> See E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978); and *idem*, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1993).

destroying Hindu religious institutions, eroding the Hindu character, and, as in the case of Henry Elliot's (d. 1853) works, even significantly reducing the Hindu population of the region by means of "massacres and murders."<sup>11</sup> The motivation behind this supposed Muslim violence was identified as doctrinal "Islam" itself, broadly argued to promote bigotry, tyranny and fanaticism, in relation to which "Hinduism" preached tolerance, inclusiveness and nonviolence.

Beyond these three general alignments, the Orientalist discourse and its influence on the reconstruction of Hinduism by South Asians becomes more complex. Apart from deriding Islam to legitimate the displacement of the Muslim political elite by the colonial regime, the relatively positive value that European scholars ascribed to Hinduism is frequently, but by no means hegemonically, connected with the assumption of the common origins of religious "truth." This "perennial philosophy" won broad appeal with the revival of interest in Hellenic thought during the Renaissance, as well as with the challenges such interests posed religious institutions in Europe.<sup>12</sup> Although Jesuits would carry this philosophy to colonial missions around the world, most British (Protestant) evangelicals would not extend it to South Asia, instead following another well-established pattern in Christian polemics: the theological representation of non-Christian divinities as "demons," meaning the personifications of "evil" in relation to the "good" of the one Christian god.<sup>13</sup> The best appraisal that evangelicals could muster, in fact, ranged between William Ward's (d. 1823) early nineteenth-century dismissal of Sanskrit literature as "disgusting, lascivious and savage," and John Nichol Farquhar's (d. 1929) label of "amoral myth" a century later.<sup>14</sup> Perennial philosophy in British India, therefore, was largely the fancy of indologists, and although it was not as dismissive of Hinduism as were the evangelicals, its assumptions of the common origins of truth did not mean the equality of all truths. As William Jones's (d. 1794) writings reveal, Hinduism was considered on par with Hellenic "heathenism" and representative of humanity's childhood, unchanged

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<sup>11</sup> For scholarly considerations of Muller's views see Sugirtharajah, *Imagining Hinduism*, 57; for Mill see J. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's "The History of British India" and Orientalism* (New York, 1992); and for Elliot see I. Habib, "Economic History of the Delhi Sultanate—An Essay in Interpretation," *Indian Historical Review* 4/2 (1978), 287–303.

<sup>12</sup> P. van der Veer, "Hindu Nationalism and the Discourse of Modernity: The Vishva Hindu Parishad," in Marty and Appleby, *Accounting for Fundamentalisms*, 658. Although there are many variants, the essence of "perennial philosophy" among Orientalists can be gleaned from B. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement* (Berkeley, 1980); and M. Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> See P. Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters* (Oxford, 1977). For an important work on the centrality of demonization in the Christian construction of the "Other" see E. Pagels, *The Origin of Satan* (New York, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Sugirtharajah, *Imagining Hinduism*, 75–85; 91–105.

over the millennia, while Christianity was the “religion” of the reasoning, modern European adult. A similarly evolutionary, paternalistic ethos carried forward into Max Muller’s (d. 1900) version of perennialism, but with the particular slant that Hinduism was “natural” while Christianity was “revealed,” rendering the latter a purer understanding of truth.<sup>15</sup> Even such “sympathy” was little more than a consequence of the fact that in their reading of Sanskrit texts, indologists like Jones had discovered linguistic bonds between Sanskrit and European languages, including Greek and Latin. Thus Jones’s contemporary Reuben Burrow (d. 1792) argued that after the “Paradise of Moses . . . the Hindoo [*sic*] religion probably spread all over the earth; there are signs of it in every northern country, and in almost every system of worship. In England it is obvious; Stonehenge is evidently one of the temples of Boodh [i.e. the Buddha].”<sup>16</sup> By the late nineteenth century not only were Jones’s linguistic bonds often tied to Burrow’s “Hindu Europe,” but the whole equation had been racialized by the likes of Muller, who categorically identified “India” as the “old home” of the “Aryan race.”<sup>17</sup> Given the growing perception of racial ties between Europeans and Hindus, it is no wonder the latter fared better than Islam and Muslims, labeled “Semitic” in the general scheme of historical writing among Europeans.

The racialization of the distinction between Hinduism/Hindus and Islam/Muslims was given further significance by *fin de siècle* German indologists, with immediate consequences for colonial-era Hindu intellectuals as well as their heirs. From 1890 to 1910 there arose various “attempts to ‘orientalize’ the New Testament, either to save it (as in Adolf Deissmann’s very popular book of 1908, *Licht vom Osten*) or to debunk it, as in Arthur Drews’ 1910 *Die Christusmythe*.”<sup>18</sup> Among such authors, Paul Deussen (d. 1919) is particularly significant to this discussion. A follower of Arthur Schopenhauer (d. 1860), Deussen visited British India in 1892 and 1893, and received Brahmanical scholars, including Vivekananda, in Europe later that decade. The essential conclusion of his study was that the “Aryan race” and its religio-philosophical heritage stood in direct opposition to the “Semitic,” such that the former was theologically grounded in monism, while the latter’s monotheism “was only able to posit

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 2–7, 62–3.

<sup>16</sup> Cited in Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 41–2.

<sup>17</sup> Cited in Sugirtharajah, *Imagining Hinduism*, 15, 33, 50–52.

<sup>18</sup> S. Marchand, “Religion and Race in German Indology; or, From the Perennial Philosophy to the Indological Reformation” (presented at the Exchange of Ideas between South Asia, India and Central Europe, Harvard University, October 2005), 14. For German Orientalism more generally see T. Kontje, *German Orientalisms* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2004); K. Murti, *India: The Seductive and Seduced “Other” of German Orientalism* (Westport, CT, 2001); and A. Sartori, “Beyond Culture-Contact and Colonial Discourse: “Germanism” in Colonial Bengal,” *Modern Intellectual History* 4/1 (2007), 77–93.

the existence of this world, and an unapproachable and sadistic God.”<sup>19</sup> Unlike most Jesuits and British-based indologists, however, the import of Deussen’s view is that he did not seek the common origins of all truth, but attempted to reduce “both ‘Christianity’ and ‘Indian philosophy’ to purified, and ultimately ahistorical forms,” and define them “in such a way as to absolutely preclude the participation of Judaism and Islam, Egypt and China, the *Naturvölker* and the Slav, in the search for truth.”<sup>20</sup> Evidently, perennial philosophy could also lead to distinctions as harsh as those posed by evangelicals, but in the case of such German indologists, monotheistic Christianity and monistic Hinduism were not set against each other. Rather, monistic “Aryans” were pitted against monotheistic “Semites.”

In keeping with their drive to separate the “Aryan” from the “Semite” without forsaking Christianity, Schopenhauer’s and Deussen’s reinterpretation of Sanskritic literature is laden with consequences for the reconstruction of Hinduism. Like most perennial philosophers, Schopenhauer and Deussen found Christian concepts of divine “oneness” most thoroughly reflected in *Vedanta*, so these texts alone were raised to represent “true” Hinduism. The problem for all European perennialists, however, was that the monism of *Vedanta* was found to lack the ethical foundations of Biblical monotheism. In precolonial *Vedanta*, nondualism (*advaita*) was the general norm, implying that the “powers of darkness” (i.e. demons) and the “powers of light” (i.e. gods) were not absolute personifications of evil and good, but ultimately “illusionary” aspects of a monistic unity. It is upon reading such monistic theology that evangelicals judged Hinduism “demonic” at worst and “amoral” at best, while indologists like Jones and Muller argued the “superiority” of Biblical monotheism. Schopenhauer and Deussen, however, built upon the fact that precolonial *Vedanta* did include a “hierarchical relativism” by which the “true” Self was differentiated from the “ignorant” Other. In this precolonial scheme, the Other was included in a “Hindu cosmological framework, but given an inferior position,” if not identified with the “powers of darkness.”<sup>21</sup> Deussen in particular transformed this Self–Other dichotomy by arguing that *Vedanta*’s “monism of cognition” was in fact a “monism of will,” thus providing a monistic basis for ethics, the “will” being “good” and all that is counter to it “evil.”<sup>22</sup> By means of this “monistic

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<sup>19</sup> Marchand, “Religion and Race in German Indology,” 5, 18–19. For the circumstances of Vivekananda’s meetings with Deussen, as well the importance of the latter’s perspective on *Vedanta* to that of the former, see W. Halbfass, ed., *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta* (Albany, NY, 1995), 273–318.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>21</sup> Van der Veer, “Hindu Nationalism and the Discourse of Modernity,” 658; and Halbfass, *India and Europe*, 403–18.

<sup>22</sup> Halbfass, *Philology and Confrontation*, 229–318.

positivism” the meaning of “good” and “evil” in *Vedanta* was entirely changed, forsaking hierarchical relativism for personifications of good as God and evil as Satan in the manner of Biblical monotheism.

From the generally oppositional categories of Occident and Orient, to the specifics of perennial philosophy, Orientalism had a resounding impact on colonial-era Hindu intellectuals. The basics are well represented in a statement Vivekananda made while touring Europe and the Americas in the 1890s. When sojourning in New York, he argued that there were “two planes” of existence, “the spiritual and the material,” the latter being Europe’s domain, the former belonging to Asia “throughout the history of the world.”<sup>23</sup> That Vivekananda also viewed Asia’s spirituality through the lens of Orientalism’s fixation on textuality and race is confirmed by his oft-repeated characterization of “Indian society” exclusively in terms of *Vedanta* and the “extreme self-sacrifice of the Aryan.”<sup>24</sup> And finally, the historical condition of Hindus as the only true “Indians,” invading and establishing “Aryan” civilization’s “Golden Age,” only to be victimized, once settled, by “Islamic” aggression, was also drawn from Orientalist literature, as in the conviction that “foreign conquest,” primarily referencing Muslim dynasties, “has trodden them [Hindus] down for centuries.”<sup>25</sup> Hindu intellectuals, however, collectively differed from their European tutors in one important respect: whereas Europeans quite unanimously argued that Occidental norms and values were superior to the Oriental, Hindu intellectuals inverted the value ascribed each domain’s traits, or simply swapped them. Mysticism, they argued, was more virtuous than rationalism, and Hinduism was the adult, Christianity the child.<sup>26</sup> Vivekananda most succinctly expressed this inversion in a letter to his sponsor, the Maharaja of Mysore, dispatched from Chicago in 1894, while participating in the first “Parliament of Religions.” He wrote, “The poor in the West are devils; compared to them ours are angels.”<sup>27</sup> By the early twentieth century Gandhi would go as far as to write of European “civilization” in general as the source of the world’s “evil” and the foundation of the “Kingdom of Satan.”<sup>28</sup>

Mention of “devils” and “angels” raises the issue of whether colonial-era Hindu intellectuals, all of whom borrowed from indologists to essentialize *Vedanta* as the perennial core of Hindu theology, employed these terms in the sense of the precolonial era’s pure monism, or whether their usage reflects

<sup>23</sup> Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Almora, 1924–32), 4: 150–52, in S. Hay, ed., *Sources of Indian Tradition*, 2 vols. (New York, 1988), 2: 75.

<sup>24</sup> Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, 4: 307–9, 33: 276–7, in Hay, *Sources*, 2: 76–7.

<sup>25</sup> Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, 4: 307–9, in Hay, *Sources*, 2: 77–9.

<sup>26</sup> Also see T. B. Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton, NJ, 1999).

<sup>27</sup> Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, 4: 307–9, in Hay, *Sources*, 2: 78.

<sup>28</sup> M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, ed. A. Parel (Cambridge, 1997), 7, 66–71.

the monistic positivism of German indologists? Excepting the founder of the Arya Samaj, Swami Dayananda (d. 1883), who wrote prior to the *fin de siècle* and so chose to emphasize monotheistic strains, monistic positivism is exactly the element that distinguishes precolonial and colonial-era interpretations of *Vedanta*. For monists from Vivekananda to Gandhi, this “positivism” provided a convenient rebuttal to evangelical charges ranging from demonism to amorality and indological associations with heathenism, while simultaneously legitimating (post-)Enlightenment conceptions of progress, individualism and so on.<sup>29</sup> Yet one cannot disregard the legacy of precolonial *Vedanta* in colonial-era readings and adoptions of European ideas, whether among monotheists or monists.<sup>30</sup> Given that the one positive that Orientalists attached to the Hindu Self was its “inclusiveness” and “tolerance,” it follows that most colonial-era Hindu thinkers did not deny hierarchical relativism when addressing the Other. In a debate between himself, a Muslim and a Christian in 1877, Dayananda categorically stated that the ultimate path to “salvation is to acquire knowledge of the Vedas,” finding various flaws in Christian and Muslim scriptures, thus setting them up as “lesser” truths, but nowhere pronouncing them “demonic.”<sup>31</sup> Instead, he argued Hindu superiority by means of the contention that the “Aryan” religion offered a closer approximation of universal truth than the “Semitic.”<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Gandhi declared himself a “servant of Muslims, Christians, Parsis [Zoroastrians] and Jews” in the early twentieth century, but prized Hinduism “above all other religions” for specifically doctrinal considerations, such as the purported “non-violence” of the latter’s *dharma*.<sup>33</sup> And finally, in 1908, Ghose sought to prove that Hinduism was the only “eternal” and “universal religion which embraces all others . . . given as a charge to the Aryan race to preserve through the ages,” by arguing that “Semitic” religions are comparatively “narrow,” “sectarian” and of “limited purpose.”<sup>34</sup> The only “demon” in the estimation of Dayananda, Gandhi and Ghose is “materialism”; that is, any view or action that denies or downgrades the spiritual realm. As Ghose had already written in 1907, “national emancipation is a great and holy yajna [ritual sacrifice] . . . But every great

<sup>29</sup> Halbfass, *Philology and Confrontation*, 257–318.

<sup>30</sup> P. van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism* (Berkeley, CA, 1994), 12.

<sup>31</sup> H. B. Sarda, *Life of Dayanand Saraswati* (Ajmer, 1946), 170–72, in Hay, *Sources*, 2: 56–8.

<sup>32</sup> D. Saraswati, *The Light of Truth*, trans. G. P. Upadhyaya (Allahabad, 1960), 548–9.

<sup>33</sup> M. K. Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi, 1958–78), 17: 406, 25: 563, 26: 415, in Hay, *Sources*, 2: 250–52. Contrary to Gandhi’s claims, Hacker writes, “the duty of nonviolence, which Tilak, and Aurobindo [Ghose] in his political period, did not recognize, but which by now has become a universally binding ideal, was first discovered by Gandhi in Leo Tolstoy’s writings before he attached it to the traditional Indian idea of *ahimsa*.” See Halbfass, *Philology and Confrontation*, 308, also 257–72.

<sup>34</sup> A. Ghose, *Speeches* (Calcutta, 1948), 76–80, in Hay, *Sources*, 2: 153–4.

yajna has its Rakshasas [demons] who strive to baffle the sacrifice, to bespatter it with their own dirt, or by guile or violence put out the flame.”<sup>35</sup> Ghose’s general orientation being anticolonial/pro-Hindu nationalist, those “demons” are personified by the “British merchant” and the “British bureaucrat” involved in the current “exploitation” of “India,” and the Muslims “of old” who also faced the “bow of the Kshatriya” for riding with the “Asuric [demonic] force in men and nations” that “tramples down, breaks, slaughters, burns [and] pollutes, as we see it doing today.”<sup>36</sup>

V. D. Savarkar (d. 1966), president of the “Hindu Mahasabha” and author of the concept of Hindutva, and K. B. Hedgewar (d. 1940), founder of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, followed Ghose’s lead insofar as they did not exclude Muslims and Christians from the “Hindu Nation,” but assigned them subordinate positions based on the “non-Indian” origins and “exclusionary” orientations of their religions. The work of, for example, Hedgewar’s successor as head of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, M. S. Golwalkar (d. 1973), contended that “Hindu India” had successfully assimilated “successive waves of invaders,” but the Muslims, who “maintained their separation and persecuted Hindus,” and the British, who argued that “Muslims and Christians . . . were equal parts of the new political entity that had been created,” had been fought for centuries and would be fought into the future for the “greatness of Hindu culture to be restored.”<sup>37</sup> The only colonial-era thinker to venture in the direction of equating the “Semitic” god with the “powers of darkness” was Vivekananda. Clearly the fruit of his study with Deussen, Vivekananda argued that the “noble thoughts of the Vedas about the eternity of creation and of the soul, and about the God in our own soul,” has created “angels,” while the “hypocrisy or fanaticism” of the “superstitious religions” of the “West,” their “theories of creation out of nothing, of a created soul, and of a big tyrant of a God sitting on a throne in a place called heaven, and of eternal hell-fires,” has led to “devils.”<sup>38</sup> The last step in demonizing the “Semitic” god itself would be left for Swarup and Goel in the postcolonial era.

Having arrived at the conclusion that the Sangh Parivar had lived on “borrowed slogans or hand to mouth ideas” far too long, in 1982, a year after founding Voice

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<sup>35</sup> A. Ghose, *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance* (Calcutta, 1948), 77–9.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 74, 77–9; and *idem*, *India’s Rebirth* (Hermanville, 2000). An online version of the latter has been consulted here, available at [http://www.voiceofdharm.com/books/ir/IR\\_part2.htm](http://www.voiceofdharm.com/books/ir/IR_part2.htm).

<sup>37</sup> A. Embree, “The Function of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: To Define the Hindu Nation,” in Marty and Appleby, *Accounting for Fundamentalisms*, 624–5. Also see M. S. Golwalkar, *We or Our Nationhood Defined* (Nagpur, 1944), and *idem*, *Bunch of Thoughts* (Bangalore, 1988).

<sup>38</sup> Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, 4: 307–9, in Hay, *Sources*, 2: 77–9.

of India, Goel and Swarup made an appeal for donations with the following statement:

Hindu society and culture are faced with a crisis. There is a united front of entrenched alien forces to disrupt and discredit the perennial values of the Indian ethos. All who care for India need to know what is happening and what is to be if a major tragedy is to be averted. Voice of India aims at providing an ideological defense of Hindu society and culture through a series of publications. Some of these publications have already been brought out and received wide appreciation. In this fight for men's minds, our only weapon is truth. Truth must be told, as much about Hindu society and culture as about the alien ideologies which have been on the war-path since the days of foreign domination over the Hindu homeland.<sup>39</sup>

Their appeal's interchangeable uses of "Hindu society and culture," the "Indian ethos" and "India," as well as the threats posed by "entrenched alien forces" and "ideologies," confirm that the basic categorical imperatives of colonial-era thinkers are alive and well in the postcolonial context. Particularly where Voice of India's ideology overlaps with the mainstream Sangh Parivar, the contents of these categories have moved forward in time without significant change. Thus in the "Preface" to Voice of India's first collection of essays—*Hindu Temples: What Happened to Them?*—a "Hindu" is defined as any member of the "Brahmanical, Buddhist, Jain" and Sikh "sects."<sup>40</sup> The "tolerance" and "inclusiveness" of the Hindu Self also resonates in the works of Voice of India, as in Subash Kak's *India at Century's End*, which contrasts imperialists who have ventured to establish rule by "militaristic" means with "Indians" who "have sought to create a cultural empire."<sup>41</sup> Illustrating the "intolerance" and "exclusivity" of the Other, one need venture no further than Goel's already cited autobiography and the statement that the "imperialist ideologies . . . that have flooded this country in the wake of foreign invasions" are the old "Semitic" favourites of Islam and Christianity, while "materialism" is now more pointedly identified with Nazism, communism and Nehruvianism.<sup>42</sup> To hear the distinctiveness of Voice of India's tune, in fact, an ear for the overarching movements of the piece is insufficient; it is the manner in which certain notes and phrases are emphasized or deleted that carries the work beyond nineteenth-century compositions. A case in point is the place accorded Hinduism and its adherents in world history.

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<sup>39</sup> This appeal was posted on the inside cover of S. R. Goel, *Story of Islamic Imperialism* (New Delhi, 1982), among other Voice of India works in the stacks of Robart's Library, University of Toronto, Canada.

<sup>40</sup> A. Shourie et al., eds., *Hindu Temples: What Happened to Them*, 2 vols. (New Delhi, 1990), 1: v.

<sup>41</sup> S. Kak, *India at Century's End* (New Delhi, 1994), 25.

<sup>42</sup> Goel, *How I Became a Hindu*, <http://www.voiceofdharma.com/books/hibh/ch9.htm>.

The “history” of Hinduism, in the words of the American David Frawley—founder of the “American Institute of Vedic Studies” in Texas (f. 1988) and a central contributor to *Voice of India*—begins in an idyllic age initiated at the end of the last Ice Age along the banks of the “Vedic Sarasvati.” According to Frawley, this river “flowed from beyond the Ambala Hills down to the Rann of Kachchh in Gujarat,” until it dried up about the “third millennium BCE” and “civilization” (i.e. urban, written culture) turned to the “more certain waters of the Ganga.”<sup>43</sup> This origin myth expunges the earlier reliance of Orientalists and their Hindu students on the idea of an “Aryan Invasion” by which Hinduism was established in South Asia and, in so doing, aligns itself with contemporary scholarship that has long debunked the theory. By consuming the pre-Sanskritic “Indus Valley Cultures” (3000–1750 BCE) as a “late” stage in “Vedic Civilization,” while bringing “Hinduism” and “civilization” to the “Ganges” one millennium earlier than archaeological, linguistic or literary evidence can confirm, however, Frawley makes room for another Orientalist trope—the “Indian” origins of the “Aryan race”—stating that that “India” is the “mother of humanity and the mother of civilization, particularly for the spiritual and yogic life.”<sup>44</sup> Goel echoes Frawley, asserting that this “India” was an “Aryan” society defined by a “universal spirituality” that once dominated the “ancient world from Egypt to China, Indo-China, Peru and Mexico.”<sup>45</sup> Various other authors, including Swarup and the

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<sup>43</sup> D. Frawley, *Hinduism and the Clash of Civilizations* (New Delhi, 2001). The online version is consulted here. See <http://www.bharatvani.org/books/civilization/part1.html>. Frawley and other *Voice of India* authors have also published this thesis independently, as in the case of G. Feuerstein, S. Kak and D. Frawley, *In Search of the Cradle of Civilization* (Delhi, 1999). Further, the American Institute of Vedic Studies includes affiliate organizations across the US, Europe and India (e.g. the European Institute of Vedic Studies), supports its own press (Lotus) and includes the works of such *Voice of India* contributors as Subash Kak on its list of intellectual associates. The most prominent Indian connection is with the Aurobindo (Ghose) Ashram in Madras. See <http://www.vedanet.com>.

<sup>44</sup> Frawley, *Hinduism and the Clash of Civilizations*, <http://www.bharatvani.org/books/civilization/part1.html>.

<sup>45</sup> See S. R. Goel, *Defence of Hindu Society* (New Delhi, 1983). The online version is consulted here. See <http://www.voiceofdharm.com/books/hindusoc/ch1.htm>. The same is echoed in Frawley, *Hinduism and the Clash of Civilizations*, <http://www.bharatvani.org/books/civilization/part1.html>. The defence of this ethnology and chronology, in the guise of a rebuttal against the Orientalist “Aryan-invasion theory,” is a mainstay of *Voice of India* publications, including such works as N. S. Rajaram, *Aryan Invasion of India: The Myth and the Truth* (New Delhi, 1993); *idem*, *Vedic Aryans and the Origins of Civilization* (New Delhi, 2001); *idem*, *The Politics of History: Aryan Invasion Theory and the Subversion of Scholarship* (New Delhi, 1995); D. Frawley, *The Myth of the Aryan Invasion of India* (New Delhi, 1994); and K. Elst, *Indigenous Aryans* (New Delhi, 1993). For a scholarly evaluation of such *Voice of India* arguments, as well as their relationship with colonial-era

Belgian contributor, Koenraad Elst, further clarify that this universal spirituality belonged to all the races and faiths of “pre-Semitic” traditions, including the Greeks, Romans, Scandinavians and Africans.<sup>46</sup> Being more concerned with “spirituality” than with “militarism,” decline eventually set into this “mother” of ancient civilization because it was overrun by new forces, such as the Kushanas, Shakas and Hunas (c.200 BCE–600 CE) in the “Indian” context. The fate of non-South Asians is taken up below but, continuing with the Hindu narrative, although little explanation is afforded the “militarism” of these “ancient” peoples besides allusions to “materialistic” intent, it is asserted that as adherents of the ancient universal spirituality, and as evidence of its tolerance and inclusiveness, “Hinduism” soon absorbed them. Thus the real threat only arose when “Muslims” arrived (c.700’s CE) and, in Kak’s words, “shackled . . . [India’s] energies.”<sup>47</sup>

The import of the “Muslim” source of decline in Voice of India’s ideology can begin to be gauged from the fact that, apart from works directed at establishing the post-Ice Age “Indian” origins of Aryans, Vedicism and world civilization, Voice of India’s catalogue is most heavily laden with books and articles devoted to rehashing or reprinting Orientalist ahistories on the violence perpetrated by Muslims on Hindus. This includes such titles as K. S. Lal’s *Muslim Slave System in Medieval India*, *The Legacy of Muslim Rule in India* and *Indian Muslims: Who are They*; S. Majumdar’s *Jihad: The Islamic Doctrine of Permanent War*; Elst’s *Negationism in India—Concealing the Record of Islam*; and Goel’s *Heroic Hindu Resistance to Muslim Invaders* and *The Story of Islamic Imperialism in India*, among others.<sup>48</sup> In such works, the writings of William Muir (d. 1905), David S. Margoliouth (d. 1940), Henry Elliot and other Orientalists are liberally employed, and Swarup is even credited with forewords for reprints of Muir’s *Life of Mahomet* (1894) and Margoliouth’s *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam* (1905)—two works heavily criticized for their anti-Muslim biases from the moment of their

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Hindu and Orientalist views, see E. Bryant, *The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture: The Indo-Aryan Migration Debate* (New York, 2001), 46–108; 140–297.

<sup>46</sup> R. Swarup, *The Word as Revelation*, 131–3, cited in K. Elst, “Hindus and Neo-Paganism,” <http://www.koenraadeltst.voiceofdharma.com/articles/Hinduism/neo-paganism.html>.

Also see Goel, *Defence*, <http://www.voiceofdharma.com/books/hindusoc/ch2.htm>.

<sup>47</sup> Kak, *India at Century’s End*, 25.

<sup>48</sup> See K. S. Lal, *Muslim Slave System in Medieval India* (New Delhi, 1994); *idem*, *The Legacy of Muslim Rule in India* (New Delhi, 1992); *idem*, *Indian Muslims: Who are They* (New Delhi, 1990); S. Majumdar, *Jihad: The Islamic Doctrine of Permanent War* (New Delhi, 1994); K. Elst, *Negationism in India—Concealing the Record of Islam* (New Delhi, 1992); S. R. Goel, *Heroic Hindu Resistance to Muslim Invaders* (New Delhi, 1994); and *idem*, *The Story of Islamic Imperialism in India* (New Delhi, 1982). These and other titles on this theme, as well as articles by these and other authors, can also be found online at <http://www.voiceofdharma.com> and <http://www.voi.org>.

publication.<sup>49</sup> The gist of this strain of Voice of India works can be boiled down to the list of charges issued in the “Preface” of *Hindu Temples: What Happened to Them?*. Echoing Orientalist ahistories exactly, that list includes “the destruction of Hindu temples,” “mass slaughter of people not only during war but also after the armies of Islam had emerged victorious,” “capture of large numbers of non-combatant men, women and children as booty and their sale as slaves all over the Islamic world,” “forcible conversion to Islam of people who were in no position to resist,” “reduction to the status of zimmi [i.e. *dhimmi*; lit. “protected”] or non-citizens of all those who could not be converted and imposition of inhuman disabilities on them,” “emasculatation of the zimmi by preventing them from possessing arms,” “impoverishment of the zimmi through heavy discriminatory taxes and misappropriation of a major part of what the peasants produced,” and “ruination of the native and national culture of the zimmi by suppressing and holding in contempt all its institutions and expressions.”<sup>50</sup>

Of course, Orientalist tropes concerning Muslim “atrocities” are nothing new among Hindu intellectuals, also having passed into the works of colonial-era authors (with the exception of Gandhi). Nor is the persistence of Orientalist misrepresentations particular to Hindutva circles. In the 1970s, the very period when Voice of India’s ideology was brewing, the same derogatory perspective could be read in the works of the British academic of Jewish Egyptian background Bat Ye’or—referred to in the *New York Times* as one of the “most extreme voices on the new Jewish Right”—who was writing and defining her concept of “dhimmitude” with exactly the anti-Muslim charges described in Voice of India writings. At that time even Bernard Lewis’s conservatism could not prevent him from criticizing Ye’or for “reductionism.”<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, Ye’or’s influence can be read in the works of as broad a sample of “experts” on Islam as American Catholic

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<sup>49</sup> See, for example, K. Elst, “Ram Swarup (1924–1998)—Outline of a Biography,” <http://www.koenraadeltst.voiceofdharma.com/articles/hinduism/ramswarup.html>.

<sup>50</sup> Jayanti, “Preface,” in Shourie *et al.*, *Hindu Temples*, 1: vi. These charges also play a prominent role in Voice of India works concerned with the Babri Masjid (Ayodhya) campaigns, led by groups associated with the Sangh Parivar. For example, see J. Dubashi, *The Road to Ayodhya* (New Delhi, 1992); and K. Elst, *Ayodhya: The Case against the Temple* (New Delhi, 2002).

<sup>51</sup> See Bat Ye’or, *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam* (Madison, NJ, 1985); *idem*, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity: From Jihad to Dhimmitude* (Madison, NJ, 1996); and *idem*, *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide* (Madison, NJ, 2001). For scholarly critiques see Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, NJ, 1984); E. Qureshi and M. A. Sells, *The New Crusade: Constructing the Muslim Enemy* (New York, 2003); and J. Beinín, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry: Culture, Politics and the Formation of a Modern Diaspora* (Berkeley, 1998). For the *New York Times* article cited see C. S. Smith, “The World: Europe’s Jews Seek Solace on the Right,” *New York Times*, 20 Feb. 2005 (late edn), Section 4, 3.

Robert Spencer, fellow of the neoconservative “Free Congress Foundation” and founder of “Jihad Watch,” and the Pakistani author Ibn Warraq, who loudly renounces Islam in the name of “Secular Humanism.”<sup>52</sup> The influence of *fin de siècle* German indology and Vivekananda in Voice of India’s version, however, is apparent in Voice of India authors’ extension of Muslim traits and their underlying causes to Jews and Christians. Elst, for example, writes of the millions “eliminated” in the Americas, Africa and Europe by Christians, while representing Jews by means of Moses’ and Joshua’s “extermination” of the people of Canaan and Midian, concluding that Muslims, Christians and Jews have committed “genocide” wherever they have ventured, making Islam, Christianity and Judaism no different than such “materialistic evils” as “Nazism” and “Communism.”<sup>53</sup> Indeed, if Muslims are accused of “shackling Indian energies,” Christianity is held responsible for entirely effacing the “universal spirituality” of the rest of the world. Those who challenge the Orientalist perspective are merely labelled “negationists,” and equated with Holocaust deniers who “conceal,” “minimize” or “whitewash” facts. A list of only a few of the Indian academics and intellectuals that Elst considers guilty of negation and “Hindu cowardice” includes R. Thapar, B. Chandra, G. Pandey, K. N. Pannikar, R. S. Sharma, H. Mukhia and M. N. Roy; such reputed novelists as K. Singh and B. Sahni; and such resonant figures and institutions from the Indian political landscape as Jawaharlal Nehru, the university bearing his name in Delhi (JNU) and the political party he led, the Indian National Congress. Of course, various Muslim intellectuals and organizations inside India, and a variety of individuals, groups and states beyond its borders, are also named, as are various “Christian” thinkers, not to mention “the Church.” Other “non-Hindus” mentioned as negationists include historians of such repute as P. Spear and S. Freitag, and the entire body of authors associated

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<sup>52</sup> See Robert Spencer, *Islam Unveiled: Disturbing Questions about the World’s Fastest-Growing Faith* (New York, 2002); and Robert Spencer, ed., *The Myth of Islamic Tolerance: How Islamic Law Treats Non-Muslims* (Amherst, NY, 2005). See also Ibn Warraq, *Why I Am Not a Muslim* (Amherst, NY, 1995). The former Spencer work is published by Encounter Books in the name of “American conservatism,” and the latter is published together with Ibn Warraq and Ram Swarup’s *Understanding Islam Through Hadis: Religious Faith or Fanaticism* (deemed “hate literature” by Indian courts) by Prometheus Books in the name of “secular humanism.” Despite the labels of Hindutva, American conservatism, the Jewish right and secular humanism, the convergence of all these perspectives on the issue of Islam and Muslims is best illustrated by the fact that Ibn Warraq provides the foreword and Ye’or the largest portion of articles in Spencer’s *The Myth of Islamic Tolerance*.

<sup>53</sup> Elst, *Negationism in India*, <http://www.koenraadeltst.voiceofdharma.com/books/negaind/ch1.htm>, and <http://www.koenraadeltst.voiceofdharma.com/books/negaind/ch2.htm>.

with the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, as well as contributors to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *Time*, *Le Monde*, *The Economist* and the BBC.<sup>54</sup>

By deriding contemporary scholars and their perspectives on Muslims, Christians and Jews, while entirely ignoring any sources on the less than tolerant and inclusive doctrines and historical activities of Hindus, Voice of India contributors use “history” to condition the reader to accept the central component of their ideology: a “theology” for the Sangh Parivar. Although this theology obviously retains an ur-revelation in the form of a “universal spirituality” that the entire ancient world shared, according to Voice of India that “spirituality” is neither “revealed” nor “monotheistic.” Rather it is resolutely “monistic.” On this basis alone, Goel defines the Hindu concept of God as “immanent” and Hinduism as “pluralistic” and “non-hierarchical,” wherein “truth” resides in “seers” rather than prophets, in the “human heart” rather than a sacred text, “self-purification” through many lifetimes bringing one to knowledge. In fact, employing a singularly Orientalist word to summarize his perspective, Goel references Hinduism as “mystical.”<sup>55</sup> Voice of India’s “universal spirituality,” however, is not common to all the major religions, as colonial-era Hindus and Orientalists often claimed, irrespective of the hierarchies and exclusions they upheld. The particular combination of influences that explains Voice of India’s spin is again most easily accessible through its grand historical narrative. As in Kak’s writing on Muslims of “Turko-Mongol” stock, all Voice of India authors repeat (as often as they can) the statement that the “violence perpetrated by the Turko-Mongol [against Hindus] should never be viewed as a racial imperative . . . Originally the Turko-Mongols [such as Kushanas, etc.] were widely tolerant of all creeds.”<sup>56</sup> Only when they converted to “Islam” was this tolerance lost. The same claim leads authors to collectively query, “How to understand this behaviour pattern [of Arab, Turko-Mongol and South Asian Muslim ‘atrocities’] so persistently followed over a thousand years under very different conditions and so consistent in its expression? What is its deeper ideological source?”<sup>57</sup> The unanimous response, in Goel’s words, is “the theology of Islam based on the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet.”<sup>58</sup> Swarup puts

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<sup>54</sup> Of course, any authors or works referencing “Hindu” iconoclasm or violence against the Other are also attacked. For a broader list of authors declared “negationists” and/or agents of “alien ideologies,” as well as links to a variety of articles directed against them, see <http://www.voi.org/indology.html>.

<sup>55</sup> Goel, *Defence*, <http://www.voiceofdharma.com/books/hindusoc/ch2.htm>.

<sup>56</sup> Kak, *India at Century’s End*, 24.

<sup>57</sup> Jayanti, “Preface,” in *Hindu Temples*, 1: vi.

<sup>58</sup> S. R. Goel, “Some Historical Questions,” in *Hindu Temples*, 1: 19.

it most succinctly in “A Need to Face the Truth,” making what seems the most repeated statement in Voice of India writings, that “the problem is not Muslims but Islam.”<sup>59</sup>

Degradation of Islam is no more particular to Voice of India than is the derision of Muslims in history. It was part of the Orientalist discourse and would also be familiar to readers of Ye’or or Spencer. In Voice of India writings, however, the trouble with Islam extends to the larger category of “Semitic” faiths, as can be gleaned from many works in the organization’s catalogue, such as Goel’s *Jesus Christ: An Artifice for Aggression*. The gist of the argument is even encapsulated by the chapter titles of Kanayalal Talreja’s *Holy Vedas and Holy Bibles: A Comparative Study*, which include “Mercy by Vedic God, Massacre by Biblical God,” “Human Sacrifice in Bible, Non-Violence in Vedas,” “Witchcraft in Bible, Divine Path in Vedas,” and “Tyranical Voice of Biblical God, Blissful Nature of Vedic God.”<sup>60</sup> Evidently, Deussen’s “sadistic god” of the “Semites” not only resonates, but has achieved a central position in the rhetoric of Voice of India—a place attributed to Vivekananda directly in Talreja’s work. Yet it is also important to note that Talreja’s book does not restrict itself to Hindu thinkers. It also contains extensive quotes from Europeans and Americans most valuable to this view, including Schopenhauer on the *Vedas*, as well as invocations of “Saint Tolstoy” and other Romantics. Meanwhile, the extension to “Semites” of traits previously reserved for Islam has added a feature to the discourse: critiques of Christianity by “secular humanists,” ranging from Voltaire and Thomas Paine to Friedrich Nietzsche and Bertrand Russell.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps most telling of the particularity of his agenda is Talreja’s lifting of a line from Paine’s *Age of Reason*, characteristically torn out of context, in which Paine describes the Bible as the “word of a demon.”<sup>62</sup>

In his “Islamic Theology of Iconoclasm,” Swarup clarifies why he and other Voice of India contributors “concur” with Paine, by first defining “theology”

<sup>59</sup> R. Swarup, “A Need to Face the Truth,” in *Hindu Temples*, 1: 36.

<sup>60</sup> See S. R. Goel, *Jesus Christ: An Artifice for Aggression* (New Delhi, 1994); and, K. Talreja, *Holy Vedas and Holy Bibles: A Comparative Study* (New Delhi, 2000). Other anti-Christian works include S. R. Goel, *History of Hindu-Christian Encounters* (New Delhi, 1989), *idem*, *Papacy: Its Doctrine and History* (New Delhi, 1986); I. Sharan, *The Myth of St Thomas and the Mylapore Shiva Temple* (New Delhi, 1991); R. Swarup, *Hindu View of Christianity and Islam* (New Delhi, 1992), *idem*, *Hinduism vis-à-vis Christianity and Islam* (New Delhi, 1992), and *idem*, *Pope John Paul II on Eastern Religions and Yoga: A Rejoinder* (New Delhi, 1995). Such works can also be found online at <http://www.voiceofdharma.com>; <http://www.voiceofdharma.org> and <http://www.voi.org>.

<sup>61</sup> See Talreja, *Holy Vedas and Holy Bibles*, <http://www.voiceofdharma.org/books/hvhb/ch8.htm>, <http://www.voiceofdharma.org/books/hvhb/ch22.htm>, <http://www.voiceofdharma.org/books/hvhb/ch23.htm>, <http://www.voiceofdharma.org/books/hvhb/ch27.htm>.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, <http://www.voiceofdharma.org/books/hvhb/ch8.htm>.

as a particularly “Semitic” discipline that purports to be the “systemized and interpreted word of God.”<sup>63</sup> Theology’s purpose is stated to be the preparation of “believers for feeling the ‘glow of faith’ as they read or listen to the unfoldment of the divine plan in human history.”<sup>64</sup> The divine plan itself, which is presented as identical in “the Judaic, the Christian and the Islamic [traditions]. . . , pronounces a permanent war, hailed as ‘holy,’” between “the lands ruled by believers and the lands where the unbelievers live,” seeking to establish the “triumph of the ‘true faith’ over ‘false belief.’”<sup>65</sup> Thus the sole means by which the divine plan has unfolded is that “one land after another was invaded and laid waste . . . [and] innocent and defenseless people were massacred in cold blood and with a clean conscience.”<sup>66</sup> In fact, Swarup goes on to reiterate the list of charges against Muslims, commenting that “the record is invariably crowded with the darkest crimes and inhuman deeds. Only the believers find it fulfilling. For persons with normal moral sensibilities, it is a nightmare.”<sup>67</sup> The persistence of this “inhumanity” is argued to be a function of the “fact” that a “pious” follower of “Semitic” faiths does not have to “use his own mental faculties or devise his own individual course of action. It is all laid down for him, from birth to death, and even beyond.”<sup>68</sup>

Swarup’s definition of theology and its identification with “Semitic” faiths is intended to make two points which are broadly repeated by his Voice of India peers. The first is that Judaism, “Christianity and Islam have nothing in common with Hindu spiritual traditions,” the latter not being based on “theology” but on “mental faculties” and “individual action”—the basis on which he goes on to establish Hinduism’s “rationality.”<sup>69</sup> The second point is that “the followers of the former have tried and are trying their utmost to wipe out the latter,” because the dichotomy of “true faith” and “false belief” is dependent on “monotheism,” whereas the “monism” of the “universal religion” is, as in the arguments of colonial-era Hindus and Orientalists, necessarily “tolerant” and “inclusive” of all.<sup>70</sup> The specifically German–Vivekanandan approach to monism, however, is best represented in Swarup’s “A Need to Face the Truth,” where the author brings both aspects of the Other together by describing monotheism as “My-Godism,” a “closed creed” and a “hegemonistic idea,” an “aggressive theology and political

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<sup>63</sup> R. Swarup, “Islamic Theology of Iconoclasm,” in *Hindu Temples*, 1: 295.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 296–7.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 295–6.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 296–7.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

ideology” which fosters “religious domination” and “religious persecution.”<sup>71</sup> In “Islamic Theology of Iconoclasm,” Swarup takes this German–Vivekanandan notion of a “sadistic” God to its logical conclusion, given the further influence of Ghose and others for whom national emancipation was “a great and holy sacrifice” fraught with the intervention of “demons.” In the “Semitic” tradition, Swarup proclaims,

one meets the Devil masquerading as God, and gangsters strutting around as prophets. Here, one discovers that the scripture does not inspire spiritual seeking or moral discipline but, on the contrary, encourages the basest in human nature to run riot without any restraint. All in all, theology stands out as another name for Demonology and the revealed religions reveal themselves as no more than totalitarian ideologies of imperialism, of enslavement and genocide. They turn out to be older versions of what we have known as Communism and Nazism in our time.<sup>72</sup>

In Goel’s writings on Christianity, the same argument echoes in the words “We have to face the fact that Christianity has been and remains a cult of devil-worship.”<sup>73</sup> According to both Swarup and Goel, in fact, it is because this divinity is a demon that “Jehovah, as portrayed in the Bible . . . behaves like a bully and a coward par excellence, apart from proclaiming, again and again, that he is a hardened gangster who has committed many crimes.”<sup>74</sup> In contrast with the Hindu god, Swarup concludes, Jehovah’s divinity “does not exist and has never existed outside that theology, neither in history nor in any high heaven.”<sup>75</sup> Rather, a demon “has possessed successively some bandit formations bent upon wanton aggression in order to carve out predatory empires.”<sup>76</sup>

Swarup’s and Goel’s “possessed bandits” is a supplementary concept engaged to render “Semitic” faiths undesirable. In this line of attack, Abrahamic “prophets” are said to have been in pursuit of their own worldly interests, or, as a result of their own all too human delusions and paranoia, to have fallen under the spell of demons and come to craft “imperialistic ideologies.” This argument, like Talreja’s description of the Bible, is an avowed extension of Vivekananda’s writings.<sup>77</sup> The argument proposes that “prophets” like Muhammad—who are

<sup>71</sup> Swarup, “A Need to Face the Truth,” 33–6.

<sup>72</sup> Swarup, “Islamic Theology of Iconoclasm,” 297–8.

<sup>73</sup> Goel, *History of Hindu–Christian Encounters*, <http://www.www.voi.org/books/hhce/Ch3.htm>.

<sup>74</sup> Swarup, “Islamic Theology of Iconoclasm,” 357.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

<sup>77</sup> See Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, 1: 184; Swarup, *Hindu View of Christianity and Islam*, 45–6, 107; S. R. Goel, ed. *The Calcutta Quran Petition* (New Delhi, 1999), 238–49; and K. Elst, “Wahi: The Supernatural Basis of Islam,” <http://www.koenraadeltst.voiceofdharma.com/articles/irin/wahiusa.html>.

historically verifiable characters in contrast to Jesus—entered a Yogic “trance” without the benefits of a qualified “guru” or guide. Unable to interpret this state of consciousness, they were left “deranged,” leading to “megalomaniacal” claims of prophethood and “superstitious” notions of truth. That is to say, Voice of India does not subscribe to the variety of anti-Islamic perspectives composed by the likes of Spencer and Ye’or, who imply that the Qur’an’s message is inherently aggressive and therefore not divine. Nor is it accurate to consider Voice of India’s polemics a mere adoption of many Jewish and Christian religious writings, past and present, that paint Muhammad’s claims (but not those of Biblical prophets) as “fraudulent” revelations, perhaps even “Satanically” inspired. Rather, Voice of India frames the concept of prophethood itself within a Vivekanandan approach to precolonial Brahmanism, rendering the revelations of all “Semitic” prophets warped by delusions or demonic intervention. It is in recognition of this demonic source of inspiration, in fact, that Goel ultimately declares that “it is a sin to regard” Judaism, Christianity and Islam “as religions in any sense of the term,” meaning that the latter are to be identified with the anti-religious “powers of darkness” also behind such “materialist” creeds as Nazism, communism and Nehruvianism.<sup>78</sup> The only solution for followers of such creeds, therefore, is “re-conversion” to the source of all ancient spirituality and civilization: “Hinduism.”

Reading Voice of India’s theology, it is clear to see why the Sangh Parivar’s leadership distanced itself from Swarup and Goel, accusing them of “strong language.” The blanket dismissal of Judaism, Christianity and Islam as “demonic” certainly does not aid in quelling domestic communal tensions, or fostering relations with the comity of nations. Almost immediately, therefore, Voice of India authors began responding to such shortfalls not by altering their theology, but by adding certain provisos. Thus, although “Semitic” theology and its prophets are dealt with in one all-encompassing “demonology,” the Jews, Christians and Muslims of the past and present are not afforded the same “equality.” Regarding Judaism, Elst has written that since the time of Moses the “contents and orientation of the Jewish religion have fundamentally changed.” Jews endeavoured to reorient their creed “toward pluralism,” as reflected in the Talmud. In an obvious capitulation to the Bhartiya Janata Party’s close economic and military ties with the “Jewish State” by the late 1990s, Elst concludes that this “reorientation” makes “Israel . . . the most democratic, humane and tolerant society of West Asia.”<sup>79</sup> Similarly, Swarup opines that there are scriptural differences between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, including the assessment that “the Quran lacks the passion and the power of the earlier scriptures,” and

<sup>78</sup> Goel, *Defence*, <http://www.voiceofdharm.com/books/hindusoc/ch3.htm>.

<sup>79</sup> Elst, *Negationism in India*, <http://www.koenraadeltst.voiceofdharm.com/books/negaind/ch1.htm>.

that plunder “was not permitted to the earlier chosen people, while it is made fully legitimate” for Muslims.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, all Christians, including those associated with the British colonial regime, are not equated with Muslims. In Goel’s words, which are echoed in Talreja’s appeal to Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment sources, “the Renaissance in Europe . . . considerably discredited this [Christian] creed in its own homeland by the time British arms were triumphant in India.”<sup>81</sup> In a postcolonial context defined by close relations between Indian governments and the former colonial metropolises of Europe, the anticolonial focus of colonial-era Hindus has been replaced by pointed attacks on Christian missionaries—the only remaining Christian challenge in India—who live by the same creed that boasts “a long and unrelieved record of wanton destruction of ancient religions and cultures and a large-scale killing of heathens,” and who wish “to complete the mission of St. Thomas and see to it that India becomes a Christian country, once and for all.”<sup>82</sup> By way of contrast, neither theological reorientation nor the ameliorating effects of alternative philosophies associated with all Jews and most Christians are extended to Muslims. From a political perspective, the reasons are self-evident. As the largest faith-based minority on the subcontinent, as the most faithful Indian National Congress voters within postcolonial India, and as citizens of Pakistan, Muslims are the most implacable spoilers of any “Hindu” attempts at regional hegemony. A global setting rife with anti-Islamic propaganda through such organs as “Jihad Watch,” therefore, leaves Muslims as the most convenient replacement for Europeans as the enduring “devilish” Other against which to define the “angelic” Hindu Self. As Swarup put it, Islam is the “most malevolent of these residues” of “Semitism,” and Muslims alone are sealed “off from every shade of empiricism, rationalism, universalism, humanism and liberalism, the hallmarks of Hindu as well as modern Western culture.”<sup>83</sup>

Although Ghose, like most others of his generation, wrote that each “religion has helped mankind,” Voice of India has decidedly forsaken this particular mode of “tolerance” and “inclusiveness.”<sup>84</sup> In fact, Voice of India’s critique of the Sangh Parivar is grounded in the idea that “Gandhi became the most eminent advocate of this Hindu illusion,” and that those who follow in his footsteps “become passive accomplices of gangsterism when they equate Hinduism with Islam and

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<sup>80</sup> Swarup, “Islamic Theology of Iconoclasm,” 299.

<sup>81</sup> S. R. Goel, *Hindu Society under Siege* (New Delhi, n.d.). The online version was consulted here. See <http://www.voi.org/books/hsus/ch3.htm>.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, <http://www.voi.org/books/hsus/ch3.htm>.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, <http://www.voi.org/books/hsus/ch2.htm>.

<sup>84</sup> Ghose, *India’s Rebirth*, [http://www.voiceofdharma.com/books/ir/IR\\_part2.htm](http://www.voiceofdharma.com/books/ir/IR_part2.htm).

Christianity, and advocate equal respect for the two predatory creeds.”<sup>85</sup> Breaking with Orientalists and colonial-era Hindu intellectuals, the “truth” that Voice of India offers is that “Hinduism” is the only religion of God, defining all else as demonic. Although the demonization of the Other was a feature of colonial-era Hindu thought and precolonial Brahmanism, Voice of India’s usage of this concept is not only a far cry from the illusionary “evil” of precolonial *Vedanta*, but also moves beyond Ghose’s characterization of exploitative Muslim and British “rulers,” “merchants” and “bureaucrats” as “Asuric” forces, or Gandhi’s identification of European “materialism” more generally with “Satan.” It even trumps Vivekananda’s critique of the “Semitic” god as “tyrannical” and prophets as “deluded.” The ultimate irony of Voice of India is that its staggeringly harsh theology most closely approximates the perspective of the evangelicals against whom colonial-era Hindus sought to defend their faith. Voice of India theology is not, however, constructed by merely borrowing evangelical theology. Thanks to the overarching influence of Deussen’s monistic positivism, Voice of India authors effect the same dichotomy by merely adding the “evil” that Ghose and Gandhi associated with “materialism” to Vivekananda’s conception of the “Semitic” god as “tyrannical.” By proclaiming the “Semitic” god the “dark force” behind the eternal “evils” of “materialism,” while extending “Aryan” positives to all “ancient peoples,” Swarup and company convert the Abrahamic god into evil’s personification in a manner most closely resembling the evangelical demonization of Brahmanical divinities, while retaining the legitimacy available through the invocation of the colonial era’s Hindu icons. The ideological consequences are quite profound. The racial and/or linguistic paradigms underlying Orientalist distinctions between “Aryans” and “Semites” recede into the background, while their representation as categories denoting chronologically oppositional “civilizations” is highlighted, leading to the conclusion that this “clash of civilizations” is an eternal struggle between God and the Devil.

Drawing together the variety of intellectual strands discussed, the evolution of a Self–Other dichotomy in Hinduism is evident. Precolonial *Vedanta* constructed the Self as the embodiment of ultimate truth, and the Other as an expression of lower truths reaching from lesser “holiness” down to the “demonic.” With the advent of colonialism and the introduction of Orientalist categories, nineteenth-century Hindu thinkers grafted a number of new tropes onto the basic dichotomy that pre-dated it. The Self was most often expanded to include any tradition with South Asian roots, from Buddhism and Jainism to Sikhism, and defined as racially

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<sup>85</sup> S. R. Goel, “Foreword,” in Majumdar, *Jihad: The Islamic Doctrine of Permanent War*, <http://www.voiceofdharma.org/books/jihad/for.htm>. Also see H. Narain, *Myths of Composite Culture and Equality of Religions* (New Delhi, 1991).

Aryan, linguistically Sanskritic, territorially Indian and qualitatively spiritual, tolerant and inclusive. The Other was generally defined in an antithetical manner, except for the broad induction of a perennial philosophy in which monotheism is less spiritual than monism because it is ultimately prone to intolerance and exclusivism. In essence, colonial-era Hindu intellectuals adopted various Orientalist categories and tropes, but either reversed the value ascribed to each (as in the case of rationalism–mysticism, progress–stasis), or inverted the tropes themselves (as in the case of egalitarianism–despotism, adult–child) in favour of their own nationalist interests. Thus, although Dayananda, Vivekananda, Ghose and Gandhi spoke of India’s destiny in terms of the revival of the world’s “spirituality” through “Hinduism,” it must be recalled that the first three acknowledged and sought to emulate Europe’s contribution to “rationalism” and “progress,” only Gandhi rejecting their products as the work of “Satan.” In the postcolonial context, even judging by Voice of India’s concern for the Sangh Parivar’s lack of an ideological centre, it is clear that much variety remains. However, Voice of India’s own publications have added a new pulse. In seeking a theologically singular ideology, Voice of India authors present the truth of Hinduism as solely spiritual (excluding all other religions) and rationally akin to the European Enlightenment, without falling prey to materialism. Furthermore, although following the lead of all colonial-era Hindus by defining the Hindu community in “national” terms, Voice of India’s religious community has expanded from “Aryans” to include all “ancient” peoples, while the destiny of the “Indian” component, as the initial cornerstone and last vestige of truth, has been raised from the revival of Hinduism to the renewal of “civilization” itself—a singularly Gandhian goal, but constituted in an obviously un-Gandhian form. Thus, although Hinduism is not “denationalized,” the truth it heralds, the destiny it promises and the evils in its way have been “globalized” in broader terms than in the colonial era.

Voice of India’s incorporation of Orientalist tropes and themes, selective appropriation of colonial and precolonial Hindu thought, and uncontextualized deployment of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thought, as well as the ideological intent of the constructed Self–Other dichotomy, have won some appeal. Voice of India ideals have been successfully employed in rallying support for Sangh Parivar campaigns in India, extending from the Babri Mosque (Ayodhya) campaigns of the 1980s and 1990s to the Gujarat “massacres” of 2002, all of which have claimed thousands of mostly Muslim lives and played a part in bringing Sangh Parivar parties to the highest echelons of state power from the mid-1990s to 2004.<sup>86</sup> They have also been responsive enough to globalization

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<sup>86</sup> For the Sangh Parivar’s role in the latter atrocities, particularly the place of its demonizing ideology, see “Compounding Injustice: The Government’s Failure to Redress Massacres in Gujarat,” *Human Rights Watch Publications* 15/3 (July 2003).

to successfully assimilate non-Indians like Frawley and Elst, attract diasporic Indians like Kak, and find common voice with “neoconservative Christians” like Spencer, “rightist Jews” like Ye’or and “secular humanists” like Ibn Warraq. Yet the role of demons in Voice of India theology does pose problems for Hindutva politicians. Their critiques of earlier thinkers, particularly Gandhi, not to mention the equation of Nehruvianism with Nazism, do not easily serve to reconcile the concept of Hindutva with the Hindu icons of the colonial era, despite obvious attempts to do just that. Further, the demonization of Islam, Christianity and Judaism, in a manner that even the Nazi-sympathizing Golwalkar did not engage in, poses enormous difficulties for Hindutva politicians seeking to build bridges with Muslims, Christians and Jews, domestic and international, even given late attempts to redeem Jews and other “enlightened” Europeans. No doubt, these are primary considerations in explaining why Goel and Swarup in particular had such a long history of intellectual affiliation with the Sangh Parivar, yet remained political outsiders to their dying days. Swarup’s and Goel’s most enduring legacy, therefore, is Voice of India itself, and a slew of affiliated international organizations like the American Institute of Vedic Studies that aid the Sangh Parivar’s domestic agenda by convincing growing numbers at home and abroad that Hindutva was birthed in the benign waters of a mythical river that flowed at the end of the last Ice Age, rather than on the malignant, modern banks of the Thames, Rhine and Ganges.