
AN INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

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Foreign scholars have often complained about India's lack of an indigenous tradition of historiography. India possesses an enormous heritage of literature accumulated over the centuries, much of it relating to past events, yet there has never been a historian to compare with those of ancient Greece and Rome, or later European scholars who contributed to the development of history as a discipline. Indifference to the western conception of history, to the idea that man can be its subject and agent, actively working to change the human condition, is cited as a distinguishing trait of Indian civilization.¹ Explanations offered for this deficiency are that Indians have no sense of history, are not interested in factual or 'objective' history, or have in any case had such a static society that there has been little in the way of historical development to encourage its scientific study. Indian religions, besides acting as 'a tremendous force for social inertia'² in that they usually adopt a reactionary attitude towards social change, are also blamed for inculcating a world-view that has never been conducive to any interest in what westerners know as history. How far these assumptions are justified, and what has been achieved in the field of Indian historiography relating to the pre-modern period, are the concern of this article.

One characteristic of the Indian world-view is its persistent concern with cyclic or mythological time as opposed to concrete or linear time. The cyclic conception of time and creation, prevalent in most ancient and primitive societies, has been examined by Mircea Eliade, who referred to it as 'the myth of the eternal return'.³ Among its symptoms are nostalgia for a mythical period when creation began and unwillingness to accept that history is random and autonomous, or that events do not conform to a preordained pattern or cosmic law. It offers an ontology uncontaminated by time and becoming that guards against nihilism and the idea that suffering is undeserved. History is denied or negated because every significant occurrence is related to some mythological or metahistorical model; actions are valued and interpreted only so far as they conform to paradigmatic gestures performed by gods, heroes, or ancestors, with the result that accounts of the deeds of out-

standing persons are quickly transfigured into myths.

It is not only in India that this tendency has survived; in all civilizations, even if they no longer accept a cyclic view of history, the popular imagination habitually assimilates people and events to some archetype or mythological model. Indian religions, however, have served to reinforce and perpetuate the cyclic conception of time by making it an integral part of a *Weltanschauung* that governs attitudes to social hierarchy and the human condition. Most of the classical religious systems aim at some kind of liberation from the ties of the phenomenal world, an ideal that sets separation against fusion — a fundamental polarity in the psychology of Indian culture. Integrating oneself into a transcendent, static, timeless, and quiescent wholeness is contrasted with the suffering that arises from being involved in dynamic, creative, but ultimately degenerative time.

In Vedic mythology Prajāpati ('The Lord of Creatures') creates the cosmos from his own substance, but the process is viewed negatively: it was an act of disintegration which initiated the devolution of time that inevitably results in decay and death. Vedic sacrifices, by imitating the act of creation and assimilating the present to the mythic moment when creation began, sought to regenerate the world by retrieving the state of primordial unity. The year, related mythologically to the course of the chariot of the Sun, was seen as the basic cyclic unit of creation and decline, the bringer of inevitable death to those who live in phenomenal time. Prajāpati and the year, both representative of totality and completeness, were equated with each other. The performance of a year-long sacrificial ritual in honour of Prajāpati aimed at an existential identification of the performers with the year as a means of overcoming death.⁴

Vedic mythology tells how Prajāpati was attracted to his daughter, the Dawn.⁵ He attempted to have sexual intercourse with her but was interrupted by an archer who fired an arrow at him. As he withdrew from her, his seed, his immortal substance, fell to earth and gave rise to creation. In later adaptations of the myth the archer who was not quite in time to prevent Prajāpati from shedding his seed was identified with Shiva. He in turn became identified with *kāla* — a word used to mean 'time' and 'death', both in the abstract and as a personified power responsible for the death of individuals as well as for the destruction of the whole of creation and the restoration of primeval integrity. Various adaptations of the myth revolve around the opposition between sexual activity, bound up with the degenerative effects of time and becoming, and withdrawal from a world that is regarded as the product of divine play or illusion. The opposition is symbolized by the ascetic yet phallic figure of Shiva who, through yogic restraint and concentration, strives to retain and transmute his creative energy in pursuit of reintegration and immortality.

Before such a state of liberation can be achieved the individual has to eliminate (or 'burn up') his *karma* — the cumulative effect of actions performed in previous lives. Since it is accumulative, *karma* is bound up with time and is an obstacle to the attainment of liberation. It necessitates belief in transmigration and the notion that liberation is gained when one is absolved from karmic debt and has thus become exempt from the need to be reborn.

It reinforces the notion that everything happens in conformity with some immutable law, explains misery and suffering as being caused by inherited guilt, and dispels the notion that they might be spontaneous, arbitrary, undeserved, or the result of exploitation and oppression.

While the aforementioned conceptions determine the attitude of the individual to his environment and destiny, the process of the evolution of the universe as a whole is conceived of in terms of a cycle of four ages, comparable to those described by Hesiod but considerably elaborated in Indian cosmology.⁶ In the Golden Age (Kṛtayuga), when the world was in its prime, everything was perfectly regulated, people were less involved in the process of becoming, lived longer and in harmony with natural law. We now live in the fourth and final age of the cycle (Kaliyuga) in which everything is approaching its nadir. The wars, heresies, decadence, materialism, moral laxity, and insubordination that characterize the present era are all looked upon as an inevitable consequence of the passage of time.

The wheel has served as a recurrent symbol for the sun, cosmic time, universal law, the moral law of man, and the inner light of illumination. It symbolized the Buddha himself, as well as his teachings, particularly with respect to the endless cycle of death and rebirth. The farther one was from the centre the more one was involved in the process of becoming, the nearer one approached the hub the less the turmoil. Central to both Buddhism and Hinduism is the concept of *dharma*, a term that covers not only ethics and religious doctrine, but also the whole conception of cosmic and social order. It is a timeless universal law that determines the status and obligations of individuals in society. Ashoka, the first of India's great emperors and a patron of Buddhism, assumed the title of 'Turner of the Wheel' (*cakravartin*), and used the wheel as a political symbol representing his role as a protector of the faith and maintainer of cosmic order on earth. The title and symbol were adopted by later monarchs, many of whom were extolled as an incarnation of one of the major gods. Since Independence the Indian Government has revived the Ashokan symbol combining the wheel and solar lions as an official emblem.

All this constitutes a harmonious and spiritually reassuring world-view that serves to impose a sense of pattern and allay the fear of irreversible time, but it tends to regard innovation as deviant or futile, encourages its adherents to stress conformity with social norms rather than personal success or failure, and to shrug off suffering and disasters as some inscrutable trick played by god, the just deserts of *karma*, or an unavoidable consequence of life in Kaliyuga. For these reasons it has certainly served to consolidate the hierarchical system of caste and to promote the idea that the ultimate goal of life is to escape from the world. To some extent it may be true to say that belief in transmigration encourages people to defer attempts at improving their lot in the hope that they will find themselves in better circumstances in their next incarnation. The Indian's 'non-sequential total field of awareness of simultaneous relations', in which everything is seen in terms of a recurring pattern, may serve to explain why social hierarchy has predominated over political systems, why the masses have acquiesced to a hierarchy of power and wealth, accepted the hereditary authority of priests and landowners,

and have rarely been inspired to struggle for structural and institutional reform.⁷

One should, however, be careful not to overemphasize the importance of religious ideals. Many publications and other media circulated in the West serve to perpetuate the notion that Indians are fatalistic, other-worldly, and preoccupied with spiritual matters. Apprehensions felt by westerners about the growth of individualism in a society geared towards mass consumption encourage them to contrast a modern 'materialistic' West with a traditionally 'spiritual' or 'mystic' East, but such a simplistic generalization fails to take into account the nature of popular religion in India (as opposed to theology) and the fact that Indians are capable of being just as pragmatic in their daily lives as any other people. What is distinctive about Indians is their ability to juggle with pragmatic and idealistic attitudes, to accommodate practicality and superstition, a feature that is apparent in the way Hinduism and its various sects have developed over the centuries. The anthropologist David Pocock⁸ tells us how struck he was by the realization that peasants of Gujarat, while paying lip-service to the traditional brahminical ideology based upon the doctrine of rebirth and liberation through renunciation, were more actively concerned with a devotional religion (*bhakti*) that places more emphasis on faith and service of a deity, the basic equality of devotees before god, and the notion that personal salvation may come as a reward for the quality and intensity of one's devotion. The negative conception of Kaliyuga has been used paradoxically to provide a positive evaluation of devotional religion and other customs that are non-Vedic: because circumstances no longer permit us to live up to the standards and ideals of the Golden Age, we are obliged to deviate from Vedic norms. It is a way of acknowledging the experience of change and duration while at the same time incorporating it into a value system that appears to deny it.

Patterns of childcare, the joint-family system, and the practical obligations of the hierarchical interaction between individuals and groups are undoubtedly of more immediate relevance to the Indian's attitude to history and change than a purely theoretical *Weltanschauung*. Sudhir Kakar has noted that minimal demands are placed on children to learn to function independently and that they are encouraged to live in a mythological world which tolerates non-logical modes of thinking and prefers symbolic imagery rather than abstract concepts.⁹ He sees this upbringing as resulting in a concern for time as it exists in the unconscious, for psychological rather than historical time; it encourages immersion in a subjective 'inner world', governed by primary processes of thought, rather than secondary processes of rational or logical thought, hence the lack of active engagement in the external world and of a sense of urgency in face of the movement of objective and impersonal time, allowing one's responses to be governed by time-honoured procedures of social interaction. Furthermore, a tendency to personalize institutions results in the belief that reform can be achieved not by abolishing or changing them but simply by replacing the individuals in positions of authority. Such an attitude is reflected in the established custom of making personal appeals to authority figures or a god in order to rectify injustices.

In recent times there has been increasing pressure to abandon the empha-

sis on emotional, aesthetic, and instinctual qualities of life and adopt more egalitarian and meritocratic procedures. In a developing democracy the need is to place more emphasis on qualifications and technical knowledge rather than on age and hierarchical seniority, but there is a strong current of vested interest in India that resists such a radical change in outlook. Kakar believes that the traditional Indian identity and the hierarchical social organisation, central elements in the conservation of Indian tradition, have in the past been capable of assimilating gradual changes, but that in the face of radical upheavals involving a conflict between the 'rational' and 'traditional' outlook, many Indians tend to fall back on the belief that change is fundamentally futile and that development of one's inner world is more important than reforming the outer world. Sudden changes that threaten the integrity of the self and the reassurance provided by family and caste ties are seen by Kakar as resulting in a collapse of self-esteem that may lead to such regressive reactions as violent rioting on inconsequential pretexts or attempts to restore an idyllic state by submission to gurus or charismatic leaders, regardless of the political consequences of their ideology. Those who feel disoriented or threatened by the emergence of western-style individualism may seek refuge in reactionary collectivities such as fundamentalistic religious groups, chauvinistic parties with a religious or ethnic base, or leaders who advocate a return to the 'Kingdom of Rama' or some other Golden Age scenario. Thus many Indians themselves also accept the polarity that sets their 'spirituality' against the threat of 'western materialism'.

Indians remain resistant to the idea of a non-teleological history. Academics and intellectuals who contributed to a collection of essays on the philosophy of history¹⁰ opt for the reassurance of a cyclic *Weltanschauung*. Adopting a monistic neo-Vedanta stance, popular among the Indian intelligensia since the days of Swami Vivekananda, they tend to drift off into mysticism and ignore the real questions raised by an empirical study of history. The traditional terror of time is linked with the fear of dialectical materialism; their idealism leads them to set Hegel against the dreaded Marx, to contrast directionlessness and chaotic materialism with the integration and harmony of cyclic time, and thus to welcome Toynbee and Sorokin as endorsing the Indian notion that there is some cosmic pattern or purpose underlying the rise and fall of civilizations.

Traditional Indian literature presents history as a ceaseless conflict between the forces of order and chaos in which *dharma* must ultimately prevail. Indians certainly put a premium on antiquity and are fond of constructing genealogies, but with little concern for chronological consistency. In their collective imagination momentous events and personages rapidly lose their immediacy and are assimilated to archetypes, while the ancient gods are looked upon as being as alive and active today as they have always been. Kakar rightly warns social scientists and oral historians of the Hindu peasant's propensity for telescoping different periods of time, mixing up his own childhood memories with those of others and introducing elements from the lives of long-deceased ancestors.¹¹ Bernard Cohn notes a dual attitude to the past: on one traditionally neglected level it provides a framework for direct social and political history, while on another level it is a living past conceived of in a

ritual or mythological context that serves to justify or explain customs and the status quo in terms of the 'great tradition'. It incorporates genealogies and myths accounting for the origin of castes, usually attributing the low status of some of them to the effect of *karma* resulting from some transgression.¹²

The range and scope of source material relating to ancient and medieval India cannot provide us with as detailed a chronology and impression of social developments as are available for European history.¹³ Narratives of the lives of saints, kings, and heroes are crammed with miraculous occurrences and stereotyped episodes that have been inserted for some edifying moral purpose or to suit aesthetic requirements. Lineages and anything approaching a chronicle are restricted to socio-political status groups; historical data in literary texts are so meagre, and archaeology has produced so little of correlative value, that it is impossible to say when the heroes of epic literature fought their battles, or even if they ever existed. In the medieval period there was an increase in secular writing dealing with the ancestry and deeds of local rulers, but the poets who composed them were primarily concerned with flattering their royal patron and displaying their command of rhetoric and poetic technique, with the inevitable result that historical facts are subordinate to the demands of literary convention. They are not, however, totally devoid of historical information; incidental references are made to social circumstances, and some of the dynastic information can help to fill out the data provided by coinage and epigraphy.¹⁴

Among texts of this genre Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgi*, written in the twelfth century, is often acclaimed as being the most historiographic work in Sanskrit. His account of the rulers of Kashmir from the earliest times to his own day is exceptional in that he refers to his having examined inscriptions, copper plates, and coinage in order to establish the dates of kings and other events, but he is still more concerned with poetics than the intrinsic value of historical facts. In accordance with his declared intention of making the aesthetic mood of peacefulness (*śāntarasa*) predominate in his chronicle, he places emphasis on the lives of those kings who ended their reigns in pious renunciation or in a similarly pathetic manner. He makes his history serve didactic purposes by stressing the transient nature of all mundane glory and the retribution that awaits all those who offend against the moral law.

The histories and annals of Muslim historians are less tied up with aesthetics and mythology, but they are equally prone to making their works preach a moral message. The earliest Muslim histories of note, dating from the thirteenth century, conform to the Persian tradition of dynastic history.¹⁵ Islamic historians, like those of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, do not give a personal evaluation of events but regard them instead as rewards and punishments handed out by god or as exemplifying his plan for the salvation of humanity. They were often secretaries and ministers with access to archival material who, even though religious beliefs coloured their presentation, showed a scholarly concern for history as a discipline in that they recorded events chronologically with the intention of adding to the knowledge of man and civilization.

The apparent stagnation of Indian society led many westerners to regard India as having no history at all. Such an attitude is not simply due to the

paucity of historical sources or the lack of any social development, but has much to do with western notions of human evolution and destiny. The cyclic conception of time and cosmology that was supported by many of the pre-Socratic philosophers survived in later antiquity, but it was increasingly modified by the millennial idea that the eventual destruction of the world by a flood or conflagration would be definitive and unrepeatable. Eliade, in his discussion of the myth of the 'eternal return', attributes the beginning of a different conception of time to the Hebrew prophets who interpreted suffering and disasters as the result of Jehova's anger. Christian thinkers amplified the notion that god intervenes in the course of history, with the result that collective suffering was no longer seen as the result of a conflict between divine and demonic forces, but as willed by god because it is necessary for a final redemption of the world in which sinners will be punished and the dead resurrected. The concept of a final victory of eternity over time led to events being seen not so much as the repetition of an archetype, but as having a specific value in themselves. Such a conception, however, is no less anti-historical than the cyclic one: instead of ignoring or periodically disposing of history, its irreversibility is compensated for by limiting it; it is tolerated because it will one day stop. Joseph Campbell, who has also discussed this divergence in attitudes to time¹⁶, regards Zoroaster's prophecy of cosmic restoration as having had a decisive influence on the development of a typically western view of history. The outcome was that the Persians, Jews, Christians, and Muslims came to share a progressive view of history that accredited man with more responsibility for his actions and fostered a dynamic attitude to the environment.

Millennial ideas also penetrated into India, but they were assimilated into the cyclic cosmology. The end of Kaliyuga, originally regarded as an inherent and inevitable consequence of the passage of time, was later seen as being precipitated by the arrival of Vishnu. Later mythology depicted his earlier incarnations as intervening on behalf of society or an individual, and introduced Kalkin as the last of them: a figure mounted on a white horse (like the rider of *Revelations* 19. 11-15) who will come to punish and destroy the unrighteous and relieve the overpopulated earth of her burden of decadent humanity. Indians, however, continued to regard this cataclysm as the culmination of one cycle of creation and a prelude to the beginning of the next, rather than as a final redemption of the world.

By the time information about Indian society became available, the linear conception of history was predominant in western intellectual circles — an outlook that was to be finally consolidated by the general acceptance of the theory of evolution. India came under the scrutiny of scholars who were convinced of the inherent value of progress, accorded greater significance to historical events, regarded man as himself the creator of history, and were inclined to welcome innovations rather than suspect them of being inherently deviant or sinful. It was not surprising that observers whose culture had been transformed by the industrial revolution should look upon Indian society as stagnant and its people as being passive, uninventive, and lazy due to their mythology, religion, and superstitions. Men whose ethics and egalitarian social ideals were far removed from the Indian concept of *dharma* found them-

selves confronted with a hierarchically ordered society structured by rules governing ritual purity. They relied on pundits who expounded the traditional brahminical world-view and were introduced to the ancient law books whose rigid formulation of the caste system was far removed from contemporary reality.

The first notable British historians of India, Charles Grant and James Mill, were respectively Evangelical and Utilitarian.¹⁷ Their conception of the positive value of Christianity or the ideals of liberty, rationalism, and individualism were contrasted with the inertia and despotism that seemed to typify Indian history. The concept of a static village economy exploited by a succession of despotic rulers, giving no incentive to the development of progressive and dynamic attitudes or an awareness of political values, became known as 'oriental despotism'. A similar view of Asians and their history had been expressed by writers from Aristotle to Montesquieu, and later appeared in the works of Hegel and Charles Lassen.¹⁸ The idea that Indians were passive and fatalistic encouraged the assumption that institutions such as guilds and castes remained closed and static. The emphasis given to dynastic changes led to a clear-cut division of Indian history into ancient/Hindu, medieval/Muslim, and modern/British periods.

A similar conception of Indian history underlies Marx's vaguely defined notion of the 'Asiatic mode of production'. It envisaged small, archaic, self-contained, and self-sufficient communities engaged in agriculture and handicrafts, maintaining a strict division of labour. After the state had exacted its revenue, which was used to finance military campaigns and the luxurious lifestyle of the rulers, there was no appreciative surplus left over for commodity exchange. D.D. Kosambi, citing the limited availability of salts and metals, criticizes Marx for having overestimated the absence of commodity production while underestimating the divergency of village economy.¹⁹ S.C. Malik, complaining of the lack of theoretical developments in the study of India's past, criticizes research carried out so far as having been concerned with quantitative accumulation of data, often to verify literary sources and oral tradition. The stress, he says, has been on continuity rather than change and the methodology has tended to continue the narrative approach of myths and legends, perpetuating the impression that men did little more than fight wars, that Indian culture has been in decline since the Golden Age of the sixth century, and that the Indian character has been inherently conservative, other-worldly, and despondent.²⁰

Many of the early contributors to the study of Indian history were colonial administrators who were more attracted to scholarly and antiquarian pursuits than to the round of club and sporting life. Throughout the nineteenth century their articles filled the journals of the Royal Asiatic Society and other learned institutions. Their ranks were joined by learned Indians who had received a western education and, with the establishment of Indology as an academic discipline, by scholars based in European universities. They are referred to as orientalist, rather than historians, since they were concerned with retrieving, interpreting, and compiling documentary evidence from literary, archaeological, epigraphic, and numismatic sources. They meticulously accumulated factual information, avoided generalizations, and on the whole

remained ideologically neutral.

Scholarly histories based on their findings implicitly accepted the moral right of the British to bestow civilization and humanitarian administration on India. In keeping with imperialist ideology, the main concern was with dynastic history. Ashoka, Chandragupta, and Akbar stood out as humane rulers whose reigns were interspersed by lapses into the anarchical autonomy that characterized 'oriental despotism'. The implication was that these three emperors gave India the kind of unity and justice that could be achieved by British rule under the guardianship of the Queen-Empress. Vincent Smith, the foremost historian of India at the height of the British Raj, has been criticized for his implicit imperialism as well as his overemphasis of Greek influence in ancient India, in accordance with the western idealization of Greece as the source of true civilization.²¹

From 1920 onwards, as nationalism became increasingly influential, Indians began to develop a more independent attitude to their history. The tendency was to glorify India's past, partly to counteract the deprecation of western scholars and partly to compensate for their humiliating subjugation to a foreign power. They sought to minimize or deny the possibility of Greek influence and argued that notable events and achievements were more ancient than western scholars claimed. Instead of challenging the notion that the traditional world-view was irrational, they maintained that Indian culture was essentially spiritual and therefore of a different and ultimately superior order than that of the materialistic West. The great Indian emperors were extolled not for imperialist reasons, but because their reigns were seen as having fostered a sophisticated culture and a sense of national unity. Lannoy has commented that *'even today the underlying desire for Indians to study history is often unconsciously motivated by longing to be restored to paradisaal innocence'*²² Unfortunately, the idealization of a Hindu Golden Age implied that cultural decline began with the arrival of the Muslim conquerors and the importation of an alien culture. Akbar could be accepted because of his religious tolerance and propagation of Hindu-Muslim unity, but most other Muslim rulers, especially Aurangzeb, the *bête noire* of Hindu history, were condemned for their bigotry and iconoclasm. The nationalists also spotlighted heroes like Maharana Pratap, Shivaji, and Lakshmibai who fought against foreign (Muslim or British) oppression, implying that they were forerunners of the freedom fighters who were struggling for an independent India.

In the atmosphere of communalism that developed in the years preceding Independence, and which still survives to this day, many Hindus adopted a chauvinistic attitude to their past, propagating sentiments that served to fuel revivalist and reactionary movements. Such attitudes underlay a series of volumes entitled *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, edited by R. C. Majumdar, A.D. Pusalkar, and others. It is useful as a compendious work of reference, but has been criticized by Kosambi for the low quality of analysis and evaluation and its obsession with dynastic history.²³ As a professed dialectical materialist, he accuses them of failing to tackle important social and economic questions, for having replaced foreign bourgeois prejudices with those of the Indian bourgeoisie, and for having produced an unhappy blend of European standards of logic and evidence in an attempt to extol

Hindu metaphysics.

In the last couple of decades Kosambi's methodology has been influential in directing attention towards the social and economic history of ancient India. Defining history as '*the development in chronological order of basic changes in the means and relation of production*', he regards dynastic changes as being indicative of significant changes in the productive basis rather than 'senseless flickers on the surface of an unchanging substratum'. He attempts to go beyond the superficial concepts of 'oriental despotism' and the 'Asiatic mode of production' by advocating study of the methods of agricultural production, the relationship between agrarian and tribal societies, the role of caste in breaking up tribal groups in order to annex them, the feudalism. He sees the main reason for the decline in political and economic development over the past fifteen hundred years as the establishment of an economy based on largely autonomous villages settled by private enterprise. The break-up of empires and kingdoms and the increase of production in the 'interior' led to the growth of self-sufficient villages whose inhabitants were preoccupied with seasonal cycles rather than the passage of years. This led to a general lack of any conception of history, and thus of historiography, since the rustic brahmins, the literate members of the community, had no concern for chronological development.

The approach advocated by Kosambi requires a reappraisal of available sources, especially those relating to land grants, and more archaeological evidence concerning the pattern of settlement and methods of production. Romila Thapar stands out among those who have attempted to present a more socially oriented history of ancient India, while there have been several works dealing with the period from the sixteenth century for which an enormous amount of archival material is available, particularly relating to revenue.²⁴ They do not necessarily adhere to Kosambi's dialectical materialism, but they share his concern for extracting as much social and economic information as possible from available source materials. The more detailed and varied picture that is emerging of the nature of land tenure and the bureaucratic power structure is helping to fill out the framework of political and dynastic history and break down the division of history into periods on the basis of dynasties and their professed religious beliefs.

NOTES

- 1 R. Lannoy, *The speaking tree. A study of Indian culture and society* (London, Oxford, New York, 1971) 292-293.
- 2 G. Myrdal, *Asian Drama. An inquiry into the poverty of Nations* (London, 1968) vol. I, 103.
- 3 M. Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour* (Paris, 1949) ; See also further discussion in *Mythes, rêves et mystères* (2e éd. Paris, 1957) and *Myth and reality* (London, 1963).

- 4 For an extended study see J. Gonda, *Prajāpati and the Year* (Amsterdam, Oxford, New York, 1984); see also S. Kramrisch, *The presence of Śiva* (Princeton, 1981) 269-272.
- 5 viz. Uṣas; for discussion of the basic myth and its elaboration cf. Kramrisch, *Presence, chapter I and 122-127, 189-196, 260-278*.
- 6 For a succinct account of Indian cosmology see R. Gombrich, 'Ancient Indian cosmology' in C. Blacker and M. Loewe, ed. *Ancient cosmologies* (London, 1975) 110-142.
- 7 Lannoy, *Speaking tree*, 227, 279, 293.
- 8 D. Pocock, 'The anthropology of time reckoning'. *Myth and Cosmos* (New York, 1967) 303-314.
- 9 S. Kakar, *The inner world. A psycho-analytic study of childhood and society in India* (2nd. edn. Delhi, 1981) 103 f. and chapter VI.
- 10 G. E. Cairns and T. M. P. Mahadevan, eds. *Contemporary Indian philosophers of history* (Calcutta, 1977).
- 11 Kakar, *Inner world*, 46-47.
- 12 B. S. Cohn, *India: the social anthropology of a civilization* (Eaglewood Cliffs, 1971) chapter V: 'The shaping of a civilization: views of the past'; for an account of how local lineages and clans can be linked to myths and history see A. M. Shah and R. G. Shroff, 'The Vahīvanā Bārots of Gujarat: A caste of genealogists and mythographers' in M. Singer, ed. *Traditional India: structure and change* (Philadelphia, 1959) 40-70.
- 13 For a survey of source materials see A. K. Warder, *An introduction to Indian historiography* (Bombay, 1972) and S. P. Sen (ed. vols. I-II) and N. R. Ray (ed. vol. III), *Sources for the history of India* (Calcutta, 1978-1980).
- 14 For a summary of the contents of eleven such works see C. Prabha, *Historical Mahākāvya in Sanskrit (Eleventh to fifteenth century AD)* (New Delhi, 1976).
- 15 For a concise summary of Muslim historiography up to the sixteenth century see Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Religious and intellectual history of the Muslims in Akbar's reign* (New Delhi, 1976).
- 16 J. Campbell, *The masks of God: Oriental mythology* (London, 1962) 6-9.
- 17 C. Grant's *Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain* was first published in 1797, and J. Mill's *History of British India* in 1817. For a survey of the work of European and modern Indian historians cf. C. H. Philips, *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* (London, 1961); R. Thapar, *Ancient Indian social history* (New Delhi, 1978) 1-25 and D. Lorenzen, 'Imperialism and the historiography of ancient India' in S. N. Mukherjee, ed. *India: history and thought – essays in honour of A. L. Basham* (Calcutta, 1982) 84-102.
- 18 G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, G. Lasson, ed. (Hamburg, 1955 - 1968) vol. II, 366 f.; C. Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde* (Bonn, Leipzig, 1847 - 1862). For discussion of western attitudes to Asian society from ancient to modern times see P. Anderson, *Lineages of the absolutist state* (London, 1974). See also W. Halbfass, *Indien und Europa* (Basel, Stuttgart, 1981) I, 1-188, and for criticism of Wittfogel's later account of 'oriental despotism' see A. M. Bailey and J. R. Llobera, eds. *The Asiatic mode of production* (London, Boston, Henley, 1981) part III.
- 19 D. D. Kosambi, *An introduction to the study of Indian history* (2nd. edn. Bombay, 1975) 10-12. For detailed discussion of Marx's formulation see M. Sawyer, *Marxism*

- and the question of the Asiatic Mode of production (The Hague, 1977) and Bailey and Llobera, *The Asiatic mode*.
- 20 S. C. Malik, 'Indian civilization: New images of the past for a developing nation' in *The new wind. Changing identities in South Asia* (The Hague, Paris, 1977) 86-94.
 - 21 V. Smith, *Early history of India* (Oxford, 1904), *Oxford history of India* (Oxford, 1919). For criticisms cf. D. D. Kosambi, 'What constitutes Indian history?', in *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* (1954) vol. 35; Thapar, *Social history*, 9; Lorenzen, 'Imperialism', 96-97.
 - 22 Lannoy, *Speaking tree*, 293 – using rather Christian terminology for the idealization of 'Vedic' values.
 - 23 Published in eleven volumes by B. V. Bhavan (Bombay, 1951 - 1969). See Kosambi, 'Indian history', for his review of the first three volumes.
 - 24 Thapar, *Social history*, and *A history of India, vol. I* (Harmondsworth, 1966). See also R. S. Sharma, *Indian feudalism: ca. 300 - 1200* (Calcutta, 1965). For a general survey of sources and reference to several works dealing with economic history since the sixteenth century see M. D. Morris 'Quantitative resources for the study of Indian history' in V. R. Lorwin and J. M. Price, ed. *The dimensions of the past* (New Haven, London, 1972) 531-549. Studies by Indian historians of the late medieval – modern period (Bipan Chandra, Nurul Hasan, Irfan Habib, Athar Ali, S. A. A. Rizvi) are recommended by Lorenzen, 'Imperialism', 87.

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