

A short response to Vishwa Adluri and Joydeep Bagchee, "Adaptive Reuse. Eli Franco, Plagiarism, and the Chair of Indology at Leipzig University" (Revised in response to Adluri and Bagchee's second rejoinder, see especially notes 5 and 6)

In a recent article posted on academia.edu (and perhaps elsewhere) Adluri and Bagchee accuse me of plagiarism and, among further unwarranted accusations, compare me in a completely far-fetched and clearly slanderous, scandalizing and at the same time illogical way to the mass-murderer Eichmann. Like most of their writings, this piece is vicious, tendentious, distortive, incoherent and sloppy.

Let me note from the outset that all three authors from whom I allegedly plagiarised (Klaus Mylius, Manfred Taube and Alexander von Rospatt) read my article in question and none of them considered my explicitly acknowledged, sometimes even verbatim adoption and adaptation of part of their work as plagiarism. They certainly did not think that I stole their intellectual property, as insinuated by A and B.

Now, let me point out a few things to explain how the presentation of A and B is misleading.

First, one has to note that all footnotes to my article were deleted and excluded from the file A and B used for comparison with the three aforementioned sources. The reason for this is not only that they could not find any traces of "plagiarism" there (most of the notes consist of mere bibliographical references) and that this would have diminished the colourful impact of their comparative presentation, but also that this allows them to eliminate the very first note on the first page of my article where I clearly indicated my sources:

"Der Hermann Brockhaus gewidmete erste Teil dieses Beitrags basiert vor allem auf meinem Aufsatz ‚Hermann Brockhaus - Zum 200. Geburtstag am 28. Januar 2006‘, in: Jubiläen 2006, 15-19. Die Ausführungen über Ernst Windisch und Johannes Hertel wurden vor allem aus KLAUS MYLIUS, Bedeutende Traditionen der Indologie an der Universität Leipzig, in: WZ KMU 28 (1979), 47-66, gelegentlich auch aus einem unveröffentlichten Manuskript von MARIA SCHETELICH, Die Geschichte der Indologie an der Universität Leipzig von 1841 bis 1937 entnommen (beides teilweise verbatim). Der Teil über Friedrich Weller stammt zum größten Teil von MANFRED TAUBE. Für die Darstellung des Wirkens von Bernhard Kölver hat mir freundlicherweise ALEXANDER VON ROSPATT seinen noch nicht veröffentlichten Nachruf zur Verfügung gestellt." They do, however, translate this note at a rather inconspicuous place in their piece, namely in endnote 6:

“The first part of this contribution, dedicated to Hermann Brockhaus, is based above all on my essay ‘Hermann Brockhaus—Zum 200. Geburtstag am 28. Januar 2006,’ in: Jubiläen 2006, 15–19. The remarks about Ernst Windisch and Johannes Hertel were taken above all from Klaus Mylius, *Bedeutende Traditionen der Indologie an der Universität Leipzig*, in: WZ KMU 28 (1979), 47–66, occasionally also from an unpublished manuscript by Maria Schetelich, [titled] *Die Geschichte der Indologie an der Universität Leipzig von 1841 bis 1937* (both partly verbatim). The section on Friedrich Weller stems to a large extent from Manfred Taube. Alexander von Rospatt kindly provided me with his as yet unpublished obituary for the presentation of the activity of Bernhard Kölver.”

First, one has to note that A and B misunderstand (I will not pay them in kind and thus do not assume that this is a deliberate distortion)<sup>1</sup> the sentence “Der Teil über Friedrich Weller stammt zum größten Teil von MANFRED TAUBE.” It means that the part on Friedrich Weller was *written* for the most part by my colleague Manfred Taube who was kind enough to assist me in writing the article. They disregard the fact that for this reason, unlike in the immediately preceding statements on my sources, no bibliographical reference is given, and falsely conclude that I plagiarized Taube’s work published in “Friedrich Weller, 22.7.1889–19.11.1980: Ein Leben für die Erforschung der Asia Major” (one of the three sources of my alleged plagiarism).

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<sup>1</sup> A and B undoubtedly have some knowledge of German, but it is difficult to ascertain to what extent. They claim that all translations from the German in their article are their own, but it is obvious that they used Google Translate or some similar program and did not bother, or perhaps were not able, to carefully check the accuracy of the translations. Even in cases where the resulting translation is nonsensical or a clear departure from the sense of the original German, it is left as is. Example are “... and the result of this research which worked alongside and all too often past each other led to chaotic results.”, “... since the most famous researchers in this field were Jews (...), it brought their particular expertise [wissenschaftliche Bedeutung], but which completely lacked an understanding ...”, “Through this semitization of the Aryan texts, which insinuated the religious and moral concepts of the Bible into ideological expressions that described ...”, “... so far as they have not been transformed ...” and “corresponds with that of the remaining Indo-Germanic peoples ...” (all in note 21); “... legal process, which Funk prosecuted against me ...”, “... he worked on personal questions against officials.” and “... I can quite well explain his promotion to myself” (all in note 25). It is also doubtful whether Hertel in 1946 really wrote that Lüders achieved “bloody little scientifically” in a letter to his daughter (note 25).

Second, the verbatim correspondences between my section on Kölver and von Rospatt's obituary are mostly accidental, innocuous or inevitable<sup>2</sup> and hardly present a case of plagiarism. As von Rospatt wrote in a recent email: "I have no problems with your treatment of Kölver at all. I am glad you used my obituary, and I shared it with you hoping you would."

Thus, the accusations concerning two of the three sources that I allegedly plagiarized are simply without substance. The case of Mylius's paper, however, is indeed more serious, yet in this case too, the presentation of A and B is deceptive or misleading on several accounts. In addition to the deletion of all my footnotes, mentioned above, A and B present a considerable number of quotations (in quotation marks) as evidence for plagiarism. Most of these quotations come from the sources clearly mentioned in the beginning of the article. In view of the clear statement of my reliance on, and indebtedness to, the aforementioned sources, the quotations in quotation marks hardly make a case for plagiarism.

Furthermore, titles of books and articles as well as elements of bibliographical references, e.g., names of journals, are also marked as evidence for plagiarism. I am not sure what I should have done in such cases. Surely, one would not expect me to change the titles or rename the journals.

Similarly, names of relevant institutions, such as "die Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft" (several times) and "die Königlich-Sächsische Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften", which obviously cannot be changed, also appear in colour, suggesting plagiarism.

Even unavoidable designations, sometimes combined with other words, such as „Chinesisch und ostasiatische Religionsgeschichte“; „Indologie an der Universität Leipzig“; „an der Leipziger Universität“; „des Lehrstuhls für Indologie“; „die Hauptfach-Studienrichtung Neuindische Philologie“ are all marked in colour as being plagiarized.

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<sup>2</sup> The following words and phrases are marked as evidence for plagiarism: „des Lehrstuhls für Indologie“; „die Hauptfach-Studienrichtung Neuindische Philologie“; „Bernhard Kölver (1938–2001)“; „an der Universität Kiel“; „Werken der indischen Geschichtsschreibung“; „Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project“; „der Nachwelt zu sichern“; „des Kathmandu-Tals und“; „des Kathmandu-Tals ist“; „durch den Kontakt mit“; „nur ansatzweise erforschten Sprache“; „Buch „Das Weltbild der Hindus“.“

Moreover, personal names, when they are long enough (at least four words) or are accompanied by life dates or other words, appear as plagiarized, for instance, “Alexander von Staël-Holstein”, “Johannes Hertel (1872–1955)” and “Bernhard Kölver (1938–2001)” are marked as plagiarized.

One also has to note that by reducing the unit of comparison to four words in a sequence, A and B maximize the identical portions in my paper and its sources to an unreasonable degree, which results sometimes in sheer nonsense, probably trusting their readers not to check the details, but to be merely impressed by the quantity of colour. Thus, the words „und nicht zuletzt der“ are marked as plagiarism (see also my n. 2 above).

Innocuous expressions like „bis zu seinem Tode“; „in den folgenden Jahren“; „die Angriffe auf Weller“; „mit seiner gesamten Bibliothek“; „befaßt sich mit dem“ are all marked as evidence of plagiarism.

Were one to unmark all the above mentioned cases, the general presentation would have been more accurate but less impressive. And it would not have been so farfetched to say:

“The remarks about Ernst Windisch and Johannes Hertel were taken above all from Klaus Mylius, *Bedeutende Traditionen der Indologie an der Universität Leipzig*, in: WZ KMU 28 (1979), 47–66, occasionally also from an unpublished manuscript by Maria Schetelich, [titled] *Die Geschichte der Indologie an der Universität Leipzig von 1841 bis 1937* (both partly verbatim).”

Furthermore, Mylius was actually pleased that I used his work extensively and considered the acknowledgement of this sufficient and adequate.<sup>3</sup> And I would gladly modify “partly verbatim” to “largely verbatim” or any similar expression; however, either formulation should make it sufficiently clear that an accusation of plagiarism is unfounded. So what is left of A and B’s allegations of massive plagiarism? One short paragraph (“the introduction”) and five sentences in the section on Brockhaus. I should have acknowledged my indebtedness to

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<sup>3</sup> He was less pleased about the short paragraph I wrote on his own role between 1969 and 1989/90, and especially about the fact that I referred in a note (not reproduced by A and B) to relevant sections in Erica Burgauer’s *Zwischen Erinnerung und Verdrängung. Juden in Deutschland nach 1945*. Reinbeck 1993. This is the reason for the indignant remarks made by his friend Kapp (twice misspelled Knapp by A and B), which A and B are quick to endorse, ignorant as they are of both background and context (n. 18).

Mylius here as well. This omission was an unfortunate oversight on my part,<sup>4</sup> for which I apologize to any reader who was misled by my incomplete acknowledgement.

Therefore, A and B's hypocritically generous, but eventually rejected consideration that this may be a case of accidental plagiarism or negligence in the use of citations is completely out of place, and their claim of the "severity" of my allegedly "outright" plagiarism is clearly exaggerated.

Moreover, presumably on purpose, A and B completely ignore the nature of my article. It is essentially a compilatory work, and I definitely presented it as such. I did not intend it, and also did not claim it, to be a piece of original research on the history of Indology in Leipzig, in spite of my own contributions by way of the addition of historical details and individual observations and judgments. The fact that for stylistic and pragmatic reasons, such as succinctness or precision of the presentation, I sometimes slightly or more extensively changed the wording of my identified sources does in no way "suggest an intent to deceive", nor can it be considered "devious", as deviously claimed by A and B. At the same time they incoherently charge me of presenting "no argument" and not even providing an "arrangement or presentation of the data because syntactical structures (and entire sentences) were adopted from [my] sources." I also do not see why I should have "pass[ed] off as [my] own" common-place judgments found in my sources.

Two more points about plagiarism. The plagiarist usually tries to carefully hide his/her sources, but A and B do not name any source used by me except those that I myself mention prominently in the very first note of the article. Further, why should I have committed this alleged plagiarism? Plagiarists usually want to gain something. Even A and B cannot think of any motive: neither fame nor money nor advancement of career. Even if I would have "personally benefitted" from propagating the narrative of an unproblematic "scientific" tradition of Indology at Leipzig University, as A and B absurdly claim in connection with their second charge, namely that I covered up Hertel's anti-Semitism, I could have easily presented the substance of Mylius' and von Rospatt's articles completely in my own words; the section on Weller, as mentioned above, was not even written by me. Thus, the motive for this alleged "wilful" plagiarism remains completely unexplained.

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<sup>4</sup> I cannot explain how this happened. I assume that I copied some sentences from Mylius's paper in order to base my own exposition on them later or integrate their gist into it, and then by mistake left them as they were.

On the other hand, it can very easily be explained why A and B denigrate me: I dared to write a scathing review of their book *The Nay Science* after they had already severely retaliated against other critics for much milder criticism of it, trying to silence any differences of opinion. After their 70-page rejoinder, in which they shamed themselves by committing more blunders and resorting to further distortions,<sup>5</sup> proved ineffective at refuting the

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<sup>5</sup> See my response in [https://www.academia.edu/31550298/Response to A and B Nay Science.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/31550298/Response_to_A_and_B_Nay_Science.pdf). Realizing perhaps that their first rejoinder had flopped and that their idiotic accusations of anti-Semitism, or at least sympathy for it, were not taken seriously (of course, my being Jewish did not help their case), A and B have recently published a second mendacious rejoinder in *South Asia* 42, 2019, pp. 813-816, and expand on it in a piece titled “Cry Hindutva: How Rhetoric Trumps Intellect in South Asian Studies.” The rejoinder is nothing more than a complaint that in pointing out the affinity of their work to unsavory phenomena in contemporary Indian society and politics that can be connected with what is generally called the Hindutva movement, I attempted to silence or suppress their critique of Indology. They play dumb: “How exactly does highlighting anti-Judaic inspiration for much Indological scholarship encourage Hindutva?” (n. 7; n. 8 in the expanded version). The question is insincere and devious: It is, of course, not critique as such that bears affinity to Hindutva, etc., but their distortive critique based on manipulative expositions which denies any value at all to Indology as such and results in grotesque conclusions from their absurd misrepresentations. For example, they claim in their first rejoinder: “Once we discount the Indologists’ fictional histories, we do not know significantly more about the Indian past than before” (n. 65). “Before” means here “before 1800,” and “Indologists” is used here in general, not just for “German” Indologists. Similarly, in their “Prolegomena to any Future Mahābhārata Studies” (p. 4) they state: “We are currently working on a second book on German Indology showing how it is, in essence, a *Rassenwissenschaft* or race science.” However, they immediately contradict themselves (*ibid.*, p. 5): “Indology is not a science; neither did Indologists have any clue of what ‘science’ is.” And so on and so forth. Furthermore, the close affinity with the Hindutva movement and related ideologies is also seen in A and B’s repeated recommendation to subordinate Indology to traditional Brahminical points of view; for instance, in *The Nay Science* (p. 313) they require: “First, no rhetoric against ‘Indians.’ If the interest in Indian texts is genuine, there will be no rhetoric against the Indian tradition. ... Second, no rhetoric about the superiority of the Germans. ... Third, no rhetoric about the superiority of reason. ...” Moreover, the warm reception of *The Nay Science* among so-called svadeshi Indologists and Hindutva proponents, and even in RSS circles, as well as the financial support provided by institutions closely related to these circles, such as the Indic Academy (which financed the self-congratulatory lecture tour of Adluri throughout India), clearly show that – deliberately or undeliberately – A and B play into the hands of the Hindutva supporters. My guess is that this is done deliberately, for how could one otherwise explain lectures such as “Origins of the Aryan Invasion myth in European political, social, religious contexts,” held on December 7, 2019 at the “National Seminar on Aryan Invasion Myth at Hyderabad” organized by the Pragna Bharati and the Indic Academy? “We nowhere defended Hindutva” they protest in pretended innocence, but what do they think they are doing when they become “core doctoral faculty members” of

the “Hindu University of America”? See <https://www.hua.edu/about/> and <https://www.hua.edu/academics/faculty/>

Further, A and B ask (n. 6; n. 7 in the expanded version): “But what about foresight? What does he [Franco] propose we do next? Can he offer a method?” I am surprised and honored that they care for my opinion, but it seems that I have been talking to the deaf. I explicitly said in my review that Indology does not use a single method. Come to think of it, I do not know of any science or scholarly discipline that relies on a single method. But even if there were one, it is certainly not Indology (“German” or otherwise). How could one possibly expect that, for example, compiling a dictionary (which relies on the methods developed in semantics), writing a grammar (which relies more heavily on morphology), or preparing a catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts (which is based on the various methods employed in codicology) would use the same method? Even when we look at critical editions of Sanskrit texts prepared over the last 150 years or so, one can hardly claim that a single method has been used. Next to the much-maligned stemmatic method, some editors use the eclectic method (argued for by the “German” Indologist S.A. Srinivasan in his edition of the Vācaspati Miśra’s *Tattvakaumudī*); some rely strongly on secondary testimonia (a method particularly useful for Jaina texts), some ignore such testimonia because they consider them unreliable or simply do not use them because they are not available for a given text; some use the evidence of Tibetan and/or Chinese translations (particularly in the editions of Buddhist texts), which requires, of course, different methods; finally, some do not use any manuscripts at all but rely only on previously printed editions (such as Ruben’s edition of the *Nyāyasūtras* (1928), which still surpasses any other printed edition; many editions by Indian scholars could also be named for this method). When it comes to the study of Indian religion, philosophy, history, society or culture in general, the variety of methods is so large that I cannot even start to enumerate them all; I just want to remind A and B, for example, of the analytical and the hermeneutical method in philosophy, the various sociological or anthropological approaches, the numerous methods employed in linguistics, and the structural and the comparative method in religious studies. As far as I can see, Indologists were not great innovators when it came to developing methods or methodology; rather, each generation adapted methods that had gained currency or were fashionable in other disciplines of the humanities and social sciences in its time and were applicable to their specific area of study, and in general the next generations will presumably continue to do so. Imitating the graceful style of A and B, we would have to conclude, it is “quite insane” to portray Indology as relying on a single method or to aspire, as A and B, to establish Indology anew on the basis of a single method. (See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeJqwukEo5Q> minute 43, where A denounces the scholars who achieved the excellent translation of Vālmīki’s *Rāmāyāna* published by Princeton University Press, that is, Robert Goldman, Sally Sutherland, Sheldon Pollock and Rosalind Lefebvre, as “quite insane”; I owe this reference to Roland Steiner).

Finally, A and B claim (p. 815) to have waited for three years until they published their rejoinder to make sure that they had not missed anything of value, especially when it comes to computer analysis of Sanskrit texts. Had they looked around instead of just waiting, they would have encountered the work of Oliver Hellwig, which is widely accepted among Indologists. In a recent paper, “Dating Sanskrit texts using linguistic features and neural networks,” *Indogermanische Forschungen* (2019), 1-45, he shows that the Bhīṣmaparvan in general and the Bhagavadgītā in particular contain different textual layers stretching over hundreds of years. On the whole, his results conform to those of the American scholar

criticism voiced in my review, they now set out to destroy the reviewer with the same defamatory energy as already exhibited throughout their book. They are not even shy to reveal this motivation.

As for the even graver, second accusation of covering up anti-Semitism and National Socialism in the case of Hertel, it is so bizarre, twisted and unfounded that I am not sure whether it even merits consideration, not to speak of a detailed refutation.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, considering that I am Israeli and Jewish, such suppression seems most unlikely from the outset, and here too, it would be difficult to see what motivation I could possibly have. By way of the motto of their nasty diatribe, “Eichmann ... constantly repeated, word for word, the same stock phrases and self-invented clichés... The longer one listened to him, the more obvious it became that his inability to speak was closely connected with an inability to *think*; that is, to think from the standpoint of somebody else,” A and B attempt to insinuate such a

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Edward Washburn Hopkins (1857–1932), classified as a “German Indologist” by A and B. To be fair, A and B could not yet have known this most recent study, but they should have come across earlier versions of Hellwig’s work published in 2016 and 2017.

<sup>6</sup> I will mention only one of their funniest “reasonings”. I wrote to Bagchee (privately) some time ago, and pointed out the difference between not mentioning something (Hertel’s anti-Semitism, which was not well known, at least not to me, when I wrote about him) and trying to cover it up. I also mentioned that I spoke about Hertel’s anti-Semitism in a public lecture at a Pañcatantra conference held in Leipzig several years ago. A and B now quote my email (without the usual courtesy of asking my permission) in n. 33, but are unable or rather unwilling to grasp the distinction between not mentioning something and covering it up: “But any mention during a conference is hearsay: it must be backed up by documentation. Franco has neither published his paper, ..., nor emended his 2006 article ... .” Presumably they do not mean that I need to prove that Hertel was an anti-Semite because this has been amply shown by Neubert’s study referred to in my email message. They rather mean that I would have had to prove that I publicly declared Hertel to have been an anti-Semite. Notwithstanding their misuse of the term (they must have been watching some American legal drama series, but misunderstood what “hearsay” evidence means), I do not mind indulging them: I declare hereby (academia.edu is a public enough platform) that I have no sympathies whatsoever for Hertel’s anti-Semitism and had I written this piece today, would have certainly mention it. Would this put an end to their outrageous accusations? I doubt it very much. A and B are not at all interested in evidence, “hearsay” or other; on the contrary, they go out of their way (not only in my case) to ignore any evidence that may indicate that anti-Semitism or National Socialism is not covered up, because their aim is to stir up scandals and attack past and present “German” Indologists by using convenient buzzwords. This is what they thrive on. Incapable as they are of any meaningful contribution to Indology and its history, A and B made themselves a career—and quite a successful one in non-Indological circles, I gather—by denigrating Indology and Indologists, especially Germans, but also others somehow related to German Indology.



motivation and add a further insult. However, inasmuch as the use of the motto illogically connects the repetition of stock phrases and *self-invented* clichés with plagiarism, and, furthermore, plagiarism with the inability to think *from the standpoint of somebody else*, this is merely another splendid example of their great talent to twist and distort their -- dutifully acknowledged -- sources.

Actually, I find it hard to believe that A and B really think that I harbour any sympathies for National Socialism or that I had tried to cover up Hertel's or anybody else's anti-Semitism.<sup>7</sup> I assume that their allegations are just a cynical move on their part either out of pure spite or in the hope that their false charges may somehow distract from the criticism I voiced in the review or weaken it, probably without them realizing that even if I were the worst of anti-Semites, this would not turn their pamphlet into a scholarly work.

Accusing his critics of an association with National Socialism seems to be a habit of Adluri, a failed Ph.D. student in Indology<sup>8</sup> of the late Michael Hahn of Marburg (who, incidentally, was also of Jewish descent) on grounds of insufficient philological skills, whom Adluri promptly accused of standing in the tradition of National Socialist scholarship; since then, he has been on a personal vendetta against "German Indologists." I have no idea what may have motivated Bagchee, who is not an Indologist, but has a Ph.D. in philosophy, to engage in Adluri's project. For some reason, he also seems to have made it his business to promulgate diverse personal attacks on Indologists, especially well-established ones, for which he was recently removed from the international Indology discussion group. I seem to be in good company.

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<sup>7</sup> If I had been intended to write a "hagiography" (a term repeatedly misused by A and B), I would rather have chosen an outstanding scholar in my own area, the area of the history of Indian philosophy, like Frauwallner rather than a someone like Hertel; see, however, Eli Franco and Karin Preisendanz, Vorwort. In: Erich Frauwallner, *Philosophie des Buddhismus*, Berlin 2010, pp. XII-LIII, esp. pp. XXII-XXVIII.

<sup>8</sup> Several colleagues have asked me about the apparent discrepancy between the above statement and Adluri's claim to have earned a Ph.D. in Indology from the University of Marburg. Indeed he has. After Adluri had accused Hahn of standing in the National Socialist tradition of Indology, the dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages decided to release Hahn from his duties as supervisor of Adluri's thesis and further to not include any professor of Indology at a German universities from the evaluation of the thesis. Adluri's thesis was subsequently supervised by Arbogast Schmitt, a professor of Ancient Greek. It probably has as much merit as thesis on the Homeric epics supervised by an Indologist. See Hahn's Supplement in Jürgen Hanneder, "Pretence and Prejudice," *Indologica Taurinensia* 37 (2011), 136-137.

Of course, there is much more to be said on the subject and on several other distortions and skewed, illogical points they make in their paper out of their desire to bring me into bad repute. Maria Schetelich also plans her own response to A and B's slandering remarks about herself.