The idea of the Aryan, the concept that was infamously touted as a racial ideal by Nazi leaders, was an intellectual topic long before it gained predominance in twentieth century Germany. The roots of the mythical Aryan, however, were much deeper and more nuanced than what was evident from the blunt, exclusionary claims of the Nazis. Developing from the linguistic theory of Sir William Jones, an eighteenth century philologist employed by the East India Company, the idea of an Aryan race became popular amongst many intellectual circles. Indeed, from its earliest years the Aryan myth was a transnational notion, popular in British India, Great Britain, and Germany, amongst other locations. The fact that the idea of the Aryan race was vague from its inception meant that many variations developed cross-nationally and within single nations. Depending on their own beliefs, various thinkers shaped the myth to their own satisfaction, often resulting in estranged and even contradictory forms of the myth existing simultaneously. Despite their independent development and disparate details, the separate versions of the Aryan myth were often used to discuss wider contemporary issues. Specifically, the underlying ideas of human origin, national identity, and race were prevalent in discourses on the Aryan myth. The myth spoke to those who were interested in national themes, and it proved to be a useful tool, easily grasped, but often maliciously wielded.