

Languages, as intellectual creations of man, and as closely interwoven with the development of mind, are, independently of the *national* form which they exhibit, of the greatest importance in the recognition of similarities or differences in races. This importance is especially owing to the clew which a community of descent affords in treading that mysterious labyrinth in which the connection of physical powers and intellectual forces manifests itself in a thousand different forms. The brilliant progress made within the last half century, in Germany, in philosophical philology, has greatly facilitated our investigations into the *national* character* of languages and the influence exercised by descent. But here, as in all domains of ideal speculation, the dangers of deception are closely linked to the rich and certain profit to be derived.

Positive ethnographical studies, based on a thorough knowledge of history, teach us that much caution should be applied in entering into these comparisons of nations, and of the languages employed by them at certain epochs. Subjection, long association, the influence of a foreign religion, the blending of races, even when only including a small number of the more influential and cultivated of the immigrating tribes, have produced, in both continents, similarly recurring phenomena; as, for instance, in introducing totally different families of languages among one and the same race, and idioms, having one common root, among nations of the most different origin. Great Asiatic conquerors have exercised the most powerful influence on phenomena of this kind.

But language is a part and parcel of the history of the development of mind; and, however happily the human intellect, under the most dissimilar physical conditions, may unfettered pursue a self-chosen track, and strive to free itself from the dominion of terrestrial influences, this emancipation is never perfect. There ever remains, in the natural capacities of the mind, a trace of something that has been derived from the influences of race or of climate, whether they be associated with a land gladdened by cloudless azure skies, or with the vapory atmosphere of an insular region. As, therefore, richness and grace of language are unfolded from the most luxu-

the Torgodi and Dsungari (Mongolians), the same habits of nomadic life, and the same use of felt tents, carried on wagons and pitched among herds of cattle.

* Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Ueber die Verschiedenheit der menschlichen Sprachbaues*, in his great work *Ueber die Kawi-Sprache auf der Insel Java*, bd. i., s. xxi., xlvi., and ccciv.