



The Nay Science: A History of German Indology

Vishwa Adluri, Joydeep Bagchee

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The Nay Science offers a new perspective on the problem of scientific method in the human sciences. Taking German Indological scholarship on the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavadgita* as their example, Adluri and Bagchee develop a critique of the modern valorization of method over truth in the humanities.

The authors show how, from its origins in eighteenth-century Neo-Protestantism onwards, the critical method was used as a way of making theological claims against rival philosophical and/or religious traditions. Via discussions of German Romanticism, the pantheism controversy, scientific positivism, and empiricism, they show how theological concerns dominated German scholarship on the Indian texts. Indology functions as a test case for wider concerns: the rise of historicism, the displacement of philosophical concerns from thinking, and the belief in the ability of a technical method to produce truth.

Based on the historical evidence of the first part of the book, Adluri and Bagchee make a case in the second part for going beyond both the critical pretensions of modern academic scholarship and the objections of its post-structuralist or post-Orientalist critics. By contrasting German Indology with Plato's concern for virtue and Gandhi's focus on praxis, the authors argue for a conception of the humanities as a dialogue between the ancients and moderns and between eastern and western cultures.

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