

Theses on Indology

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Your Imperial Majesty and Your Lordships demand a simple answer. Here it is, plain and unvarnished. Unless I am convicted [convinced] of error by the testimony of Scripture or (since I put no trust in the unsupported authority of Pope or councils, since it is plain that they have often erred and often contradicted themselves) by manifest reasoning, I stand convicted [convinced] by the Scripture to which I have appealed, and my conscience is taken captive by God's word, I cannot and will not recant anything, for to act against our conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us.

—Martin Luther, Luther's Final Answer, April 18, 1521 (The Diet of Worms, 1521)

Preface

Nineteenth-century German Indology casts a long and problematic shadow over the contemporary study of Indian texts. The German Indologists have yet to respond to Nietzsche's challenge to philology's episteme or to Foucault's exposure of its collusion with power or to Said's critique of Eurocentrism. The commonest response to Said has been to shrug off his allegations by pointing to an obvious lacuna in his argument: Germany's lack of colonial possessions (see Gaeffke 1994, Marchand 2009, and Rabault-Feuerhahn 2013). The German Indologists themselves have brushed off post-orientalist criticisms as "meta-theorizing" (Hanneder 2001, 239) or "discourse strategy" (Grünendahl 2009–2010, 23–24). Even Sheldon Pollock, who acknowledges Indology's enmeshment in Nazism (see Pollock 1993), fails to see that Nazism itself was merely an effect of the logic of othering enshrined in the method itself. His analysis overlooks the theological nature of the philological method of yesterday and the Christian framework of secularism today. Pollock's work thus remains entrenched in the historicist, secularist, and positivistic rhetoric of the nineteenth century. Indeed, following philology's "presentist [sic]" rehabilitation, the philologist reemerges as the high priest of a newly constituting "temple of disciplinarity" (Pollock 2015, 23).

Pollock's proposed "critical philology," which is supposed to address the problems with traditional Indology, is similarly problematic. Pollock advocates critical philology as a response to Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Allegedly, it enables us to "return to philology" following Said's insight that the orientalist disciplines functioned primarily to create a discourse about the "other" (see Pollock 2009, 946–47, 959–61). But Pollock's analysis overlooks the fact that a critical philology must primarily study the methods and axioms of philology as they developed in their European and, more specifically, German context. A critical philology is only possible as a *self*-critical philology. It must trace its genealogy back to academic structures that owe their existence to nineteenth-century European thought. Pollock identifies philology's origins with F. A. Wolf and cites names like Schlegel, Heyne, and Boeckh. He describes himself as a "secular Rankean philologist" (2014, 407; 2016, 23). But he does not critically evaluate the hagiography and historicist positivism at philology's heart. In a perversion of Said, he transfers (to use a Saidian idiom) Said's analysis to the Orient. Among Sanskrit's new found functions in the "Sanskrit cosmopolis," Pollock now discovers its potential for othering and its imbrication with power. With this move—we shall call it "disorientalism"—he effectively neuters Said's criticism. Rather than subject his own work or his own discipline to analysis and question its political collusions or its privilege, the philologist constitutes himself *yet again as an overseer of the natives*. Pollock's "disorientalism" thus works to inoculate the academic community, its Eurocentric past-century pretensions and its institutional hegemony, against Said's critique. It is no accident that Pollock never fulfilled the tentative claims and promised research raised in "Deep Orientalism?"

In *The Nay Science*, we addressed historicism's and secularism's shortcomings in relation to Indian texts. We demonstrated that, although the Indologists described their discipline as "scientific" (*wissenschaftlich*), it met no reasonable definition of science. Their so-called "text-historical" method did not lead to universally demonstrable propositions. The German Indologists claimed their work was objective and presuppositionless as compared with the tendentious interpretations of native commentators. Yet we found that their reconstructions of the Mahābhārata and the Bhagavadgītā were perfectly subjective and arbitrary. The little consensus they possessed—for example, the rejection of the texts' traditional reception—was due to an institutionalized prejudice against the native commentators. *The Nay Science* focused mainly on the Indologists' claim of scientificity (*Wissenschaftlichkeit*), but it already indicated the need for an institutional critique of Indology. Franco's review now provides us the opportunity to complete this task. In a dissent from Pollock's transference of Said's critique to the Indians, we shall show that a critical philology worthy of the name can only be practiced as a critique of philology's practitioners, the would-be philologist-kings or at least philologist-priests. Its first task must be to question *their* knowledge, power, and authority. If we have thus chosen to respond to Eli Franco's review of *The Nay Science* (Eli Franco, review of *The Nay Science. A History of German Indology*, by Vishwa Adluri and Joydeep Bagchee, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 39, no. 3 [2016]: 695–98, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2016.1207281>), it is because greater issues are at stake than the petty egotism of any one Indologist or even of all of them as a class. What is really at stake in this debate is the university's very future as a place for inquiry and scholarship, which requires a critique of its calcified superstructure.

Our response takes the following form: Franco's review is reprinted in italics with our response below it. Nominally in the form of footnotes, this section constitutes a self-standing essay divided into sixteen sections as follows:

1. *The Nay Science* (nn1–6)
2. German Indology and Method (nn7–8)
3. German Indology as an Institutional Hegemony (nn9–11)
4. A Guide to Indological Publications (nn11)
5. German Indology: Definition (nn12–21)
6. Critical History versus Hagiography (nn22–24)
7. Historical Criticism and Indology (nn25–30)
8. German Indology as a Priesthood (nn31–36)
9. German Indology as Philology (nn37–49)
10. The Bhagavadgītā and German Indology (nn50–52)
11. Historical Criticism and the Logic of Othering: Aryanism and Anti-Semitism (nn53–54)
12. Indology and the University: Future Prospects (nn55–59)
13. Indology and Protestant Theology (nn60–61)
14. The Search for Legitimacy (nn62–68)
15. The Death of Indology (nn69–72)

16. Excommunication and Apartheid (nn73–75)

There are reasons for this format, which inverts the traditional relationship of text and footnote. The importance of footnotes for academic writing cannot be overstated. Moreover, we contend that Franco's prejudices represent the discipline's superstructure and hence belong on the top, whereas, as a Marxist critique of this superstructure, our response is necessarily "from below." As this superstructure, Franco's review provides us an opportunity to study and critique the full spectrum of epistemic blindness, professorial arrogance, *ersatz* scientificity, political manipulation, and policing of the subaltern responsible for Indology's demise.

There are, of course, other functions in the study of texts. The Mahābhārata itself notes the functions of preservation and explanation (*vividhaṁ saṁhitājñānaṁ dipayanti maṁṣiṇaḥ | vyākhyātuṁ kuśalāḥ ke cid granthaṁ dhārayitūṁ pare* ||, Mahābhārata 1.1.51). We acknowledge efforts to preserve the texts, collect manuscripts, and carefully improve the transmission. But these functions were carried out to varying extents by most traditions. The Mahābhārata textual tradition, for example, reveals an industrious, accurate, and intelligent text-custodial tradition, which gives the lie to contemporary Indological philology's prejudices (the Mahābhārata was a chaotic text, *bhakti* is a late, "sectarian" interpolation, *nirguṇa bhakti* is a late *vandhyāputra*, the Bhagavadgītā does not belong in the Mahābhārata, and so on). It is this specific discourse, sometimes called "higher criticism," that is the issue here. Academics have abandoned the ivory tower, that is, their custodial and philosophical functions, for the political watch tower of oversight and demagoguery. Nowhere is this clearer than in Franco's review, which merely repeats the priestly demand for obedience to institutionalized dogma and threatens to impugn our reputations. Thus, after making unlearned assertions and pointless comments, Franco raises the specter of Hindutva. This troubles us for many reasons. Hindutva has become an easy accusation. When it is brandished without proper criteria, and used, moreover, to defend a questionable expertise, we must ask: "What, exactly are the criteria for 'Hindutva'?" Is someone who considers John Brockington's scholarship on the Gītā or Pollock's citation of the 'Schriftartprämisse' untenable automatically 'Hindutva'?" Perhaps we should first provide a clear conceptual definition of the term, and clarify how it differs from "Hinduism" and "Hindu." Political phenomena like extremism, hatred, violence, intolerance, terrorism, and executions must be condemned. But as much as these issues appeal to our sense of righteousness, they cannot excuse the Indologists from answering for their questionable expertise. Is religious fundamentalism a real problem? Yes, of course. Are the Indologists sufficiently self-critical and self-disciplined, and does their episteme stand up to intellectual scrutiny? No, emphatically not. The Indologists' failure to dialogue with practitioners, their condescension, petitioning, and polarization of the public provides a heartbreaking commentary on the university's decline. Before we academics and intellectuals play such games of power, exclusion, and stigmatization, let us first clarify who we are and what we do. "The art of reading as such" cannot be an excuse for pissing on practitioners from the university's balcony. Our stance towards the *polis* must be one of respect and compassion. With respect to ourselves as an academic clique, it must be one of unrelenting scrutiny and critique. Hence this rejoinder.

If one thing is truly clear after reading this distorting and tendentious book, it is that this is anything but a history of German Indology. The tome begins with a critical survey of the earliest German publications on the Mahābhārata¹ (basically dealing with only two scholars, Christian Lassen and Adolf Holtzmann),² and then moves on to examine the work of some half a dozen scholars on the Bhagavadgītā from the late nineteenth to the first half of the twentieth century, which forms the bulk of the book.³ The whole thing has then been packaged (and successfully sold) as a history of German Indology in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴ But how can a work of such limited scope claim to be a history of a rather vast

¹ *The Nay Science*

The Nay Science began with a discussion of the origins of “philology” in the argument for the immortality of the soul and philology’s connection with philanthropy (in the Prologue). We dedicated the entire Introduction to definitions, and traced the Indologists’ ideas of critical scholarship back to the historical-critical method and its origins in Neo-Protestant theology.

² *The Nay Science* focused on German Mahābhārata and Bhagavadgītā scholarship as particularly revealing of German scholars’ political and ideological concerns in reading Sanskrit texts. It traced the development of German prejudices about ancient Indian (“Aryan”) civilization beginning with their earliest readings of the Mahābhārata. German scholars applied the historical-critical method, which breaks apart a text into its *hypothetical* constituent elements—in this case, its Aryan and Brahmanic layers, to recover a pristine albeit equally hypothetical original that would confirm their prejudices about India. Incidentally, there were *two* Holtzmans (note the correct spelling; it is not “Holzmann”), Adolf Holtzmann Sr. and Jr., so, minimally, *The Nay Science* is about *three* scholars. Chapters 1 and 2 (on the Mahābhārata) also dealt with the work of Theodor Goldstücker, Edward W. Hopkins, and Hermann Oldenberg. The conceptual genealogy that culminates with Adolf Holtzmann Jr. and thus contemporary Mahābhārata studies is unthinkable without Goldstücker.

³ Chapter 3 of *The Nay Science* examined the following scholars’ reconstructions of the Bhagavadgītā: Adolf Holtzmann Jr., Richard von Garbe, Hermann Jacobi, Hermann Oldenberg, Rudolf Otto, and Jakob Wilhelm Hauer. The last scholar examined is Georg von Simson (born 1933 and, to our knowledge, still alive). The article we discussed was published in 1969. Scholars like Angelika Malinar (currently Professor at the University of Zurich) are later than von Simson.

⁴ *The Nay Science* stated at the outset that it was neither intended as a “history of the establishment and growth of scholarship on ancient India in Germany” nor did it pursue a “disciplinary history in the sense that it recounts details of departments or scholars” (*NS*, 2). In what sense, then, is *The Nay Science* a history? As we explained next, “the history dealt with in this book is *discipline-reflexive*, by which we mean it studies the self-presentation or self-understanding of the discipline’s practitioners: how did they view their discipline? In what way did they see themselves as contributing to the task of translating or clarifying Indian literature to European audiences? What were the means, the arguments, or the strategies used to justify their role as official purveyors of Indian culture to these audiences, and what role did the rhetoric of science and scientificity play in these arguments?” (*Ibid.*, 3).

The conventions of scholarly review require a reviewer to assess the book an author has written, not criticize him for not writing one the reviewer would have written. Those interested in traditional hagiographies of German Indology were directed to the relevant literature—above all to Ernst Windisch (1917–1920) and Theodor Benfey (1869), and the more recent additions to this genre by Valentina Stache-Rosen (1981 [1990]) and Jürgen Hanneder (2010b). Franco cannot claim that we either mislead the reader or “blissfully ignore” traditional histories of German Indology. We know the Indologists’ writings and their histories better than they themselves. See *NS*, 4n13, and for other sources promulgating a special Indo-Germanic

academic discipline?⁵ It is the method, the authors say (p. 1 and *passim*); by describing the method, they claim to give us the essence of German Indology. This is all very convenient: we no longer have to bother reading thousands upon thousands of tiresome pages to grasp the history of German Indology (whatever that may be, see below), the method will disclose its dark secrets to us.⁶ However, there is a tiny problem here: Indology—German Indology included—does not have a method, or rather, it does not have a single method, as inexplicably assumed by the authors.⁷

“connection” *NS*, 2n3 and 313n632, with discussion at pages 312–13.

⁵ *The Nay Science* did not claim to be a history of the entire academic discipline but merely to highlight its key features, namely, its use of the rhetoric of science and scientificity (*Wissenschaft* and *Wissenschaftlichkeit*), its dependence on the critical or historical-critical method, its attempt to profile itself vis-à-vis British and Continental scholarship, its attempt to claim descent from and to model itself on classical philology, and its insistence on possessing a superior critical consciousness vis-à-vis “traditional,” “uncritical” Indian scholars. We clarified this in the definitional qualification at *NS*, 19 (“Although this book is intended as a history of German Indology, it naturally cannot claim to be exhaustive. German Indology is a huge and diverse field, extending from scholarship on the Vedic hymns, Upaniṣads, Dharmasāstras, Purāṇas, and so on, to treatises on systematic philosophy (*śaḍdarśana*), Indian drama, poetry, literature, and grammatical and scientific texts. It encompasses a number of technical aids such as dictionaries, grammar books, and catalogues of manuscripts”) and again at *NS*, 24 (“Since it is this combination of religious, evangelical concerns with (pseudo)critical methodology that became definitive for the discipline known as German Indology, this book focuses mainly on what might be termed a Tübingen-Bonn axis”). For a clarification of the term “pseudocritical,” see note 48 below.

⁶ *The Nay Science* is an exhaustive reference work. It includes more detailed discussions of primary sources than any competing book available. It is the only book that offers a historical *and* a philological evaluation of the Indologists’ claims. *The Nay Science* also discusses lesser known sources. For instance, the standard German reference on the Bhagavadgītā (Malinar 1996), does not list Richard Garbe’s article in James T. Hasting’s *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. For Rudolf Otto, it lists three books on the Bhagavadgītā (*Die Urgestalt der Bhagavadgītā*, *Lehrtraktate der Bhagavadgītā*, and *Der Sang des Hebr-Erhabenen*) and one article (“The God of the Gītā”; the title is incomplete: it should be “The God of the Gītā, Vasudeva-Vishnu-Narayana and His Origin”) but not his articles “Krishna’s Lied” (Kṛṣṇa’s Song) and “Worte der Gita” (Thoughts of the Gītā) (in *Zeitschrift für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft* and *Die christliche Welt* respectively).

German Indologists frequently elide sources that contravene their narrative of a secular, objective discipline. The Indologists’ bibliographies and their hagiographic claims should hence be treated with caution. (See Bagchee and Adluri 2013, 215–29.)

As for the method disclosing “its dark secrets to us” how else could we glean the root biases so well concealed in the method if not by studying thousands of pages of literature? By our estimate, we now possess the world’s largest private collection of writings by German Indologists.

⁷ German Indology and Method

Contrary to Franco’s claim, we did not “inexplicably assume” that German Indology has a single method. *The Nay Science* explicitly clarified:

“1. This epithet [German Indology] refers strictly and exclusively to an Indology based on the historical-critical

To understand the absurdity of their claim, imagine that a selective review of scholarly studies of Hamlet in Germany was presented as a history of the studies in that country of English language, literature, history and culture as a whole, including English grammar, lexicography and dialects, manuscripts, inscriptions and paleography, epic and court poetry, novels and theatre, philosophy, religion and ritual, history, numismatics, architecture, art history, and so forth.⁸ It is hard to imagine that such a bizarre assertion would pass muster with even the most indulgent of referees, let alone be published by a reputable publisher like Oxford University Press, but nowadays anything seems possible in South Asian Studies.⁹ It is

method and following certain agendas that can best be understood out of German Protestantism.

2. This study takes a text-based approach, and its claims refer to a highly circumscribed group of texts and/or authors. Whether and in what way these claims can be extended to the work of other Indologists working in other fields (e.g., Vedas, Purāṇas) remains a subject for a separate study.

3. As German Indology is a broad term unifying various theoretical currents and approaches (e.g., *Indische Literatur, Indische Philologie, Indische Altertumskunde, Orientalische Philologie, Vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft, Sanskrit Philologie, Indogermanische Studien*), the analysis here refers more narrowly to that part of Indology identified with a certain tradition of Indian historiography that followed specific ideological and fundamentalist agendas in its historiography of India” (NS, 22).

That said, there are good reasons for thinking that German Indology’s distinguishing feature—and the feature it itself emphasized—was its reliance on the historical-critical method (or, as it was sometimes also simply called, the critical method). The German Indologists’ reconstructions do not accord with the canons of textual criticism: their approach was primarily to separate the text into earlier and later “layers” based on an *a priori* narrative of history. On Indologists’ confusion of historical-criticism with textual criticism see Adluri and Bagchee (2018).

⁸ There is nothing specifically “German” about these techniques or approaches. Insofar as German scholars used them, they would merely be studying the text like any other group. In contrast, German Indology, since its inception, valorized the notion of a unique German access to ancient India as the volumes by Wilfried Nölle, Ludwig Alsdorf, Helmuth von Glasenapp, and others attest. Practically, this access was identified with the application of the historical-critical method to Indian texts to recover the earliest stages of these texts and thus *mutatis mutandis* of Indian culture—precisely those “origins” in which “it [Indian culture] was considered to be akin to our own,” as Heinrich von Stietencron puts it (von Stietencron 1981, 21).

On the political significance of relating the earliest strata to the colonizing culture, see Guha (1998, 423–41).

The comparison with *Hamlet* therefore does not hold: a more accurate example would be if scholars in Germany claimed a special affinity to *Hamlet* (but only in its earliest and most genuine stages), argued that they possessed a unique method for identifying these stages, and established a discipline on the basis of this method. In that case, a review of scholarly studies of *Hamlet* in Germany, while not “a history of the studies in that country of English language, literature, history and culture as a whole” (which was never our claim), *would* reveal something about the discipline’s origins, institution, and diremption. Franco’s claim is a straw man argument. The real question is: does a review of German Mahābhārata and Bhagavadgītā studies reveal something about the way German Indologists viewed themselves? We contend that it does.

⁹ German Indology as an Institutional Hegemony

It is standard Indological practice to label inconvenient scholarship unworthy of publication. Walter Slaje

*surprising that a respected scholar like Alf Hiltebeitel, who evidently has very little firsthand knowledge of German Indology, endorses and praises this book on its back cover (and perhaps, significantly, no one else).*¹⁰ Incidentally, the authors of the book, Vishwa Adluri and Joydeep Bagchee,

writes of Jakob Stuchlik's book on the Nazi Indologist Erich Frauwallner, "The author would have done better to find a home for his book in a non-scientific publisher's or an ideological organ's catalog. It [his book] has nothing to do with science—in spite of the contrary suggestion [enabled] by the reputed name of the press that inexplicably permitted this treatise to appear" (Slaje 2010, 463). Angelika Malinar, Hans Harder, and Thomas Oberlies likewise ask (of articles published in the *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* and the *International Journal of Hindu Studies*), "how could essays of this calibre ever be published in the above journals? And how is it that they elicited from the editors of these journals not a word of rebuttal? Or do the editors think that silence is the right way to encounter such distorting polemics?" (Angelika Malinar, Hans Harder, and Thomas Oberlies 2011).

What is the basis for Franco's similar assessment? He has not read *The Nay Science*. Other than invoke traditional hagiographic claims of an unproblematic "philological" science, he has not proposed a better history. He raises straw man objections to "German Indology," arguing that "German" cannot refer to either nationality or language, when in fact the definition referred to ideological and institutional principles. The suggestion that "a reputable publisher like Oxford University Press" should not have published *The Nay Science* is an *ad baculum*, a threat of force, against the press. It recalls the recent right-wing intimidation of Penguin, which ultimately bowed to the critics' pressure and withdrew Wendy Doniger's book *The Hindus: An Alternative History*. At the time, Indologists criticized the decision as a "dark-ages ruling" (Dominik Wujastyk 2014a). Is there a difference? Perhaps Franco shares Wujastyk's view that, while "an ignorant person (or persons) who does not have sufficient specialist education to understand a particular book" should not be permitted to ban books, it is acceptable for academics to advocate censorship. Wujastyk adds, "Imagine an uneducated farmer taking exception to the work of a nuclear physicist. Would a court say that the physicist should not do his research or publish his findings?" (Wujastyk, 2014b).

We might similarly ask, "Imagine an Indologist taking exception to the work of a historian of Indology. Would a court say that the historian should not do his research or publish his findings?" As Franco's errors demonstrate, he is not an expert on the history of German Indology. Merely being a practitioner is not the same as a critical historian of the discipline. Franco's argument that only histories written by insiders and practitioners like Windisch are acceptable recalls Dinanath Batra's claim that only practicing Hindus may define Hinduism. Indologists cannot credibly claim to be concerned with academic freedom when they so eagerly avail themselves of similar means. Not one Indologist pointed out the inconsistency between defending Doniger's right to publish unpalatable views of Hinduism and arguing that *The Nay Science* should not have been published.

All debates about method aside, Franco proves *The Nay Science's* case: Indology is an *institutional* hegemony founded on a tendentious and ultimately unsustainable distinction between the expert and the layperson (see *NS* 8, 291–93, 313, 344–46, 381, 434, and 445). *The Nay Science* also demonstrated that the idea of an Indological science (*Wissenschaft*) is a myth. Wujastyk's comparison of the Indologist with a nuclear physicist further bears out our claim that Indologists always aspired to the legitimacy of the natural sciences.

¹⁰ The publisher selected a single blurb for reasons of space. More recommendations are listed at the publisher's [page](https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-nay-science-9780199931361?cc=de&clang=en&#) (https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-nay-science-9780199931361?cc=de&clang=en&#). A sample is provided here: "*The Nay Science* is more than a history of

recently edited two volumes of his papers.¹¹

German Indology. Besides offering a highly nuanced critique of scientific positivism and historicism, it makes important interventions in broader debates on the development of the social and human sciences in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany, and has much to say regarding the role of race and religion in the formation of German national identity. [...] *The Nay Science* contributes greatly to our understanding of the origins, nature, and consequences of German orientalism. [...] daunting in its depth, breadth, and complexity, the authors have produced a remarkable work of scholarship” (Kurlander 2015, 432); “If ever there is a fine specimen of how to do the in-depth history of ideas as it pertains to an academic discipline, this study by Vishwa Adluri and Joydeep Bagchee ranks very, very highly” (Trompf 2016, 374). Finally, challenging Franco’s assertion that no such entity as German Indology exists, Nicholas A. Germana notes: “the authors do successfully make the argument that there was such a thing as ‘German’ Indology (at least within the textual tradition they study), a scholarly project that was shaped by certain political, religious, and ideological commitments” (Germana 2015, 1133). Reviews by Brian Collins (2015, 53–54) and John Bussanich (2015, 813) round out the list.

Incidentally, it is false that Hildebeitel “has very little firsthand knowledge of German Indology.” He was the first to call attention to a distinctively German tradition of Mahābhārata scholarship (see Hildebeitel 1979, 65–107). Hildebeitel is a recognized authority not only on the Mahābhārata but also German scholarship on it. As such, his blurb was the most valuable.

¹¹ The insinuation that two Indians could not have received a recommendation on their merit reveals Franco’s prejudice if not racism. It is an insult to Alf Hildebeitel. The insinuation of a quid pro quo is especially dastardly given that several of Franco’s books have appeared in his mentors’ and/or partner’s series: *Perception, Knowledge and Disbelief* (Franco 1987) in *Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien* at the Seminar für Kultur und Geschichte Indiens an der Universität Hamburg (under Albrecht Wezler’s editorship); *Dharmakīrti on Compassion and Rebirth* (Franco 1997) in *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde* (under Ernst Steinkellner’s editorship); *Historiography and Periodization of Indian Philosophy* (Franco, ed. 2013) in the De Nobili Research Library series at the Institut für Südasiens-, Tibet-, und Buddhismuskunde at the University of Vienna (Franco’s wife, Karin Preisendanz, is a professor at the institute and one of the series’s three editors).

Franco accuses us of self-publishing when his own work has not been subject to rigorous, independent peer-review. Nonetheless, his comment presents an opportunity to consider how German Indologists produced the publications through which they gained institutional respectability.

A Guide to Indological Publications

Indological publications fall into five categories:

1. The monograph series, typically funded by a department and under its chair’s control, through which professors publish the work of their students. Franco himself notes of the series *Indica et Tibetica* that it is “published privately by Michael HAHN; it contains much of his own work and that of his students” (Franco 1999, 407). Likewise, Johannes Bronkhorst has published three books in the series *Handbook of Oriental Studies* (2007, 2011, and 2016), all under his own editorship. *Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien*, *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde*, *Publications of the De Nobili Research Library*, *Purāṇa Research Publications*, Tübingen, *Leipziger Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte Süd- und Zentralasiens*, *Indologica*

Marpurgensia, and the recently launched Pune Indological Series fall into this category. German professors' authority rests significantly on this ability to publish their students' work.

2. The mid-career journal, through which Indologists publish each others' (and sometimes their own) work. Examples are *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, *Indologica Taurinensia*, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Südasien*, *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* (since 2008 under the title: *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Südasienstudien*), *International Journal of Jaina Studies* (launched 2005 with a single previously published article by Peter Flügel), and the *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies* (launched 1995 to disseminate Michael Witzel's views).

The significance of controlling a mid-career journal should not be underestimated. Johannes Bronkhorst, praised for his "numerous research publications" (Houben 2012, 1) has published thirty-five articles in the journal *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatique* in the period 1991–2012. Twenty-four of these were between 1993–2006 and two in 2010, a period when according to the masthead he was the journal's editor. Due to limitations in ETH's digitization we are unable to check the years 2007–2009 and 2011–12. From 2013 onward, he is listed as a member of the editorial board and his publications cease. The mid-career journal also provides a bully pulpit for disciplining non-conformist scholars, as Andreas Bigger does when he writes that Hiltebeitel "eschews [the need for] scientific demonstration" (Bigger 2008, 496). We direct the reader's attention to our critique of Bigger's theory that the Mahābhārata Critical Edition represents merely the "normative redaction" of the epic (in Adluri and Bagchee 2018).

3. The mature or collected work (including the retrospective *Festschrift*) published by German organizations like the Stiftung Ernst Waldschmidt and the Helmuth von Glasenapp-Stiftung, or their European counterparts like the Schweizerische Asien-Gesellschaft (Welten Süd- und Zentralasiens) and the Finnish Oriental Society (*Studia Orientalia*). Typically prefaced by a hagiographic account of the scholar, these are often hastily compiled. The *Kleine Schriften* are typescripts of published articles, featuring original pagination and formatting, while the *Festschriften* are rarely better edited. Mislav Ježić (2011, 87–110) offers a salient example: it has several logical errors, the numbering format of Mahābhārata verses is unchanged from the electronic version (that is to say, it has been copied and pasted from John D. Smith's text), and the central thesis that it is possible to separate the Bhagavadgītā into layers is flawed (see Adluri and Bagchee 2016a and 2016c). These works occasionally contain a selective bibliography of the scholar's publications, the most egregious example being Hacker's *Kleine Schriften*, which elides his evangelical and apologetic pieces.

4. The various *Nekrologies* (obituaries) published in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* and other Indological organs. Laudatory in tone, they aim to cement a scholar's academic reputation, though they sometimes serve the subsidiary function of highlighting a specific chair. They contain some historical information, but should not be relied on without verification from independent sources. Lambert Schmithausen's *Nachruf* of Paul Hacker (Schmithausen 1981), for instance, suppresses Hacker's Nazi record (membership number 4612687; he attained the rank of storm trooper in the SA [the *Sturmabteilung*]). Schmithausen also does not mention Hacker's evangelism. Klaus Rüping (1981) mentions Hacker's "Kriegsgefangenschaft," but again elides the Nazi party membership.

Nekrologies are typically published soon after the scholar's death, though they may also follow years after. Parpola (2003, 189–219) and Karttunen (2007, 109–19) are two relevant examples. Parpola combines the *Festschrift* with the *Nekrologie* (while also underscoring the relationship between chairing a department,

controlling a series, and getting published). Karttunen attests to the continuing glorification of German Indology's founders—he argues that “it is rather unnecessary to criticize Lassen for sharing some of the views of his time” (Ibid., 112), probably a reference to Lassen's rabid anti-Semitism—while also illustrating the Austrian Academy's role in disseminating and institutionally securing the Indologists' problematic “science.” The authorized histories of Indology by Windisch and Benfey belong to this class. Also worthy of mention is Stache-Rosen (1981 [1990]), which conspicuously elides the Indologists' Nazi histories.

5. The various short-lived journals established to assure Indologists of publishing venues like *Indische Bibliothek* (1820–30), *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (1837–50), *Indische Studien* (1850–98; including a thirteen-year hiatus from 1885 to 1898), *Orient und Occident* (1862–65), *Beiträge zur Kunde der indogermanischen Sprachen* (1877–1906), *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik* (1922–1936), *Indo-iranische Quellen und Forschungen* (1924–27), *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens und Archiv für indische Philosophie* (1957–69; from 1969–99: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens und Archiv für indische Philosophie*), *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* (1975–2007), *Berliner Indologische Studien* (1985–2003; sporadic thereafter), and *Münchener Indologische Zeitschrift* (2008–2009 and 2010–13).

Many of these journals began as publishing venues for their respective founders. The first volume of Schlegel's *Indische Bibliothek* featured eleven articles—all by Schlegel himself. The second volume contained eleven articles: nine by Schlegel, while the remaining two were extracts of letters to Schlegel (with his wordy responses). Only in the third and final volume did he gain his first contributor, his student Christian Lassen. Gabrielle Zeller notes of Weber's *Indische Studien*: it “was [...] an important organ for him to publish his own essays. Thus in the first volume alone 10 of the 18 contributions are by him” (Zeller 2012, 100). Something similar holds of Hertel's *Indo-iranische Quellen und Forschungen* (all seven volumes by him) and Witzel's *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies* (volume 1, issues 1, 2, 4 entirely by him).

Finally, there are publications of the mixed type like Parpola's article mentioned earlier. Other examples include: Voegeli, et al. (2012), a *Festschrift*, that is, type 3, but Bronkhorst is also an editor of the series *Welten Süd- und Zentralasiens* in which it was published (type 1); and Hanneder (2010b), a *Nekrologie* of the Marburg chair (type 3). Hanneder is also the editor of the series *Indologica Marburgensia* in which it was published (type 1). In contrast, Hanneder's other publications in the series (2012a, 2013, and 2015) belong to type 1. A further stage of analysis would require examining the editorial boards of these journals and/or series, through which German Indologists provided each other positions and mutually constituted their authority, and the means (DFG grants, etc.), through which they funded these reciprocal arrangements.

When was a German Indologist last successfully published in a mainstream academic journal? How many Indologists, Franco included, who claim to be philosophers, have been published in a philosophy journal? Isn't it the case rather that their careers depend on access to publishing venues created and paid for by their departments? A 100–200-page dissertation provides the disciplinary entrée, a single-manuscript edition such as Franco's edition of the *Tattvoplavasiṃha* (Franco 1987) or Michael Witzel's edition of the *Kaṭha Āraṇyaka* (Witzel 1974 and 2004) constitutes the “philological” qualification, the *Doktorvater's* series creates the springboard, and the newly minted Indologist is qualified not only to speak for the entirety of the tradition but also to exercise oversight over the natives. Borrowing Witzel's term, we might speak of “a cottage industry” (Witzel 2014b, 15) for generating Indological knowledge and authority.

Due to the more open and competitive nature of its market, the situation differs somewhat in the United

States. There is greater separation between chairs/departments and publishing organs, and publishers are answerable to the reading public's interests, in contrast with Germany, where the state is both the financial backer of and buyer of last resort for Indological publications. But German publications *are* translatable into institutional status and, ultimately, a foreign publishing contract. Many German Indologists' CVs reveal how they progressively built up a dossier of home-grown publications, before securing international positions.

Michael Witzel's CV is perhaps the best example. For the first part of his career, his publications were restricted mainly to German venues interspersed with minor Indian and Nepali and German journals. The dissertation (Witzel 1974) was self-published. The journals included the *Journal of the Ganganath Jha Research Institute*, *Vishveshvaranand Indological Journal*, *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik*, and the *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* (the latter, again, controlled and paid for by Germans). The latter offers another example of how German Indologists were reliant on starting their own, mostly short-lived publishing venues: eight volumes appeared intermittently from 1977 to 1988, four volumes between 1993 and 2001, and the journal was then dormant for eight years, until briefly revived—for a single issue—in 2009. Chapters were published in various *Festschriften* (for Wolfgang Voigt, Paul Thieme, Karl Hoffmann, B. R. Sharma, Wilhelm Rau, J. C. Heesterman) and some Japanese proceedings. The first major publication was Willem Caland's *Kleine Schriften* (Witzel 1990), but it was paid for by the Glasenapp Stiftung (type 3 in our typology above). The *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies* finally started in 1995, thus assuring Witzel of a publishing venue. The term "journal" may be an exaggeration, since "issues" consist of unformatted, unedited mostly one-article pdf files uploaded to the internet. Many articles were published more than once. "How to Enter the Vedic Mind? Strategies in Translating a Brāhmaṇa Text" (Witzel 1996a), first published in *Translating, Translations, Translators from India to the West* (in the Harvard Oriental Series, whose editorship Witzel assumed in 1990), reappeared as Witzel 2013. "Early Sanskritization" (Witzel 1994), first published in the *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies*, reappeared in the *Journal of the Indological Society of Southern Africa* (Witzel 1996b) and in *Recht, Staat und Verwaltung im klassischen Indien* (Witzel 1997). The latter was not coincidentally edited by Witzel's "old friend" Bernhard Kölver (Witzel 2014a, 16n44). Two edited volumes (Witzel, ed. 1997, and Osada and Witzel, eds. 2011) followed. Both were published in the Harvard Oriental Series by the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies and its successor since 2011, the Department of South Asian Studies. Witzel functioned as series editor, illustrating how firmly entrenched the German model of the department as a vehicle for a mandarin professoriate's career interests has become. Witzel's edition of the *Kaṭha Āraṇyaka*, self-published from "Erlangen-Kathmandu" in 1974, reappeared in Witzel's Harvard Oriental Series in 2004. Once again, it was published by Witzel's chair, the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University.

Witzel's first independent publication with a major foreign publisher—*The Origins of the World's Mythologies* (Witzel 2012)—appeared in 2012. It was immediately called "racist": "This is an astonishing book, but not for the reasons the author intended. *The Origin of the World's Mythology* utilizes completely out of date and highly questionable scholarship to claim a grand scientific discovery which relies on the author's 'theory' of ultimate mythological reconstruction, dating back all the way to reconstructed stories (i.e., made up by the author) told some 100,000 years ago. The 'theory' (I would say hypothesis) is implausible (in terms of data, scholarship, logic, internal plausibility, etc.), even more so than quasi-academic concepts, like Nostratic, which it relies on as proven fact. The book's main claim is explicitly racist. I define 'racist' here simply as any argument that seeks to categorize large groups of people utilizing a bio-cultural argument ('race'), and that further describes one such

group as essentially better, more developed, less 'deficient,' than the other(s). The book claims that there are two races in the world, revealed by both myth and biology: the dark-skinned 'Gondwana' are characterized by 'lacks' and 'deficiencies' (e.g., xi, 5, 15, 20, 88, 100, 105, 131, 279, 280, 289, 290, 313, 321, 315, 410, 430, 455) and are labeled 'primitive' (28) at a 'lower stage of development' (28, 29, 410), while the noble 'Laurasian' myths are 'our first novel,' the only 'true' creation stories, and the first 'complex story' (e.g., 6, 54, 80, 105, 321, 372, 418, 421, 430), which the Gondwana never achieved. Such a grand evolutionary pronouncement, published by Oxford University Press and penned by a Harvard Professor (of Sanskrit), demands attention and careful investigation of its claims. If the author is correct, then indeed the field of mythology, and folklore, will be entirely rewritten. Not only this, but the ideas of a separate, deficient 'dark-skinned race' will be, for the first time, scientifically validated. The theoretical justification of this work is derived from a sort of straw man contest between ethnologist Leo Frobenius (1873–1938), representing monogenesis and diffusion, and Freud's errant disciple Carl Jung (1875–1961), with his universal archetypes of the collective unconscious. This straw man argument is not an appropriate one: Jung's theories have long been derided in scholarship on mythology, and the data have been shown not to support his claims of universals (Dundes, 2005). Indeed, the resounding refutation of universals not only invalidates Jung's theories, but also stands in direct contradiction to many of the claims of this book. His [Witzel's] sole factual claim to his grand separation of the races seems to be his assertion that only the light-skinned Laurasians developed a 'complete' myth. He makes several claims about what this myth 'is,' but these are contradictory, vague, and with many exceptions or permutations (variously: 53, 64, 76, 120, 183, 323). At some points he claims that the only actual differences between the two is that the Laurasian has the world end, and the Gondwana do not (e.g., 283). At other times, however, he claims that the Gondwana actually have no cosmogonic myths whatsoever" (Thompson 2013).

Bruce Lincoln likewise notes: "Worse still, when treating the myths of non-literate societies, Witzel consistently ignores the more recent, more reliable, and less prejudicial work of British, American, and French anthropologists, in favor of dated German literature steeped in the *Kulturkreis* paradigm, which used a mix of racial, cultural, and geographic factors to categorize the world's peoples in ways that naturalized, legitimated, and reinforced the privilege of Europe's colonial powers" (Lincoln 2015, 444). "Scholars who worked within this paradigm identified with many disciplines (*Ethnologie, Anthropologie, Volkskunde, Völkerkunde, Rassenkunde*, and *Rassenwissenschaft* [Lincoln could have added: *Indologie*]), but shared a large number of assumptions no longer intellectually or morally tenable. More important than differences in disciplinary orientation distinction between Germans and Austrians, the latter of whom tended to be missionaries and whose racism could be softer (condescension, rather than contempt). Equally important is the difference between works written prior to 1920, whose subtexts justify colonial expansion and domination, and those written after 1930, which were strongly inflected by Nazi ideology. Works of the 1920s either continued the former trend or anticipated the later, and sometimes both. Witzel relies on a great many works written by scholars this sort, not just for data, but for many important lines of interpretation. Those he cites directly include Adolf Bastian, Hermann Baumann, Fritz Bornemann, Erich Brauer, Ernst Dammann, Otto Dempwolf, Hans Findeisen, Leo Frobenius, Martin Gusinde, Beatrix Heintze, Hermann Hochegger, Adolf Jensen, Karl Jettmar, Walter Lehmann, R. Lehmann-Nitsche, Johannes Maringer, Hans Nevermann, Alois Pache, Heinz Reschke, Hans Schärer, Paul Schebesta, Wilhelm Schmidt, August Schmitz, Carl Leonhard Schultze-Jena, Wilhelm Staudacher, Paul Wirz, and Josef Dominik Wölfel. There is now a large critical literature on scholarship of this sort, including Gothsch (1983); Marx (1988); Fischer (1990); Linimayr (1994); Jacobeit et al. (1994);

Hauschild ed. (1995); Streck ed. (2000); and Evans (2010)” (Ibid., 447n4). “Rather incredibly, Witzel cites one testimony of this sort as a confirmatory antecedent of his own position. [...] The passage cited is taken from Baumann (1936, 1), a work written by a learned scholar and committed Nazi, whose research in Africa was meant to justify German colonization of inferior peoples. He is, moreover, one of the authors on whom Witzel relied most heavily, with more than a hundred citations; on his life and work, see Braun (1995)” (Ibid., 448n7).

Thus, through the German government’s efforts, which unthinkingly poured money into Indology, his colleagues’ collusion, who initiated him into their publishing networks, and the system’s institutional inertia, which places academic credentials above valid argument, Witzel’s problematic views attained a wide circulation and were canonized as “scholarship.” As with Schlegel 1819 (the source of the terms *arisch* and *Arier* and the thesis that the Germans were originally known as Aryans when they lived in the Orient; see Wieshöfer 1990), Lassen 1830 (the source of the thesis of a special proximity between the Aryans and the “warlike Germans”), Schlegel 1834 (the source of the biracial theory of Indian origins), and Klapproth 1823 (the source of the term *indogermanisch*; see Shapiro 1981) toxic ideas that originally emerged in Germany to assure the Germans of their identity (as rational, heroic, and culturally and intellectually superior) entered into the world thanks to a publishing system designed to serve the professoriate. In vain does Witzel’s reviewer bemoan, “To conclude: this book will no doubt prove exciting for the gullible and the racist, yet it is useless—and frustrating—for any serious scholar. This is a work which should never have reached book publication stage: a whole series of scholarly checks and balances—ranging from Harvard’s venerable Folklore and Mythology Department, to the editors and reviewers at Oxford University Press—should have been in place to guide the scholarly inquiry, which would have prevented the socially irresponsible publication of such grandiose, brash, and explicitly racist claims based on ill-informed, highly problematic scholarship” (Thompson 2013). Beginning with the departmental series through the mid-career, the self-launched, and the cordially disposed journal to the Glasenapp-funded *Fest- and Kleine Schriften*, the German Indologists’ publishing network had accomplished its purpose.

Witzel’s case is not an anomaly. It is evidence of the system’s “normal” functioning. The Humboldtian research university developed primarily as a means for Germany to accelerate the production of new knowledge (including the new ideas of race, historicism, and nationhood) and to funnel them into the world in a bid for intellectual and cultural parity with the Western powers, England and France. Under this system’s auspices, the university professor, previously in the mold of the English gentleman-scholar, was tasked with developing the historical and anthropological research that would affirm German exceptionalism. Enhanced publishing opportunities, with the departmental journal and the dissertation series as their crux, were central to this initiative. Unsurprisingly, the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (the German Oriental Society) inducted Witzel into its ranks as an *Ehrenmitglied* (honorary member) in 2009 with the words: “a preeminent scientific personality, who through pathbreaking investigations could decisively advance the research into the Indian cultural sphere and bring central questions concerning the linguistic, textual, religious, and mental history to a solution. Michael Witzel has also influenced the discipline of Indology methodologically in a way that will shape future trends, as well as stimulated and enriched related disciplines oriented toward cultural history” (2009, 527). This is the very approach—the identification of a “mental history” of a people—that Thompson and Lincoln critique, yet in Germany it is equated with “pathbreaking research results.” The Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft wished Witzel “a continued uninterrupted capacity for work,

*Now, what is this 'method' practised by German Indologists? Before we answer this question, perhaps we should first ask who those German Indologists are, a question which the authors never bother to address.*¹² *In fact, German Indology is nothing more than a fuzzy construct (see*

endurance, and exemplary decisiveness there where the autonomy of science is endangered” (Ibid.)

When Witzel uses his department to publish his work, when Franco publishes with the *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde*, when Franco and Preisendanz (2010) reissue the Nazi Indologist Erich Frauwallner’s work, these are not anomalies, but evidence that the system is functioning as intended. German Indologists’ authority derives from this system of institutionalized favors. We can now also understand why scholars may be reluctant to criticize German Indology. To criticize Indology is to challenge a nexus of reciprocal funding arrangements, publishing contracts, venues, and instruments for establishing an academic reputation (invited lectures, public events, promotions, prizes, and so on). It means to risk the full cohort of institutional defenses—scholarly opprobrium, character assassination, tarring with toxic political associations, however unfounded, and being called unworthy of publication, as Franco has done with us. Hence our view that German Indology is primarily an institutional hegemony. It is a biased and inequitable system that will not condemn racists in its midst (indeed, offers *apologias* for them), yet attacks those who offer a potent, precise, and professional critique of its ideology and its arrangements. In other words, it is a feudal system, in which public scrutiny of its privileges—its system of tithes and taxations, its cozy arrangements between journal editors and their friends, between reviewers and reviewed, and between funding agencies, the experts requested for evaluations, and applicants—is unwelcome. This system can overlook anti-Semitism (Karttunen 2007), Protestant fundamentalism (Parpola 2003, Morgenroth 1975–76), and Nazism (Slaje 2010, Steinkellner 2009, and Hanneder 2012b). It can even reward racist scholarship (Schönig, Laut, Reiter, Tramontini, and Pohlus 2009). It will tolerate nepotism. The one thing it cannot permit is a critique of the system itself.

¹² **German Indology: Definition**

Contrary to Franco’s claim that we “never bother to address” the question of “who those German Indologists are,” we explicitly addressed this question in the Introduction and the concluding portions of the first, second, and third chapters. The fourth and fifth chapters added precision to the definition of German Indology from the perspective of its theology and its science. In fact, the entire book is dedicated to answering this question: not by setting up an *a priori* definition of German Indology, but by working through concrete examples of the Indologists’ “philology” to identify Indology’s distinguishing characteristics. See *NS*, 21 (“What, then, do we mean by German Indology? As we use the term in this study, we have in mind primarily a *mode* of doing scholarship. Even though this mode originated in Germany, its application was international. For example, French, English, Dutch, and American scholars quickly assimilated the text-historical method”), continued at *NS*, 30–31 (“Our main concern will be to trace the historical conditions that made it possible for the *Gītā*, following its disappearance in the wake of Hegel’s vociferous criticisms of Indian philosophy, to be reconstituted toward the end of the nineteenth century as an object of Indological research. This concern will simultaneously permit us to define what we mean by German Indology more narrowly as a step toward our evaluation of its claims to scientificity in chapters 4 and 5”) and picked up at *NS*, 156 (“However, besides simply tracing the continuing evolution of the German response to the *Gītā*, this chapter also serves broader philosophical perspectives. First, it allows us to define more precisely what we mean by German Indology. The last chapter was already a step in this direction, but in this chapter we show how the racial and historicist

Hanneder, 2011).¹³ *German Indologists cannot simply be defined as German nationals working in the field of Indology,*¹⁴ because Lassen, for

prejudices of an earlier generation of scholars were sanitized and institutionalized in the work of twentieth-century Indologists like Richard Garbe, Hermann Oldenberg, and Hermann Jacobi. Thereafter, in the form of a claim about the superior critical and methodological consciousness of German scholarship, these prejudices would become a mainstay of German Indology in the work of twenty-first-century Indologists like Heinrich von Stietencron, Angelika Malinar, and Jürgen Hanneder). Contrary to Franco's claim, we answered the question of who German Indologists are in detail—to the extent of specifying that “among ‘German’ Indologists, we also include a number of American scholars, including E. W. Hopkins and his latter-day incarnations James L. Fitzgerald and Kevin McGrath” (NS, 7n4).

¹³ The reference is to Hanneder (2011), specifically to pages 130–31, where Hanneder argues against a defining characteristic that identifies an Indologist as “German.” The example is unfortunate, for, on the Department of Indology and Tibetology's homepage (Department 2016) where Hanneder is a Professor of Indology, we read: “One of the core expertises of German Indology in general and of the Marburg Indological school in particular lies within the techniques used for editions of Sanskrit texts.” The expression “Deutsche Indologie” also occurs in Hanneder (2010c). It is used to highlight the German scholars' unique achievements (“German-speaking scientists in this field [Indology] need not struggle ‘to catch up with the world's best’” [Ibid., 82]) and their unique conditions (“In contrast to Italian and French Indology, Indologists in Germany frequently encounter rejection from publishers when shopping their book projects for a wider, non-scientific readership with the explanation of insufficient commercial potential” [Ibid., 84–85]).

Peter Gaeffke dedicates an entire article to the topic (Gaeffke 1994). His argument that “Central European Indology cannot be labeled Orientalism [. . .] in the sense of E. Said” (Ibid., 3) hinges on identifying distinct origins and motivating factors for German scholarship as compared with French or British. Gaeffke answers Franco's question of whether German Indology should be defined by race, nationality, geographic territory, or linguistic competence by opting for a mixture of all four:

“By the end of the 19th century a remarkable structure of Indic learning had been erected in Europe and was solidly founded on 17 university professorships in Germany, in Vienna, Prague, etc. [. . .] While the first German Indologists had gone to Paris or London to learn from French or English scholars and to make use of the new collections of Sanskrit manuscripts available only there in Europe at this time, already in 1829 a German Indologist was appointed to teach English students. This was Friedrich Rosen (1805–1835) who became professor at the University College at London. With him starts a long series of German Indologists at English institutions of higher learning. The next appointment was that of Max Muller [sic] (1823–1900) who in 1850 became professor of linguistics at Oxford. In the following year Theodore Goldstucker [sic] (1821–1872) started to teach at the University College at London. At about the same time Reinhold Rost (1822–1896) was appointed at the college or [sic] St. Augustine at Canterbury [sic]. From 1864 to 1869 he was secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society and later he became Librarian of the India Office. His successor in this office was Hans Haas (1835–1882), who formerly had served as a private tutor to Lord Minto's family. From 1872 onward, he taught at the University College at London. His predecessor in this position and successor of Goldstucker [sic] was Julius Egeling [sic] (1842–1918), also a secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society who from 1875 until 1914 taught at the University of Edinburgh. There he followed Theodore Aufrecht (1821–1907) who had occupied this position since 1861. This list could easily be extended by adding the names of German Indologists in the service of the East India Company and later of the British Government in India” (Ibid., 5).

instance, one of the main villains figuring in this book, was a Norwegian who established his academic career in Bonn, at a time when it was governed by Prussia (would that make him a Prussian Indologist?).¹⁵ Should we regard German nationals who spent most of their working lives in

Gaeffke's list would indeed run into the definitional conundrums Franco lists. Unlike Gaeffke, we preferred the more sophisticated solution of defining "German" in German Indology in terms of an allegiance to methodological and institutional principles, and, above all, *the sense of a unique tradition distinct from British and French scholarship as well as the Indian commentarial tradition.*

A search for "Deutsche Indologie" in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* returned twenty-five results. Franco himself uses the term "German Tibetologist" to describe Per K. Sørensen, by nationality a Dane (in Franco 1999, 437). In a footnote in the same article, he distinguishes "German Buddhist studies" from "Swedish [Buddhist] studies" (Ibid., 427n86), and excludes Claude Oetke from the former even though a German national. Franco thus answers his own question of whether German Indology should be defined by nationality, political borders, or employment at a German department. Additionally, he has used the expression "current 'German Indology' as a whole," though whether the quotation marks indicate terminological usage or skepticism is unclear (Franco 2012).

We may conclude that German Indology exists as a term: (1) when German Indologists wish to secure funding; (2) when they wish to valorize German Indology's greatness; (3) when they wish to distinguish themselves from the British and French; (4) when they wish to include someone; (5) when they wish to exclude someone; and (6) when they wish to propose a consensus view. It only does not exist if its use is critical. In other words, its use is self-serving and hagiographic, expressing membership in an elite club. Confirming the point, the Secretary of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft wrote that "the formulation of the bylaws does not intend mere nominal familiarity with the candidate [bloße namentliche Bekanntschaft des Kandidaten], but rather, 'recommendation', that is, express support of the application by two DMG members ['Empfehlung', also ausdrückliche Unterstützung des Antrags], whether they belong to the presidium or not" (Stein 2016).

¹⁴ The claim that "German Indologists cannot be defined as German nationals working in the field of Indology" is a straw man argument, since we did not define German Indology by nationality. See *NS*, 7: "When seeking to define what makes German Indology *German* Indology, we have to look at method rather than, say, race or national identity. Pollock has found that these issues did inform the praxis of German Indology, but the international acceptance of this mode of 'doing' Indology cannot be explained if one defines *German Indology* tautologically as 'Indology done by Germans.'" And see also *NS*, 20: "Although our analysis focuses on the vicissitudes of this discipline as it developed in Germany, it is important to specify that by German Indology we do not, obviously, mean all Germans. We do not define German Indology by national or racial identity, any more than we mean that all German Indologists are alike." We stated unequivocally that, rather than referring to "Germany" as a geopolitical entity, the epithet "German" referred "strictly and exclusively to an Indology based on the historical-critical method and following certain agendas that can best be understood out of German Protestantism" (*NS*, 22). Franco has not read *The Nay Science*.

¹⁵ Franco's observation about Christian Lassen's Norwegian origin is pointless, since, as noted earlier, national origin is irrelevant. We are aware that Lassen was originally Norwegian. We mentioned it twice: once at *NS*, 41 ("Christian Lassen was born in Bergen, Norway in 1800, but, after the death of his father in 1818, moved to Germany with his mother, where he was to remain for the rest of his life. After studying with A. W. Schlegel in Bonn (1821–24), he went to Paris and London for further studies, finally receiving his *venia legendi* from Bonn

Great Britain, as for instance Max Müller, as German Indologists? Or should one say rather that German Indologists are scholars of Indology employed at institutions located within the borders of the German state?¹⁶ But since there was no German state before national unification in 1871, to which political borders should we confine 'German Indology'?¹⁷ Do we also want to include scholars living in the Habsburg Empire? But that would include almost all of Eastern Europe! Or should we say that Indologists writing in the German language are German Indologists?¹⁸ However, this would include not only Swiss, (modern) Austrian and Czech scholars, but also Dutch and Scandinavian, and even some Hungarian, Russian, Lithuanian, Polish and Ukrainian scholars, depending on their time of life.¹⁹

in 1827”) and once at *NS*, 121 (“This distinction, first introduced in 1837 in the work of the Norwegian Christian Lassen, amounted to no less than a reading of Indian history in terms of race, specifically in terms of the superiority of the ‘white’ race”). Franco is insufficiently informed about his discipline’s history. As a matter of fact, Lassen never returned to Norway and is buried in the Alter Friedhof in Bonn.

¹⁶ What about other scholars? We consider scholars “employed at institutions located within the borders of the German state” to be German Indologists if and only to the extent that they adopt German prejudices and apply German methods to texts. While these prejudices and methods are *characteristically* German, they are not uniquely so. Hans Harder, Thomas Oberlies, and Angelika Malinar are therefore mistaken—or at least their objection is irrelevant—when they note that “the methodology” of “American and British Indologists” “is not different” (Malinar, Hans Harder, and Thomas Oberlies 2011). Above all scholars are German Indologists if they embody a certain attitude towards traditional scholarship, regarding themselves as both in competition with it and as its Oedipal successor. For an important analysis of modernity’s attitude towards the ancients and a critique of Enlightenment subjectivity, see Goux (1993).

¹⁷ The claim that German Indology cannot be restricted to a political border since a unified German nation did not exist before 1871 is another straw man argument. We clearly stated that, for definitional and investigative purposes, German Indology bespeaks a certain approach to texts and an ideology. There are obviously institutional aspects that grew around these, but they remain secondary for us. See, for example, *NS*, 28, where we outlined the defining features of German scholarship: “The German *Gītā* is constituted less by its content (which can vary enormously) than by certain presuppositions regarding the nature and function of scholarship. These may be summarized as:

1. A rejection of theology and philosophy.
2. Unbounded confidence in the historian’s ability to recover an ‘original.’
3. A rejection of Indian hermeneutics as ‘uncritical.’
4. A claim to sovereignty over both text and tradition.

This fourfold characterization justifies us in our claim that German Indology constitutes less a national tradition than a certain *mode* of doing scholarship.”

¹⁸ This cannot be the definition for the simple reason that few German Indologists mastered the language. For truly atrocious examples see Oldenberg (1906a) and Slaje (2003).

¹⁹ German scholars have so often raised objections based on Indologists’ national origins that the attempt has acquired a faintly desperate air. Michael Witzel blames Nazism on “L. Schroeder, the Vienna professor of Indology originally from Latvia” (2014b). The attempt to include other European nationalities within German Indology is irrelevant, since we did not define German Indology in national terms. It is akin to proving that non-Germans also collaborated with Nazism: though true, it does not change the fact that when

*So much for 'German'; what about 'Indology'? It is obvious that the authors' use of the term is a bit anachronistic and even more erroneous. The term 'Indologie', and its English counterpart 'Indology', seems to have been coined in the last quarter of the nineteenth century; the word does not appear in the T volume of the Grimm dictionary of 1876, and its earliest source in the OED dates from 1882. The term only came into wider use in Germany after World War II.²⁰ Prior to that, during the period treated in this book, the terms 'Sanskrit-Philologie' and 'Indische Philologie' were far more common.²¹ It is not by accident that the best and most renowned history of the discipline, by Ernst Windisch, which the authors blissfully ignore, is titled *Geschichte der Sanskrit-Philologie und Indischen Altertumskunde* (1917).²² As far as I can see, none of the scholars*

seeking to understand Nazism we must begin with conditions in Germany. Whether and to what extent and why others collaborated is a secondary issue (as a matter of fact we do acknowledge the contribution of other nations; see *NS*, 7n26; 21; 22; 53, with nn108 and 109; and 153, especially n253).

²⁰ The claim that *Indologie* “only came into wider use in Germany after World War II” is historically inaccurate: Hermann Oldenberg, Ernst Zupitza, and Richard Schmidt all held chairs for “Indologie” (Göttingen, 1908–1922; Greifswald, 1900–1917; and Münster, 1913–1935). Richard Garbe held a chair for “Indologie und allgemeine Religionsgeschichte” at Tübingen from 1895–1926 (Rabault-F Feuerhahn 2013, 310–22). Franco is correct to assert that Windisch prefers “Sanskrit Philologie” but the term “Indologie” is not unknown in his two-volume *Geschichte der Sanskrit-Philologie und Indischen Altertumskunde*: it occurs twice in the first volume (Windisch 1917, 143 and 151) and there is a reference to “indologische Studien” in the second volume (Windisch 1920, 216). Franco also does not address the issue of substantial continuity between “Sanskrit Philologie” and “Indische Philologie” and “Indologie,” which makes his contention that “The term [Indologie] only came into wider use in Germany after World War II” moot. Peter Gaeffke, for instance, writes, “It was much safer to fall back on contacts made already before the war. This applies to the more senior Indologists who had experienced longer stays in India before the war, e.g., Paul Thieme (1905–), Ludwig [sic] Alsdorf and Helmut von Glasenapp. [...] So there was no doubt that after the war academic Indology should continue as before” (Gaeffke 1994, 10).

²¹ See *NS*, 5n17: “The expression ‘Indology’ translates the German *Indologie* and is used here as a broad term for a number of disciplines concerned with the study of the literary cultures of ancient India. It has been chosen because it is ultimately the term that established itself in German over against other possible terms, such as *Indische Literatur*, *Indische Philologie*, *Indische Altertumskunde*, *Orientalische Philologie*, *Vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft*, *Sanskrit Philologie*, and *Indogermanische Studien*. All these terms refer, with slight differences in accent, to the study of Indian texts on the basis of a method known as the “historical-critical method.” And see also *NS*, 361: “With this and other publications on Indologie or, as he preferred to call it in explicit contrast to classical philology, on *indische Philologie* (Indian philology), Oldenberg rapidly became the foremost spokesperson for the new science.”

²² **Critical History versus Hagiography**

We do not “blissfully ignore” Windisch’s book: it is mentioned at *NS*, 4 among the “official histories” of the discipline. We drew extensively on it for orientation. However, we did not follow its account as it is an insider’s account of the discipline: rich in material, it completely eschews a critical perspective. In Albrecht Wezler’s opinion, “Those [...] who look for a penetrating analysis of Indology in terms of the history of ideas, who are eager to know the reasons which led to the coming up and rapid growth of this discipline in the 18th and 19th century, who wish to know its place within the ‘Geisteswissenschaften’ and the intellectual life of contemporary Europe and the more or less hidden driving forces behind them, not to speak of the self-

*discussed in the book actually held a chair of 'Indologie' or was employed at a department or institute of 'Indologie.'*²³ *The term became more prevalent after the war precisely in order to emphasise that the study of (mainly pre-modern) South Asia was (and had been) broader in scope than 'mere' Sanskrit philology.*²⁴ *But no matter whether one uses 'Sanskrit-Philology' or 'Indology' or 'Study of Indian Antiquity', the discipline under*

perception of Hinduism seen as part of the encounter between India and the West—to these people Windisch's book cannot but be a disappointment; for in these regards it can hardly be said to even scratch the surface, not to speak of addressing and solving the many problems involved" (Wezler 1993, 18). Jürgen Lütt notes, "A critical history of Indology has still to be written" and adds, implying that Windisch is *not* this critical history: "Plenty of material can be found in Ernst Windisch, *Geschichte der Sanskrit-Philologie und Indischen Altertumskunde*" (Lütt 1981, 115n1). The insistence that scholars should adhere to Windisch is tantamount to the assertion that we continue to view the nineteenth century in the terms in which it saw itself. This is not only uncritical; it also betrays our commitment as scholars to continuously reexamine our past.

²³ As mentioned earlier, Hermann Oldenberg and Richard Garbe held chairs of "Indologie" (at Göttingen and Tübingen respectively), so the objection is false. It also misses the point: the question is not whether German Indologists called themselves one thing before the war and another afterwards, but rather, whether they rethought their discipline after the war. But here we have the Indologists' own testimony: "After the disturbing experiences of Nazism and the second World War, German Indology emerged in much the same form as it had been in the beginning of the twentieth century, when it celebrated the victory of textual scholarship and boasted of a nearly endless series of masterly publications. In 1946, the philological text-critical method was not impaired by the political situation, although some Indologists had undergone various forms of deprivation, persecution, moral debasement, etc. But when the German universities opened their doors again, Indologists continued the textual studies of earlier times" (Gaeffke 1997, 398). The change in nomenclature is no more significant than the experience Heinrich Böll describes: "man ließ sich ein bisschen entnazisieren—so wie man zum Friseur geht, um den lästigen Bart abnehmen zu lassen" ("one let oneself be a bit de-Nazified—the way one goes to the barber to have an irritating beard removed").

²⁴ Contrary to Franco's assertion, German Indologists always regarded textual scholarship as their *métier*. Walter Slaje writes, "But where, in fundamental terms, might the deficiency lie in such powerful, indispensable methods like those of textual criticism and philology?" (Slaje 2003, 313, underscored in nn2 and 3 on the same page). At 328n21 Slaje critiques Rahul Peter Das for arguing for interpreting Indology more widely ("Against the background of this pre-understanding of the discipline it is then only consequential to find that the same author [that is, R. P. Das] elsewhere deprecates the opinion that 'the term [Indology]' 'outside of German-speaking areas' has 'a much narrower meaning, namely the philology of ancient and medieval Indian languages' and 'we must hold on firm' to the fact 'that "Indology" is by no means identical' with 'South Asian studies' or 'the cultural science(s) of South Asia.' [...]") and "opposes" to it "Michael Witzel's [...] definition [...]: 'I rather prefer to define [philology], as we did in a symposium some five years ago: as Kulturwissenschaft based on texts,' or 'the study of a civilization based on texts.' [...] 'The object of the Indology that proceeds philologically is to clarify the past and its effects on the present. This is unfairly dismissed at times as "old-fashioned".'"

Incidentally, Slaje misquotes Das. The original reads: "What 'Indology' is supposed to mean requires an urgent clarification, since there appears to be no general consensus in the meantime. *Barely used outside of German-speaking regions*, the term there has a much narrower meaning, namely the philology of ancient and medieval Indian languages. We must hold on firm to the fact that 'Indology' is by no means identical with 'South Asian studies' or with 'the cultural science(s) of South Asia'" (Das 2000, 710n20, italics added). German Indologists

discussion never 'largely defined itself in terms of a specific method (the historical-critical method or the text-historical method)' (p. 1).²⁵ This is a

cannot plausibly claim a special affinity for textual work, and when questioned on their textual scholarship, distance themselves from earlier claims. Das correctly points out that Indologists tend to dismiss contemporary cultural studies: “There can be no talk of a meaningful cooperation of the cultural sciences with other disciplines, for example the social or economic sciences; as is well known, even at the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg, which was established in order to realize such a cooperation, such a dovetailing could not be realized. In general, academic cultural-scientific research into contemporary South Asia in Germany plays almost no role in the current process of interaction with this region; neither is it asked to nor does it appear to be able to contribute anything essential on its own, even though Germany probably has the highest concentration of chairs for Indology worldwide” (Ibid., 710). Rothermund corroborates this assessment: “This institute [the South Asia Institute] was inaugurated in Heidelberg in August 1962. With the exception of Indologists, there were hardly any area experts available in Germany, however. In Germany, reading Indology means studying classical Sanskrit philology, which was not the most suitable basis for establishing an interdisciplinary research institute devoted to contemporary problems” (Rothermund 2016). Slaje’s response underscores the resistance to rethinking Indology’s function and focus: “For what is *implied*—albeit *not said*—with ‘modern Indology’ is not the discipline and its methods [that is, that they should modernize], but rather, the *object* of research, namely, *modern India*” (Slaje 2003, 330, italics in original).

As President of the Deutschen Gesellschaft für Asienkunde e. V. (German Association for Asian Studies), Rahul Peter Das rightly pointed out at the recently held *1. Mitteldeutscher Südasiensitag* (June 2–3, 2016) that while things were moving in a favorable direction for modern Indian studies (his field), the impression may not percolate outside the meeting of the study group for modern South Asia (Mitgliederversammlung des AK Neuzeitliches Südasiens der DGA) that it welcomed the replacement of chairs of “classical” Indology with chairs for modern India.

²⁵ **Historical Criticism and Indology**

Franco is misinformed. References to the historical-critical method can be found in many works and manuals, including the standard handbook of the discipline (Bechert and von Simson, eds. 1979). Other examples include a reference to the “historical-philological method” (*historisch-philologische Methodik*) in Heinrich von Stietencron’s “Editor’s Introduction” (1996, 6), where it is explicitly contrasted with the uncritical, tendentious methods of Indian scholars, and Michael Hahn, who in a letter to Vishwa Adluri wrote that he “finds lacking in his work references to the above mentioned works by Willibald Kirfel and Paul Hacker. They stand in the tradition of the philological method that argues historically and critically [der historisch-kritisch argumentierenden philologischen Methode], and they use the techniques of lower as well as higher textual criticism” (Hahn 2010). A similar email (to Alf Hildebeitel) by Georg von Simson, who read Adluri’s work and lifted ideas from it, noted: “If the author denies philology the right to interpret an ancient text written in a foreign language, he must not be astonished if this attitude will not be accepted in a Department of Indology *where nothing else than a historico-critical approach (which he rejects on p. 20) is usually admitted*” (von Simson 2009, italics added).

The publication of these materials awaits a third book, which undertakes an institutional critique that complements the historical and philological critiques of *The Nay Science* and *Philology and Criticism*.

Even if Franco regards these statements as the private views of non-representative individuals, how does he

*pure fabrication on the part of the authors.*²⁶

Assuming that 'German Indology' can nevertheless be understood as a meaningful and appropriate term, what about the method? It is obvious that

account for the following statement by the President of the German Oriental Society? "We owe it to the great achievements of the founders of the discipline [sc. of Indology] that today the disclosure of the contents of the oldest as well as more recent linguistic documents of the Indian region can be advanced reliably and, above all, more profoundly with the *primary method* of a philology that works historically and critically [historisch-kritisch], which further implies that this should also be done" (Slaje 2003, 319, italics in original). Likewise, Heinrich Lüders, the society's President for the years 1922–1932, refers in his article "Philologie, Geschichte und Archäologie in Indien. Vortrag gehalten auf dem Fünften Deutschen Orientalistentag" (Lüders 1929) to "historical understanding and critical methods" (Ibid., 2), "modern philological-critical method, [...] historical understanding of the facts" (Ibid., 9), "critical-historical research" (Ibid., 10), "historical-critical research" (Ibid., 11), and "historical-critical orientation" (Ibid., 12). In the first citation, the German Indologists Bühler and Kielhorn are credited with "familiarizing" "native scholarship" with these methods; on the following page Lüders notes that this was "not possible for the British scholars, who had worked until then in India, as they were not philologists or historians in the *true sense*" (Ibid., 3, italics added). In the second, he notes "that it is self-evident that we cannot speak of modern philological-critical method, of historical understanding of the facts" vis-à-vis the native scholars. Franco's claims evince an ignorance of not only his discipline's history but also its textual basis.

²⁶ We did not "fabricate" the notion that German Indology primarily defined itself in terms of the historical-critical method. It is the Indologists' own view, found in many writings either as explicit methodological statements or in application to texts.

The Nay Science was written in part to clarify to the Marburg Indologists, who thought they were standing sovereign on an unimpeachable method, that their method, which they prided themselves on, was a sham: it was neither universal nor objective, and certainly not illuminating. Contrary to their claim to have emancipated themselves from theology—Jürgen Hanneder: "I have to disappoint you: this discussion is not really brand new, in Europe it is as old as the emancipation of the humanities from theology" (2010a)—we showed that their method was essentially theological, having emerged from Protestantism as a weapon against Catholicism and Judaism. To require this method of other scholars is thus tantamount to religious conversion by other means, even if Indologists proclaim it non-sectarian, unbiased, and secular. It is one thing for German Indologists as Lutherans whose salvation is ensured *sola fide* to read Indian texts historically and critically; and another to insist that others also apply the method. *The Nay Science* showed that, rather than an enlightened, post-confessional, and cosmopolitan science, German Indology: (1) was rooted in Protestant theology, and (2) used techniques of interrogation and discipline inherited from Christianity to reveal the subject in his truth (enlightened or traditional? secular or religious? saved or damned?). As such, it represents an institutional apparatus for practicing games of power and knowledge on the subject's body. It is inherently violent, discriminatory, and anti-intellectual. We have yet to see a serious counter to this thesis: Franco's review desperately attempts to shore up Indology's crumbling institutional authority by exercising instruments of exclusion, polemic, and appeal to a questionable expertise similar to those analyzed in the book.

the 'method' described by the authors simply refers to textual stratification aimed at retrieving an earlier, if possible original, form of a given work.²⁷ As such, it was already practised by the Alexandrine scholars as early as the third century BCE and was already applied to the Old Testament by Origen, if not before.²⁸ In its modern form it was practised in Europe after the Renaissance not only by 'Germans', but also by French, Italian, British, American, Russian, Japanese and—to the authors' chagrin—even some Indian scholars who were infected by the bug of 'German Indology'.²⁹ There is nothing particularly German about this method,³⁰ except perhaps that when it comes to classical South Asian Studies in

²⁷ The historical-critical method does not "simply refer" to "textual stratification" with its suggestion of legitimate distinctions and objective historical investigations. It is rather a theologically driven method aiming at a Christocentric interpretation of the Bible. It uses the notion of historical growth (which, incidentally, the Rabbinic tradition acknowledged) to undermine the canon's unity, and it does so to delegitimize Old Testament communities. Franco does not once mention *The Nay Science's* central contention, namely, the historical-critical method's anti-Judaic agenda. Does a sense of delicacy prevent him? Or the recognition that once we grasp its logic, which sustained thousands of pages of "philological" reconstruction, Indology ceases to be a viable discipline? It is striking that he does not mention Indology's ingrained anti-Semitism, an issue of special concern to someone born in the nascent state of Israel (Tel Aviv, 19.6.1953, born Eliahu Franco).

²⁸ Origen could not have applied the historical-critical method because it emerged in the eighteenth century, specifically with the work of the Neo-Protestant theologian Johann Salomo Semler who used it to separate "the 'true Christian' content of New Testament doctrine from its Old Testament-Jewish garb" (Raupp 1998, 1446). Franco's assertion not only misrepresents the method's origins; it also overlooks what is specifically new about it.

²⁹ Historical criticism is not the modern form of a pre-existing technique: it is an innovation within Neo-Protestant theology that since its inception was used to separate Judaic elements from the true *kerygma*. As we showed in *The Nay Science*, its application to Indian texts was justified only on the basis of the equation of Brahmans with Jews. We presented evidence that German Indologists from Rudolf von Roth to Hermann Oldenberg made this equation, regarding the Brahmans as legalists, ceremonialists, and corrupters of texts. Seeking to buttress their authority at the latter's expense, German Indologists like Richard von Garbe and Albrecht Weber authored polemics against the Brahmans.

The circumstance that other nationalities also applied the method does not change its origins or function. We are no less critical of them for thoughtlessly applying it; see *NS*, 153: "Yet, such was the prestige of German Mahābhārata studies that after the nineteenth century, scholars worldwide joined in the search for the original," footnoted with: "Besides Fitzgerald and McGrath, Tsuchida has recently argued that 'Lassen's theory should be evaluated as the first important step in text-historical research on the Mbh. It is as a continuation of Lassen's basic study that we are to carry on our investigations concerning the formation of the narrative structure of the epic.' [...] In his conclusion he reinforces this estimation. 'In conclusion to our inquiries into the narrative structure of the Mbh, we do not propound any new idea. Our present study has rather the character of reconfirming and developing the theory which Christian Lassen already put forward in the middle of the nineteenth century.' [...] Indian scholars, too, joined the bandwagon. C. V. Vaidya in 1907, in a palpable echo of Lassen, describes the Mahābhārata as 'something like a civil war between the pure Aryans and the mixed Aryans,' won by the latter, 'with a counterpart in the Civil War in America,' while the historians S. P. Gupta and K. S. Ramachandran, confusing textual investigations with archaeological, proposed a Jaya, a Bhārata, and a Mahābhārata epic." But to focus on these scholars in telling the story of German Indology is to place the cart before the horse. Many non-European scholars adopted the method out of a desire to

*Europe there were more scholars writing in German than in any other language, and the output in this language was consequently larger. McGetchin counts 47 professors of Sanskrit or 'Aryan' studies that included Indology as a major component in Germany alone in 1903, not including those in other German-speaking countries or Scandinavian or Dutch scholars writing in German.*³¹ While the stratification of the

participate in a hegemonic European episteme. Hence when seeking to understand the reasons for the method's contemporary popularity we must begin with its originators and disseminators.

³⁰ The historical-critical method was the creation of German Protestant theologians and, later, biblical critics like Ferdinand Christian Baur and David Friedrich Strauß, both Swabians. It is inconceivable without specific developments in German intellectual history like the Protestant *Schriftprinzip*, Kant's phenomenon/noumenon distinction, and historicism. The method's origins are thus German not only in geographic, biographic, and historical senses; it is also first and foremost a German intellectual phenomenon. Further, the historical-critical method served a specific purpose relevant only within German Protestantism, namely, the separation of the New Testament from the Old, and the latter's fragmentation. The method is already prefigured in Luther's translation of the Old Testament, which significantly altered the Hebrew text to provide a Christological interpretation. In one scholar's assessment, Luther "injected the blood-stream of the Old Testament with the Gospel, so that it spread out into its finest branchings almost by itself" (Bornkamm 1948, 185). Like Luther, the Indologists invoked a criterion of "inner criticism" (compare Luther's "inner canon," comprising the Gospel of John, Peter's first epistle, and Paul's epistles, above all, Romans) to reinterpret Sanskrit texts like the Mahābhārata and the Bhagavadgītā (see NS, 79–83). Like Luther, they fragmented these texts and injected a Christological interpretation, replacing the "Hindu gods" Viṣṇu, Śiva, and Brahmā with "Aryan gods" like Indra (for references, see NS, 148 and 391n126). They considered their own scholarship the teleological fulfillment of Indian thought's rational, monotheistic origins—origins that, they argued, had gone horrifically astray with Hinduism. Like Luther, the Indologists subordinated grammar and meaning to theology's demands, turning philology into a subdiscipline of Protestant scriptural hermeneutics. We are therefore justified in tracing a direct connection between not only Luther and historical criticism but also Luther and German Indology.

³¹ **German Indology as a Priesthood**

McGetchin's central thesis is that German principalities built up a significant network of resources through sustained investments in Sanskrit studies out of a desire to provide a suitable racial pedigree for the nascent German nation and to contest French-Roman intellectual preeminence on the Continent (see McGetchin 2009, 18–21). He refers to this system of institutions as "the Sanskrit Reich," indicating both its size and its imperial ambitions (Ibid., 29). Thus the statement that "there is nothing particularly German about this method, except perhaps that when it comes to classical South Asian Studies in Europe there were more scholars writing in German than in any other language, and the output in this language was consequently larger" misrepresents matters. The German Indologists' numerical superiority was not a byproduct of an innocent interest, as Franco implies. Rather, Germany made concerted investments in Sanskrit, viewing Indology as an instrument of cultural domination and theological dissemination. The theory of Brahmanic corruption affirmed Lutheran anti-Judaic stereotypes. Not only did Germany create publications to disseminate this anti-Brahmanic ideology inspired by Protestant anti-Judaic rhetoric; it also provided a market for these publications by creating departments of Indology. Thus, through sustained investment, it fostered an *economy of anti-Semitism*, in which writings affirming the narrative of priestly corruption and a progressive historical emancipation from "self-incurred immaturity [Mündigkeit]" (Kant) could emerge, circulate, be

Indian epic into earlier and later phases, the issue at the core of this book,³² is not a current concern of any particular German scholar;³³ in the case

consumed, and attain the status of true propositions. This is why in *The Nay Science* we argued that “the correct analogy for Indology in Herling’s inquiry is not the process of reception of a text, but the institutionalization of other pseudoscientific fields of inquiry in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany, such as the various attempts to classify racial phenotypes in the disciplines of *Rassenkunde* or *Rassentheorie* (race science or racial theory) or to draw consequences for society from this knowledge in the discipline of *Rassenhygiene* (racial hygiene)” (NS, 308). Rabault-Feuerhahn (2013) details the scale of these investments (see especially the three annexes on pages 295–324). Indra Sengupta provides evidence of how due to their overproduction of PhDs German departments were led to export scholars and scholarly ideology to other nations (Sengupta 2004). We are thus justified in treating German Indology as a distinct institutional tradition with a coherent ideology.

³² The “issue at the core” of our book is not the Mahābhārata’s stratification, but the historical-critical method’s anti-Semitic potential, which German Indologists employed against indigenous intellectual communities to seize epistemic authority over texts, Brahmans being equated with Rabbis and Hinduism with the ceremonialism and legalism of Judaism. We examined German Mahābhārata scholarship merely as an example of the method’s application, though we have since extended our analysis to other groups and texts. *The Nay Science* was written to demonstrate that the Indologists formed a powerful clique that practiced arcane ritual methods, produced flawed and tendentious interpretations of Sanskrit texts, and limited access to these texts in the interests of its own authority. It argued that German Indologists had become highly paid priests, even as they belabored Reformation-era tropes of “Brahmin supremacy,” “Hindutva,” and “methodically sound and sober scholarship free of [...] ‘traditional’ and political constraints” (all examples from Franco’s review).

The extent of anti-Brahmanic prejudice in German Indology should not be underestimated. Scholars like Richard von Garbe rankled at having to learn from the Brahmans, whom they considered racially inferior to them. Kaushik Bagchi relates how Garbe inculcated colonial attitudes on board the ship to India. “Already before arriving in India, Garbe seemed to be learning that the white man in the Orient was all-powerful and that the locals were at his mercy, waiting for handouts” (Bagchi 2003, 301). Garbe attests that he learned “from personal experience the tremendous gap that separates the Sahib from the non-European; the former does not really consider the latter a species of the genus *Homo sapiens* Linné” (Garbe 1889, 10). By the time he arrived in Bombay, he was convinced of the necessity of British rule in India, and fancied himself a member of the ruling, civilized European class. “Garbe was quite ‘understanding’ of the desire to keep the races apart. The principle of segregation, was, in his opinion, justified since the products of miscegenation did not in most cases measure up ‘physically, morally, and intellectually’ to good European society. The Eurasian element in their blood would ‘erupt’ in their physical appearance, sometimes in an ugly fashion, once every couple of generations. Where the Indian element predominates in these ‘mixeds,’ Garbe wrote, it was evident that ‘nature was averse to the mingling of the two races, for the products are often weak and misshapen human specimens for whom there is no appropriate place in the world’” (Bagchi 2003, 307).

In his travelogue, Garbe recounted with delight that he was frequently mistaken for an Englishman. As a white man, he found he had an access to elite social circles in India that he would never have dreamed of in Europe. He noted that the Maharaja of Ramnagar arranged a lavish dinner for the Europeans. The king served beef to his European guests, a dinner “worth fifteen rupees a cover,” and champagne worth “more than a thousand rupees” with the accompaniment of “an English military band” (Garbe 1889, 110). “The invited Hindus

naturally did not sit at the table; only the Maharaja, the Kumar [prince], and [...] Shivaprasad [the prime minister] did us the honor, albeit without eating and drinking themselves” (Ibid., 110–11). Yet to his dismay, Garbe found that the Brahmans were less deferential. They maintained their exclusivity. “A Brahman would rather commit robbery, arson, and murder than drink water from the same glass as I had; after all, there could be no greater disgrace for him. He could, after sitting ten years in a prison, return to his family and they would welcome him, but if he ate or drank with me his wife and child would avoid him like an outcaste. The pandits who have visited a European afterwards change their clothes, one does not shake hands with them on meeting or departing, and otherwise takes care not to sit too close” (Ibid., 91). Garbe complained that “*externally*, as [he] left Benares, [he] had not come one step closer to” his teachers (Ibid., 92, Garbe’s emphasis). Whereas for most Indians his color trumped his status, the Brahmans “unwillingly receive[d] a European’s visit in their home, [...] because they fear[ed] its ‘pollution’” (Ibid., 92).

These experiences led Garbe to portray the Brahmans in singularly malicious terms in the roman à clef *The Redemption of the Brahman* (Garbe 1894). We cite the most egregious examples, grouped under appropriate headings:

1. The Brahmans are usurious and exploitative:

“The glowing sun shone down upon the heap of offerings, decomposed the stuff, and created a fearful stench, of which the thronging masses did not seem to take notice. Before they passed out they threw silver and copper coins upon a great pewter plate which stood under the special care of a greedily watching priest. With eagerness he looked at it and cried at intervals with a loud voice sounding above the shrill clang of the bell and the shouts of the throng: ‘Durga, the mother of us all is not pleased with you. You have given her to eat and drink, but you give not money enough, and for this the goddess will let you perish, you and your children! If she is to conquer in the conflict with the demons we must support her with our offerings, and so we need money, much money.’ Then the departing ones would put their hands into their garments and the coins would clatter upon the plate, which, as soon as it was nearly filled, was emptied by the priest with a sly, unnoticed movement” (Ibid., 33–34).

2. They are arrogant and deceitful:

“‘Hold, Ramchandra, blasphemer!’ cried the Purohit, now full of agitation. ‘The gods are merciful. Can you, with your dull eyes, understand their ways? You look over this one short life and think not of the cycle of unnumbered births in which creatures are tried and educated by the gods, until, purified from the dust of earthly things, they approach them, and at the end of their career, enter into the great rest of Brahma. However, do not talk of the kindness and mercy of the gods; think rather of their ordinances and laws. Upon them rests the world! The Sahibs always speak of their kind and merciful God. That’s it, indeed! Now it is all clear to me! The constant intercourse with the Sahib has spoiled you. I wish this accursed barbarian—.’ Ramchandra at once interrupted the angry man with the words: ‘Stop. You do not know him. The Sahib is good; as good as you.’ ‘You are irreverent, Ramchandra,’ said the Purohit, immediately; ‘the rapid success of your studies has blinded you. You no longer respect age and experience; I have long noticed with regret’” (Ibid., 38).

“‘I do not trust Ramchandra,’ said a second one; and after a pause he added: ‘I hate Ramchandra.’ The first suggested ironically: ‘Of course, since the Sahib, after a few days of your instruction, dismissed you and chose

Ramchandra. He seems to understand his part better.' The insulted man cast at the speaker a venomous glance, which clearly showed how deeply the thrust had wounded him, and replied: 'The Sahib's conduct displeased me, and on that account I left him. But I should think that you above all had little cause for such scorn. Perhaps you think we do not know that a few weeks ago you were unsuccessful in the competition with Ramchandra for the prize offered by the Raja of Darbhanga.' A third Brahman stepped between them to settle the quarrel: 'Do not be angry; we all have cause enough to dislike the haughty Ramchandra. He always speaks to us as if he were better than we.' 'And the torrent of his speech,' put in another, 'cuts short every discussion. It is annoying to be silenced by him, who is so young a man. Look at him! He speaks now just as haughtily to the Sahib.' The one who was first ridiculed here saw his chance of taunting all who had before mocked him, and said: 'Only that the Sahib laughs and is not silenced'" (Ibid., 48–49).

3. They are cruel and despotic:

"'The custom!' exclaimed Ramchandra, 'since the custom was introduced! You do not believe, then, that the law is as old as the world, that it was the will of the Creator from the beginning, upon this holy ground of India, to separate the castes in all the necessities of life?'" (Ibid., 44).

"Do not be angered again, Ramchandra, but answer me one more question. Do not all those whom you have mentioned, the Brahman, the merchant, the soldier, the coolie, and all your other numerous castes, belong to the one race of man?' 'No,' replied Ramchandra, with decision, 'the word man only designates similarity of structure, it means a being which has head, trunk, arms, and legs, but it does not mean race'" (Ibid., 46).

"Then the speaker raised his voice and with angry earnestness and great force said: 'Since you foolishly despise the commands of the gods, hear the judgment of our caste. From this day on, no merchant shall enter your house, no one shall do business with you; and if we meet you upon the street we shall turn from you as if we had never known you. Come, friends, we have done our duty.' And without taking leave of Krishnadas, the merchants departed" (Ibid., 65).

"The sound of your voice disgraces this house. My father and I—we were never good enough for you to share a meal with us, because the silly laws of your caste,—no, not laws,—because your pride forbade you. Yes, hear it from the lips of a woman! Open your ears and hear the truth! Oh, the Pariah who sweeps the filth from the streets is better than you! I say it to you; I, a widow, whom you and all of your class despise..." (Ibid., 69).

Garbe evidently intended these caricatures to support the conclusion he explicitly drew in his travelogue, namely, that British rule was a boon for the Indians as it would liberate them from Brahmanism. Here is Garbe's account of how, under the influence of Western ideas, Western education, and Western printing, the natives might be empowered to overthrow Brahmanism:

"I do not think it is wrong,' replied the Brahman; 'times have changed. The wisdom which was once the sole possession of my caste, has now become a common property. They are beginning to print our ancient sacred books in our own land; every one can buy them, and whoever knows our language can read them'" (Garbe 1889, 24).

"There again, Ramchandra,' said Mr. White calmly, 'you touch upon something about which I hold a different opinion from you. The redemption, that is, the emancipation of the individual soul from the pains of mundane existence, all your systems which I have studied with you, propose to attain through the medium of the intellect, through this or that knowledge. I seek redemption by morality, and I believe that every one may

of the *Rāmāyaṇa* it is currently undergoing the most vigorous examination by, for instance, John Brockington,³⁴ emeritus of the University of

attain to it in this life. The disciples of Buddha, the enlightened one, whom you Brahmans have driven out of your land, have ap-proached nearer to the true understanding of redemption than you” (Ibid., 45–46).

“Believe me, Ramchandra, you are in the true path to enlightenment. It will not be long before you, too, can distinguish between the will of God and the laws of Brahmanism” (Ibid., 62).

“I will hear nothing more from you,’ cried she, ‘but one thing more I will say to you, and then—go! In the short time that has elapsed since Lilavati’s death, this has become perfectly clear to me. The divine laws, of which you Brahmans are always talking, and whose most distinguished conservator you desire to be, are nothing but lies and deceits! The pitiful existence to which you condemn the poor Pariahs was formerly established as a law by your class through base selfishness. And the mass, the ignorant mass, has believed your words and has languished in these fetters from century to century. You Brahmans are not the protectors, you are the scourges of our people” (Ibid., 69–70).

“Redemption?’ Ramchandra cried while his superior indignantly left the room, ‘I have found it. There is but one in India, the redemption from the fetters of your delusion, from the soul-smothering bonds of Brahmanism” (Ibid., 79).

“Look, Sahib, the Brahman cord still hangs about my neck.’ He threw back his outer garment, took off the single white woolen cord, which is the sacred emblem of Brahmanism, broke and threw it from him. ‘There lies in shreds, the last outward sign which binds me to my caste. My Brahmanhood is gone” (Ibid., 81).

Franco’s reference to “Brahmin supremacy” to justify Indology thus stands in a long tradition. Historically, German Indology’s primary function has been to exercise critical oversight over the Brahmans. The link between German Indology’s anti-Brahmanism and its anti-Semitism deserves further study.

³³ The Mahābhārata’s stratification is a current concern of Thomas Oberlies (Professor, Göttingen), Peter Schreiner (Emeritus, Zurich), Angelika Malinar (Professor, Zurich), Andreas Bock-Raming (Professor, Mainz), Reinhold Grünendahl (Ex-librarian, Göttingen), Andreas Bigger (Librarian, Basel), and Annemarie Mertens (Assistant, Zurich). It has also been a major concern of James L. Fitzgerald, Kevin McGrath, and John Brockington (and not only in relation to the *Rāmāyaṇa*). It features in the newest abridgement of the Mahābhārata in German (von Simson 2011). Franco has not read current Mahābhārata scholarship. As co-editor of *From Turfan to Ajanta* (Franco and Zin, eds. 2010), he should have known that Brockington uses the Spitzer manuscript’s *parvan*-list (Brockington 2010) to argue for a shorter original epic.

³⁴ It is not true that the *Rāmāyaṇa*’s stratification is “*currently* undergoing the most vigorous examination by [. . .] John Brockington” (italics added). Brockington has settled views about it. In his earliest article (Brockington 1978), he argued that “the Northern recension of the *Rāmāyaṇa* with its innovations was well established before the fixing of the text of the *Mahābhārata*” (Ibid., 81). In the same article, he also noted, “In theory at least we can divide the stereotyped expressions of the epics into three groups: those found equally in both epics (and so presumably belonging to the traditional stock drawn on by authors of both), those found in the *Mahābhārata* but not in the *Rāmāyaṇa* or only in its later portions, and conversely those occurring in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and lacking in the *Mahābhārata* or only in late passages” (Ibid., 84). In a conference paper presented in 1983 (Brockington 1985a), he asserted, “The process of expansion and elaboration *certainly* began already from the period when it was first recited” (Ibid., 250, italics added), in spite of the fact that we cannot know

*Edinburgh, and arguably the greatest living scholar on Indian epic literature.*³⁵

that the “process of expansion and elaboration” began with the first narration whatever we may think of it in general. In 1985, he capped a series of articles arguing that the Rāmāyaṇa had undergone continuous expansion with *Righteous Rāma: The Evolution of an Epic* (Brockington 1985b). In it, he argued for a five-stage expansion. In *The Sanskrit Epics* (Brockington 1998), he summarized: “My own statement [regarding the Rāmāyaṇa’s composition] was that the first stage belongs to the period from about the 5th to the 4th century BC and this remains my view” (Ibid., 379). The introduction states: “It is *clear that* the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* represent the culmination of a lengthy tradition of oral poetry, transmitted through recitation by the *sūtas* or bards” (Ibid., 3, italics added). Brockington later asserts, “*No doubt* eulogies of heroes and cycles of stories underlie the extant epics; traditionally the *Mahābhārata* had an earlier and perhaps *more clearly epic* version in the *Bhārata*. The first stage in the establishment of an epic tradition *would then have been* the progressive clustering of ballads and other material around some central theme, whether the personal vicissitudes of a hero or events of particular importance” (Ibid., 19–20, italics added).

Franco’s statement, “in the case of the *Rāmāyaṇa* it [the stratification of the epic] is currently undergoing the most vigorous examination by [...] John Brockington,” is thus disingenuous. It is also untrue that Brockington examines the Rāmāyaṇa independently of the Mahābhārata. He explicitly relates the two: “This process of transformation *seems* in the case of both epics to be linked with passing from the hands of their traditional reciters, the *sūtas* and *kuśilavas*, into those of the brāhmanas as the guardians of all traditional learning. [...] The *Rāmāyaṇa* *clearly* underwent a parallel process of adaptation to brāhman values [as the Mahābhārata]” (Ibid., 394, italics added). Brockington is neither an impartial witness nor an uncommitted scholar. Indeed, as the second work cited attests, his career was based primarily on adopting German views of the epic.

German scholars likely cite Brockington because he affirms their prejudices. Oskar von Hinüber praises Brockington’s *The Sanskrit Epics* as “the foundation for all further researches into ancient Indian epic and a secure and reliable guide for everyone who preoccupies himself in some way with these texts” (von Hinüber 2002, 269). Readers of *The Nay Science*, however, will recognize that Brockington’s views are not original. The thesis that “traditionally the *Mahābhārata* had an earlier and perhaps *more clearly epic* version in the *Bhārata*” has its source in Adolf Holtzmann Jr. and Adolf Holtzmann Sr. (see *NS*, 84–85). The suggestion that “eulogies of heroes and cycles of stories underlie the extant epics” recalls E. W. Hopkins’s infamous statement that the Mahābhārata’s origins lay “in the ‘circling narration,’ in the original Bhārati Kathā, or in the early mention of tales of heroes who are also epic characters” (Hopkins 1901, 386). Ultimately, like most ideas in Mahābhārata scholarship, Brockington’s views are rooted in Christian Lassen’s 1837 article (see *NS*, 43). They thus implicitly support the latter’s racist and anti-Semitic prejudices. This is why it is vital that scholars read *The Nay Science*: it reveals the historical origins of their prejudices. Besides locating Brockington’s scholarship in its historical context, *The Nay Science* also provides rigorous counterarguments to it (see *NS*, 280–91 for criticisms of Georg von Simson’s argument for removing the Bhagavadgītā from the Mahābhārata, and Ibid., 291n592 for criticisms of Brockington’s reliance on von Simson). We address Brockington’s views of the Bhagavadgītā in Adluri and Bagchee 2016a (see nn12, 91, 99, and 103 for the absence of evidence for “layers” in the Bhagavadgītā) and 2016c (see 26n3).

³⁵ The point is indeed arguable. Hildebeitel, in his review of *The Sanskrit Epics*, writes, “It is of course purely fanciful—a kind of churning of the ocean of scholarly wishes—to imagine the main story of the Mahābhārata

Now, turning to the stratification of the Mahābhārata, the vast majority of scholars, not just the 'German' ones, assume that the text has gradually grown to its present size³⁶ (seven times that of the Iliad and Odyssey together, as the cliché goes) in a process that took several hundred years.³⁷ One

'crystallizing' out of a 'fluid mass.' E. Washburn Hopkins, long before this, would seem to have had something similar in mind when he described an 'original Bhārata Kathā' in a 'circling narration' that 'may lie as far back as 700 BC or 1700 BC, for aught we know' [...] Yet Hopkins had the good sense to add: 'but with no evidence of an epic before 400 BC' (397). Hopkins, however, did not have the Parry-Lord theory of oral formulaic verse to help him close this gap. But Brockington does, and it allows him to ignore the lack of evidence of any reference to the Mahābhārata in the Veda, and to find evidence, via oral theory, of how, despite the Veda's silence, the Mahābhārata would have 'obviously' developed" (Hiltebeitel 2000, 163).

It cannot surprise us that Franco cites Brockington: his work is a pastiche of German views from the past two centuries. His first article on the Sanskrit epics (Brockington 1978) began by citing Albrecht Weber. In *The Sanskrit Epics*, the first scholar cited is Hermann Jacobi. Brockington's work recalls E. W. Hopkins, who carried German views about the epic to the English-speaking world. Von Hinüber, who praises Brockington for his evaluation of "an unbelievable wealth of literature," simultaneously directs him to two other German sources (von Hinüber 2002, 268), as though this were the scholar's sole function. Brockington cannot be cited as confirmation of the German scholars' views. His work is too strongly aligned with the principles characteristic of German Indology, and hence does not represent an independent, self-critical authority (see NS, 291: Brockington rarely has an understanding of "the deeper processes at work in this [the German] tradition of scholarship"). Perhaps Franco thinks citing Brockington is a counterargument because he mistakenly thinks we defined German Indology by national origin.

³⁶ The argument from consensus is weak. Hiltebeitel dismisses it as follows: "Brockington's bottom line is 'the usual assessment of relative dating'—as if there were a consensus, or as if consensus would in itself be significant. Moreover, virtually anything can be evidence of interpolation: contradiction, 'grounds of subject matter' (385), 'extensive repetition,' exceptional shortness, elaboration, 'high proportions of long compounds and of similes,' 'elaborate use of figures of speech'" (Ibid., 165). Further, which scholars does Franco mean? Earlier he wrote: "the stratification of the Indian epic into earlier and later phases [...] is not a current concern of any particular German scholar." Who then are the scholars comprising the "vast majority"? Have they examined the thesis or have they not? Or does he mean the consensus among nineteenth-century scholars? But surely, the nineteenth-century view cannot be binding, unless his argument is that, as no contemporary German scholar addresses the question and critical evaluations like *The Nay Science* are unacceptable, the nineteenth-century consensus holds. This would be a strange claim because most scholars have moved on from the German Mahābhārata critics. Only a small minority like Brockington, Fitzgerald, and Franco still defend their work, possibly because their careers depend on the narrative of a great German tradition of Sanskrit philology. Furthermore, as we demonstrated, the consensus emerged by reinforcing the myth of the Mahābhārata's origins in an oral epic tradition. No scholar ever returned to the sources to understand or trace the thesis's origins. As the examples from Brockington demonstrate, most scholars repeated the scholarly dogma without any critical judgment: witness Brockington's use of "It is clear that . . .," "no doubt . . .," "would then have been . . .". As for Brockington's claim that "traditionally the *Mahābhārata* had an earlier and perhaps more clearly epic version in the *Bhārata*," it is simply false. The first person to suggest this was Christian Lassen (1837), but as Hiltebeitel (2011, 133–34) shows, it is based on a tendentious reading of Mahābhārata 1.1.61.

*can sympathise with the authors' claim that the various attempts to stratify the text, and more specifically the Bhagavadgītā, tell us more about the stratifiers than about the stratified. However, the fact that we cannot untie the knot does not mean that there is no knot.*³⁸ In their blanket rejection

This is why we noted in *The Nay Science*: “It was important, in the first part of this work, that we disentangle these complex chains of citation and secondhand citation and trace their underlying views back to their original authors. By showing how completely dependent contemporary Mahābhārata scholarship is on the problematic and unscientific views of Lassen and Holtzmann, these two chapters illustrated the problems with basing interpretations of the Bhagavadgītā on Western scholars' theories of the epic as a war narrative” (NS, 155).

³⁷ German Indology as Philology

German Indologists primarily took up the stratification of the epic to imitate the classicists on whom they modeled themselves. But they are behind the times: ever since Cedric Whitman (1958), classicists have abandoned stratification. We cite from an evaluation of Adluri's PhD dissertation from Philipps-Universität Marburg: “Die wissenschaftliche Beschäftigung mit dem indischen Großepos Mahabharata begann im 19. Jahrhundert in einer Phase, in der die Klassische Philologie sich gerade neu als eine eigene Wissenschaft neben Theologie und Philosophie etabliert hatte und mit ihren Methoden viele andere Philologien beeinflusste. Angeregt durch die *Prolegomena ad Homerum* Friedrich August Wolfs hatte sich eine breite Tendenz der Homeranalyse ausgebildet. Die romantischen Vorstellungen von Volkslied und Volksdichtung hatten die Aufmerksamkeit auf den Unterschied zwischen einer schriftlich konzipierten Kunstdichtung und aus der Mündlichkeit hervorgegangen Sammlungen gerichtet. Für die Deutung Homers folgte daraus, dass man nicht mehr mit einem Dichter als Verfasser rechnete, sondern mit vielen Formen der Entstehung des endgültigen Großtextes: mit Einzelliedern, Einfügungen, Erweiterungen, Redaktionen, usw. Diese Art der Homerdeutung beherrschte die Forschung über mehr als eineinhalb Jahrhunderte und brachte viele Auseinandersetzungen zwischen sog. Analytikern und Unitariern, die meinten, allen vermeintlichen Brüchen und Widersprüchen im Text zum Trotz mit einem Dichter rechnen zu sollen, mit sich. In der Klassischen Philologie kann dieser Prozess als abgeschlossen gelten. Die—oft heftige—Gegnerschaft erwies sich als Resultat einseitiger Betrachtungsweise. Es gibt eine lange mündliche Tradition, in der die Techniken des Erzählens und die Inhalte der Dichtung ausgebildet und immer wieder neu variiert wurden. Die Endfassung aber, die in *Ilias* und *Odysee* vorliegen, sind das Ergebnis einer einheitlichen, Anfang, Mitt und Ende in komplexer und raffinierter Weise verbindenden Konzeption. Für den Klassischen Philologen interessant ist, dass ein vergleichbarer Prozess in der Indologie noch lebendig und (zumindest zu einem guten Teil) auf einerseits kontinentale und andererseits südasiatische und amerikanische Forschungstraditionen verteilt zu sein scheint.” It is tragic that Indologists attempt a comparison with the philologists, when they are uninformed about current scholarship in the classics.

³⁸ There is no evidence of a “knot.” In a majority of the cases in which German Indologists proposed improbable theories of Indo-Germanic origins and Brahmanic “inversions” to account for the text, simpler explanations like literary or philosophical design were available. In truth German Indologists never cared to understand the texts as they existed. They preferred instead to create fetish texts corresponding to their identity longings. In asserting the existence of a “knot” *a priori*, Franco falls into the same trap. What is the evidence for a “knot” (note the negative phrasing: “However, the fact that we cannot untie the knot does not mean that there is no knot”). What is the evidence that any future attempt at stratification will not reveal more

about the stratifier than the stratified? Before we speak of hypotheticals, we should first address the following problems:

1. We must establish an *objective* difficulty in the text;
2. We must establish that this difficulty cannot be resolved by other means; and
3. We must establish that the text cannot be interpreted as a coherent whole.

Only then can we consider composite historical origins a possible reason for textual dissonance. But even then we would need objective historical evidence of composite origins. They cannot be deduced in an *a priori* manner from the texts' seeming heterogeneity, or rather, from the texts' resistance to simplistic quasi-historical interpretive schemes.

The question of the Gītā's composite origins only arose after Christian Lassen and Adolf Holtzmann Sr. invented the thesis of a Brahmanic revision of the Mahābhārata. Thus, the obstacles to the Gītā's interpretation arose from a twofold failure: German scholars were not interested in its philosophy, and they ignored the commentarial tradition, which provided a guide to its interpretation. We do not deny that every reader must navigate between a multiplicity of interpretations. But this is no truer for the Bhagavadgītā than it is of Kant's first *Critique* or Hegel's *Phenomenology*. The history of interpretations is an invitation to engage with the meanings readers have seen in the text, and arrive at one's own understanding of it. The fact that several interpretations are possible does not mean we should abandon the interpretive task because—allegedly—we can never attain the truth. An argument could be made that Indology's current institutional difficulties (see <http://www.kleinefaecher.de/indologie/>, and: <http://www.kleinefaecher.de/entwicklung-der-professuren-und-standortzahlen-in-den-kleinen-faechern/> [both accessed August 31, 2016]) stem directly from its failure to acknowledge the hermeneutic task.

Franco might argue that the traditional reception of the Bhagavadgītā only means that the Indians are ignorant of its early history. There is precedent for this argument. Oldenberg, for example, argues that the Aryan "immigration already lay in the distant past in the period, to which the oldest monuments which we have of religious poetry belong. The Indians had as completely lost the recollection of this past as the corresponding events were forgotten by the Greeks and Etruscans" (Oldenberg 1881, 9). He explains this loss of memory by the fact that "the Indian people, in their deep introversion, had long since become an oddity among the peoples, ruled by forms of life and habits of thought that were incommensurable with the non-Indian world. *Without a past, whose memory could have continued in the present, without a present, which one was determined to appropriate in love and hate, without a future, for which one could hope and work, they dreamed pale, proud dreams of that which transcends all time, and of their own kingship in these eternal realms*" (Ibid., 2–3, italics added). But note that the evidence for the "loss of memory" is precisely the memory that he wishes to implant on the Indian people. The Indians are censured for not "remembering" what the German Indologist asserts as their past, based on their present "truth" as seen from his perspective—that is, as a downfallen de-Aryanized nation fit for colonization. How are we to sever *this* knot? We cannot because the Indologists' assertion is based on their institutional authority rather than argument or evidence. Franco knows that no evidence exists for this history. That is why he turns to a political justification: the need to guard against "caste distinction, Hindu nationalism, Brahmin supremacy, Right-wing militarism and fascism." A fictional past justifies intervention in the present, intervention in the present is presented as evidence for the Indians' immaturity,

of all attempts to come to grips with the different strata of the text, the authors have chosen against all probability to endorse the position of Madeleine Biardeau,³⁹ who largely incurred amused reactions to her claim that the text had been composed by a single person.⁴⁰ (The only person I

and their immaturity as evidence that they cannot authentically appropriate their past. Premise and conclusion feed off of each other in a vicious circle, or, from the German Indologists' perspective, a virtuous one, since they derived power and profit from this oversight function. Little wonder that the past has become a contested site for right-wing Indians: they have grasped that it is the site where their enduring immaturity and hence colonization are enforced.

³⁹ Franco is wrong on three counts.

1. The position we endorse is that of V. S. Sukthankar, who in 1942 dismissed the "Analytical Theory" of the origin and the character of the Mahābhārata" (Sukthankar 1957, 11), and the Critical Edition, which shows that the archetype—that is, the latest common ancestor of all extant manuscripts reconstructed using an objective and mechanical method—contained many episodes that the German critics termed "Brahmanic" interpolations. We acknowledged our debt to Sukthankar and the editors of the Critical Edition in the Acknowledgments.

2. Madeleine Biardeau does not hold that the text was composed by a single person. Franco likely refers to Biardeau's "The Two Sanskrit Epics Reconsidered" (Biardeau 1991), though he does not provide a citation. We also failed to find one in his 2004 book, where he asserted, "These facts are worth repeating as *Mahābhārata* specialists such as Madeleine Biardeau still believe that the epic was composed by a single person" (Franco 2004, 10). If this is indeed Franco's source, the assertion is incorrect. Biardeau's exact words are: "What is more important is to grant—even just as a hypothesis—that there is one author for each epic and that author in both cases must have been a *brahman*" (Biardeau 1991, 87). These words occur in the context of her rejection of the prevailing view of "bardic" composition. It is clear from the context that "one author" does not refer to a single authorial personage as much as unified compositional activity. Thus, Biardeau notes next that "only this unity of authorship can account for the unity of the narratives" (Ibid., 88). She also notes that "we shall never have access to the authentic texts—the *Urtext*—and that we shall not even try to reconstitute it" (Ibid., 87). Biardeau also explicitly refers to *groups* of Brahmins in Biardeau 1989 and 2002.

3. Franco incorrectly attributes the view that the Mahābhārata is a unified composition to Biardeau. Sukthankar attributes it to Joseph Dahmann, and, via him, to the Indian tradition. "There is thus no question whatsoever of an 'epic core' that had become gradually incrustated with didactic accretions, an idea which is nothing more than a phantasy, just an obsession of the modern critic. The poem is, as Indian tradition has always implied, a conscious product of literary art (*kāvya*) of the highest order, with a pronounced unity of conception, aim, and treatment" (Sukthankar 1957, 20).

⁴⁰ Franco probably has in mind his fellow Indologists. However, Biardeau found significant resonance in the international scholarly community, at any rate more than the German critics. Greg Bailey and Adam Bowles follow her example in reading the Mahābhārata as a unified literary work. Bailey echoes Biardeau's comment, "the teaching of the *Gītā* is perfectly consonant with the whole of the epic. It only establishes as doctrine what the myth expresses" (Biardeau and Malamoud 1976, 132), when he writes, "what is implicit in the narrative material is made explicit in the didactic material" (Bailey 1983, 109–110). André Couture's studies of Kṛṣṇa in the Mahābhārata are influenced by Biardeau. Scholars like Tamar Reich, Arti Dhand, Aditya Adarkar, and Simon Brodbeck have pursued creative literary exploration over the search for the lost original. A selection

know who tries to defend Biardeau's opinion is Alf Hildebeitel.)⁴¹ Biardeau's claim is highly implausible, not only because of the daunting size of the composition⁴² and its lack of coherence on many levels,⁴³ but also because of such trifles as the inclusion of two considerably different parvan lists, i.e.,

can be previewed in *Argument and Design* (Adluri and Bagchee, eds. 2016). Finally, the suggestion that we hold that the Mahābhārata was composed “by a single person” is false. *The Nay Science* did not take a stance on the epic’s composition except that it exposed the ideological reasons for asserting a “Brahmanic” takeover of an original bardic epic. The sole place we discussed composition refers to “the authors of the text” *in the plural* (NS, 214n244). The idea that all Indians believe in a single author is a widespread caricature (see von Simson 2011, 636–37), but it is unattractive all the same.

⁴¹ See the preceding note. Franco’s dismissal of Biardeau overlooks the fact that the field of Mahābhārata studies has moved on. We cite from a recent review: “These approaches [the “analytic” and “synthetic”] reflect divergent perspectives on the Mbh, either as a composite text that grew over centuries with contributions by diverse authors of differing views, producing a text with little unity (the analytic approach), vs. as a unified text with a coherent meaning due to composition according to a plan (the synthetic approach). These two approaches are often seen in the history of Mbh studies. This vital point has been in dispute for over a century: Was the Mbh composed over centuries by numerous contributors or in a short period with an agreed-upon design? [...] If a single author in modern times [the reference is to Isaac Asimov] is capable of producing such an array of publications on an impressive range of topics totaling some 100,000 pages, we cannot rule out the possibility that a single author or small committee produced the Mbh. In any case, in the field of Mbh studies, *received wisdom and assumptions about how this text was created are ripe for reconsideration*” (Bruce M. Sullivan 2016a, 167, italics added).

⁴² Hildebeitel and Sullivan have convincingly refuted this argument. Sullivan writes: “Some have assumed or argued that the size of the Mahābhārata, the sheer number of words, is evidence of a long compositional history—it would take a long time to write so much, perhaps 400 or 800 years. Some have assumed or argued that the diversity of literary styles and religious ideas would require hundreds of years to be composed. These, however, are assumptions rather than persuasive arguments. As a counter-example, I can cite Isaac Asimov, who wrote some 500 books—on popular science, history, chess, and science fiction—while also serving as professor of biochemistry at Boston University. I mention him not only because of the number of his many works, but also their diversity: he published in all ten major categories of the Dewey Decimal System, so he was not simply producing quickly written romance novels. Indeed, as another example, Alf Hildebeitel has written perhaps as much about the Mahābhārata as he credits Vyāsa’s committee with having accomplished! And these are individuals working without contributions from committees” (Sullivan 2016b, 188–89). Leibniz’s literary estate comprises 150,000–200,000 pages, written in Latin, French, and German (what a field day the Indologists would have identifying “interpolations”). Edmund Husserl’s literary estate comprises 40,000 pages in Gabelsberg stenography. Bertrand Russell’s literary estate includes 200 manuscripts; the complete archive comprises 143 meters of textual and other materials. The Indologists appear unacquainted with the standard of work expected in other fields.

⁴³ The Mahābhārata is coherent if one knows how to read it. As Adluri demonstrates (2016) German scholars’ so-called text-historical approach stems from a failure to appreciate the text’s meaning. Adluri examines Thomas Oberlies’s rationale for claiming that the Nārāyaṇīya’s second Vasu narrative (Mahābhārata 12.324) is an “interpolation” (namely, that the king advocates animal sacrifice, whereas earlier he had performed a bloodless *śvamedha*). He shows that Oberlies’s interpretation is simplistic: “the *Nārāyaṇīya* programmatically

lists that serve as tables of contents (there are actually three of them, the third one being fragmentary).⁴⁴ Should we assume that the single author of the Mahābhārata forgot that he had already written a parvan list and so wrote another one?⁴⁵ Apart from this, neither Biardeau nor the authors

contrasts Vasu's bloodless sacrifice in the first narrative with his decision in favour of the gods (who insist on animal sacrifice) in the second. This sudden and surprising shift cannot be accidental. If, as Oberlies suggests, the passage was 'interpolated' into the text, the alleged 'redactor' could easily have harmonised the two accounts. Once again, the text is making a philosophical point: King Vasu first ascertains that the gods favour animal sacrifice, and sides with them against the sages and their *nivṛtti* values. His choice of *pravṛtti* over *nivṛtti* further recalls an earlier incident in the *Ādiparvan*, where Indra was able to dissuade him from pursuing austerities in return for his friendship (*Mbh* 1.57.1–31). In deciding in favour of *pravṛtti*, Vasu falls. Thus, far from illustrating the worn-out cliché of the vindictive brahmins (this is how Oberlies takes it), the text makes a sober point about the inconstancy of the *pravṛtti* order: it is transactional, conditioned, finite, and eternally subject to reversal. Thus the two narratives are perfectly consonant once we appreciate the philosophical point about Vasu's turn away from *nivṛtti dharma* and its non-violent symbolic or internalised sacrifice. In fact, in a concluding section, Bhīṣma narrates how Vasu, having realised that the *pravṛtti* ascent is always subject to a reversal and a fall, turns to the highest *dharma* of them all: the *uñchavṛtti dharma* or 'way of gleanings', where the king subsists on the *vasudhāra*, the run-off from the sacrificial offerings. Thus from purely *pravṛtti dharma* to *nivṛtti dharma*, and finally to their mediation and resolution in the concept of *uñchavṛtti dharma*, the text weaves its way back and forth in the Vasu narratives, superbly negotiating the vicissitudes of each *dharma* in its effort to identify a practical and permanent solution to the problem of how to attain *mokṣa* within 'Becoming' (Ibid., 132–33). We cannot think of a better term to describe the Indologists' approach to texts than "sezierende Methode," literally "to open up a corpse and dissect it anatomically," incorrectly rendered by Stietencron's translator as "analytic method."

⁴⁴ The current view among textual critics is that a critical edition should make a minimum of interventions, remaining as faithful to one exemplar as possible, while the critical apparatus is the place for discussion of the text's variants (see Adluri and Bagchee's introduction, 2018). The multiple *parvan* lists are uniformly transmitted in all the manuscripts (barring minor variants) so that we cannot eliminate them on grounds of manuscript evidence. Indeed, the Mahābhārata Critical Edition retains them as features of the common ancestor of all our extant manuscripts. Franco's argument is testimony to the fact that German Indologists have never understood the principles of stemmatic reconstruction. Rather, what they have wished to do was engage in *a priori* reconstructions of texts, pruning them depending on their perception of contradictions, stylistic changes, breaks, and so on. That Franco still argues on circular and specious grounds for the non-originality of the *parvan* lists after Olivelle 1998 illustrates how timely *The Nay Science's* critique is. As Adluri (2011a) has shown, the Mahābhārata's two beginnings offer two distinct entry points into the narrative: a cosmological and a genealogical beginning. Between the two beginnings, the epic inserts a hermeneutic and pedagogic apparatus in the form of the Parvasaṃgrahaparvan and the Pauṣyaparvan. The multiple summaries serve different functions. Dhṛtarāṣṭra's lament, for instance, serves as a Lament of Becoming that parallels the Song of Being in the Bhagavadgītā at the epic's center (in Book VI). We would lose these details by following Franco's reductive logic.

⁴⁵ The question entails a false alternative. We do not need to assume anything. We have a text with two or three *parvan* lists, and these lists are transmitted consistently in the extant manuscripts. No neo-Lachmannian critic would recommend excising them. The fact that they are found in all extant manuscripts suggests that

tell us which Mahābhārata was written by a single author.⁴⁶ Was it the Mahābhārata of the Northeastern, Northwestern or the Southern

they were features of the archetype. Franco may argue that multiple lists are due to conflation of different sources. But even so, a neo-Lachmannian would not eliminate them. Further, the lists are not exact doubles; might it not be that each contains vital information? Then, again, how does Franco explain the existence of different versions? Conflation might have occurred once into the archetype or one of its ancestors. But to claim that a scribe collected three or four versions?

⁴⁶ The question is irrelevant: we never claimed that the Mahābhārata was written by a single author. It also suffers from the fallacy of complex question. Franco either does not know our position or knowingly misrepresents it. *The Nay Science* showed that for 200 years the German Mahābhārata critics neglected to read the Mahābhārata as it exists for a fantasy epic of their own devising (variously called the “Ur-epic,” “oral epic,” “bardic epic,” “Kṣatriya epic,” “Aryan epic,” “Indo-Germanic epic,” “Bhārata epic,” “Pāṇḍava Bhārata,” and so on). It argued that their reconstructions of various layers only revealed something about their ideology, rather than contributing to objective historical research. Thus, critics from Christian Lassen to Hermann Oldenberg read the Mahābhārata to find evidence of Aryans as well as to show that Brahman “priests” had enslaved the free-spirited and heroic Aryans. The argument that German Indologists abetted German nationalism is not new. Michael Dusche (2013, 31–54) shows how Friedrich Schlegel relaunched his career by reimagining himself as a nationalist. *The Nay Science* lent precision to this argument by showing how German nationalism was linked to the German interest in India: “German Indology thus sees itself not merely as learning and collecting objective knowledge as in the case of natural sciences. It is more: the German Indologist directly intervenes in history and changes it. On the one hand, Indians are to be shown to be at the mercy of the tyranny of their misshapen, lecherous, and fantastical gods. Even more urgently, they are to be shown as being subject to the tyranny of priestly authority. Texts need to be purified of Brahmanical interpolations and metaphysical speculations. Freedom on a political and cultural level, in this idiom, can only be secured when the task of securing texts coincides with purifying them. Thus, we have seen in the third chapter the profuse enthusiasm with which German Indologists vied with each other to find excuses to dissect the Gītā. If only Brahmanical and *bbakti* aspects were removed, Indians, as brethren in the world humanitarian project, could stand up as good, free Kṣatriyas, interpreted here to mean as good Prussian soldiers. Or very nearly so. More importantly, the Indologist must keep the Enlightenment torch burning at home in Germany, as Slaje, Hanneder, and Bronkhorst argue. Thus the Indologists allied themselves with whoever was in power to do their best to be philologist-kings or at least philologist-advisors. It is important to keep this aspect in mind when considering German Mahābhārata studies. What could be more invigorating than a *Blut und Eisen* model of the great epic of India? Thus begins the complex seduction of the experiment of forging a Kṣatriya *Urepos* from the Mahābhārata. But the transformation was not just directed outward at Indian history or society, but inward at the researcher’s historical situation itself. The former two were to be remade in the mold of the German scholar’s interpretation, even if the most dubious evidence had to be brought forth to convince Indians that they had once been blood brothers in the Āryan rationalist project. The history recounted was always an eschatological history embodying a concrete vision of what India could be if it but followed the German scholar’s missives. But at the same time as the Germans intervened in the subject of their researches, they were placing themselves at the head of this narrative of history: if the scholar-scientist can put in place a historical narrative that culminates in Western, enlightened self-consciousness, then the scholar-priest who is the epitome of that consciousness becomes the very meaning of history itself. Thus behind the German scientists’ mournful glances backward at Indian history was also a rather self-serving look forward at their own

recension:⁴⁷ Or might it possibly be the one reconstructed in the critical edition (which employs to a considerable extent the method⁴⁸—even though

historical present. Who would pay them to tell tales of ancient Indian history unless those tales simultaneously reflected Germany (and German scholarship) in a good light?” (NS, 391–92). Franco’s attempt to defend positions that have been discredited on historical, philological, and philosophical grounds by invoking authority only underscores our point: the Indologists’ “primary concern was to protect an institutional hegemony” (NS, 434).

⁴⁷ The Mahābhārata tradition branches into two main recensions, the Northern and the Southern. The only editor to identify three main recensions was Franklin Edgerton. Franco’s question is therefore misleading. Further, the author’s recension cannot have been any of the three recensions Franco lists because they are, *by definition*, later than the archetype, which is defined as their latest common ancestor. Consequently, the author’s text could have been either the archetype (if the archetype and the original were identical) or an ancestor of the archetype (if separated by one or more copies), but it emphatically could not have been one of the archetype’s descendants. Franco’s question is like asking a grandfather which of his three grandchildren he fathered.

⁴⁸ The Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata is a neo-Lachmannian edition, based on the twin principles of a systematic *recensio* and genealogical analysis of the relations of filiation between them. It has no relation with the German Mahābhārata scholars’ pseudocritical methods. We discussed this extensively in the section “The Origins of the Historical-Critical Method in the Neo-Protestantism of the Eighteenth Century.” We explicitly noted that “the sense of criticism found in German Indology is not the second, narrower, more technical sense of this term. In this latter sense, the expressions ‘textual criticism’ or ‘critical method’ refer to the two-stage process of a systematic *recensio* (collection and analysis of manuscripts), followed by an analysis of the relations of filiation between these manuscripts based on this recensio. This process culminates in a mechanical reconstruction of the archetype (the oldest text from which all extant manuscripts are derived). [...] The method is critical because it seeks to eliminate sources of subjective influence (e.g., the editor’s personal views of the tradition) by making the process of the reconstruction of the archetype as mechanical as possible and because it insists that every stage of the process be documented so as to enable other scholars to follow, review, and, if need be, make changes to editorial choices.” Our conclusion, listed in the same section, was that “the sense of criticism found in German Indology is inherited from the first of Kant’s two senses; that is, it implies a suspicion of traditional authority. This is the sense operative in Indology” (NS, 11–12).

Even assuming Franco misunderstood the distinction, he could have read our clarification in the Nicholson response (Adluri and Bagchee 2016b). We cite the relevant passage: “Nicholson confuses textual criticism with historical criticism, a distinction that is one of the central themes of the book. We defended textual criticism in the introduction (NS, 11–12) and wrote that we would focus on historical criticism (Ibid., and see also NS, 1–2, 22–25), which sounds similar, but is neither historical nor critical (NS, 17–18, see also 1n1), being rather the name of a movement within Protestant theology advocating a Christocentric approach to the Bible, particularly the Old Testament (NS, 315–24, see especially 318). There is a good reason why we defended the work of the Bhandarkar Institute scholars: textual criticism is mechanical, rigorous, and follows objective and explicitly stated principles. The Bhandarkar Institute scholars were following textual criticism, not the pseudo-critical, anti-Semitic method of historical criticism. Unlike textual criticism, which seeks to provide a better and more authentic text of a given work for interpretation and/or literary investigations, historical criticism is a theologically driven method that questions the integrity of the transmitted work as a way of undermining the

our authors seem unaware of this)?⁴⁹

The problems of the coherence of the Mahābhārata are present in a nutshell in the Bhagavadgītā. Looking alone at the divine figure of Krishna, we can discern at least three different theological positions: theism, pantheism, and panentheism⁵⁰ (the world being inside God). Many scholars

notion of the canon and the interpretive communities founded upon it. In the case of the Mahābhārata and the Bhagavadgītā, this took the form of arbitrarily identifying ‘layers’ in these texts, so as to frustrate literary and philosophical interpretations of these works. The question of what makes Indology ‘pseudo-critical’ is thus easily answered. ‘Pseudo-critical’ is a synonym for ‘historical-critical’ and this was explained in the introduction when we went through the different senses of ‘critical’ (NS, 11–12, see also 23–25, with particular attention to nn95 and 99)” (Ibid., 2).

⁴⁹ As explained in the preceding footnote, the Critical Edition does not use the German scholars’ “method” (note the ambiguous use of “method” without a qualifier). Indeed, one reason Sukthankar undertook the Critical Edition was to subject the German scholars’ theories of an original, heroic, Aryan oral epic to a critical analysis. The Mahābhārata Critical Edition gave him the confidence to reject their views of the Mahābhārata (see Sukthankar 1957 and see also Hiltebeitel 2001, 106–7). We dedicated *The Nay Science* to the BORI editors in full awareness of Sukthankar’s historic achievement (see the Acknowledgments). We also defended the edition at NS, 75n2: “With the completion of the Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata in 1966, the scope for oral epic theory was further reduced. Completed on the basis of the rigorous principles of textual criticism, the Critical Edition offered conclusive evidence that all extant Mahābhārata manuscripts were descendants of a single written exemplar, and that this archetype contained elements such as the narration of the epic at a sacrifice, the entire Bhagavadgītā, the Śāntiparvan including the highly theological Mokṣadharmaparvan—precisely the elements considered by the defendants of oral epic theory to be ‘late’ and ‘Brahmanic.’ The Critical Edition thus blew a hole not only in their theory of the epic’s genesis, but also in their theory of its transfer in authority from Kṣatriya warriors to Brahman priests. Since then, their efforts have shifted to highly complex theories dedicated to explaining how the archetype might have existed and still need not rule out the existence of an older oral epic tradition such as Andreas Bigger’s nonsensical ‘normative redaction’ hypothesis.” Rather than dismiss the Critical Edition, we are fully aware of its value. Thus, we noted: “A critical edition, when carried out correctly, can have considerable value. It can help clarify the transmission of the text or help attain the oldest state of the text, the so-called archetype. But as we have seen, in the case of German Mahābhārata and Bhagavadgītā scholarship, the Indologists’ editions were not critical editions in the technical sense of the term where it refers to an edition based on systematic *recensio* and genealogical analysis. On the contrary, they elevated prejudices about the tradition to first principles and proceeded to reconstruct the texts on the basis of these subjective impressions. In general, the principles of critical editing are badly understood and the expression itself irresponsibly applied by the majority of German Indological authors, as we discuss in our forthcoming book, *Philology and Criticism: A Guide to Mahābhārata Textual Criticism*” (NS, 415n193).

⁵⁰ **The Bhagavadgītā and German Indology**

Neither the Bhagavadgītā nor the Indian tradition recognizes the “three different theological positions” of “theism, pantheism, and panentheism.” The closest term is *nirīśvara*, but to translate it as “atheistic” would be misleading because *īśvara* does not correspond to the Christian monotheistic god. We would also have to disambiguate between *īśvara*, *brahman*, and *puruṣa*. The terms “pantheism” and “panentheism” are

progressively more alien. A good philologist would use caution when using non-indigenous terms. At the very least, he would provide precise definitions. Franco uses the terms with a self-evidence that belies the fact that they arose in seventeenth-century Europe, and addressed specific theological debates within Protestantism. The term “pantheism” was first used by Joseph Raphson in 1697, and gained widespread currency after the Irish thinker John Toland used it to characterize Spinoza’s philosophy in 1705 (see *NS*, 173). Likewise, “panentheism” originated with the German scholar Karl Krause in the eighteenth century, who introduced it to distinguish Hegel’s and Schelling’s positions from that of Spinoza (see Göcke 2013). In *The Nay Science*, we showed that the Bhagavadgītā’s “pantheism” only became germane in the context of a German debate. The relevant passages are as follows: “Returning to Schlegel and Holtzmann now, we find that the question of whether the Bhagavadgītā professes a pantheistic outlook is immaterial to the text itself. It was, rather, a question that had specific intellectual, religious and political resonances in Germany of the *Goethezeit*. To raise the question of the Gītā was already to prejudice significantly its reception. The ‘original Gītā’ debate, insofar as it rested on the question of the Gītā’s pantheism, was largely a problem of the Germans’ own making. The various reconstructions proposed were, in turn, German solutions to a German problem; it was only logical that Western and Indian scholars would later reject German claims of having evolved a superior approach to the Bhagavadgītā” (*NS*, 173–74); “But it is clear that in taking up the pantheism theory and tying it to a theory of the Indo-Germanic origins of the Bhagavadgītā, he [Adolf Holtzmann Jr.] was setting the stage for a charged debate. In keeping with his irrationalist strain, however, he reversed the Schlegelian scheme, according to which pantheism was a sign of philosophical and moral enervation. Schlegel wished to show that it was the Protestant Reformation that had led Europe to pantheism and he used his bipartite analysis of Indian intellectual history to offer a salient example. In contrast, Holtzmann made pantheism the hallmark of the free-thinking, crude, and passionate Indo-Germans and claimed that it was the sophistic morals of the Brahmins that had sapped the Indo-Germanic spirit. This difference in views is, of course, easily explained: the neo-Catholic Schlegel was interested in a critique of Indian pantheism as a way of demonstrating the superiority of Catholicism; from his perspective, the theism of Catholicism was preferable to the materialism, naturalism, and atheism of Protestantism. In this context, Indian pantheism could be used to make polemical points about German Protestantism. In contrast, the Protestant Holtzmann was interested in a critique of Indian theism as a way of demonstrating what could happen when unscrupulous priests seized control over a people; from his perspective, the pantheism of the Germanic peoples was preferable to the ritualism, ceremonialism, and papism of Catholicism. Indian pantheism could be used to make polemical points about Roman Catholicism” (*NS*, 173–74); and “By entering the ‘original Gītā’ debate at the turn of the century, Garbe was able to restore the pantheism controversy once again to its original form: was it Protestantism or Catholicism that led to pantheism? Holtzmann’s tolerance of pantheism and his view that the dangers of Catholicism were to be sought rather in its imposition of theistic ideas upon the Germanic peoples was shown to be a minority view. Garbe pruned back Holtzmann’s Romantic excesses and once again rendered the Bhagavadgītā safe for the German public. As long as they read it in his sanitized edition, readers of the poem were at no risk of developing pantheistic sympathies. And as long as they remembered that it was ancient India and not contemporary India that was the model and objective, there was no danger of Indology inculcating politically seditious views in them. The Bhagavadgītā was set for its meteoric rise in Indology” (*NS*, 190–91).

Franco’s statement, “Looking alone at the divine figure of Krishna, we can discern at least three different theological positions: theism, pantheism, and panentheism,” thus appears frightfully naïve after *The Nay*

have assumed, therefore, that the text is composed of chronologically different layers and tried to disentangle them in order to retrieve the original form and theological doctrine at the core of this text.⁵¹ Some have considered the theistic doctrine to be the core, others the pantheistic one, and still others hold that the entire theological perspective is a late addition and that Krishna was originally an epical human hero;⁵² still others read their

Science's analysis. The footnotes on pages 173 and 214 (nn76 and 244) clarify that the term “pantheism” is not only anachronistic but also arises from a misunderstanding concerning the relationship of ideal or conceptual conditions to real entities. We are aware that, by the eighteenth century, it had become a common term in academic discourse—a theologically loaded accusation and a favorite label of the doxographers. But its application to the Bhagavadgītā is unconscionable. Not only is the concept philosophically ambiguous; the term is also lexically problematic.

⁵¹ Historically, the assumption that the Bhagavadgītā was composed of “chronologically different layers” preceded the notion that it contained “theistic” and “pantheistic” doctrines in contention. Indeed, it was the precondition for the latter. It is clear why this must logically be the case: in a philosophical text like the Bhagavadgītā, theism and pantheism could stand for viewpoints internal to the text. The idea that each represents a different “stratum” is an external prejudice that must be imported into the text. The historical record bears this out, as we showed in *The Nay Science*. The theory of the Mahābhārata’s “redaction” and an “inversion” in its sympathies was first articulated in 1854 by Adolf Holtzmann Sr. His nephew Adolf Holtzmann Jr. adopted this idea in 1892 and developed it into an account of the Brahmanic takeover of the text from the heroic Indo-Germans. Only thereafter in his next book (Holtzmann 1893), did he claim that the Gītā originally espoused a pantheistic philosophy as was—he claimed—proper to the Indo-Germanic people, whereas following the Brahmans’ victory over the Indo-Germans, they introduced their theistic worship of Kṛṣṇa Vasudeva into the text. The question of the Gītā’s theism or pantheism became a salient issue in German Indology precisely as a question about the philosophy appropriate to the Germanic people.

⁵² As we showed, there is no reason to assume the existence of a “core.” The thesis of a “core” plus “additions” only arose because of a prejudicial theory about the Bhagavadgītā’s origins in heroic, Indo-Germanic warrior circles. Not only is there no historical evidence to support this theory; its anti-Semitic roots have also become sufficiently clear. Likewise, there is no reason to assume the existence of an “epical [sic] human hero” called Kṛṣṇa. As we showed in “Paradigm Lost” (Adluri and Bagchee 2016a), the search for a human, historical Kṛṣṇa reflects a deep reluctance to concede Kṛṣṇa’s divinity. Thus, rather than acknowledge his status in the epic, German scholars advanced a specious theory of euhemerism. Richard von Garbe argued, “Every unbiased historical observation of our sources shows us Kṛṣṇa in the earliest period as a human and later—in continuous development—as a demigod, god, and all-being. When in the mythology of Hinduism, Kṛṣṇa appears as a god become human, as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, that is an inversion of the real relationships, such as is often to be observed in myths of transformation. In our case, euhemerism is the correct view” (Garbe 1905, 23). Since Garbe read his theory of “continuous development” out of the text, it cannot be called a “historical observation.” In fact, his logic was circular, since he presumed that the text had to be interpreted historically as a “myth of transformation.”

As for the statement, “a recent preliminary study indicates that the Bhagavadgītā belongs to the same strata as the philosophical sections of the Mahābhārata, which is to say, the philosophical treatises of Mokṣaparvan [sic] towards the end of the epic,” we are unable to verify it, since Franco does not provide a citation. He may mean Brockington (2000) or one of Angelika Malinar’s or James L. Fitzgerald’s works. Note, however, that without definitive historical evidence, arguments on linguistic, stylistic, or semantic grounds remain

racist theories of Aryan supremacy into the text, as into the Mahābhārata in general. In hindsight, it is easy to point to the weaknesses and prejudices of these pioneering, often over-confident studies.⁵³ However, it may be presumed that they were not all as wrong as the authors assume. It is quite probable that computer-based analyses of metrical patterns and other statistical features will be able to reveal structures that will provide a more robust basis for future attempts at stratification.⁵⁴ A recent preliminary study indicates that the Bhagavadgītā belongs to the same strata as

hypothetical. They would not justify us in assuming a common stratum, since two parts of the text may cohere more closely due to a *thematic* rather than a historical continuity. For example, there are thematic similarities between the descending and ascending logic of the *Republic's* closing and opening books and its central myth of the cave with its ascent to the form of the Good (see Rosen 2005, 19). Should we assume that they belong to the same stratum?

⁵³ Historical Criticism and the Logic of Othering: Aryanism and Anti-Semitism

Franco treats these issues as though past, but in point of fact they occur in *current* German Indological scholarship. Georg von Simson uses the terms “Indo-Aryan,” “Indo-Germanic,” and “Aryan” to characterize earlier and later strata of the epic (see von Simson 2011, 618, 650, and 664). Philipp A. Maas attributes the epic’s redaction to unnamed “Brahmans” (see Maas 2014), but could not provide a clarification of who these Brahmans were. It is thus not a case of pointing “to the weaknesses and prejudices of these pioneering, often over-confident studies,” but of asking why Indologists still invoke these discredited principles. Georg von Simson writes, “However one wishes to evaluate the historical events, what is important in this context is the ascription of the text in its outermost frame to a Sūta or to the son of a Sūta; for this expression originally characterized the charioteer of a prince, a person who, as the ruler’s closest associate, was tasked with eulogizing him” (von Simson 2011, 640). He appears unaware that Hildebeitel (2001 and 2005) has shown that orality is a trope in the epic or that Minkowski (1989) argues that the Mahābhārata’s outer frames are *more* Brahmanic than the inner narrative. Thus, he claims: “Here the talk is still of the fame of the warriors, which may have been the genuine theme of the bardic poem”; “This looks like old bardic transmission” (von Simson 2011, 641); “The animosity directed against the warrior nobility that is expressed here shows how far the *Mahābhārata* had distanced itself from its origins in a bardic composition that probably was close to the Kṣatriyas”; “It is thus no glorious victory in the sense of the old heroic poem” (Ibid., 643); and “Certainly, it was this main aim of the Brahmanic revisers of the heroic poem handed down of old, namely, to urge the Kṣatriyas to accept the Brahmanic legal order” (Ibid., 644). Readers of *The Nay Science* will recognize the source of these theses: it is the anti-Semite Christian Lassen; the actual words are from the nationalist Adolf Holtzmann Jr. Von Simson’s anti-Brahmanism is also evident in earlier writings (see von Simson 1969, discussed at *NS*, 288–91).

⁵⁴ We do not assume that the Indologists were wrong; we demonstrate it. This contrasts with Franco’s claim that “it *may be presumed* that they were not all wrong” (italics added). Since the Indologists’ attempted stratification of the epic has failed, Franco now hopes that “computer-based analyses of metrical patterns and other statistical features” will prove more reliable. But why should universities throw good money after bad in the hope of rescuscitating a failed paradigm? Further, even if these new methods generated results, it would not exempt us from critically evaluating past work. Indeed, how can new methods evolve if not through a critical analysis of past failures? By attacking us, Franco actually hinders the emergence of better approaches. Finally, what is at stake for the Indologists in the epic’s stratification? Why do they continue to advocate it even after repeated failure? Why not read the epic as it exists, when it is easier, more rewarding, and entails less risk of failure? We suggest that the Indologists’ defend the epic’s stratification because their authority depends

the philosophical sections of the Mahābhārata, which is to say, the philosophical treatises of Mokṣaparvan [sic] towards the end of the epic.

Viewed as a whole, this is a sad book; and it is sad that many readers may be misled into thinking they are holding a scholarly book about ‘German Indology’ in their hands.⁵⁵ Actually, the book is simply a clumsy attempt to avenge an insult.⁵⁶ One of the two authors, Vishwa Adluri, is a failed

on it. Without it, German Indology would not exist as a distinct tradition: it would dissolve into the history of interpretations of the text. It would be no different from other schools or traditions and could be measured against both preceding and succeeding interpretations. The Indologist would thus lose his privileged position as the end-point of history, as we pointed out in *The Nay Science*: “Bear in mind this part of Roth’s argument because the narrative of decline (the content, if one will) was not distinct from the framing of the scholar’s task (the form the scholarship took). Content and form mutually conditioned each other. In fact, the former directly engendered the latter. If Indian texts had been correctly preserved and interpreted, there would be nothing for the critical scholar to do. He could at most read, learn from, enjoy, and possibly even praise these texts. But the narrative of decline, introduced uncritically and defended dogmatically, opened up previously unimagined horizons for scholarship. It practically obligated the scholar to work out an alternative hermeneutic to Indian texts” (NS, 340). Further, to read the epic as it exists is to grant a coherent theology. It is to grant Indian readers self-reflexivity and Hinduism self-consciousness. It is to acknowledge that Western oversight is superfluous. German Indologists struggle with these consequences because they have never evolved a convincing rationale for their discipline apart from the bad excuse of oversight over the natives, either as “Brahmanism” or as “Hindutva.”

⁵⁵ Indology and the University: Future Prospects

We have already seen that it is common practice for Indologists to label inconvenient scholarship unworthy of publication to take seriously Franco’s allegation that *The Nay Science* is not “a scholarly book.” But his allegation nonetheless raises an interesting question: what *are* the criteria for scholarship?

1. *The Nay Science* is a history.
2. It took a critical approach.
3. It dealt mainly with the primary sources.
4. It is a philological work, which read the sources carefully as well as applied philological techniques (reconstruction, historical contextualization, lexical analysis) to them.
5. It employed the Indologists’ historical-critical method to analyze their works.
6. Besides the historicist approach and evaluation of *realia*, it also applied techniques like *Tendenzkritik* and *Quellenforschung* to the Indologists’ writings.
7. It is heavily supported by over 1800 footnotes.
8. It is meticulously researched.
9. It has a comprehensive bibliography.
10. It is authored by two scholars with PhDs with a deep knowledge of German philosophy, history, and *Geistesgeschichte*.

11. It has a German intellectual pedigree, being written by authors who studied in Germany.
12. It traced the development of Indology from its roots in Protestant theology onward to the emergence of an *ersatz* conception of scientificity.
13. *The Nay Science* not only located Indology in the context of wider debates about science and the *Wissenschaftsideologie* of the nineteenth century; it also discussed philosophical movements like positivism, historicism, and empiricism.
14. It passed a stringent peer review and was published by the world's leading academic publisher.
15. It has been reviewed in academic journals.
16. It received outstanding reviews, including praise like: "If ever there is a fine specimen of how to do the in-depth history of ideas as it pertains to an academic discipline, this study by Vishwa Adluri and Joydeep Bagchee ranks very, very highly"; "All we are left with is the brilliant use of Occidental historical-critical, empirical, and Gadamerian phenomenology, hoisting earlier Western scholars by their own petards"; and "This is a monumental piece of work, and scholars wanting to think through their own presuppositions and conditionings will ignore it at their peril. A spoof on Nietzsche's *Gay Science*, 'Nay Science' means a 'sham branch of science known as higher criticism' 'trapped by its own positivist inheritance' (151, 404) that either underappreciates or badly misinterprets the 'native' insights of at least two of India's greatest literary treasures. And all hail to two veritable Indian masters of both German and English" (Trompf 2016, 374, 375, and 376).

What then remains of the criteria for Indological scholarship? In rejecting that *The Nay Science* is "a scholarly book," Franco raises the question: what is scholarship? How is it defined? What are its criteria? Who determines something as scholarship? Who *permits* it to be scholarship? What are the institutional mechanisms (conferral, nomination, acceptance, peer review, publication) that ensure its acceptance as scholarship? Earlier we saw that Michael Witzel's work, though of questionable scientific, ethical, and intellectual value, was canonized as "scholarship" through the mechanisms of Indological publication, department funding, and DMG membership. Franco's allegation now provokes the reverse question: when is something *not* scholarship? What are the institutional mechanisms for rendering it "not scholarship"?

Formally speaking, *The Nay Science* fulfilled all the criteria for scholarship (critical historical research, familiarity with primary sources, knowledge of secondary sources, peer review, publication). Yet from Franco's perspective, it is *not* scholarship because it lacks the *institutional framework* that makes something scholarship. Confirming the point, Walter Slaje writes: "You emphasize that you allegedly have worked intensively on 'German Indology.' This may be correct, but the aim of the DMG is 'the deepening and broadening of the knowledge of the Orient' (§1), not the deepening and broadening of the knowledge of German Indology. In light of the devastating reception of your works concerning this [topic] by *recognized scientists* such as, among others, the professors Michael Hahn, Jürgen Hanneder, and, most recently, Eli Franco, one cannot consider the tenability of your published results as given even in the slightest degree" (Slaje 2016, italics added).

Franco's and Slaje's ire is understandable, but in declaring *The Nay Science* not scholarship they reveal the *merely institutional character* of the Indologists' scholarship. Neither objective criteria like the quality of arguments or the contribution to understanding nor formal criteria like citation or bibliography suffice for scholarship. Indeed, even a methodological allegiance to the historical-critical or text-historical method, which the German Indologists valorized as the sole scientific method (Hacker 1961, 489), appears insufficient. Rather,

*PhD student of the late 'German Indologist' Michael Hahn, who Adluri promptly accused of standing in the tradition of Nazi scholarship*⁵⁷

what is required is a number of systems—a *discipline* (even the word is revealing); the approval of *disciplinary peers*, who nominate something as scholarship; adherence to the *discipline's authorized history*, however hagiographic (hence Franco's insistence on Windisch); integration within the *discipline's structures* (witness Slaje's statement cited earlier); and consent to the *disciplinary hierarchy* (Slaje: "It is not credible that someone who takes such a view of the German research on India, which is to a large extent gathered in the DMG, and attacks them in numerous publications himself wishes to be a member. As per §6 (2, 4) of the statutes, it would be a reason for expulsion from the society 'when a member grossly damages the esteem or the interests of the society,'" Slaje 2016)—that together constitute something like the "scholarly world." It is only within this world, and within its institutional procedures for rendering something an object of scholarly engagement and appreciation, that a work, a book, or an idea can *even become scholarship*—that is, either good scholarship or bad scholarship.

Franco's comment therefore only reveals that *The Nay Science* falls out of the *institutional framework* for creating or nominating something as scholarship. In attacking our book, he reveals the truth about the Indologists' authority—that it was based neither on expertise nor knowledge, but on their ability to *institutionally confer* the title of scholarship. An entire nexus of institutional arrangements—the ability to grant PhDs, hire doctoral students (Franco 2016), apply for DFG grants, and so on—served to underpin this function, but it also simultaneously concealed the fact that there was nothing underlying it. Or, to put it another way, the Indologists' power *exhausted itself in keeping people in or out*. Whatever insight, knowledge, or philological ability they possessed was *an excess over and above this power*: it was essentially unrelated to it, as revealed by Franco's and Brockington's recent attendance at the Paris conference (*Enjeux de la philologie indienne: Traditions, éditions, traductions/transferts*, Collège de France, Paris, December 5–7, 2016) where they made embarrassing philological errors and yet were treated as authorities, honored invitees, and oracular voices. Stripped of their institutional status, the Indologists would have no function and no authority.

⁵⁶ If perceived insults can produce a work of the magnitude of *The Nay Science*, we have surely performed the greatest of all services to Indology. By serving as a Socratic gadfly, critiquing it and challenging it to give an account of itself (*λόγον διδόναι*), we have enabled the conditions for its renaissance. Surely German Indologists will now produce brilliant works free of the defects of the past? We can hardly wait to see how Eli Franco generates new epistemic foundations for Indology.

⁵⁷ Neither of us accused Hahn of "standing in the tradition of Nazi scholarship." Franco refers to the article "Pride and Prejudice" (Adluri 2011b). But this article's argument was not that German Indology and Nazism were linked (which hardly needs restatement), but rather, that the Indologists' lack of clarity about "science" and their indiscriminate valorization of their scholarship as "scientific" exposed them to political manipulation. While Nazism garners attention, it was a historic blunder. Only a few Indologists (Jakob Wilhelm Hauer, Walther Wüst, Ernst Waldschmidt, Emil Sieg, Walter Porzig, Erich Frauwallner, Paul Hacker, Johannes Nobel, Johannes Hertel, Walther Schubring, and Friedrich Weller) have well-documented Nazi histories. In contrast, the article's main argument—namely, that Nazism was *one manifestation* of the Indologists' willingness to place their scholarship in the current regimes' service—suggests that the problem lies with the Indologists' "bureaucratic" mindset, with all the implications this term has since Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Adluri explicitly noted, "I take Pollock to be less interested here in the actual mechanics of how Indologists collaborated with Nazism, than with highlighting the way an uncritical acceptance of the rhetoric of science

(incidentally, it may be mentioned that Hahn, who died in 2014, was of Jewish extraction).⁵⁸ This explains, I think, the nasty and indignant tone that runs throughout the book, which may be seen as a personal vendetta against ‘German Indology’. It might also be worth mentioning that as a result of his complaint, Adluri was awarded a PhD in (‘German’) Indology from the University of Marburg without any ‘German’ Indologist evaluating his work (see Hahn, 2011).⁵⁹

Looking for the origins of ‘German Indology’, the authors proceed like the famous drunkard in reverse. The coin is under the streetlamp, but they go looking for it in the dark alleys of Protestantism and biblical philology.⁶⁰ The nature and origin of ‘Indology’ were already clearly stated in A.W.

made German Indology so susceptible to being harnessed for the most diverse and the most inhuman ends” (Ibid., 259), and “Since Pollock’s critique is not restricted to a simplistic equation of Indology with Nazism, it cannot simply be brushed aside as a ‘uni-dimensional presentation’ (Grünendahl 2006: 213)” (Ibid., 260). The conclusion underscored the article’s wider concern with the German university’s imbrication in “Germanism” defined as “the attempt to define the German self” (Ibid., 266): “The wider question of Germanism [...] cannot just be restricted to an analysis of German Indology or to German Orientalism. It would have to encompass wider aspects of German intellectual history, including philosophy, politics and religion” (Ibid., 279).

There are only three references to Hahn in the article; none link him with Nazism: “As a consequence of this need to link up with India’s past rather than its present, German Indology was never interested in any aspect of contemporary India. [...] This sentiment continues to the present day. As Michael Hahn notes, ‘When it comes to research into modern politics and history we are one among many others. But as regards classical studies, there we have the greatest prestige’” (ibid., 272); “The point I wish to make [...] is not that some Indologists were deeply implicated in National Socialism, but to show how German Indologists constantly invoked the rhetoric of ‘Wissenschaft’ in order to defend claims of German precedence in Indology. [...] One can trace a direct lineage from this rhetoric of science as a uniquely German capacity in Oldenberg via Frauwallner to contemporary authors such as Slaje, von Stietencron, and Hahn” (ibid., 277); “This [the “focus on an epoch of Indian history adequately far removed from modern India”] is true not just of the early phase of German Orientalism, as it continues to be echoed even in recent writings. Besides the comment by Michael Hahn cited in Schulz’s write-up (see above), see especially Hanneder’s review” (ibid., 284n24). Hahn thus misunderstood Adluri when he wrote, “he wishes to place me in the *paramparā* of ‘Nazi Indology’” (Michael Hahn, supplement to Hanneder 2011).

⁵⁸ Franco previously defended scholars’ right to critically examine the relationship of Nazism and German Indology: “Dear friends and colleagues, For those of you who took the trouble to read this bizarre piece and may wonder about the connection between Frauwallner and Hermann Oldenberg’s rac(ial)ist ruminations that Karin Preisendanz and I quoted in our introduction to the new edition of Frauwallner’s *Philosophie des Buddhismus*, see the very explicit statement in Frauwallner, ‘Der arische Anteil . . .’, p. 286. Grünendahl has obviously not bothered to carefully read the relevant articles by F. before he produced another of his diatribes directed against critical scholars who touch upon the (political) history of Indology in Germany and Austria during the NS period (and before)” (Franco 2012). Possibly, it is our book’s wider claim about German Indology’s ingrained anti-Semitism that troubles Franco: the attempt to associate our book with Nazism literature is a mere feint.

⁵⁹ We cannot understand this comment’s relevance. If German Indology does not exist and does not have unique canons of method as Franco claims, how does it matter if the examiners were not German?

⁶⁰ **Indology and Protestant Theology**

The connection between Protestant theology, biblical criticism, and the German university is irrefutable. Franco can dismiss us as “drunkards,” but he will still have to answer Levenson (1993), Howard (2006), and Purvis (2016). Kugel notes that historical-critical biblical criticism has been “from its inception, [. . .] fundamentally a Protestant undertaking, one might even say, a form of Protestant piety”; it has “in ways great and small, still retained much of its particularly Protestant character” (Kugel 1986, 22). The founder of the United Synagogue of America Solomon Schechter wrote: “Higher anti-Semitism is partly [. . .] contemporaneous with the genesis of the so-called Higher criticism of the Bible. Wellhausen’s Prolegomena and History are teeming with aperçus full of venom against Judaism, and you cannot wonder that he was rewarded by one of the highest orders which the Prussian Government had to bestow. Afterwards Harnack entered the arena with his ‘Wesen des Christenthums,’ in which he showed not so much his hatred as his ignorance of Judaism. But this Higher anti-Semitism has now reached its climax when every discovery of recent years is called to bear witness against us and to accuse us of spiritual larceny” (Schechter 1915, 37). Several recent works, among them Yelle (2013), Oddie (2006), and Gelders (2009), argue for a connection between Protestantism and academic views of Hinduism. Further examples may be found by consulting Bagchee (2014).

The Nay Science is the first work to argue for a connection between German Indology and Protestantism in detail, but it is not an isolated example. As Robert Yelle notes, “this is an important book, with a challenging and provocative argument. One reason why it is so challenging is that, if you take the conclusions of the authors seriously—and they draw all of the logical connections among the data, making it difficult to avoid their conclusions—then it appears that we are in a crisis in the study of Hinduism. Actually, the argument of the book has implications also for religious studies more broadly, inasmuch as it reveals the biased presuppositions on which much of modern textual-critical scholarship, particularly but not only as applied to non-Western traditions, rests. Similar criticisms have been leveled at Western scholarship before. The complaint that European studies of other traditions express a bias toward the ‘original meaning’ contained in textual form, a bias borrowed from the post-Reformation study of the Bible, is hardly new. What is innovative and impressive in Adluri and Bagchee’s approach is the thoroughness with which they document the history and consequences of this bias at the heart of supposedly ‘scientific’ (*wissenschaftlich*) German Indology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as the extent to which individual scholars’ reconstructions of the Mahābhārata and the Bhagavad Gītā were so variable, arbitrary, and tendentious. One is left at the end with a strong suspicion, or possibly even an unshakeable conviction, that elements of this bias continue, insofar as the method of disassembling and reassembling Hindu texts, irrespective of their received form and interpretation within India, in order to arrive at an ‘Urtext’ continues, long after the separation of academic Indology from Protestant bible studies” (Yelle 2016, 14).

We documented the German Indologists’ Protestant background extensively. We showed that the majority were theologically committed Protestants from pastors’ homes. We also showed that Protestant concerns infiltrated their work at every level. Rudolf von Roth vacillated between becoming a Protestant minister and continuing his linguistic studies, before finding a happy medium in Indology. Albrecht Weber recommended the critical publication and translation of the Veda to expose the “religious untruths” of Hinduism. As director of the Tübingen Seminary, Roth made the study of the Veda compulsory. We provided evidence that the Prussian state supported German Indology as an annex to Protestant theology. Indologists like Weber explicitly underscored the fact that they would place their research in service of Protestantism. Closer in time,

Schlegel's founding essay, 'Über den gegenwärtigen Zustand der Indischen Philologie', which marks the beginning of 'German Indology' as an academic discipline: 'If the study of Indian literature is to thrive, the principles of classical philology have to be thoroughly applied to it, and that with the most scientific rigor'. ('Soll das Studium der indischen Litteratur gedeihen, so müssen durchaus die Grundsätze der classischen Philologie, und zwar mit der wissenschaftlichsten Schärfe, darauf angewandt werden.') This opinion was still widespread and taken for granted when I first

the deeply religious Paul Hacker, propounded: "As long as there is a scientific study of India, an Indology, the topic of 'India and Christianity' in its manifold aspects will belong to its research domain" (Hacker 1978, 178). Hacker also noted: "My real profession is namely the science of India [die Wissenschaft von Indien], especially of Indian philosophies and religions. But unlike almost all my colleagues during my thirteen-month stay in India I sought an association with the mission, namely the Catholic but also the Protestant. I wanted to place my science in the service of the Church" (Hacker 2012, 140n1). Rather than address this evidence, Franco resorts to an *ad hominem*. His review does not present a single counterargument. Rather than address the evidence of a Protestant bias in the study of Hinduism (see Gelders and Derde 2003), it attacks us instead.

⁶¹ This one line from August Wilhelm Schlegel's essay has attained the status of a bromide. Thus, Theodor Benfey (1869) writes, "In Bezug auf die allgemeinen Erfordernisse ist hier insbesondere das stärkste Gewicht darauf gelegt, daß die Grundsätze der classischen Philologie auch bei diesen Studien in Anwendung zu bringen seien; so heißt es S. 22: Soll das Studium der Indischen Litteratur gedeihen, so müssen durchaus die Grundsätze der classischen Philologie, und zwar mit der wissenschaftlichen Schärfe, darauf angewandt werden" (Ibid., 381). Ernst Windisch quotes the same passage: "Gegenüber den Mängeln der ersten englischen Übersetzungen und ersten indischen Textausgaben stellt er S. 22 den Satz auf: 'Soll das Studium der Indischen Litteratur gedeihen, so müssen durchaus die Grundsätze der classischen Philologie, und zwar mit der wissenschaftlichen Schärfe, darauf angewandt werden'" (Windisch 1917, 79). Neither appears to have read much beyond this line. Windisch cites only this passage. Benfey cites more of the context, but still does not provide a critical reflection. Neither scholar acknowledges the link between Schlegel's nationalism and philology. Let us first take a closer look at some passages:

"In not a few fields of research, the Germans are decisively ahead of all the other peoples of Europe; in no field will they permit themselves to lag behind their neighbors" (Schlegel 1823, 1).

"All the above mentioned goals and drives lie outside the domain of the Germans; in contrast, the world-historical, philological and philosophical perspectives, which offer themselves immediately on contemplation of the Indian monuments, will appeal to them all the more vitally. For the researches, which train the eye for such prospects into the unknown prehistorical world, are preferentially at home in Germany, and foreign scholars do not even have an idea of certain concepts with which the German has long since been familiar" (Ibid., 4).

"The English translations of Indian books delivered until now have at least preliminarily satisfied the desire for knowledge, and provided some instruction and entertainment. Of course, when it comes to historical-critical researches [historisch-kritische Forschungen], one may demand that one go back to the original sources, especially as they are now accessible" (Ibid., 16–17).

Franco, like Windisch and Benfey, only cites the comparison with philology. His analysis does not clarify wherein the "application" of "the principles of classical philology" consists. It also does not adequately account for the fact that Schlegel's valorization of the German "philological" school was linked to his nationalism, or that this nationalism promoted historicism to affirm German exceptionalism. It also elides the fact that

came to Germany in the early 1980s. It lasted as long as classical philology itself was able to maintain its prestige, until the repeated waves of neo-liberalism, secondary school and university reform, and the cultural turn in the humanities marginalised it, and with that Indology as well.⁶² In

Schlegel explicitly intended this new paradigm to replace the traditional approach: “One may not object that owing to the uninterrupted transmission the learned Brahmans are in possession of the understanding of their ancient books; for them Sanskrit is still a living language: we may only learn from them. We must understand the written monuments of India simultaneously as Brahmans and as European critics. The current Homeric questions were not more strange to the learned Greeks as the investigations into the origin of the Indian religion and legislation, into the gradual development of mythology, into their context and their contradictions, into their cosmogonic, physical or historical *explanation*, finally, into the incursion of later fraud, would be to the learned Indians” (Ibid., 22, emphasis in original).

A closer look, however, reveals that Schlegel’s essay confirms all our points in *The Nay Science*. German Indology began in competition with the British; it was part of a general German movement to claim the status of the cultured people of Europe (*das Kulturvolk Europas*); it valorized German philological expertise; it claimed a parallel with classical philology in its quest to become a university discipline; it wished to supplant native traditions of commentary; it presented the latter as historically naïve; and it argued that German historicism had superseded them. Indology also emphasized the separation of the earlier, “more genuine” doctrines from later additions, which it ascribed to Brahmanic fraud. Exactly how is this essay supposed to refute *The Nay Science*?

One final point is worth noting. Whence Schlegel’s arrogance towards the Brahmans? Let us first read his own words: “But we are Europeans, and our precedence, our spiritual maturity [Mündigkeit] lies precisely therein that we survey the globe with its inhabitants, and have the drive to trace the history of both back to the most remote prehistory. Consequently, no monument of venerable antiquity should solicit us in vain for its interpretation” (Schlegel 1823, 25). Qua European, Schlegel thinks that his thought or his worldview subsumes all others. This precedence derives from the fact that European thought is *mündig* or mature, whereas all other cultures still await their “exit” from *Unmündigkeit*, preferably under German tutelage. *The Nay Science* made this precise point. We argued that ultimately the German Indologists’ arrogance derived from a secular analogue of Christian supersessionism. Mediated via Hegel, this supersessionism was the real reason they thought they did not need to engage with the tradition; that European categories, merely in virtue of occurring later, subsumed the former. The key passage reads as follows: “Because their [the Indologists’] interpretations were now tacitly underwritten by this theoretical premise, a historical metanarrative that conferred universality and exclusivity on their interpretations, they were now forced constantly to denigrate the tradition. What little scientificity their interpretations possessed was due to the fact that *they*, rather than the tradition, were consonant with the idea of reason. The tradition had been superseded not through exposing its shortcomings, but by projecting a narrative of historical reason capable of subsuming all earlier stages of history within itself. No dialogue had occurred, but, more importantly, no dialogue *could* occur, because to enter into dialogue with tradition would mean implicitly to surrender Indology’s claim to being absolute. And thus, concrete interpretation of Indian texts was indissolubly linked to the task of a critique of tradition” (NS, 343). Citing Schlegel only confirms our thesis.

⁶² **The Search for Legitimacy**

What is neoliberalism’s relevance to philology? Is there any evidence that philology’s decline is due to neoliberalism? Is there any evidence that neoliberal economists have taken a stance on philology? Or that

neoliberalism entails a critique of Indology? “Neoliberalism” has become a catchall among Indologists, a way to blame their discipline’s decline on unspecified corporate or economic interests. Slaje’s analysis focuses on “the dictate of paymasters and accountants dominating today, to whom thinking in categories other than quantifying and profit-maximizing ones must be alien. [. . .] But if fundamental thought categories and commercial trading principles as were originally developed among the mercantile class and have there indubitably proven themselves are declared to be universally valid and applied absolutely as a measure even for science [Wissenschaft], then we should fear for intellectual freedom at universities” (Slaje 2003, 314). Pollock likewise blames “philology’s collapse” on “the contemporary attack, unprecedented for its depth and extent, on the humanities as representing little more than a market inefficiency in the newly corporatized Western university” (Pollock 2015, 3).

Slaje’s and Pollock’s analysis overlooks the fact that Indology’s problems are unrelated to economic conditions. Student enrollment and funding have never been higher at German universities. In the United States, Indians, the most obvious recipients of Indian philosophy, have never comprised a higher share of the population. Indology’s crisis is self-made. It has not found a convincing rationale for itself. Unspecified corporate interests thus serve as a convenient scapegoat. Rather than acknowledge the problems with their discipline, above all, that it emerged in response to specific historical and political conditions, the Indologists still wish to pretend that their science is timeless, and the real problem is a changing economic landscape.

They do themselves no favors with this argument. They may think that others associate the same negative connotations with “neoliberalism,” and they merely have to mention “neoliberalism” to make it clear that Indology, as neoliberalism’s other, is worth protecting, but in truth they merely reveal themselves as a mandarin elite that fears economic change and technological progress (Ringer 1976). Compare, for instance, Gaeffke (1990), who blames Indology’s decline on “the private character of higher education,” “irregular public funding” (Ibid., 69), “the voices of the new nations of Asia,” “the growing crisis of the humanities” (Ibid., 70), “postwar nationalism,” “resentful Asians,” “Orientalist bashing,” “postcolonial politics,” “anti-Orientalist propaganda” (Ibid., 71), “the American scene,” “immigrant population,” “the deplorable state of secondary education,” “insufficiently trained Easterners” (Ibid., 72), “flashy ‘theories’ [in place of] a disciplinary method,” “Michel Foucault,” “deconstructionists” (Ibid., 73), “affirmative action policy” (Ibid., 73–74), and the hiring of “more women” and “intellectual fashions” (Ibid., 74). Slaje (2003, 311–31) likewise blames “doctrinary mercantilism” and “usefulness” (Ibid., 311), an “educational deficit [...] in the universities and educational ministries” (Ibid., 312), “commercial principles of dealing,” “the mercantile class” (Ibid., 314), “an ideologically fed discourse” (Ibid., 314–15), and “centrally planned science [Planwissenschaft]” (Ibid., 315) for Indology’s decline. Michael Witzel writes, “By now, the institution seems to have run its course: under the influence of the imitation of the Anglo-American plethora of degrees (now re-incarnated on a European level, BA-MA), by mass production of students under the typical German super-bureaucracy, with an ever more powerful administration, it has become nearly impossible to function” (Witzel 2014, 17n39). In sum, we have the impression of a discipline that would thrive in a world without Asians, Americans, and women; a world where intellectual development was outlawed, Europe remained in control of the world’s resources, and European categories the sole normative ones. Ideally, colonialism would still be in force, and pesky outsiders, especially the colonized races could not demand that the Indologists provide an account of their work or whom it benefits.

Franco’s review, however, overlooks a key fact. *The Nay Science* is not a neoliberal critique of German

other words, 'German Indology' is not, at its core, a 'nay' science; rather, 'German Indologists' wanted to accomplish for India what their fellow philologists had accomplished for Ancient Greece and Rome⁶³—and presumably, some of them still have this aim. Looking back at what they have

Indology: *it is a Marxist critique. The Nay Science* interrogated Indology's superstructure. It raised the question of who controls the means of production and who benefits from the established order. It raised the question of whose labor the Indologists were exploiting. It argued that the Indologists were engaged in extracting the Brahmins' sole resource, their texts, as corroborated by the Indologists' own testimony (see *NS*, 293n595 and 305n621). Indology's decimation is thus not a refutation of Marxist dialectic: it is a confirmation of it. Indologists thrived on the surplus capital accrued from the colonization of the non-Western world. In this newly liberalizing world, for the first time they are being asked to account for themselves.

⁶³ Throughout their history, the German Indologists sought recognition from the classicists. Thus Hermann Oldenberg made explicit overtures to the classicists at the Forty-Eighth Association of German Philologists and School Teachers in Hamburg: "We [the German Indologists] cannot offer the great ideals [necessary] for that; as the educator of our youth and our nation, India may never be mentioned in the same breath as Greece and Rome. [...] Even when we must reject Buddhism as a source of education, we will still find that acquiring such knowledge is not devoid of a pedagogic element. In this sense, the educators of our people who draw out of the riches of antiquity [the classical philologists] will not deny us, too, the right to a place alongside them" (Oldenberg 1906b, 8–9). Moriz Winternitz similarly belabored a comparison with the study of Greek and Roman antiquity: "It may not be doubted that the commonality of language, this most important of all tools of spiritual activity, presupposes a *spiritual affinity* and a *cultural community*. Even though the Indians are not flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood, we can nonetheless discover spirit of our spirit in the Indian thought world. But to attain knowledge of the 'Indo-Germanic spirit,' that is, what we can label the Indo-Germanic character in the thought and appearance and poetry of these peoples, it is necessary that our knowledge of the Indo-Germanic essence such as we have acquired through the study of *European* literatures be supplemented by an acquaintance with the Indo-Germanic spirit such as it has been active in the far East. Therefore *Indian literature* constitutes a necessary supplement to the classical literature of ancient Greece and Rome for everyone who wishes to preserve himself from a one-sided contemplation of the Indo-Germanic essence. To be sure, Indian literature cannot be compared with the Greek in terms of artistic value; certainly, the Indian thought world did not remotely exercise the same influence on modern European intellectual life as did Greek and Roman culture. But when we wish to understand the *beginnings* of our own culture, the oldest *Indo-Germanic* culture, we must go to India, where the oldest literature of an Indo-Germanic people is preserved. For however the question of the age of Indian literature may be settled, so much is clear that the oldest literary monument of the Indians is simultaneously the oldest *Indo-Germanic* literary monument that we possess" (Winternitz 1909, 5–6, emphasis in original).

But the real question is not whether the German Indologists have seen themselves as "fellow philologists" as Franco argues, but whether the classicists have ever acknowledged them as such. Are there any examples where the comparison flowed the other way? In our extensive research, we did not encounter a single source where a *non-Indologist* acknowledged Indology as part of the humanities. The sole arena where success was reserved for Indology was Indo-Germanic or Aryan ideology. Thus J. W. Hauer used language similar to Winternitz's to consolidate Indology's position at the university: "In spite of everything strange and foreign, we discover in it [the *Bhagavadgītā*] the question and answer of our own innermost essence. Here spirit of our spirit has been at work" (Hauer 1937, vi). Franco and others may blame "neoliberal" policies, but the real

*accomplished over the last 200 years, they have not done such a poor job.*⁶⁴

*The great French Indologist Sylvain Lévi famously said that 'India has no history' ('l'Inde n'a pas d'histoire'). By this, he did not mean of course, as he was often misinterpreted as saying, that things always remain the same in India, but rather that premodern India was not in possession of its own history.*⁶⁵ *It created neither a historiography (though one might insist on a few exceptions), nor archives, nor archeology, nor other means to preserve*

reason for Indology's decline is the loss of *this* central political and social function.

⁶⁴ The Indologists' gaze appears permanently turned to the nineteenth century. Michael Witzel quotes Bernhard Kölver as saying, "It was a nice two hundred years" (Witzel 2014, 17n39). Sheldon Pollock notes that "philology was the queen of the sciences in the nineteenth-century European university, bestriding that world like a colossus in its conceptual and institutional power" (Pollock 2015, 2). This nostalgia is at odds with their role as pedagogues, supposedly hired to produce citizens of the twenty-first century. It is also unhistorical: the nineteenth century may have been good to the mandarin professoriate; almost everyone else remembers it as a period of violence, exploitation, and warfare. The Indologists' nostalgia expresses an inability to comprehend which way the world is moving philosophically and to adapt to this changing world. It thus exposes their claim to be "future philologists." We can well believe that the Indologists were created for the patronage system Gaeffke describes: "From the students in the first semester to senior professors, everybody was judged according to whether he adhered to a general standards [sic] and did not say or write anything that was not supported by the texts. This standard worked as the rule in patronage of students, in the promotion of young scholars, in the awarding of research grants and review articles, and, of course, in the grape wine [sic] of correspondences and scholarly meetings" (Gaeffke 1994, 6). But it is unacceptable for Franco to inform us that we must read Windisch to comprehend German Indology. Has he been drinking more of the same grape wine?

⁶⁵ *The Nay Science* demonstrated how tenuous the Indologists' "histories" were. It demonstrated how, in the name of historical research, they refashioned the Mahābhārata in the mold of a "Blut und Eisen" Prussianism, projected their anxieties about civilizational downfall onto the text, and invoked Lutheran anti-Judaic prejudices to explain supposed failings of Indian culture. Franco's analysis overlooks the distinction between true historical research and the Indologists' "historio-graphy," a subgenre of fiction writing (the term is Anders Gerdmar's; for a discussion see *NS*, 22n93).

Once we discount the Indologists' fictional histories, we do not know significantly more about the Indian past than before. In some respects we know less, because their accounts veiled important intellectual developments such as the emergence of *bhakti* from Vedic Brahmanism.

Finally, Franco's claim that the Indians never developed a historiography is neither novel nor true. Hegel made it the cornerstone of his critique of Hinduism. Oldenberg wrote: "Monumental documents that report of the deeds of ancient kings, such as [existed] in Egypt or Babylonia, of course, did not exist in the India of the Kurus and Pāṇḍus and still did not exist there through long centuries after. And historiography in a scientific sense: how many leagues one was, of course, far from that! What purpose would it have served anyway for this epoch?" (Oldenberg 1922, 11). "Historical development tends to be more weakly, more nebulously formed in India than in the West. [...] It [i.e., historical development] lies in a transmission before us that does everything [possible] in order to obscure its image completely: this transmission without firm dates, which often confuses old and new to a seemingly hopeless extent" (Oldenberg, 1906b, 6). The claim is false because India developed

and remember its own history. Consider how much the most learned Indian intellectuals, the pandits, acaryas, etc., knew around the year 1800 about Indian history and civilisation, and how much we know now. The difference is due to Indology, obviously not only 'German', although the 'German' contribution has been decisive.⁶⁶ The Bhagavadgītā itself is a good example. It was largely unknown in India in the nineteenth century except in Vedānta circles,⁶⁷ and its current popularity is rightly considered to be a case of the 'pizza effect' (pizza became popular in Italy only after

historiography in the form of the epics and the Purāṇas. Admittedly, this is historiography in a different sense than the West is accustomed to, but this only underscores how perverse it is to impose history in a normative Western sense on these texts. Coomaraswamy notes, "Modern attempts to prove the historicity of the epics are conditioned in part, of course, by a natural reaction against the accusation of a 'lack of any historical sense' in Indian culture generally. But the European scholar is perfectly correct in his diagnosis of an indifference to history in India; the Indian wrong, untrue to himself, and lacking in the courage of his own convictions and traditional indoctrination when he denies this virtue in himself" (Coomaraswamy 1937, 212). Coomaraswamy is correct, but we would add: Indians are only indifferent to history in the sense of a linear, objective unfolding. This latter sense is a theologically determined sense of history. It arises from a combination of the Christian *Heilsgeschichte* or salvific history (that is, the experience of awaiting the *parousia*) with the Stoic *Universalgeschichte* or universal history (the Stoic influence on both Kant and Hegel is well attested), and is thus relevant only for Christianity. Michael Witzel (2005) is therefore quite right when he states, "I hate people who misrepresent history," except that he misunderstands the reason for his antagonism: it is theological in nature. Franco's implication that the Indians ought to be grateful to the German Indologists for providing them with a history illustrates the Indologists' epistemic blindness and arrogance.

⁶⁶ Aside from the problems with the Indologists' "histories" (see preceding note), Franco's comment raises an interesting question: if the Indologists provide histories, why do we require departments of Indology? Surely, the Indologists' proper place is within history departments? More generally, if the Indologists provide sociological analysis (for example, of caste relations and Brahman domination), their proper place is in sociology departments, where methods and paradigms (experiments, statistical models, control groups, fieldwork, and so on) have been evolved for this kind of research; if they provide anthropological knowledge, their proper place is in anthropology departments (where again methods and paradigms exist for this research); and if they provide ethnogeographic or geopolitical insights, their proper place is in area studies or international relations (where their knowledge, moreover, will have a practical function). Alternatively, if the Indologists claim that they belong to "the world of the humanities" (Slaje 2003, 311), then they cannot avoid answering questions of value, ethics, and contribution to the humanities like those raised in *The Nay Science*. Further, here too they cannot avoid the question of why we need Indology. If Indology is concerned with India's "linguistic documents" (Slaje 2003, 321), it is a subfield of literary studies; if it is concerned with "methods like [...] textual criticism and philology" (Ibid., 313), it should be merged into (classical) philology; if it is concerned with "the disclosure of the contents of the oldest as well as more recent linguistic documents of the Indian region with the *primary method* of a philology that works historically and critically" (Ibid., 319), its place is evangelical theology. Finally, there is the option that Indology is the study of Sanskrit. In this case, there exist long-standing canons for the study and literary appreciation of Sanskrit in India, and Indology dissolves into the tradition of Sanskrit erudition. The Indologists' work will then fundamentally consist of the appreciation and preservation of India's Sanskrit heritage, and there will be no place for the kind of suspicion of the natives, narratives of superior critical consciousness, controlling admission to the "temple of disciplinarity," and so on that we have seen.

⁶⁷ The idea that Indians rediscovered the Bhagavadgītā through the Indologists can be frequently encountered

and as a result of becoming popular abroad);⁶⁸ it was barely known even in Vaishnava circles (imagine the Hare Krishnas without the Gītā!). Gandhi, for instance, who contributed greatly to its current popularity and the image of its 'sanctity', first heard about it when he was in England, and first read it in an English translation.

So what is the 'nay science' in all of the above? Surprisingly, the authors fail to make it entirely clear what exactly the title of their book refers to.⁶⁹ If I

among German Indologists. Jürgen Hanneder writes, "What will perhaps not be so clear to the reader is that the Bhagavadgītā originally attains its present stature at the [same] moment in time as it is received in the West. The German reader should therefore not see himself as an ethnologist, who, in amazement, encounters another country and its religion for the first time, rather, he holds here in his hands the result of long discussions and interactions between his own [culture] and Indian culture" (Hanneder 2008). As Catherine Robinson (2006) points out, this is a misperception: "Despite some protestations to the contrary, there is, then, no doubt of the prestige enjoyed by the Bhagavad-Gītā in the pre-modern period, as the wealth of commentaries it has generated and the number of texts called 'Gītā' that it has inspired [...]. The Bhagavad-Gītā has been prized by Vedāntins as a constituent of the prasthāna-trayā (threefold canon or triple foundation) along with the Upaniṣads and the Vedānta Sūtra. Hence Vedāntic philosophers and theologians, among them Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva, have produced commentaries on the Bhagavadgītā in accordance with Advaita (non-dualist), Viśiṣṭadvaita (qualified non-dualist) and Dvaita (dualist) Vedānta respectively. Even Śaivites composed commentaries on the Bhagavad-Gītā" (Ibid. 4). The Bhagavadgītā's resurgence was due neither to Indian freedom fighters nor to the Western translators they relied on nor to new religious movements that encouraged its study. Its resurgence was due to its intrinsic qualities, which are implied in the notion of a "classic." A classic is a text capable of being rediscovered at any time. It is a text so rich in meaning that every generation can find some message in it. Even if extrinsic historical conditions facilitate this reappropriation, they are secondary. But even if we grant Franco's claim that German Indologists helped Indians rediscover the Bhagavadgītā, what conclusion should we draw from this? Surely the implication is that the Indian government rather than the German should fund Indology.

⁶⁸ The reference is to Agehananda Bharati's theory of the "pizza effect" (Bharati 1970). Bharati, whose real name was Leopold Fischer, was an Austrian national. After serving in Hitler's "Free India" legion along with fellow Indologists Paul Thieme and Paul Hacker, he spent time in India and joined a monastic order. He coined the term "pizza effect" for the way Western appreciation shaped the Indian acceptance of native concepts or products. The choice of "pizza" is unfortunate because the theory that pizza attained popularity due to Italian-Americans has been disproven as an urban legend. The idea is, moreover, jejune. In any process of globalization, there is a flow of goods and ideas, and these condition reciprocal influences. What is Franco's argument: that Indians would not have rediscovered their tradition without the Indologists? Or that Indians ought to be grateful to the Indologists for reintroducing them to it? If so, the proper source to fund Indology is the Indian government and not the German government. Or perhaps Franco, like Bharati, expresses his frustration that, in spite of his effort to enculturate, the Indians refuse to acknowledge his authority and, instead, have developed their own ideas of the past. We sympathize. It can be difficult to surrender one's culture in the quest for authority and acceptance from another. But if the Indologists' sense of self-worth going depends on getting Indians to see things the way they do, they are in for a bitter disappointment. The point of education in the humanities is self-knowledge, not the establishment of a new creed.

⁶⁹ **The Death of Indology**

understand them correctly, they use the label to characterise a lack of respect for the 'traditional' and/or 'indigenous' way(s) of reading Sanskrit texts.⁷⁰ This would include both the indigenous pāṇḍitya readings as well as personally committed religious and political readings, like Gandhi's reading of the Gītā, which the authors specifically endorse. In other words, anything goes when one instrumentalises the text, that is, anything except a careful and critical scholarly reading of it.⁷¹ This tendency has become more pronounced with the post-colonial turn, which endorses defensive,

The title is self-evident. It is a double word play. It plays on the English translation of Nietzsche's *La Gaya Scienza—The Gay Science*. It also puns on the word “nescience,” which translates the Sanskrit *ajñāna* or *avidyā*. The title was thus intended to underscore Indology's nihilism and its absence of meaning and genuine intellectual value. German Indology appears a game played for the stakes of professorial positions and institutional authority. The German Indologists may have impressed some people with their displays of erudition. Certainly, their arcane technical language contributed to this impression. But they have understood neither the texts nor the purpose of reading them. Their situation recalls that of the fool in the Kathāsaritasāgara: “A certain foolish man, who wished to see the new moon, was told by a man who saw it, to look in the direction of his finger. He averted his eyes from the sky, and stood staring at his friend's finger, and so did not see the new moon, but saw the people laughing at him.” In the name of a critical methodology, the Indologists have advanced tendentious and misleading concepts like Hacker's “method of comparing multiple transmissions” (Hacker 1961, 489, italics removed) or Grünendahl's false “premise of scripts” (Grünendahl 1993, 101–30). They have not contributed to the humanities. On the contrary, their research provided epistemic foundations for the most infamous genocide in human history. Appropriately, *The Nay Science* concluded, “Since this science no longer has a positive motivation such as the reappropriation of tradition or the upholding of ethical values, its effects are negative and nugatory. In Carne-Ross's memorable words, ‘if the humanities failed to humanize us, it is ‘because we deprived them of their humanity by alternately aestheticizing them and handing them over to scholarship.’ In this sense, German Indology is truly worthy of the epithet ‘the nay science’” (NS, 445).

⁷⁰ We label German Indology a “nay science” not because it rejects “‘traditional’ and/or ‘indigenous’ way(s) of reading Sanskrit texts.” Rather, German Indology is a nay science because it lacks a positive function. It has contributed neither to the humanities nor to scientific knowledge. It is a discipline that thrives on the abstract contrast between Western and Eastern, modern and tradition, enlightened and precritical. It thus perpetuates the racist legacy of colonization and European exclusivism. The Indologists invoke history not because they seek historical knowledge (as we showed, their histories are untenable), but because the idea of history as a “waiting room” tacitly underwrites their authority. Paradoxically, while insisting that everything is in history and hence must also be understood historically, they resist historical analysis of their own discipline. For the expression “waiting room” see Chakrabarti (2000, 8) Chakrabarti clarifies it thus: “Mill's historicist argument thus consigned Indians, Africans, and other ‘rude’ nations to an imaginary waiting room of history. In doing so, it converted history itself into a version of this waiting room. We were all headed for the same destination, Mill averred, but some people were to arrive earlier than others. That was what historicist consciousness was: a recommendation to the colonized to wait.”

⁷¹ The dichotomy between “indigenous pāṇḍitya readings” and “personally committed religious and political readings,” on one hand, and “a careful and critical scholarly reading of it,” on the other, is false and prejudicial. It assumes that the German Indologists had no personal commitments, a view *The Nay Science* showed is false:

1. The German Indologists' readings of the Bhagavadgītā were no less religious and political in nature. The debate over the text's alleged pantheism flared up over the question of the religion proper to the ancient

*indigenist readings of such texts.*⁷² I am not sure whether the authors realise that what they recommend amounts to an open invitation for reading

Germans: was it, as Adolf Holtzmann Jr. asserted, nature worship or, as Richard Garbe asserted, rational monotheism? In the background of this debate stood yet another: was Catholicism or Protestantism closer to the original revelation?

2. No group instrumentalized the Bhagavadgītā more than the German Indologists. Richard Garbe argued that the text presented an “ethical Kṣatriya religion” (Garbe 1905, 24, italics removed). His student Jakob Wilhelm Hauer thought that it contained “the question and answer of our own innermost essence” (Hauer 1937, vi). According to him, the Bhagavadgītā contained “the classical form of one of the most significant phases of Indo-Germanic religious history [Glaubensgeschichte]—to be sure mixed up with other elements but in its core of an exceptional essential purity” (Ibid., vi). This difference is easily explained: Garbe was addressing conservative Württemberg circles, whereas Hauer was addressing Nazi officials. Garbe was elevated to the peerage in 1909; Hauer became the director of the newly founded Aryan Seminar (*Arisches Seminar*) at Tübingen University in 1940.

3. Franco’s analysis is tendentious. It recalls von Stietencron’s comment: “The analytical thinking of Western scholars trained in historical and philological methodology stood in contrast to the traditional Indian commentators. The latter not only generously harmonized all the disjunctions in the text but, above all, attempted to recognise in particular passages of the text their own philosophical and theological concepts. This was done in order to secure for themselves the divine authority of Kṛṣṇa” (von Stietencron 1996, 6). It also recalls Hanneder’s comment: “The tension between the two methods of scholarship [that is, between traditional Indian and Western academic scholarship] [...] is in some respects similar to the relationship between theology and ‘Religionswissenschaft.’ Theology conceived as the academic side of the practice of a religion can include a scientific investigation of the subject, but for a theologian his subject will always be more than ‘just’ a topic for research. In a similar way, the pandit’s proficiency in a subject is often coupled, as Aklujkar points out, with a certain way of life and it may be difficult to divorce the academic aspect from the Pandit identity. Since he is supposed not only to function as a mere scholar, his view of the culture he embodies through his erudition is necessarily more holistic. ‘Western’ Indology with its specifically historically oriented, critical approach, had to make use of the Indian *pāṇḍitya* in order to get, as much as possible, first hand information, but it could not accept its theological dimension without compromising its aims as a historical subject” (Hanneder 2005, 672). In its semantic structure, Franco’s “personally committed religious and political readings” practically mimics Hanneder’s “religiously and confessionally bound” (Hanneder 2010b, 87). All three authors thus attempt to trade on a narrative of European superiority.

4. Franco’s analysis is implicitly racist. It does not distinguish between different pandits but, like Garbe (1889, 86), assigns them a general character. This is to overlook their specificity and, once again, trade on a narrative of a generalized European freedom and faculty of critical self-reflection.

One final comment is in order. As we showed, the German scholars were less self-reflexive, less self-critical, and less historically self-aware than the Indians. Yet Franco can describe Indian readings as “defensive” and “indigenist” because of an Enlightenment prejudice that individuals of nations that have as yet to undergo a historical Enlightenment lack self-consciousness. Ultimately, it is this prejudice that sustains the Indologists’ authority, and confers legitimacy on the narrative of the tradition’s supersession by Indology.

⁷² Like neoliberalism, “postcolonial turn” is another catchphrase among the Indologists. They equate it with an

*and using a text like the Gītā as a justification of the abominable concepts and practices of caste distinction, Hindu nationalism, Brahmin supremacy, Right-wing militarism and fascism, to mention but a few possibilities.*⁷³

attitude in which science is no longer valued as an intrinsic good; an attitude in which questions can be asked about who authored these treatises and why. They thus regard postcolonialism as the denigration of all they stood for: a value-neutral, presuppositionless science unrelated to questions of perspective or privilege, supposedly representative of a universal episteme. There are four problems with this claim:

1. It is one thing to assert that Indology represents the claims of reason *tout court*; another to actually demonstrate it. Franco merely *asserts* that Indology is a timeless, value-neutral science such that the issue of perspective and privilege do not apply.
2. There is an inconsistency between claiming the Marxist moral high ground and refusing to answer questions of privilege.
3. The question of whom this science serves cannot be dismissed as a postcolonial concern: it is a question raised from the heart of German academia. *The Nay Science* demonstrated that the German Indologists lagged behind German philosophy. It demonstrated that Indology was anachronistic not from an Indian perspective, but a German one. Contrary to Edward Said's thesis of orientalism, it argued that German Indologists sought to present themselves to Indians as the face of Western political rationality, but were in fact a marginal phenomenon even within the university.
4. Postcolonialism is not identical with "defensive, indigenist readings." Strictly speaking, it does not endorse any readings at all, since it is an epistemic stance rather than a theory of interpretation. Gaeffke similarly contrasts the Orientalists' "scholarship" with the "blind resentment and unfocused anger" of "postcolonial politics" (Gaeffke 1990, 71). The Indologists seem to think invoking the contrast between the enlightened, critical, and self-possessed Western scholar and the resentful colonial subject suffices as a political legitimization if not an epistemic justification of their discipline. But the question is not whether Indology is preferable to the alternatives, but whether its episteme is sufficiently rigorous. Franco invokes Schlegel, classical philology, neoliberalism, secondary school and university reform, the cultural turn in the humanities, Indian history and civilization, the postcolonial turn, defensive, indigenist readings, caste distinction, Hindu nationalism, Brahmin supremacy, Right-wing militarism, fascism, and Hindutva ideology. But he does not address the two questions we raised: were German interpretations of the Mahābhārata and the Bhagavadgītā sufficiently rigorous? Were the Indologists sufficiently self-aware? If not, there is a problem with Indology. Underscoring its role of oversight over indigenous readers will not obscure this simple truth.

⁷³ **Excommunication and Apartheid**

The Nay Science did not make any recommendations concerning Sanskrit studies. It scrupulously avoided arguing for tradition in an unqualified sense. Rather than present an idealized vision of the past, it undertook a critique of the present, specifically of Enlightenment rationality. We undertook this critique not from an Indian perspective, but from the perspective of contemporary Continental philosophy. In the introduction, we noted: "Thus, this book's direct inspiration is ultimately the radical philology of Nietzsche (articulated, among other works, in his *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*) and its contemporary descendants, such as the work of Sean Alexander Gurd (see his *Iphigenias at Aulis: Textual Multiplicity, Radical Philology* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005]). It also owes a tremendous debt to Reiner Schürmann, especially his

Broken Hegemonies, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003)” (NS, 5n16). Our critique was philosophical and emancipatory, rather than political and reactionary: “It must however be emphasized that the generalized suspicion of tradition has deep roots in contemporary European consciousness. It cannot be eradicated with a few empty gestures toward greater inclusivity or toward a more perspicuous hermeneutic consciousness. Ultimately, the roots of this suspicion will be the very same as the fundamentals of the modern hegemony of self-consciousness, as Schürmann has analyzed these in his magnum opus, *Broken Hegemonies*. The rehabilitation of tradition cannot therefore have a restorative intent. The modern university serves functions that are essentially distinct from those of traditional systems of pedagogy. It would be naïve to assume that a return to tradition is all that is required to correct the deficits of contemporary scholarship. Rather, the rehabilitation of tradition must primarily take the form of a critique and, above all, of a self-critique of modernity” (NS, 355).

Franco appears to think that because we reject German Indology we must affirm tradition in an uncritical sense. As we showed, the abstract contrast between tradition and modernity was crucial to German Indology for its legitimacy depended on it. As inheritors of Hegel’s Protestantism, the Indologists were tasked with defending the narrative of a *Geist* whose movement from East to West tracks mankind’s emergence from immaturity and bondage to reason and freedom. Hegel’s logic, however, could not work unless India was represented as the paradigm of a monolithic, unchanging, and reactionary tradition—precisely the culture to which Germany constituted itself as an other. When Franco cites “the abominable concepts and practices of caste distinction, Hindu nationalism, Brahmin supremacy, Right-wing militarism and fascism” as the alternative to Indology, he confirms our observation in *The Nay Science*, namely “nowhere does the German scholars’ rootedness in specific historical circumstances become more evident than in this difference [that is, their iconoclastic attitude toward tradition] from their British and Continental colleagues. German scholars, however, did not stop to ask themselves why tradition appeared so inimical to them. In their headlong rush to take their place as scientists alongside their philologist colleagues, they simply accepted the abstract opposition of tradition and reason as set up by Romanticism. Indeed, it became one of the foundational gestures of the discipline. Thus, from Roth to Oldenberg and from Slaje to Hanneder, when asked what Indology was, they responded with a clarification of *what it was not*: it was not the tradition. But merely not being traditional is no argument for a discipline; it is only an argument for the value of something where tradition has been equated with the nonrational or the antirational” (NS, 424–25). *The Nay Science thus already anticipated Franco’s response.*

The insinuation that we “recommend [. . .] reading and using a text like the *Gītā* as a justification of the abominable concepts and practices of caste distinction, Hindu nationalism, Brahmin supremacy, Right-wing militarism and fascism” is pernicious and offensive. Our paradigm of the thoughtful reader was Gandhi, who interpreted the text to extend its promise of political and personal emancipation to all members of society. We showed how Gandhi subverted the German scholars’ false dichotomy between reading something into the text and a strictly scientific dealing with the text. “Nothing could be more diametrically opposed to the German Indologists’ insistence that no meaning be attached to archaic words in a naïvely apolitical and ahistorical search for the history of meanings of terms. It is precisely by not attaching meanings that the Indologist loses all meaning. (Paradoxically, in this attempt to not attach meanings, he nonetheless ends up attaching meanings of the most disparate and random nature: Āryan incursions, heroic blood-drinking warriors, Ur-Gītās tailored to the ‘epic situation,’ and a call to the German people to not lose their ‘sensitivity for the desires of the nature that creates dispositions and functions’” (NS, 439). We showed how Gandhi, by

*Under such circumstances, we as 'German' and other Indologists may gladly accept the epithet 'nay science' for our discipline; we gladly say 'no' to this promotion of ignorance, shallowness, arbitrariness, prejudice and eccentricity by the authors, and say 'yes' to serious, methodically sound and sober scholarship free of allegedly 'traditional' and political constraints by Hindutva ideology and the like.*⁷⁴

validating his reading of the Gītā against the touchstone of personal experience, enabled a deeper understanding than the German Indologists' pseudoscientific method. In contrast, the latter, although repeatedly called scientific, failed to generate a scientific consensus on a question as basic as the text's extent. Contrary to Franco's claim that such an approach amounts to "an open invitation for reading and using a text like the Gītā as a justification of [...] caste distinction, Hindu nationalism, Brahmin supremacy, Right-wing militarism and fascism," we showed how Gandhi provides a rendering "designed for women, the commercial class, the so-called Sudras, and the like, who have little or no literary equipment, who have neither desire to read the Gita in the original, and yet who stand in need of its support" (NS, 441). We explicitly noted: "Gandhi does not feel the need to distance himself from the Gītā. He avoids both the pitfall of a narrow caste-based reading as well as that of a chauvinistic nationalistic reading. Gandhi does not see the Gītā as belonging exclusively to any one group; indeed, it does not belong to any individual in virtue of his or her national, political, or social identity (German, enlightened, Indologist), but in virtue of whether he or she has made an effort to live his or her life in accordance with it. This does not mean he is uncritical: he criticizes many aspects of Indian society and tries to bring it in line with what he sees as its enduring and true principles—principles that are contained precisely in its canonical literary and philosophical texts such as the Bhagavadgītā. Criticism, however, does not mean a return to antiquity: Gandhi is far from advocating a return to India's Āryan past, as German Indologists did" (NS, 442).

Why then associate us with "the abominable concepts and practices of caste distinction, Hindu nationalism, Brahmin supremacy, Right-wing militarism and fascism"? Franco, having failed to present a counter to *The Nay Science's* argument, is left with the demagogue's fallback: character assassination. Here too his attempt fails. As left-leaning liberals and homosexuals educated at The New School, we reject his attempted categorization.

⁷⁴ Franco accuses us of "promotion of ignorance, shallowness, arbitrariness, prejudice and eccentricity," but our book was based on detailed research and years of study. In contrast, his review levies random, baseless, and irrelevant charges. It misrepresents the book, and engages in *ad hominem*s. It does not offer a single cogent objection, but instead seeks to tar us with the brush of "Hindutva." The contrast between "serious, methodically sound and sober scholarship," on one hand, and scholarship subject to "'traditional' and political constraints [and] Hindutva ideology," on the other, is too simplistic. It recalls Jürgen Hanneder's statement, "A new field of activity is soon to offer itself to academic Indology here [that is, against the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi University], [...] namely, the defence of the achievements of the Enlightenment against religiously determined views, which camouflage themselves as science. In order to succeed against the disinformation through a corporation active world-wide, such as that of the adherents of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, however, a functional Indology is needed. But perhaps it no longer bothers anyone, when in our school-books the Veda is held to be the origin of all knowledge, all languages are to be derived from the Vedic, and Indian culture reaches back into pre-historic times. Perhaps one then whispers to one of the instructors for Vedic literature in Hannover—recruited from among unemployed colleagues—something of the old Indology, a once rational human science [Geisteswissenschaft], that won honor for itself for the understanding and clarification of

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India's cultural and intellectual history" (Hanneder 2010b, 87). Franco and Hanneder, however, overlook a simple fact: the problems with Hindutva or the Maharshi Mahesh Yogi do not amount to a justification for Indology. They cannot compensate for the flaws in its methodology, research, or institutional structure. Surely, their argument is not that Indology deserves support as the lesser of two evils?

⁷⁵ The German Indologists are so accustomed to regard both "science" (*Wissenschaft*) and "scholarship" (*Forschung*) as institutionally conferred titles that the idea that someone might ask them for an epistemic justification of their work, as *The Nay Science* did, appears outrageous. When Franco declares that *The Nay Science* is not "a scholarly book," when Witzel attacks Vishwa Adluri, Stefan Arvidsson, Tuska Benes, Robert Cowan, Jörg Esleben et al., Nicholas Germana, Suzanne Marchand, Douglas T. McGetchin, Pascale Rabault-Feuerhahn, Indra Sengupta, Raymond Schwab, and Leslie A. Willson for producing a "cottage industry-like flood of books" (Witzel 2014, 17n39), when Grünendahl accuses Sumit Sarkar, Edward Said, Sheldon Pollock, Raymond Schwab, Hermann Blome, Amary de Riencourt, Léon Poliakov, Thomas R. Trautmann, Ruth Römer, Horst Junginger, Foucault, Derrida, Indra Sengupta, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, Dipesh K. Chakrabarti, Peter van der Veer, Kamakshi P. Murti, Dorothy M. Figueira, Tuska Benes, Mishka Sinha, Stefan Arvidsson, Bradley L. Herling, Nicholas A. Germana, Pascale Rabault-Feuerhahn, A. Leslie Willson, Jan Houben, Jakob Stuchlik, Eli Franco and Karin Preisendanz, and Vishwa Adluri of replacing science (*Wissenschaft*) with discourse (*Diskurs*) (see Grünendahl 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009–2010, 2012), they merely illustrate this reliance on disciplinary authority. From the Indologists' perspective, we are not *authorized* to critique the discipline—hence Franco's observation that although Vishwa Adluri was awarded a PhD from the University of Marburg, it was not with the acceptance of "any 'German' Indologist" or Slaje's use of the subjunctive mood when referring to this event ("you allegedly were conferred a Dr. phil. degree in the subject of Indology in Marburg"; Slaje 2016)—just as a commoner may not question a member of the nobility. As members of an elite hierarchy, confirmed by appointment to a chair, they regard themselves as representatives of the state's sovereign power. But what they thereby overlook is that we critique them not because we are unaware of the rules of the game, but because we *understand them only too well*. We are aware of the German professors' status as the functionaries of mankind or, at least, of the nineteenth-century German state. We are aware not only of their doctrine-making power—the ability to nominate something as "scholarship"—but also of their power to censor a book, an idea, or an individual. But we have seen this power before: it is the power of a church. Hence this our last word: Franco and the Indologists demand a simple answer. Here it is, plain and unvarnished: Unless we are convinced of error by the textual tradition of the Mahābhārata and its reception history (since we put no trust in the unsupported authority of Indologists or that of Orientalist research groups, since it is plain that they have often erred and often contradicted themselves) by manifest reasoning, we stand convinced by the textual tradition to which we have appealed, and our conscience is taken captive by (its) logic, we cannot and will not recant anything, for to act against logic is neither safe for us, nor open to us.

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