

ORGANIZED BY

Research Centre Vergelijkende Cultuurwetenschap
(Ghent University, Belgium)

Department for the Study of Religions
(The University of Pardubice, Czech Republic)

Centre for the Study of Local Cultures
(Kuvempu University, India)

India Platform UGent
(Ghent University, Belgium)

Academy for Social Sciences and Humanities, ĀSHA
(Karnataka, India)

“ Rethinking Religion in India III ”

EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIONS
AND INDIAN RESPONSES

under the auspices of Prof. Miroslav Ludwig, Rector of the University
of Pardubice and Dr. Štěpánka Fraňková, Mayor of Pardubice
with the support of the Eastern Bohemia Museum

11 - 14 OCTOBER 2011

CHATEAU PARDUBICE, CZECH REPUBLIC

www.rethinkingreligion.org

“Rethinking Religion in India III”

Contact details

Marianne Keppens, marianne.keppens@ugent.be,
Martin Fárek, martin.farek@upce.cz

In case of emergency or urgent questions, you can contact the conference organizers:
+420 775 511 211 (Marianne) or +420 775 032 574 (Martin)

This conference has been made possible with the financial and logistic support of

The University of Pardubice, The City of Pardubice, Eastern Bohemia Museum, Cultural Centre Pardubice, Centre for the Support of the Integration of Foreigners in the Pardubice Region, Kuvempu University, The Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR), The India Platform UGent, Ghent University

We want to especially thank the city of Pardubice for their wonderful support of the conference.



“Rethinking Religion in India III”

Organizing Committee

Jiří Binder, David Bradna, František Brendl, Lucie Břízová, Sarah Claerhout, Nele De Gerssem, Jakob De Roover, Martin Fárek, Marianne Keppens, Štěpán Lisý, Emanuel Maes, Alexander Naessens, Viola Pargačová, Jitka Rychlíková, Dinesh Shenoy, Romana Vojtířová, Petr Vorel

With the help of all the volunteers, students of the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Pardubice

Adéla Prokšová, Barbora Červová, Barbora Štefková, Helena Hejnová, Irena Pštrossová, Jana Horáková, Jitka Vojtková, Jolana Šafránková, Kateřina Danielková, Kateřina Kvochová, Klára Kudláčková, Lenka Zilvarová, Luboš Ježek, Lucie Šárovcová, Lukáš Málek, Markéta Kociolková, Milana Volková, Miroslav Diviš, Miroslav Košťál, Monika Makovičková, Pavlína Kubová, Sabina Kuncová, Veronika Hudcová, Viktor Hejna, Vilém Skopal, Zuzana Černá, Zuzana Drahorádová

Programming Committee

S.N. Balagangadhara, Sarah Claerhout, Nele De Gerssem, Jakob De Roover, Martin Fárek, Naomi Goldenberg, Rajaram Hegde, Marianne Keppens, Štěpán Lisý, Viola Pargačová, J.S. Sadananda

“ Rethinking Religion in India III ”

**Rethinking Religion in India III
will be inaugurated by**

Prof. Miroslav Ludwig, Rector, University of Pardubice

His Excellency Mr. V. Ashok, Ambassador of India to the Czech Republic

Dr. Štěpánka Fraňková, Mayor of Pardubice

Mr. Yannick De Clercq, Government Commissioner, Ghent University

Prof. Petr Vorel, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, University of Pardubice

**Room # Lecture Hall
11 October, 11.00 - 13.00**

Rethinking Religion in India on facebook

We warmly invite you to join our Rethinking Religion in India facebook page & interact with practical, emotional and intellectual comments and questions.

www.facebook.com/rethinkingreligion

“ Rethinking Religion in India III ”

Conference venue

The Chateau of Pardubice
(Eastern Bohemia Museum)
Zámek čp. 2
530 02 Pardubice
Czech Republic

A map of the chateau indicating all conference rooms has been enclosed in the conference bag.

Lunch and refreshments

A vegetarian and non-vegetarian lunch, as well as morning and afternoon tea with snacks, will be served for all conference participants at the venue.

Restaurants

A range of good restaurants is located on the main city square of Pardubice and the surrounding streets.

Table of Contents

Inaugural address	4
Practical information	5
Welcome	8
Well-wishing word by the Rector of the University of Pardubice	10
Well-wishing word by the Major of Pardubice	11
Conference at a glance	12

88	Closing workshop
89	Conference output and documentary
90	About the University of Pardubice
92	About the city of Pardubice
94	Participant list

PLATFORM SESSIONS

The Three Platform theses	15
Session 1 # The current representations of Indian religion are products of a monologue, not a dialogue	17
Session 2 # The dialogue is more accurately described as a meeting of two monologues	19
Session 3 # Towards mutual understanding	22

ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

Session 1 # <i>On Rammohan Roy</i>	27
Session 2 # <i>On Ghandi</i>	28
Session 3 # <i>On Dharampal</i>	29

SCREENING OF THE FILM

<i>'Kelai Draupadi, Listen Draupadi'</i>	30
--	----

PARALLEL SESSIONS

32	Detailed schedule
38	Alphabetical list of paper presenters
46	Rethinking the Caste System 1
50	Islamic Mysticism in European and Indian Perspective
54	Secularism in Europe and India
58	Indian Responses 1
62	Rethinking the Caste System 2
66	Rethinking Religion in Europe: Learning from the Case of India
71	Workshop: How to Teach about the Indian Traditions II?
72	European Representations of India 1
75	Indian Responses 2
79	European Representations of India 2
83	Hermeneutics and Historical Consciousness: German Constructions of the History of Indian Literature, 1837-2007
87	Workshop: Learning from the California Textbook Debacle

Welcome

Welcome to the third conference of the five-year conference cluster Rethinking Religion in India!

In January 2008, the first edition in Delhi initiated the five-year conference cluster by questioning the current theoretical framework for the study of religion and tradition in India. We continued the discussion in a second conference in 2009, which focused on the Indian debate on secularism and communal conflict. One of the most striking facts about these first two editions was that the formulation of clear and controversial questions generated intellectual enthusiasm and lively debate among the participating scholars, both during and after the conference proceedings.

After the two conferences in Delhi, this third conference in the series brings the project to Europe for the first time. The questions raised in the Rethinking cluster are relevant for the social sciences and humanities in Europe too, not only for the study of India specifically, but also for theoretical questions in the study of religion and cultural difference more generally. Therefore, we are very happy that the University of Pardubice took up the task of hosting this conference in Pardubice, Czech Republic.

From the first two conferences it became clear that we need to develop a new framework for the study of the Indian traditions. In the third conference we want to continue the reflections on how to realize this. Today, a virtual consensus has come into being among scholars that the European descriptions of religion in India were produced through a process of collaboration and dialogue between Europeans and Indians and hence reflect both European and Indian ways of understanding religion in India. The third Rethinking Religion in India conference will take a closer look at this growing consensus. We will systematically examine its claims, presuppositions, and implications, and thus assess whether the new consensus constitutes a step forward in the study of the Indian cultural and religious traditions.

The conference will work towards these ambitions in the three traditional formats of our Rethinking cluster:

In the course of three **Platform Sessions** the question ‘**Monologue or Dialogue?**’ will be addressed. Three experts will respond to three clearly formulated theses about the general theme of the conference. On day one they will discuss the thesis that ‘the current representations of Indian religion

are products of a monologue, not a dialogue’; day two will focus on the thesis that ‘the dialogue is more accurately described as a meeting of two monologues with distortions of meaning on both sides.’ On day three they will reflect upon the challenges and opportunities for future research. You can read all about the theses further in this brochure.

The **Roundtable Sessions** will explore ‘**The Indian Response**’. We will look at the Indian side of the dialogue: how have Indians responded to the European descriptions of their religion and culture? More specifically, three Indian responses to the European descriptions by important scholars will be looked at in great detail: Rammohan Roy, Gandhi and Dharampal. A group of eminent experts will take place around the round table and discuss the presentations in relation to the following questions: how have the European representations and the concepts used by them been absorbed into the Indian framework? How have they been interpreted and distorted, and what can we learn from this about the nature of Indian culture and its traditions?

In the **Parallel Paper Sessions** scholars from different parts of the world share their research findings and reflections on the following themes: Rethinking the caste system; European representations of religion in India; Said and Orientalism: dead or alive? The colonial construction of Hinduism; Indian responses to the European descriptions; Secularism in Europe and India; Islamic mysticism in European and Indian perspective. The ‘**How to...?**’ **workshops** will challenge the audience to think about two specific issues: (1) Learning from the California textbook debacle and about (2) How to teach about the Indian traditions? We are sure these topics will provoke vibrant debates in the different rooms!

One of the highlights in the program will be the screening of the wonderful film “Listen Draupadi” by Sashikanth Anathachari, which is about a Mahabharata festival in villages in Tamil Nadu. The screening will be followed by a conversation between the filmmaker and Alf Hildebeitel, an expert on these traditions.

Let us together make this into a wonderful four days of joint reflection and open debate.

Well-wishing word by the Rector of The University of Pardubice

Prof. Miroslav Ludwig

The universities represent significant centres of education giving the vital background for the development of advanced societies.

Long-time success and recognition of the University of Pardubice as a worthy institution spreading traditions and wisdom which, at the same time, prepares the young generation for successful careers in a wide variety of professions is conditioned by several factors. Generally, we need talented and responsive students who are deeply involved in the selected field of interest and in the university life. To carry out our mission effectively, we need creative academic and skilled administration staff with high academic standards of teaching and research work that builds up a productive atmosphere respecting individuality and common objectives.

Scientific conferences, quality academic sessions and dialogues of experts from the interested parties from around the world are an important and vital part of our university life and activities.

The cluster of Rethinking Religion in India conferences certainly contributes to such intercultural dialogue and cooperation, so needed in nowadays world. I am very honoured that the third conference “European Representation and Indian Responses” is held in Pardubice this year under the auspices of our Faculty of Arts and Philosophy.

I wish the conference and all its participants successful sessions, meaningful outcomes and a pleasant stay in Pardubice.



Well-wishing word by the Mayor of Pardubice

Dr. Štěpánka Fraňková

Dear conference participants,

Allow me to use this opportunity to welcome you to the Conference Rethinking Religion in India III: European Representations and Indian Responses which will take place in Pardubice from October 11 to October 14. This conference is another example of the increasingly productive relationship between India and countries of the European Union. On both sides, policy makers, the business community and cultural activists are becoming aware of the future strategic importance of this partnership. In accordance with this perception, India is today considered a strategic partner of the European Union.

I feel honoured that the Municipality of Pardubice can contribute to this process of mutual political, economic and cultural enrichment. And I am very satisfied that our contribution is not of minor relevance. After the 2008 and 2009 conferences organized in New Delhi, the Pardubice conference is the third one in a five-year cluster which has already succeeded in gaining significant international recognition. The main foundation of this growing success is the support of several renowned academic and scientific institutions from India and Belgium. I take great pride in stating that one of the co-organizers of the 2011 Conference Rethinking Religion in India III: European Representations and Indian Responses is the University of Pardubice.

I am very pleased that we have been able to attract many of the world's leading academics to this conference. I look forward to listening and discussing with them over the next four days so that we can all say at the end that the Pardubice conference achieved its goal: to increase the mutual understanding between India and the countries of Europe.

I wish us all a very successful conference!



Tuesday 11 October

9.00-11.00 : *Registration*

Registration Hall

9.00-11.00 : Tea, coffee and snacks Pillar Hall

11.00-13.00 : *Welcome and inauguration*

Lecture Hall

13.00-14.30 : Lunch in the First Courtyard

14.30-16.00 : *Platform Session 1*
'Monologue or Dialogue?'

Lecture Hall

16.00-16.15 : Tea break in the Pillar Hall

16.15-17.00 : *Platform Session 1 (continued)*

Lecture Hall

Wednesday 12 October

9.00-11.00 : *Parallel Sessions 1*

Rethinking the Caste System 1
Smaller Knights' Hall
Islamic Mysticism in European and Indian Perspective
Larger Knights' Hall
Secularism in Europe and India
Seminar Room 1
Indian Responses 1
Seminar Room 2

11.00-11.15 : Tea break in the Pillar Hall

11.15-13.15 : *Roundtable Session 1*
'The Indian Response: on Rammohan Roy'

Larger Knights' Hall

13.15-14.30 : Lunch in the First Courtyard

14.30-16.00 : *Platform Session 2*
'Monologue or Dialogue?'

Lecture Hall

16.00-16.15 : Tea break in the Pillar Hall

16.15-17.00 : *Platform Session 2 (continued)*

Lecture Hall

17.00-17.30 : Tea break in the Pillar Hall

17.30-20.30 : *Screening of the film 'Listen Draupadi'*
followed by a discussion

Lecture Hall

Thursday 13 October

09.00-11.00 : *Parallel Sessions 2*

Rethinking the Caste System 2
Smaller Knights' Hall
Rethinking Religion in Europe: Learning
from the Case of India
Larger Knights' Hall
Workshop: How to Teach about
the Indian Traditions?
Seminar Room 1
European Representations of India 1
Seminar Room 2

11.00-11.15 : Tea break in the Pillar Hall

11.15-13.15 : *Roundtable Session 2*
'The Indian Response: on Gandhi'

Larger Knights' Hall

13.15-14.30 : Lunch in the First Courtyard

14.30-16.00 : *Platform Session 3*
'Monologue or Dialogue?'

Lecture Hall

16.00-16.15 : Tea break in the Pillar Hall

16.15-17.00 : *Platform Session 3 (continued)*

Lecture Hall

Friday 14 October

9.00-11.00 : *Parallel Sessions 3*

Indian Responses 2
Smaller Knights' Hall
European Representations of India 2
Larger Knights' Hall
Hermeneutics and Historical Consciousness:
German Constructions of the History of Indian
Literature, 1837-2007
Seminar Room 1
Workshop: Learning from the California
Textbook Debacle
Seminar Room 2

11.00-11.15 : Tea break in the Pillar Hall

11.15-13.15 : *Roundtable Session 3*
'The Indian Response: on Dharampal'

Larger Knights' Hall

13.15-14.30 : Lunch in the First Courtyard

14.30-16.30 : *Closing workshop* 'Towards the
Future of Rethinking Religion in India'

Larger Knights' Hall

16.30-17.00 : Tea break in the Pillar Hall

17.00-17.30 : *Closing address*

Larger Knights' Hall



Platform Session 1 # Tuesday, 11 October, 14.30-17.00

Platform Session 2 # Wednesday, 12 October, 14.30-17.00

Platform Session 3 # Thursday, 13 October, 14.30-17.00

Room # Lecture Hall

Moderator # Sarah Claerhout

Speakers

Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair is Associate Professor and holder of the Tara Singh, Balwant Kaur Chattha, Gurbaksh Singh, and Kirpal Kaur Brar (S.C.S.B.) Sikh Studies Professorship at the Department of Asian Languages and Culture, University of Michigan, USA. His fields of study are: Sikh and Punjab Studies; South Asian Religions and Culture; Continental and Comparative Philosophy; Postcoloniality; Theories of Religion and the Secular; Translation Studies and Political Theology. His most important work is: *Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality and the Politics of Translation* (Columbia University Press, 2009).

Brian Pennington is Associate Professor of Religion at the Department of Humanities, Maryville College, USA. He teaches courses in Hinduism, the culture and history of South Asia, and the study of religion. He conducts research on religion in colonial India, the Hindu-Christian encounter, and also writes about method and theory in the study of religion. His first book, *Was Hinduism Invented?: Britons, Indians, and the Colonial Construction of Religion* (Oxford University Press, 2005), is a study of Hindu-Christian interaction in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; it was reissued in paperback in 2007.

S.N. Balagangadhara is Professor in Comparative Science of Cultures and Director of the Research Centre Vergelijkende Cultuurwetenschap, Ghent University, Belgium. He also directs the India Platform UGent. His most important work is *'The Heathen in His Blindness...': Asia, the West and the Dynamic of Religion* first published in 1994 by Brill and republished by Manohar Publications in 2005.

The Three Platform Theses

During the last decades, many scholars have pointed out that the modern representations of religion in India are specifically 'Western' or 'European' in nature and do not reflect Indian realities. Operating within a cultural framework that constrained their experience and understanding, European Orientalists created the basic conceptual structures of 'Hinduism', 'Sikhism', 'Buddhism', 'Jainism'... that remain dominant to this day. During the colonial period, these structures were fleshed out with empirical details provided by ethnographic fieldwork and native informants. The resulting descriptions of 'the religions of India', the same scholars argue, represent Indian culture as a deficient variant of Western culture.

Reacting to such claims, other scholars have argued that this denies agency to the Indians, as though the latter had no say in producing the modern representations of their own religions. Consequently, a virtual consensus has come into being today that the modern conceptions of 'Hinduism', 'Sikhism', 'Jainism', 'Buddhism'... are the result of collaboration between Europeans and Indians. This collaboration is characterized as a kind of dialogue — a dialogue between people belonging to two different cultures possessing different conceptual frameworks. As Phillip Wagoner puts it:

Whereas the postcolonialists have tended to see native scholars merely as 'informants', providing raw data with which active Europeans produced colonial knowledge, the 'collaborationists' have instead viewed these indigenous intellectuals as active partners in the process, bringing their own forms of knowledge and epistemic regimes to the dialogue. (Wagoner 2003, 784)

The results of this dialogue, it is said, are representations that contain elements of both sides and are therefore neither entirely European nor entirely Indian. Instead, they reflect the conceptual frameworks of both cultures. Otherwise put, the modern representations of religion in India were produced through a process of collaboration and dialogue with Indians and hence reflect both European and Indian ways of understanding religion in India.



As an illustration, take the case of 'modern Hinduism'. The earlier claim that modern Hinduism was 'constructed' by Orientalist scholars and colonial officials has now been rejected by most scholars. Instead, it is said that this construction of Hinduism was a many-sided process: European colonials and Indian elites collaborated in the creation of a uniform religion of Hinduism, modeled on Brahmanical texts. Hence, modern Hinduism is supposed to have emerged out of the agency of Europeans *and* Indians – the product of dialectical exchange between colonizers and colonized, incorporating both pre-colonial and colonial elements.

The *aim of the Platform Sessions* is to take a closer look at this emerging consensus. In three sessions, we will systematically examine its claims, presuppositions, and implications, and thus assess whether the new consensus constitutes a step forward in the study of religion in India. The format will be as follows: in this position paper, two provocative theses and a proposal for future research are formulated. The two theses intend to bring to the foreground problematic aspects of the consensus that the modern representations of Indian religion emerged out of a dialogue between Europeans and Indians. In a brief explanation accompanying the two theses, some fundamental problems will be formulated that need to be solved by the emerging consensus. The proposal for future research will try to formulate a tentative solution to some of these problems.

During the three sessions of the Platform sessions, each speaker will first give a ten-minute presentation of his reflections on the thesis or proposal under review: Does he agree or disagree with it? What are the main hypotheses and arguments involved? Which conceptual and empirical problems remain unexamined? This will be followed by a moderated debate between the three speakers.

Platform Session 1

The current representations of Indian religion are products of a monologue, not a dialogue.

The dominant representations we have of religion in India do not reflect a dialogue but a European monologue. Today, India is viewed as a country of many different religions and, correspondingly, Indian society is carved up into distinct communities of religious believers or practitioners ('Hindus', 'Sikhs', 'Buddhists', 'Jains'...). This view reflects the Western cultural experience of India. When one speaks of 'the religions of South Asia' and studies 'Hinduism', 'Sikhism', 'Buddhism' or 'Jainism' as such instances of religion, one is invoking a conceptual apparatus that results from the way in which Europe came to terms with India. These 'religions' are fictitious entities, which may exist in the minds, books, and libraries of the West and the western-educated, but *not* among the people whose religions they are supposed to be.

The European intelligentsia was compelled to create conceptual units like 'the Hindu religion' or 'the Sikh religion' in order to give structure to its experience of a completely alien culture. Elements of the traditions of India – their intellectual treatises, stories, rituals, practices, temples, their *devas* and *devis*... – were gradually interpreted and linked to each other in such a way that coherent patterns came into being in the European descriptions of India. From treatises and stories, European scholars extracted the presumed 'sacred doctrines', 'religious beliefs' and 'laws'; certain texts had to be 'scriptures'; rituals became 'worship' practices that embodied the 'doctrines' and 'religious beliefs'; temples could not but be 'houses of worship'; and *devas* and *devis* were taken to be 'gods', of course. In this way, 'Hinduism', 'Jainism', 'Sikhism', and 'Buddhism' emerged as conceptual units within the cultural framework that guided the European understanding of the traditions of India.

This cultural framework consists of a generic Christian theology. That is, the terms used by the European representations of Indian culture – 'religion', 'worship', 'sacred', 'secular', 'gods', 'divinity', 'priest'... – are not neutral observational terms, but theoretical terms embedded in the basic conceptual framework shared by the different Christian theologies.



This background framework has provided meaning to these terms and related them to each other in a conceptual grid. The same framework determined the particular interpretations and translations of the texts and practices found in India. It also established the relations among those elements fractured and extracted from the Indian traditions, which were viewed by Europeans as doctrines, scriptures, sacred law, worship, liturgy, priests, and gods. Against the background of this framework, 'the religions of India' could come into being as coherent patterns of description.

Indian contributions to these descriptions, wherever Indians collaborated with Europeans, were absorbed into the Western conceptual framework and fundamentally transformed in the process. This did not alter the nature of the dominant framework, nor did it fundamentally change the way in which Indian culture was described. Indeed, fragments from the Indian intellectual traditions had been integrated into the European representations from the very start, but their meaning was changed and distorted. In order to appreciate this point, it suffices to ask the following question: Which Indian theories or knowledge traditions have been adopted in fruitful ways in the development of the contemporary Western intellectual traditions that we see embodied in the social sciences and humanities? It is difficult to think of any, with the exception of linguistics.

To suggest that the contemporary conceptions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism... are products of a dialogue between Europeans and Indians is to ignore how the dominant conceptual vocabulary and framework were established by Western culture and how these were intelligible and accessible only to Europeans. Europeans had already set the framework within which the 'dialogue' could take place; hence, it could in reality only be a monologue.

Platform Session 2

The dialogue is more accurately described as a meeting of two monologues with distortions of meaning on both sides.

The insight that the European and Indian cultures operate with two frameworks that are fundamentally different from each other needs to be taken more seriously. These frameworks have come, and continue to come, into contact with each other. Terms, concepts, and sentences from both sides are adopted and interpreted within the other's framework. However, accordingly as they are integrated into a different constellation of concepts they also get distorted. Mostly, this mutual distortion of meaning occurs without awareness. Consequently, the two parties in the presumed dialogue – European and Indian – have been talking past each other without even being aware of this problem. They are using words with different meanings attached to them. They relate concepts to each other in fundamentally different ways. Inevitably, then, they interpret their own and each other's utterances very differently.

Quite obviously, European thinking and talking about religion during the last centuries has taken place within the framework of a linguistic practice. That is to say, one learns to use the word 'religion' and its cognates like 'worship', 'god', 'priest'... accordingly as one participates in, and becomes a member of, the linguistic practice of a community. Importantly, this linguistic practice refers not simply to the practice of using a natural language (like French, German, or Dutch) but also to that of using a theological language. Over the last 1500 years, the conceptual vocabulary and framework of Christian theology has shaped and constrained the linguistic practices in question. That is, a basic theological framework gave shape to the natural-language use in European vernaculars where these discuss religion and the nature of human beings and societies.

'Linguistic practice' is used well advisedly here. Not because Christian religious life requires using some or another natural language, but because the cluster of concepts that gives Gestalt to this religious life has taken the status of being an integral part of the natural language-use of Europeans. Today, it has become as natural to say 'I am very religious' or



‘They are worshipping’ in English as it is to say ‘It is raining’. Nevertheless, whenever Europeans invoked notions like ‘religion’, ‘worship’, ‘gods’ or ‘priesthood’ in order to describe India, their reasoning operated against a background theology, which had determined the semantic content and systematic relations of these terms.

Naturally, Indians had their own cultural experiences, linguistic practices and conceptual frameworks. Trying to make sense of the queries of the colonizer, Indians learned to use English-language words (‘religion’, ‘revelation’, ‘God’, ‘worship’, ‘priest’, ‘idolatry’), without having access to the background framework that related these terms to each other in a systematic way. This implies that they could not possibly understand what the Europeans meant by these terms.

In turn, the terms used by Indians to discuss their cultural traditions were also part of a linguistic practice. Again, this practice was also shaped by specific conceptual frameworks or at least a minimal shared set of background ideas. This shared set of background ideas was equally inaccessible to European travellers, missionaries, colonial officials, and Orientalists.

While conversations between Europeans and Indians certainly occurred during the colonial period, these did not constitute a real dialogue but rather a Babylonian confusion of tongues. For instance, while puja rituals are not the equivalent of worship in Christianity, Europeans first misunderstood these rituals as worship (originally of ‘false gods’, later of ‘gods’ *tout court*) and mistranslated ‘*puja*’ as ‘worship’. In the next step, Indians learned English and accepted that ‘worship’ meant ‘*puja*’, without understanding what worship entails in Christianity and without having access to the linguistic practices and conceptual schemes, which related this notion of worship to other theological notions like God, idolatry, and religion. Given our current lack of insight into this process, we cannot grasp the distortions that occurred when the term ‘worship’ was mapped onto ‘*puja*’.

A similar process occurred for all such appropriations of English-language terms and theological notions. As Indians took over these words, their original meanings were distorted, accordingly as European-language terms were mapped onto terms from Indian languages (e.g. ‘*dharma*’, ‘*apaurusheya*’, ‘*deva*’, ‘*puja*’, ‘*purohit*’, ‘*murtipuja*’). Even where

Indian authors meant completely different things with, say, words like ‘religion’, ‘worship’, ‘Supreme Being’, ‘gods’, ‘revelation’ or ‘divine’ than the European Orientalists and colonial officials, such differences were eradicated accordingly as the latter interpreted what the former said within the dominant conceptual framework, namely, that reflecting the Western cultural experience.

The major difficulty in defending the claims about the dialogue between Europeans and Indians giving rise to the current representations of religion in India, then, is that we cannot begin to understand how Indians contributed to this dialogue, since we do not even know today how they made – and continue to make – sense of the European terminology, concepts, and descriptions.

The problem of translation could not and cannot be solved by turning to the available dictionaries of Indian and European languages. From the start, the dictionaries that defined the terms and mechanisms of translation were shaped by the background conceptual framework of European natural languages. Wherever this background framework concerned religion and related subjects, it had been deeply informed and structured by Christian theology. Consequently, the act of translation simply conformed the terms from the Indian conceptual framework into the European conceptual framework. Take the example of one Indian vernacular, Kannada. The major Kannada-English dictionary, still in use today, was created by a German Protestant missionary working with the Basel Mission, the Reverend Ferdinand Kittel. Such dictionaries, originating in the desire to translate the Bible into local vernaculars, inevitable took recourse to a basic theological framework in order to determine the semantic equivalence of terms from Indian and European languages.



Platform Session 3

Towards mutual understanding.

The problems identified in the two above theses are significant, because they also point to a way forward: *the process of mutual distortion is the key towards understanding fundamental cultural differences between Europe and India*. Through a study of what happens to certain kinds of ideas from one culture when they are absorbed into the conceptual frameworks or clusters of another, we can learn a lot about both cultures and the differences between them. Once we have an understanding of the respective conceptual frameworks a new kind of dialogue could start to take place.

In fact, this challenge provides a promising entry point into the study of Indian cultural traditions. In the case of Europe, we have proposed to study its cultural experience by looking at how Europeans have systematically described and distorted Indian culture. For instance, European conceptions of 'Hinduism' and 'the religions of India' give us insight into the common structures of this European cultural experience and how these structures are constituted by the Christian religion, its development and its internal problems. It is tempting to assume that we can apply this 'mirror principle' to India also and understand the Indian cultural experience by studying how Indians have described Europe. However, this does not work for several reasons: there exists no such massive and systematic body of Indian descriptions of Europe; and, to a large extent, Indians have adopted European self-descriptions as though these are veridical.

Instead, there is another key to finding out the common structures and patterns in the Indian cultural experience: this key lies in the *kinds of distortions* that occurred when Indians took over the conceptual vocabulary of Europeans. There has to be a pattern to these distortions, precisely because terms like 'religion', 'worship', 'scripture', 'sacred law', 'conversion'... were mapped onto terms from the Indian languages. Consequently, the patterns in these distortions indirectly give us access to the conceptual structures and clusters common across the Indian cultural traditions.

Let us return to the example of 'worship' and '*puja*'. In order to fully grasp how Indians adopted English-language terms like 'worship' and 'idol worship', we will need a hypothesis on the nature of *puja*, its role in the Indian cultural traditions, and how this constrains the semantics of terms like '*puja*' and '*murtipuja*'. But the most promising route to developing such a hypothesis is to circumscribe the misunderstanding and conceptual distortion that occurred when Indians began to talk in terms of 'worship' and 'idol worship'. The difference between their use of these words and the conceptual structures behind the European-Christian understanding of 'worship' and 'idol worship' will reveal how the two groups were talking about completely different things. This mismatch then allows us to characterize the underlying conceptual structures of the Indian cultural experience by contrasting them to the European-Christian conceptual structures.

Why do we talk of 'conceptual distortion' here? Is it because we take Western language-use as the standard and then assess Indian language-use as a deviation from this standard? No, this is not the point we are trying to make. The point is the following: When modern Westerners discuss the subject of religion in natural languages like English, they invoke all kinds of commonplace ideas. For instance, they usually assume that each people or culture has some form of religion and that 'belief' and 'worship' are central to religion. They also think that religions can have one God or many gods and distinguish between monotheism and polytheism. Many of these commonplace ideas have their origin in Christian theological discourse. Many have also been elaborated into theories about religion or at least into systematic descriptions of the different 'religions' of humanity. We would like to introduce the technical term 'topos' (plural 'topoi') to refer to such commonplace ideas that have been developed into theories.

Topoi, as we understand them, are not simply isolated ideas, but rather occur as clusters of interrelated ideas. The interpretation and elaboration of all such topoi depend on the presence of other commonplace ideas. That is, the topoi about religion that circulate in Western society are intelligible and productive units of thought because of a shared system of conceptual resources present in the background, which allows us to interpret these ideas and elaborate on them. Topoi require a particular conceptual background, consisting of fairly systematic clusters of ideas, in order to continue to function as commonplace ideas for the



culture or society in question. We would like to define 'conceptual distortion' as the process that occurs when topoi originating from one cultural setting are interpreted against another cultural background, that is, by making use of commonplace ideas from another culture.

When Indian thinkers speak and write in English, they invoke such commonplace ideas, but interpret these in peculiar ways. Metaphorically, it helps to think in terms of two layers: at the surface, we have the *prima facie* layer of Indian thinkers' discourse on 'religion', 'Hinduism', 'God', ..., where they make use not just of English-language terms and phrases, but (through them, as it were) of Western topoi. Underneath this lies a more fundamental conceptual layer that we need to dig up, where the same thinkers call on the commonplace ideas and topoi of their own cultural traditions to make sense of these Western topoi. This second layer reflects Indian modes of reasoning about the nature of traditions, the role of reason, the meaning of truth, and changes within and between traditions. To a large extent, the Indian thinkers' use of English-language terms is mapped onto the conceptual schemes of this deeper layer. That is, they adopt typical formulae from Christian theology and Western thought, but in the process of interpreting these map them onto Indian topoi.

The surface layer provides our only access to the deeper layer. This is the case, because the conceptual distortion does not occur at random, but in a systematic way. The systematic nature of the distortions, we propose, expresses the structure of the topoi that lie behind Indian thinkers' claims and interpretations of English-language terms. Furthermore, these commonplace ideas derive from the background theories of the Indian traditions that have shaped their reasoning. Tracking such underlying ideas allows one to characterize basic structures of these traditions. The interpretive challenge we face then is to uncover the patterns in the Indian distortive use of Western topoi. Once we have circumscribed such patterns, we can begin to develop hypotheses on the underlying ideas expressed in these conceptual distortions.

This proposal has a very fundamental implication for the problem of translation between cultures. On the basis of a deeper study of the systematic conceptual distortion, we could predict the meanings of some of the core words in the Indian languages. That is to say, Indian authors will display a penchant for using some specific words from the Indian lan-

guages to 'translate' in a distorted form the meanings of English language words. Because this tendency will be common to multiple generations of Indians, we can make the following claim: certain words from different Indian languages will be used to translate English language words not because the former are synonyms of the latter, *but because they distort the latter in the same way.*

In other words, when we study translation of words across cultures, the commonly used 'equivalents' in local languages *do not signal in the direction of synonymy of meaning but in the direction of distortion*: the systematic distortion of the meaning of chosen synonyms will tell us more about the language and culture into which English language words are translated by the natives. This should be put in a stronger form: today, we have to study how people use English in India, in order to understand their local languages. How they distort the English language provides us with clues about the semantics of their local languages. In studying cultures, in other words, we would do better to focus on their distortions in meaning rather than on looking for their synonyms to our words.

An illustration of this approach is not possible in a position paper. Here, we merely intend to propose a route for future research: in the process of theorizing the conceptual structures of Indian cultural traditions, we will also reveal their decisive impact on the manner in which Indians took over the vocabulary of the Europeans. It is only once we have done this kind of research that we can meaningfully begin to analyze the Indian contribution to the 'dialogue' that led to the creation of 'Hinduism', 'Sikhism', 'Jainism', 'Buddhism'... In the absence of this research, it is premature to present the fact that Indian elites also talked in terms of 'religion', 'worship', 'God'... as evidence for the claim that they co-built the current representations of 'Indian religions', as though Europeans and Indians had the same things in mind when they used these terms.



Chair # Naomi Goldenberg

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Permanent respondents # Geoffrey Oddie, History Department, University of Sydney, Australia, **Prakash Shah**, School of Law, Queen Mary, University of London, UK, **Peter Gottschalk**, Department of Religion, Wesleyan University, USA, **Robert A. Yelle**, Department of History, University of Memphis, USA, **Venkat Rao**, School of English Literary Studies, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India, **J.S. Sadananda**, Centre for the Study of Local Cultures, Kuvempu University, Shimoga, India and **Shanmukha A.**, Centre for the Study of Local Cultures, Kuvempu University, Shimoga, India

Roundtable Session 1: on Rammohan Roy

Wednesday 12 October, 11.15-13.15

Throughout the 18th and 19th century, the Indian responses were varied. While many had no interest in participating in any dialogue with the Europeans, other Indians adopted and reproduced the descriptions of Europeans. Movements such as the Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj and people like Rammohan Roy accepted the descriptions which depicted the Indian traditions as degenerate religion and tried to reform them on the model of Protestant Christianity.

Speaker # Jakob De Roover, Research Centre Vergelijkende Cultuurwetenschap, Ghent University, Belgium

Expert respondents # Martin Fárek, Department for the Study of Religions, University of Pardubice, Czech Republic and **Polly Hazarika**, Department of English, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, India



Roundtable Session 2: on Gandhi

Thursday 13 October, 11.15-13.15

In the late 19th and early 20th century, different forms of resistance emerged to the European representations of India. Indian writers such as Gandhi started to point to the Indianness of the Indian traditions and their difference from European religion. Such descriptions still made use of the European concepts albeit in a distorted way.

Speaker # Sarah Claerhout, Research Centre Vergelijkende Cultuurwetenschap, Ghent University, Belgium

Expert respondents # Dunkin Jalki, Centre for the Study of Local Cultures, Kuvempu University, Shimoga, India and **Sufiya Pathan**, Sophia College, Mumbai, India

Roundtable Session 3: on Dharampal

Friday 14 October, 11.15-13.15

In the previous century, thinkers like Dharampal and some of the postcolonial scholars have started to point to the inadequacy of European concepts in describing the nature of the Indian traditions. They call for developing alternative descriptions that are understandable across cultures. In doing so, they have initiated the process of building new knowledge about the Indian traditions and decolonising the social sciences.

Speaker # G. Sivarama Krishnan, National Law School of India, Bangalore University, India

Expert respondent # S.N. Balagadhara, Research Centre Vergelijkende Cultuurwetenschap, Ghent University, Belgium

SCREENING OF THE FILM

'Kelai Draupadi, Listen Draupadi' by Sashikanth Ananthachari



Every year in over 200 villages in Tamilnadu, India, the Mahabharata is celebrated as a festival. For 20 days and 20 hours per day, the epic is performed as village rituals, narrated as a story and performed right through the night as theatre in the traditional Therukoothu form.

The Mahabharata is seen as an anti-war text and what is being performed there is a 'doubled' Mahabharata; it is both the epic and it is also simultaneously a record of the wars the people of this region have endured.

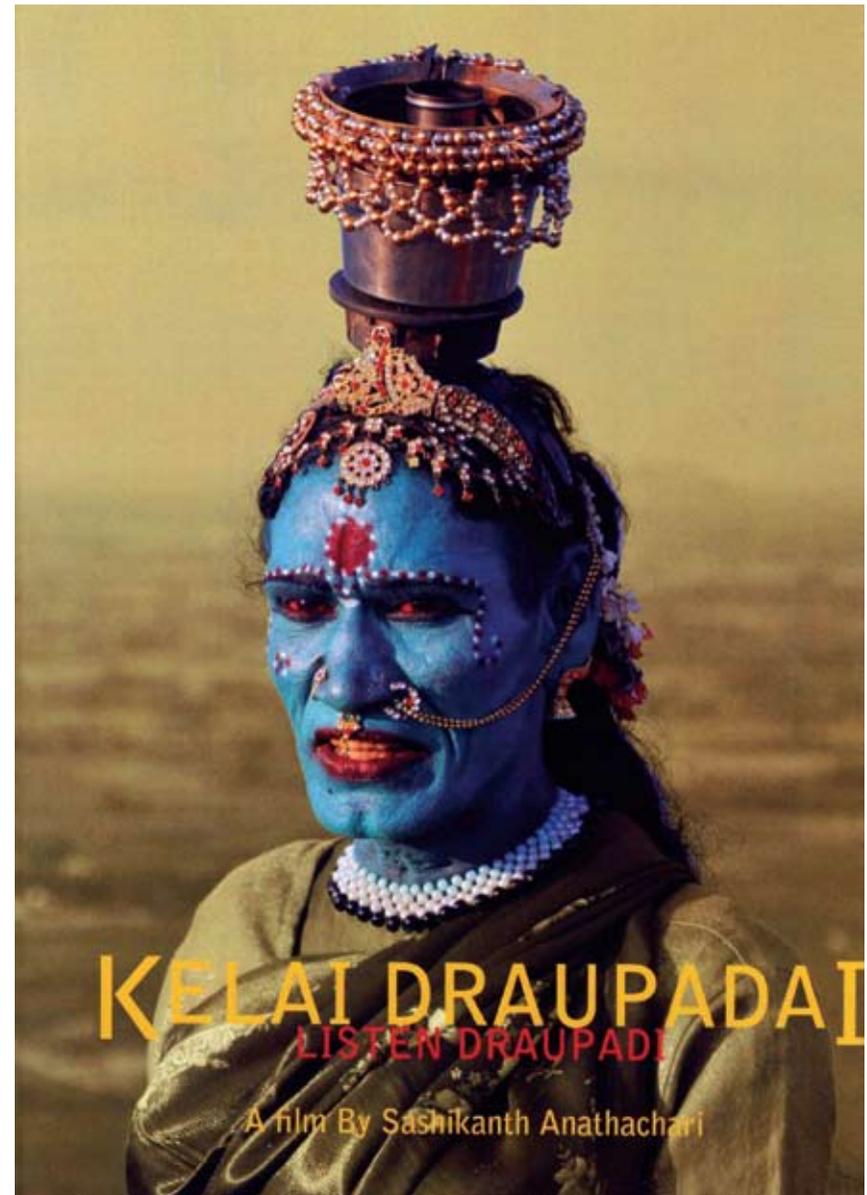
Draupadi is seen as the protagonist of the epic, and the epic is performed so that Draupadi can hear her story again. Draupadi is again 'doubled'; while she is the Queen of the Pandavas, she is also a metaphor for all the people unjustly victimised by war.

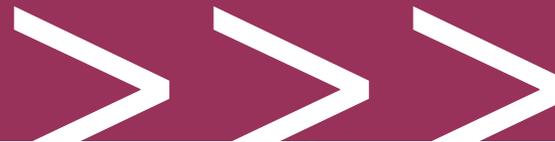
The film is the product of three years of intensive research on and participation in the festivals of Draupadi that take place in Tamil Nadu. Mr. Ananthachari has specialised himself in these traditions and has thus become one of the experts on the role stories like the Mahabharata play in India and the way they are being reproduced.

After the screening of the film there will be a conversation between Mr. Ananthachari and Prof. Hildebeitel, who is a well-known expert on the same traditions. The focus of his research are the great epics of India (specifically the Sanskrit epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana), regional folk epics, and the cult of the goddess Draupadi. He is the author of the two important volumes on the cult of Draupadi: *The Cult of Draupadi, Volume 1, Mythologies: From Gingee to Kuruksetra*, 1988 and *The Cult of Draupadi, Volume 2, On Hindu Ritual and the Goddess*, 1991.

Wednesday 12 October, 17.30 - 20.30

Room # Lecture Hall





Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00

Rethinking the Caste System 1

SANTHOSH K. SHETTY

Caste System or Misunderstood Rituals

KAVITHA P.N.

Caste and Sub-Caste: Problems of Classification

SHANKARAPPA N.S. AND
A. SHANMUKHA

Theories of "Untouchability" and their Impact on "Dalits" in India

PRAVEEN T.L.

Kannada Literature versus Social Sciences?

Chair # Nele De Gersem

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

Islamic Mysticism in European and
Indian Perspective

DUŠAN DEÁK

Sunni, Sufi, Varkari? Meaningless Discourses and Meaningful Religion

MAHESH KUMAR C.S.

What has Dargah to do with Sufism?

ŠTĚPÁN LISÝ

The Sufi Practices as Reflected in Kifayat al-abidin (the Guide to Serving God) by Rabbi Avraham ben Moshe ben Maimon (1186-1237)

VIOLA PARGAČOVÁ

Between and Behind Sufism and Tasawwuf Study on Contemporary Approaches to Muslim Mysticism and Spirituality

Chair # Peter Gottschalk

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Secularism in Europe and India

SUIFYA PATHAN

Secularism: the Indian Trajectory

ANINDITA CHAKRABARTI

Sacred Traditions, Sectarian Identity and the Question of Secularism in Contemporary India

DEVENDRA INGLE

Indian Democracy and Secularism - Judicial Perspective

NAMRATA GANNERI

The Politics of Caste and Hindu Nationalism

Chair # Prakash Shah

Room # Seminar Room 1

Indian Responses 1

VARUNI BHATIA

Loss and Recovery: Re-evaluating Religious Modernization in Colonial India

SANTANU DEY

Resuscitating or Reconstructing the Tradition? Gaudiya Vaishnavism in Colonial Bengal

SVETLANA RYZHAKOVA

Non-Parsi Zoroastrians, Non-Indian Hindus, Western Adepts of Eastern Religions: Perspectives Compared

NORA MELNIKOVÁ

McDonaldization of Meditation

Chair # Sarika Rao

Room # Seminar Room 2



Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00

Rethinking the Caste System 2

AHMED SOHAIB

Contesting Hierarchies: Buddhism, Caste and Social Protest

DUNKIN JALKI

A Reappraisal of Studies on Sanskritisation

MUKESH BHATT

Caste as Cosmopolitanism in Diaspora

VENKAT RAO

Memories, Genres and Genos: Rethinking Local Cultures from India

Chair # Sandeep Kumar Shetty

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

**Rethinking Religion in Europe:
Learning from the Case of India**

VALENTINA GENTILE

Secularism in Contemporary India: the Satyagraha as a Source of Liberal Tolerance

PRAKASH SHAH

Cultural and Legal Logics of Religion and Secularisation in Europe

AAKASH SINGH

Ambedkar and Zizek, India and Europe

TORKEL BREKKE

Secularism and the Religious Market in Scandinavia

PÉTER LOSONCZI

Religion, Politics, Secularism: Elements of an Intercontextual Study on India and Europe

Chair # Péter Losonczi

Discussant # Jakob De Roover

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Panel presented by the International Research Network on Religion and Democracy (IRNRD)

**Workshop: How to Teach about the
Indian Traditions II?**

Conducted by:

MARTIN FÁREK

DUŠAN DEÁK

MILAN FUJDA

Room # Seminar Room 1

European Representations of India 1

DANIEL SHEFFIELD

Of Parsis and Philologists: German Orientalists and Zoroastrian Reformers in 19th Century Bombay

SAI BHATAWADEKAR

Advaita Makes the Most Sense: 19th Century German Streamlining of Hinduism

DEBALINA BANERJEE

Indias of the Mind: Representations and Misrepresentations in Sister Niveditas' Web of Indian Life and Katherine Mayos' Mother India

Chair # Geoffrey Oddie

Room # Seminar Room 2



Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00

Indian Responses 2

OLGA REAL-NAJARRO

*Beyond Conventions or Stereotypes:
Sri Aurobindo's Revision of Hinduism*

POLLY HAZARIKA

*Between a Teacher and his Student:
Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami
Vivekananda and the 'Modernisation'
of Indian Tradition*

TOMAS AVRAMOV

*Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, the Father
of Indian Catholic Theology and the Con-
temporary Theology of Indian Christians
– their Relation to the Indian Philosophy
(Especially Vedanta) and Spirituality*

ROSA MARIA PEREZ

*Reversible Roles. Subalternity and Religion
in Hindu Goa*

Chair # Štěpán Lisý

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

European Representations of India 2

MALCOLM VOYCE

*Buddhism and the Vinaya : An Edward
Said Approach to Buddhist Disciplinary
Texts*

MUKESH BHATT

*India Before and After - Diderot's
Encyclopédie as Watershed*

JANA VALTROVÁ

*Images of Indian Christianity in the
Context of Historical Studies of Christian
Missions*

SHARADA SUGIRTHARAJAH

Orientalists and their 'Hinduisms'

Chair # Alexander Naessens

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Hermeneutics and Historical
Consciousness:

**German Constructions of the History
of Indian Literature, 1837-2007**

VISHWA ADLURI

*Text-Historical Reconstruction and the
Struggle for an Objective Canon: German
Gītā Interpretations between the Two World
Wars*

ALF HILTEBEITEL

*Tribes, Castes, and Gazetteers: European
Templates for Interpreting India's Epics from
Germany, France, and Great Britain*

JOYDEEP BAGCHEE

*The Invention of Difference and the Assault
on Ecumenism: Paul Hacker becomes a
Catholic*

Chair # Robert A. Yelle

Room # Seminar Room 1

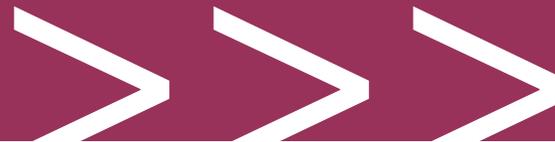
Workshop: Learning from the
California Textbook Debacle

Conducted by:

KOENRAAD ELST

Room # Seminar Room 2

PARALLEL SESSIONS
ALPHABETICAL LIST OF PAPER PRESENTERS



Aakash Singh

Ambedkar and Zizek, India and Europe

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking Religion in Europe:

Learning from the Case of India

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Ahmed Sohaib

Contesting Hierarchies: Buddhism, Caste and Social Protest

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking the Caste System 2

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

Alf Hiltebeitel

Tribes, Castes, and Gazetteers: European Templates for Interpreting India's Epics from

Germany, France, and Great Britain

Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00 – Hermeneutics and Historical Consciousness:

German Constructions of the History of Indian Literature, 1837-2007

Room # Seminar Room 1

Anindita Chakrabarti

Sacred Traditions, Sectarian Identity and the Question of Secularism in Contemporary India

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Secularism in Europe and India

Room # Seminar Room 1

Daniel Sheffield

Of Parsis and Philologists: German Orientalists and Zoroastrian Reformers

in 19th Century Bombay

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – European Representations of India 1

Room # Seminar Room 2

Debalina Banerjee

Indias of the Mind: Representations and Misrepresentations in Sister Niveditas'

Web of Indian Life and Katherine Mayo's Mother India

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – European Representations of India 1

Room # Seminar Room 2

Devendra Ingle

Indian Democracy and Secularism - Judicial Perspective

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Secularism in Europe and India

Room # Seminar Room 1

Dunkin Jalki

A Reappraisal of Studies on Sanskritisation

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking the Caste System 2

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

Dušan Deák

Sunni, Sufi, Varkari? Meaningless Discourses and Meaningful Religion

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Islamic Mysticism in European

and Indian Perspective

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

How to Teach about the Indian Traditions?

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – Workshop: How to Teach about the Indian Traditions II?

Room # Seminar Room 1

Jana Valtrová

Images of Indian Christianity in the Context of Historical Studies of Christian Missions

Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00 – European Representations of India 2

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

PARALLEL SESSIONS

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF PAPER PRESENTERS



Joydeep Bagchee

The Invention of Difference and the Assault on Ecumenism: Paul Hacker becomes a Catholic

Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00 – Hermeneutics and Historical Consciousness:

German Constructions of the History of Indian Literature, 1837-2007

Room # Seminar Room 1

Kavitha P.N.

Caste and Sub-Caste: Problems of Classification

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking the Caste System 1

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

Koenraad Elst

Learning from the California Textbook Debacle

Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00 – Workshop: Learning from the California Textbook

Debacle

Room # Seminar Room 2

Mahesh Kumar C.S.

What has Dargah to do with Sufism?

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Islamic Mysticism in European and Indian Perspective

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Malcolm Voyce

Buddhism and the Vinaya: An Edward Said Approach to Buddhist Disciplinary Texts

Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00 – European Representations of India 2

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Martin Fárek

How to Teach about the Indian Traditions?

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – Workshop: How to Teach about the Indian Traditions II?

Room # Seminar Room 1

Milan Fujda

How to Teach about the Indian Traditions?

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – Workshop: How to Teach about the Indian Traditions II?

Room # Seminar Room 1

Mukesh Bhatt

Caste as Cosmopolitanism in Diaspora

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking the Caste System 2

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

India Before and After - Diderot's Encyclopédie as Watershed

Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00 – European Representations of India 2

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Namrata Ganneri

The Politics of Caste and Hindu Nationalism

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Secularism in Europe and India

Room # Seminar Room 1

Nora Melniková

McDonaldization of Meditation

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Indian Responses 1

Room # Seminar Room 2

PARALLEL SESSIONS
ALPHABETICAL LIST OF PAPER PRESENTERS



Olga Real-Najarro

Beyond Conventions or Stereotypes: Sri Aurobindo's Revision of Hinduism

Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00 – Indian Responses 2

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

Péter Losonczi

Religion, Politics, Secularism: Elements of an Intercontextual Study on India and Europe

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking Religion in Europe:

Learning from the Case of India

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Polly Hazarika

Between a Teacher and his Student: Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda and the 'Modernisation' of Indian Tradition

Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00 – Indian Responses 2

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

Prakash Shah

Cultural and Legal Logics of Religion and Secularisation in Europe

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking Religion in Europe:

Learning from the Case of India

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Praveen T.L.

Kannada Literature versus Social Sciences?

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking the Caste System 1

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

Rosa Maria Perez

Reversible Roles. Subalternity and Religion in Hindu Goa

Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00 – Indian Responses 2

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

Sai Bhatawadekar

Advaita Makes the Most Sense: 19th Century German Streamlining of Hinduism

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – European Representations of India 1

Room # Seminar Room 2

Santanu Dey

Resuscitating or Reconstructing the Tradition? Gaudiya Vaishnavism in Colonial Bengal

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Indian Responses 1

Room # Seminar Room 2

Santhosh K. Shetty

Caste System or Misunderstood Rituals

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking the Caste System 1

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

Shankarappa N.S. and A. Shanmukha

Theories of "Untouchability" and their Impact on "Dalits" in India

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking the Caste System 1

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

Sharada Sugirtharajah

Orientalists and their 'Hinduisms'

Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00 – European Representations of India 2

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

PARALLEL SESSIONS

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF PAPER PRESENTERS



Štěpán Lisý

The Sufi Practices as Reflected in Kifayat al-abidin (the Guide to Serving God)
by Rabbi Avraham ben Moshe ben Maimon (1186-1237)

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Islamic Mysticism in European
and Indian Perspective

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Sufiya Pathan

Secularism: the Indian Trajectory

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Secularism in Europe and India

Room # Seminar Room 1

Svetlana Ryzhakova

*Non-Parsi Zoroastrians, Non-Indian Hindus, Western Adepts of Eastern Religions:
Perspectives Compared*

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Indian Responses 1

Room # Seminar Room 2

Tomas Avramov

*Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, the Father of Indian Catholic Theology and the Contemporary
Theology of Indian Christians – their Relation to the Indian Philosophy (Especially Vedanta)
and Spirituality*

Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00 – Indian Responses 2

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

Torkel Brekke

Secularism and the Religious Market in Scandinavia

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking Religion in Europe:

Learning from the Case of India

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Valentina Gentile

Secularism in Contemporary India: the Satyagraha as a Source of Liberal Tolerance

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking Religion in Europe:

Learning from the Case of India

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Varuni Bhatia

Loss and Recovery: Re-evaluating Religious Modernization in Colonial India

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Indian Responses 1

Room # Seminar Room 2

Venkat Rao

Memories, Genres and Genos: Rethinking Local Cultures from India

Thursday 13 October, 9.00-11.00 – Rethinking the Caste System 2

Room # Smaller Knights' Hall

Viola Pargačová

*Between and Behind Sufism and Tasawwuf Study on Contemporary Approaches to Muslim
Mysticism and Spirituality*

Wednesday 12 October, 9.00-11.00 – Islamic Mysticism in European and
Indian Perspective

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

Vishwa Adluri

Text-Historical Reconstruction and the Struggle for an Objective Canon:

German Gītā Interpretations between the Two World Wars

Friday 14 October, 9.00-11.00 – Hermeneutics and Historical Consciousness:

German Constructions of the History of Indian Literature, 1837-2007

Room # Seminar Room 1

Santhosh K. Shetty

Centre for the Study of Local Cultures, Kuvempu University (Shimoga, India)

Caste System or Misunderstood Rituals

It is a fact about India that it has numerous castes. Until today these castes and their practices have been described by most scholars in terms of a system of castes. According to the standard descriptions the different castes are organised in a systematic manner with a strong hierarchical order. This order, the standard account tells us, differentiates the castes from each other by providing them a higher or a lower status. If this is the case there has to be a principle which determines this social status. That is to say, the principle is identified as a fundamental tenet of the caste system and it divides castes into different rungs. Louis Dumont, the eminent sociologist, identified 'purity' and 'impurity' as the fundamental principles that provide the yardstick for the caste hierarchy and also specified that this hierarchy is purely ritual. He elaborated how this principle is clearly identifiable in two extremes, i.e. Brahmins at the top and untouchables at the bottom. All the research that followed Dumont accepted the concept of 'purity' and 'impurity', without questioning it, as the entry point to understand the structure of the caste system. Many scholars have considered the notion of 'purity' and 'impurity' to be the foundation of the caste system.

The present paper tries to illustrate the problems in the aforementioned assumption in the light of findings of extensive fieldwork in Karnataka. The main contestations of this paper are: 1) the notions of 'purity' and 'impurity' are understandable only within the realm of ritual practices. 2) 'Purity-impurity' is a traditional practice transmitted through imitative learning. 3) There are no foundational principles or theories to guide such practices. 4) The native terms such as *madi*, *mailige*, etc. do not represent the notions of 'purity' and 'impurity' that we find in the existing theories on caste. Scholars who have tried to explain ritual practices such as *madi*, *mailige*, etc. outside of the realm of rituals have invariably ended up misunderstanding these aspects of Indian culture.

Kavitha P.N.

Centre for the Study of Local Cultures, Kuvempu University (Shimoga, India)

Caste and Sub-Caste: Problems of Classification

The varied explanations and arguments put forth by the scholars engaged in the study of castes in India all tell us that there are different kinds of social classification in the Indian society: caste, sub-caste, sub-sub-caste, tribe, exterior caste, etc. The Government policy makers have also adopted this kind of classification to formulate state policies. However, as social scientists themselves agree, there are more disputes than there is consent about this classification. Nevertheless most scholars who do research in the Indian society still continue to use such terms to describe and distinguish social groups.

When European colonizers arrived in India, they initially noticed diverse kinds of divisions: *jati*, *mata*, *kula*, *paiki*, *pangada*, *sampradayam*, occupational, regional, linguistic and ethnic groups. To Europeans the diversity of Indian society struck them as chaotic. To resolve this problem the colonizers reduced these different kinds of groups into caste and sub-caste, i.e. the systematization of caste classification.

What I want to suggest in this paper is that the caste classification is a construction of the European colonizers. This generates a space for asking one important question: do theories on caste classification represent the Indian society? Can we see the classification of caste and sub-caste at the empirical level? From the British colonials to the social scientists of today, the colonial system of caste classification has been represented as the actual division of the Indian society. Opposing this, the contention of the present paper is that the caste classification fails to make sense at an empirical level. To illustrate this I take the Lingayat tradition as a case study and try to bring out the inadequacies of this classification so far as the notion of caste and sub-castes are concerned. Probing deep into this question will no doubt throw new light into our understanding of Indian social structure in general and caste classification in particular.

Shankarappa N.S. and Shanmukha A.

Centre for the Study of Local Cultures, Kuvempu University (Shimoga, India)

Theories of "Untouchability" and their Impact on "Dalits" in India

As per a list made by the Indian constitution there are 429 Scheduled Castes in India. These castes are generally categorized as "Dalits" who are considered by scholars as those who live in miserable conditions. Of course, many of these groups are indeed economically poor and do live in vulnerable conditions. But, socially and culturally most of them have rich (local) traditions. This richness is hardly recognized by most scholars or intellectuals. Furthermore, some Dalit thinkers and educated Dalits do not want to associate themselves with these traditions. They consider their traditions as a sign of their inferiority and therefore think their castes are also 'inferior'. If this is true, then one has to answer the following questions: "Do the non-educated/common Dalit people recognize the same traditions as 'inferior'?" If not then "why do these educated Dalits recognize their traditions as 'inferior'?" There may be a readymade answer from educated Dalits to the latter question saying that "common dalits lack awareness of their own inferiority". However, if this answer is true, then the following question arises: "how did the educated Dalits become aware of the 'inferiority' of their traditions?" As an answer to this last question we suggest the hypothesis: the existing theories about the Indian society and culture, particularly the theories of untouchability and caste system, do not explain the Dalits' own experiences and compel them (the educated Dalits) to recognize their own traditions as 'inferior'. The theories about untouchability and statements like "Dalit traditions are inferior", we further suggest, reflect the western experiences of India. To strengthen this hypothesis, we will examine theories like the racial theory (Risley and Stanley Rice), the occupational theory (Stanley Rice) and the beef eating theory (B. R. Ambedkar). We will contrast the arguments of these theories with the opinions of common Dalits regarding their caste(s) from field data.

Praveen T.L.

Centre for the Study of Local Cultures, Kuvempu University (Shimoga, India)

Kannada Literature versus Social Sciences?

This paper focuses on the relationship between the social sciences and (creative) literature. Recent research shows that the social sciences study Indian society through the colonial framework. However, there is a claim in the domain of literary studies – which is rather popular in Kannada literary circles in the last few decades – that *only the creative Arts or literature can understand our society 'authentically', because it is an expression of the author's own experience*. Since the social scientists fail to provide such an authentic description their accounts are uninteresting and banal, they say. If this claim holds true the following is an inevitable conclusion: there should be a significant difference in the way the literature (novels, stories, poems etc.) and the social sciences describe Indian society and culture. In my research into Kannada novels, however, I have found the opposite to be the case: instead of the expected difference we find a great similarity between the social sciences and Kannada novels in the way they describe the Indian culture. In their description/representation of Brahmins and 'low-castes', both the social sciences and novels make use of a series of colonial stereotypes: "Brahmins are greedy/crafty", "low-caste women are lustful" and so on. Put differently, the social sciences and (Kannada/Indian) novels share a common set of stereotypes about Indian society and culture.

Indian novels, thus, reproduce and spread western stereotypes about India and not their authors' experience. More importantly, because of their specific properties, they not only accelerate the spread of stereotypes but also disguise the very process of spread of stereotypes as well as the fact that they (novels) hasten this process.

Dušan Deák

Department of Ethnology and World Studies, University of St. Cyril
and Methodius (Trnava, Slovak Republic)

Sunni, Sufi, Varkari? Meaningless Discourses and Meaningful Religion

The linguistic turn in the humanities and the social sciences and the launch of postcolonial projects on diluting the concepts of “the West” or “Europe” has led the academic debate in South Asian studies to become carefully sensitive towards meanings used, produced, and reproduced in debates centred on South Asian religious life. As a “window” to South Asia, religion has, for decades, blurred our vision of other aspects of life in South Asia and has now become increasingly problematized.

This paper argues that the current academic understanding of Sufism in the Indian subcontinent – in its historic, textual hue, and from the perspective of anthropological present, outside or inside South Asia – is heavily influenced by dominant discourses that draw from the colonial and orientalist heritage. This leads researchers to interpret their findings in established academic terms (like Sufism) to a considerable degree, even when the findings suggest other possible readings.

By example of local and academic narratives and interpretations of Shaikh Muhammad from Shrigonda (Maharashtra), a holy man that lived in the 17th century Marathi Deccan, this paper demonstrates how, why, and under what conditions the same holy man may be seen as a Sufi by some while not by others. By the same token, it also shows how academic discourse interacts with both social and political environment of Shaikh's present-day devotees.

Mahesh Kumar C.S.

Centre for the Study of Local Cultures, Kuvempu University
(Shimoga, India)

What has Dargah to do with Sufism?

There is an intellectual debate going on in India about the interaction between Islam and the Indian traditions. One group claims that Islam is basically an aggressive and intolerant religion. The other group denies this. The latter argue that Islam has some tolerant traditions like the Sufis who propagated Islam through the principles of tolerance. Some of the proponents of the latter view even go to the extent of claiming that Sufism is a religious syncretism and a tolerant and mystical alternative to Islam. The Dargahs of India, wherein both Hindus and Muslims participate, are supposed to be the places where the Sufi preaching has come into practice. This has also led to the characterization of Sufism as a dissenting tradition within Islam.

In this paper, I will try to show that we cannot characterize Sufism from a modern secularist angle and identify it basically as a dissenting tradition of Islam. Notwithstanding the fact that the Sufi saints laid the source of justification for their practices in the Islamic scriptures, the secularist argument arises out of a mistaken equation between the Dargah practices and Sufism. I will argue that so-called ‘Sufism’ and the Dargah practices are not one and the same. Therefore it is not logical to argue that Sufism is a separate tradition on the basis of the empirical evidence picked up from the Dargah practices. So far the Dargah practices have been viewed from the angle of Islam and Sufism. The present paper will try to show that if we want to understand Dargah practices, we have to look them from the angle of the Indian traditions. I will build my arguments on the basis of fieldwork, which I conducted among Muslim communities in different parts of Karnataka.

Štěpán Lisý

Department for the Study of Religions, University of Pardubice
(Pardubice, Czech Republic)

The Sufi Practices as Reflected in Kifayat al-abidin (the Guide to Serving God) by Rabi Avraham ben Moshe ben Maimon (1186-1237)

This paper will focus on Abraham's reflection of the medieval Sufi practices during 13th century in Egypt. In that period we can clearly recognize a certain impact of Muslim Sufis on the Jewish communities that lived together with the prevailing Muslim and minor Christian population. There are still many questions concerning the emergence, practising and continuation of the Sufi tradition. This became all the more so after 2008 when a new Hebrew/English edition of *Ha-maspiq le-ovdei Ha-Shem/the Guide to Serving God* appeared. This work was originally written by Rabeinu Avraham ben HaRambam (son of Maimonides) in Judeo-Arabic and is approved by many contemporary rabbis from the United States and Israel where we can trace its reception and impact on the contemporary Jewish thought. The main purpose of this paper and the panel at large is to show the difference between the meeting of the Jewish and the Islamic (sufi) traditions and the meeting of the Indian and Islamic (sufi) traditions. Based on those examples some scholars tend to talk about a kind of "syncretism". What we mean by the term "syncretism" will be part of the discussion.

Viola Pargačová

Department for the Study of Religions, University of Pardubice
(Pardubice, Czech Republic)

Between and Behind Sufism and Tasawwuf Study on contemporary approaches to Muslim mysticism and spirituality

This paper offers a discussion of the problems regarding different interpretations of "Sufism", especially those promoted by the 19th century Orientalists and modern scholars. Contrary to the prevailing opinions of those European writers who treat "Sufism" as the only source of Muslim Sunni spirituality, the medieval biographical dictionaries offer stories of non-Sufi Ulema who were treated as "people close to God" (arab. sg. wali Allah). Thus Sufism is closely related to so-called "Sunni Scripturalism" and the separation of "Sufism" from any form of Sunni Islam distorts Sunni Islam itself. The essential problem to be discussed is "What is considered by the term Sufism" in Western and Eastern perceptions. So far we can state that in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, there is no synonym for the term Suf-ism. An Arabic term Tasawwuf, the process (of becoming Sufi), is since 19th century wrongly translated as a phenomenon – Sufism. At the same time other and non-Sufi forms of Islamic spirituality were and still are neglected. The phenomenon of Muslim spirituality (arab. ruhaniya) should be put into question. Meanwhile "Sufism" is rejected by most of the Sunni reformist movements; spirituality seems to be an integral part of contemporary Sunni Islam. Sayyed Qutb (†1966), member of Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, is presented as a pious Muslim with deep spiritual insight. His exegetical work on the Koran (*In the Shadows of the Koran*, arab. *Fi Zilaal al-Qur'an*) contains spiritual passages, at the same time he uses the terminology that we would expect from Sufi authors (for example God is the Beloved one, and The Only Reality, human beings should liberate themselves from the earthly bonds that prevent them from establishing the Real Bond with God, etc.). The paper points out to the fact that contemporary islamologist production is focused on politics, political analyses and descriptions of the Middle Eastern and North African countries. By means of these politically orientated studies contemporary Islam seems to be nothing else than a pure political project free of any spiritual dimensions.

Sufiya Pathan

Sophia College (Mumbai, India)

Secularism: the Indian Trajectory

While it is common for Indian academics to claim that secularism in India is different from the western notion, a close study of just how different secularism has been in the Indian context, would probably serve to shock us out of thinking of our use of 'secularism' as in any way covalent with the western notion. This paper examines the entry of secularism into Indian political discourse in order to examine what it meant and what political goals the concept was used to accomplish. The relationship between secularism and the history of representation politics in India which the paper highlights serves to problematize the usual associations of secularism with religion and 'religious intolerance'.

Anindita Chakrabarti

Indian Institute of Technology (Kanpur, India)

Sacred traditions, Sectarian Identity and the Question of Secularism in Contemporary India

In this paper I shall argue that the concept of secularism needs to be understood in the context of concrete religious practices. The paper explores the relation between religious movements, sectarian traditions and the secular, democratic nation-state. Religious movements and the sectarian traditions that they evolve into, have very often escaped the gaze of sociologists of religion in India. The sociological literature has studied the movements within Hinduism into two opposite frameworks—(a) as protests against Sanskrit Brahmanism, which were over a period of time predictably appropriated by the Brahmans or other dominant castes and (b) as a process not of protest but of 'sanskritization' whereby lower castes improved their status in the caste hierarchy. Likewise, the movements within Islam have been seen as processes of Islamization. I shall argue that in order to understand the relation between the state and religious movements in contemporary India, we need to go beyond these two opposite viewpoints. Through an ethnographic exploration of two contemporary religious movements—one Islamic and the other Hindu—in western India, I shall argue that religious movements need to be studied within a framework that looks into internal dynamics of religion and not through extraneous factors of caste mobility and political identity. Although sociologists have often expressed the need to develop a comparative-historical approach to the study of sociology of religion, so that it does not remain fettered by Western ethnocentrism, it has rarely happened in practice. In this paper I shall work my way through the following problematic: what analytical tools do we have at our disposal to interpret the myriad sectarian movements apart from assigned to the preordained task of sanskritization/Islamization? An exploration of this question would help in understanding the dynamics of sacred traditions and sectarian identities beyond the binaries of communalism and secularism in contemporary India.

Devendra Ingle

Postgraduate Department of History, M.J. College, North Maharashtra University
(Jalgaon, India)

Indian Democracy and Secularism - Judicial Perspective

When one looks at some national level disturbances such as communal riots that took place in the last two decades they have marred the secular democratic features of Indian polity. My emphasis here is on the precise redefinition of secularism to enable the judiciary to take an active but definite stand in this regard. The Chief Justice of India S.H. Kapadia, in one of his interview had said that religion is a “matter of personal belief and should be kept at home”. His statement is significant in the light of an earlier Supreme Court observation with reference to the flak faced by Justice R.S. Liberhan on the 1992 Babri Mosque demolition. Secularism is a basic structure of the Indian constitution. So far, the Judiciary has evolved over a score of basic structures; which have immunity from being amended by the constitution Amendment Act. Like a number of other basic structures, secularism is not defined in the constitution though unlike some of the others it has been placed in the preamble of constitution after the 42nd Amendment Act, 1976. However, so far, if we see the various judicial pronouncements from S.R. Bommai to the election cases in Maharashtra we will notice that the concept of secularism has not as yet acquired a well-defined scope and nature through the judiciary’s eye. Secularism is corollary of democracy. Indian democracy is partially modelled on the UK pattern. Thus, Indian democracy has freely availed the political system of the West without any reservation then should India follow the western concept of secularism? The conventional wisdom is that a secular state can emerge and even thrive in deeply religious societies. A secular state, we have been told, should not be confused with secularisation of the civil society and the consciousness of the citizens.

Namrata Ganneri

Department of History, SNTD College of Arts & SCB College of Commerce & Science
for Women (Mumbai, India)

The Politics of Caste and Hindu Nationalism

The Hindu nationalist movement is aimed at Sangathan, organizing all Hindus to create a uniform political constituency of the Hindus. Similarly, it is well known that historically this community of Hindus has been constructed variedly. There are no easy answers to the question, ‘Which of us are Hindus?’ While Hindu nationalist attempts to foreground discourses of community and nation simultaneously seek to submerge caste difference, caste continues to dominate Indian social worlds. Nicholas B Dirks in *Castes of Mind* asserts that in the colonial milieu, caste was understood as ‘religiously derived’ and central to Hinduism. Significantly, Hindu nationalism was always associated with elite upper caste Hinduism in the academic discourse. However, Hindu nationalists over the years have struggled to negotiate with caste hierarchy, and reify the community of Hindus vis-à-vis Muslims. This paper maps the response of Hindu nationalist ideologues and leaders in the early twentieth century to the major movements of lower caste assertion. I seek to counter pose the stance of two major Hindu nationalist organizations, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh(RSS) to tease out the dynamics of caste in Hindu nationalist discourse. Indeed it is my assertion that such an exercise provides a key insight into the diversity amongst Hindu nationalists to questions of caste reform. On the other hand, the resistance to a new incorporative Hinduism that began with Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar in the early years of this century reflects the changing claims of Hinduism during the last century. Further, this range of responses leads us to question the construction of Hindu nationalism itself, which is crucial to chart the trajectory of the new post-colonial Hindu nationalism in independent India.

Indian Responses 1

Chair # Sarika Rao

Varuni Bhatia

Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, USA)

Loss and Recovery: Re-evaluating Religious Modernization in Colonial India

This paper seeks to explore nineteenth century indigenous categories of understanding social and intellectual processes that have historiographically been studied through the binaries of (socio-religious) reform and revival. Noting the analytical limitations of the abovementioned categories, as well as their location within theories of modernization, this paper demonstrates the necessity of undertaking a sustained analysis of self-representation deployed by intellectuals, thinkers, and theologians who influenced religious discourse in the period of (so-called) reform and revival of Hindu traditions in colonial India. This paper argues that for the agents of religious transformations in the late nineteenth century, reform and revival were not polar opposites, as historians have tended to see them, but complementary intellectual processes. The only “reform” that was hence possible was through a thorough a “revival” of true tradition. As Kedarnath Dutta Bhaktivinoda Thakur, Gaudiya theologian from the late nineteenth century, insisted in 1869, the task of a reformer is “not to destroy the old order but to fulfil it.” Hence, categories of reform and revival not only blind us to larger theoretical and epistemic processes at work, they also silence out the contours of intellectual debates from the period. Taking my cue from these debates as they were carried out in Vaishnava circles in colonial Bengal, I propose that we should abandon the paradigm of reform/ revival, and carefully examine notions of “loss” and “recovery.” As terms of self-representation, loss and recovery allow us to go beyond categories determined by western scholars. As analytical categories, loss and recovery allow us to go beyond European experience of the Protestant Reformation as our unstated paradigm, and conceptually re-evaluate the grounds of religious modernity in the subcontinent. My paper seeks to cover some of this ground.

Indian Responses 1

Chair # Sarika Rao

Santanu Dey

Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, University of Calcutta (Kolkata, India)

Resuscitating or Reconstructing the Tradition? Gaudiya Vaishnavism in Colonial Bengal

Questioning the binary configuration of ‘tradition’ and modernity this paper seeks to chart the transformations that the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition underwent at the hands of a milieu of educated middle-class Bengali reformers in the early 20th century. Faced with missionary criticisms and ethnographic stereotyping such middle-class men who were often part of the colonial bureaucracy tried to present a cleansed image of their tradition. To an extent this process of reinterpreting the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition can legitimately be identified as a collaborative venture. The need to respond to Christian missionary and ethnographic stereotyping, contact with Christian standards of morality and Victorian ethos led the newly educated reformers of colonial Bengal to reassess the textual and ritual foundations of their tradition through novel methods. As they tried to bring the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition into the educated public domain through the production of books and periodicals, a literate Vaishnava public sphere emerged during this period. The Gaudiya tradition was sought to be moulded in a profound puritan spirit through a purported return to an imagined real past of the days of Chaitanya in the early 16th century. Despite this attempt to resurrect the 16th century spirit in its original form there seeped in several modern notions like moral conscientiousness, humanism, devotionalism, and a socially democratic structure for Gaudiya Vaishnavism. This paper explicates how a public forum for reforming Gaudiya Vaishnavism was developed through vernacular Bengali Vaishnava devotional and cultural periodicals namely the Sri Sri Gauranga Sevaka, Sri Vaishnava Sevika, Sri Vaishnava Sangini, Viswabandhu among numerous others in the early 20th century. The focus within this attempt shall be upon identifying the main cultural notions and issues used by the educated reformers to resuscitate, reconstruct and modernize the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition.

Indian Responses 1

Chair # Sarika Rao

Svetlana Ryzhakova

Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow, Russia)

*Non-Parsi Zoroastrians, Non-Indian Hindus, Western Adepts of Eastern Religions:
perspectives compared*

The growing interest of Western peoples towards the Indian religions and spiritual practices meets sometimes unexpected reactions from the Indians themselves. The openness of India or Indians to a wide Western audience has changed the social format of the religious idea as such. The distribution of Indian spiritual knowledge has created various syncretic schools, based on developments of the local Hindu inheritance. Nevertheless, the very identity of a Hindu or a Zoroastrian is formed in a quite controversial correspondence of descent, technical skills, a way of life and socialization into the circle of members. The very practice of conversion to Hinduism and to Zoroastrianism, although possible today, seems to be quite confusing, since different groups of Indian society perceive and interpret it in different ways. In contrast with the thick self-identification of recently converted persons (supported often with the vast intellectual knowledge) as Hindu or Zoroastrian, they sometimes are not regarded as such in the eyes of the indigenous people, are not allowed in the temples, and occur quite odd attitude in the daily life. The highly multiple inner religious identity of Hindus does not allow for an easy conversion of the foreigners. While in India, they appear as highly exotic figures to most Indians, making them to construct and re-construct the new stereotypical images of the Other, the Westerner. Being in a liminal position, Non-Indian Hindus and Non-Parsi Zoroastrians have to create their own way of life, behaviour patterns and mental outlook, different from their actual Western homeland and local Indian one. Various verbal and non-verbal cultural texts and practices among the local people (gossips, forms of curiosity, taboo, jokes, teasing) are widespread in the contact situation, and in the places of international ashrams in particular. The question of the very possibility to convert into Hinduism and Zoroastrianism is still open. The dealing with the exotic Others, Westerners, but self-converted into Hindus, lead to the 3 following strategies of the Indian society in general. The first one is positive identification, based on the acknowledgement. The second one is in the negative alterity. The third one forms the cases of crucial changes in the own ethno-religious identity, what makes Hinduism and Zoroastrianism even more complex than they use to be, creating new religious spaces inside while re-shaping the very format of the religions and nations.

Indian Responses 1

Chair # Sarika Rao

Nora Melniková

Department for the Study of Religions, Masaryk University (Brno, Czech Republic)

McDonaldization of Meditation

In my paper, I would like to look at the modernization of Indian traditions from a rather sociological perspective. The key term with the help of which I want to describe the changes that some of the traditions rooted in the Indian Subcontinent have undergone in the last 50 years is George Ritzer's McDonaldization, which refers to a contemporary paradigm of the rationalization process, one of the main characteristics of modernization. The process of McDonaldization, which in its contemporary form started in the United States and was first described in the context of its fast food industry, has in the last half-century extended its domain to previously unaffected fields, e.g. developing economies, academics or religious traditions. Having taken the example of an Indian offspring of one of the traditions which originated on the Indian subcontinent, the Theravada Buddhism, I will try to describe the characteristics it developed under the influence of McDonaldization. The example, S. N. Goenka's school of Vipassan, will provide material to show how the aspects of McDonaldization (efficiency, predictability, calculability and control through technology) influence mainly the form, but inevitably also the teachings of the tradition.

Ahmed Sohaib

Centre for Comparative Religion & Civilisations, Jamia Millia Islamia (New Delhi, India)

Contesting Hierarchies: Buddhism, Caste and Social Protest

The dominant discourse in the domain of social philosophy of early Buddhism, has been its avowed anti-caste stance and its pronounced decibel of protest. Such entrenched received wisdom has virtually left little latitude to offer any radical re-evaluation; such attempts are likely to be dismissed with frowned scepticism. Despite this, there is an urgent need to tease out the complexity of the dynamics of Buddhism, caste and social protest. This begs reconsideration of the relationship between Buddhism and the social context in which it emerged. The multi-vocality of Buddhist scriptures allows for discrepant interpretations of the textual passages. This paper interrogates the enthusiastic celebration of Buddhism as a revolutionary programme against caste system and calls into question its assertion of being a social protest movement. Challenging the hitherto received wisdom of early Buddhism's anti-caste posturing, it seeks to replace it with a fundamental premise that denies Buddhism the privilege of being as a socio-religious ideology that snubbed the varna-jati based social hierarchy. The Buddha's rebuff of social superiority based on birth (jati) and his widespread critique of the Brahmanical programmes and ideals have been invariably stretched to read into these a Buddhist revolt against the Brahmanical system and rejection of caste. As a supposed social protest movement Buddhism did little to undermine certain existing social ethos, values of new urban classes or the nature of urban life and rather allied with those who exacerbated the above situation. What really takes the sting out of Buddhism's claim of a social protest movement is the fact that while the Buddha criticized ascribed status (based on birth), he neither sought to disband nor reform the varna-jati based social organisation. Buddhism's social stance was complex and multi-faceted, and resists any simple categorization.

Dunkin Jalki

Centre for the Study of Local Cultures, Kuvempu University (Shimoga, India)

Department of English, Vijayanagar Sri Krishnadevaraya University (Bellary, India)

A Reappraisal of Studies on Sanskritisation

This paper raises some basic questions about a much discussed notion of our time – Sanskritisation: Which empirical or visible properties prove the existence of the phenomenon of Sanskritisation? What does this notion of Sanskritisation explain? What does it explain better than the existing theories about the Indian social structure? The existing literature on Sanskritisation has nothing to say about these questions. In fact, it is not even clear if the concept Sanskritisation names a phenomenon or offers an explanation for something. Nevertheless, much has been written about Sanskritisation in the last 60 years, both in its favour and against. The very abundance of literature about how this notion is useful or not in understanding Indian social structure is perhaps an indication of a crisis in the field.

This paper argues that the notion of Sanskritisation was invented to explain away an important anomaly found in the classical account of the caste system. The mobility within the castes, which is obvious to any researcher who goes to the field, is a serious threat to the dominant theories of the caste system that represent it (the caste system) as inherently rigid. Either one has to abandon caste theories or one has to accommodate the mobility seen in society within the notion of a caste-ridden and rigid Indian society. M.N. Srinivas' notion of Sanskritisation is an attempt to do the latter. The paper argues that it is the failure of the concept to achieve this goal that has prompted the controversies in its 60-year career.

Rethinking the Caste System 2

Chair # Sandeep Kumar Shetty

Mukesh Bhatt

School of Law, Birkbeck College, University of London (London, UK)

Caste as Cosmopolitanism in Diaspora

How do Hindus use caste when not in India or when exposed to a multiplicity of cultures? Caste is seen as central, with well-defined rules, and social structures. It is also seen as mono-valent, rigid and inflexible, not allowing social mobility or any interchange of persons or traditions. In addition, caste in its numerous forms is often exported to countries that receive and host diasporic communities from Hindu cultures. It will be shown that caste, far from being singular in its values, is actually a polyvalent phenomenon affecting migrant communities. Further, caste is proposed to be not a series of unique reciprocal relationships, but a set of complex, constantly changing inter-relationships between six or more components that might explain the paradoxical results from studies. It will be shown that definitions of caste suggested by early writers in Hindu culture and by European travellers in the 16th and 17th centuries more closely describe the situation when compared with the later 19th and 20th century empirical studies of European and European-influenced researchers. Finally, it will be shown that caste acts and has acted in the past as a major integrating mechanism in societies with cultural diversity despite studies suggesting that caste either does not exist, or it does not affect traditions and interactions between numerous groups.

Rethinking the Caste System 2

Chair # Sandeep Kumar Shetty

Venkat Rao

School of English Literary Studies, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India

Memories, Genres and Genos: Rethinking Local Cultures from India

Every cultural form and every cultural composition in India, every verbal and visual genre that was invented and circulated over millennia was generated on the singular axiom: know yourself by knowing or living your *kula* (*varna*, *jati*, "caste"). That is, one's life and awareness are deeply related to one's location in a *kula*. In other words, singularity of one's existence and one's sense of it are contingent upon one's sense of the singularity of one's own community and its existence. "Indian" cultural formations are woven with such fractal multiplicity of singularities. Discrete in their living and reflective compositions of speech and gesture, each of these singular communities is also intricately related to the other. Such heterogeneous phenomena throw up challenges for teaching and research in the humanities in the Indian context. Whereas the university is yet to prepare itself to confront such a challenge.

The main argument of this paper is that the reflective and generative nodes of Indian cultural formations are located in the configurations of memory, body, and idiom (verbal and visual). That is, only through the body's embodied and enacted performatives that the force and signification of the idioms and memories can be sensed, received and reiterated. As there is no ideal body complex and no normative performance in these configurations, the reflective and generative nodes of idiom and memory proliferate along with the bodies. The verbal and visual generic diversity across Indian cultural formations is as immeasurable as the *jatis* that bring them forth. This work emphasizes that the task of critical humanities is to engage locally with the dehiscence of these bio-cultural formations beyond the post-colonial abyss.

Valentina Gentile

Libera Università Internazionale Degli Studi Sociali, LUISS (Rome, Italy)

Secularism in Contemporary India: the Satyagraha as a Source of Liberal Tolerance

What is secularism? Can secularism be compatible with post-colonial democracies? In the last years, a wide literature emerged in post-colonial societies has been focused on the notion of secularism and its relation with democracy. In this respect, the case of India is particularly relevant. In this country, “Nehru-Gandhi consensus” on the secular rule was based on the recognition of the difficulty to overcome the deep religious antagonisms emerged in the aftermath of the declaration of Independence. However, critics of secularism have shown that the process of secularisation in India has presented ambivalences and disintegrative potential.

This paper is concerned with the work of an Indian influential scholar, Neera Chandhoke. In particular, it is focused on her critique of both secularism and Rawls' model of liberal tolerance, as presented in her *Beyond Secularism* (1999). In this respect, I will show that Chandhoke fails in grasping relevant issues involved in this model. I will then consider her last writings (2010) on the Gandhian idea of *satyagraha* understood as a model of public reasoning based on the shared search of truth. Therefore, I will argue that this model seems to be very influenced by Rawls's idea of public reason.

Prakash Shah

Queen Mary University of London (London, UK)

Cultural and Legal Logics of Religion and Secularisation in Europe

This paper formulates some problems concerning cultural diversity, which includes religious diversity, within a European geo-legal context. It builds on crucial work done by S.N. Balagangadhara, who has pioneered research into the manner in which Western Christianity has been constitutive of Western culture as a configuration of learning, which is its learning process, in such a way as to substantially shape that culture's way of going about in the world. Balagangadhara's work shows that Europe's dominant culture retains its Christian religious character while having gone through various phases of secularisation. The kind of knowledge this culture spreads is an obstacle to pluralism and intensifies 'culture wars'. This culture privileges the knowledge contained in doctrines, theories, beliefs, and principles over practical knowledge, performativity, rituals and customs. It demands the identification of a realm of the 'secular' through theological construction by expunging 'idolatrous' elements from pagan culture(s). The secular sphere must remain free of contamination from idolatrous elements, as must the realm of 'true religion'. This culture therefore suppresses or 'subalternises' knowledge of customary practices and laws. Instead, traditions are reconstructed through the agency of the dominant culture and its legal system in order to eliminate 'idolatrous' elements and practices, and to remake them as a variety of 'religions' on the model of Christianity. Christian anthropology thereby becomes the cornerstone of knowledge about 'other religions'. Legal systems participate in the spreading of such knowledge. This paper attempts to trace how legal systems participate in spreading the kind of culture that Balagangadhara identifies and the ways in which legal systems participate in 'reforming' non-Western traditions. It divides into four sections. The first discusses the attitude that religion is a universal phenomenon and property of all cultures. This pervasive attitude, the basis of which is theological, informs the gradual reconstruction of other traditions as 'religious', and therefore as erring variants of Christianity as Western contact with them advances. Despite the prevailing assumption of universality, Balagangadhara's theorisation of 'religion' confines the phenomenon to the three Abrahamic traditions

and sets out some of its basic features. The second section introduces the division of religions into 'true' and 'false', which constitutes the basis for the historical and contemporary claims that non-Western cultures are morally and ethically deficient, and also the basis for proselytization and conversion, which is the first manner in which Christianity spreads. The other mechanism by which Christianity universalises is through secularisation, discussed in the third section. Secularisation is the spread of a Christian attitudinal framework in a non-Christian guise, extending out among non-Christians. Part of the secularisation process involves purging pagan cultures of their idolatrous practices and merging them into a secular world which Christian theology presupposes. It is argued that this process continues in a secularised form in Europe in the encounter between Western and non-Western cultures and laws. The fourth section concretises the discussion by presenting the different ways in which liberal states harness the dynamics set in train by Christianity and its secularisation to reform non-Western cultures in its own image.

Aakash Singh

DCRC (New Delhi, India)

Ambedkar and Zizek, India and Europe

Torkel Brekke

Department of Cultural Studies and Oriental Languages, University of Oslo
(Oslo, Norway)

Secularism and the Religious Market in Scandinavia

Taking Scandinavia and India as examples, I argue that one way to conceive of secularism would be to see the state as a regulator in a market for religion and life-stances. If we look at the changing relationship between religion and state in periods of early state formation, and if we compare the states' monopolization of the sphere of religion to its behaviour in other spheres (like organized violence, education etc.) new perspectives can be gained in our debates about what secularism "really" is and what secularism should mean today in different contexts. Some have argued that the Rational Choice approach to religion is Western-centred, but I argue that there are good historical reasons why it is not in principle impossible to use the approach outside the West, like in South Asia. There are several reasons why a "market-secularism" or "laissez-faire" secularism of this sort is preferable to many other political arrangements. At least three positive consequences can be expected from such an approach. Firstly, a distanced regulator role without state funding is on the whole likely to result in a wider and better supply of religious services, which is positive to consumers. Secondly, such a role is likely to lead to more individual initiative in the religious section of civil society thus creating social capital. Thirdly, in the long run we might expect such an approach to lead to less jealousy and less competition for state favouritism between organizations thus taking away any basis for allegations of favouritism and pseudo-secularism. On a more general level, a state role taking an equal distance to all religious groups is most in agreement with the general ideals that are cherished as the core of mainstream political thought, like freedom and equality.

Péter Losonczi

Goldziher Institute Budapest (Budapest, Hungary)

Religion, Politics, Secularism: Elements of an Intercontextual Study on India and Europe

In this programmatic paper, I am going to outline elements of a rather extended research program I intend to complete on problems related to the religio-political situation in Europe on the one hand, and the global, especially Indian perspectives of this study. This short presentation makes it impossible to elaborate in detail all the problems I want to discuss and the directions I would take. However, I hope that this paper would enlighten the main contours of my project and, especially, unveil the relevance of the Indian context for the study of the European situation. My aim is basically to present a theoretical framework for the research I call an intercontextual study on Europe and India, and would serve as a pillar of my project on the rethinking of the situation of secularism in Europe (as I call it 'recontextualisation of secularism').

Conducted by # Martin Fárek, Department for the Study of Religions, University of Pardubice (Pardubice, Czech Republic), **Dušan Deák**, Department of Ethnology and World Studies, University of St. Cyril and Methodius (Trnava, Slovak Republic) and **Milan Fujda**, Department for the Study of Religion, Masaryk University (Brno, Czech Republic)

This workshop picks up several issues that arised during the first workshop on this topic (Rethinking Religion in India II, New Delhi, 2009): the problematic category "religion" in the context of India, the importance of teaching about contemporary and living traditions rather than focusing on texts and also how to implement critical evaluation of Orientalism into the curricula. The conductors of the workshop will briefly summarise their experience of teaching about Indian traditions/religions. From their teaching experience and discussions with other colleagues and students three main areas were selected. These will be discussed by the participants of workshop:

1. What is the goal of teaching about religion in India (such as the problematic concept of 'Hinduism')? What issues are relevant and important and how to implement them in the teaching? Here it is clear that a focus on contemporary living traditions is crucial rather than to perpetuate the traditional focus on texts.
2. Can we identify any specific characteristics of the space of communication and interactions between traditions that we see in India? If yes, how to teach about them? If not, what are the implications for teaching? For example, can *dharmā*, or the special social organisation based on *jāti* be selected as such specific pan-Indian characteristics?
3. What kind of experts shall the education about Indian traditions or religions form? What should students of Indian traditions know in the 21st century? Should they be able to critically reflect on the heritage of previous generations' Orientalism and if so, how to teach them to do so? What other knowledge and competences should future experts develop? This question is especially relevant to the contemporary discussions about the role of classical and modern languages in South Asian studies or about methodology of field research in the area.

Daniel Sheffield

Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University
(Malden MA, USA)

*Of Parsis and Philologists: German Orientalists and Zoroastrian Reformers
in 19th Century Bombay*

A remarkable change occurred in Zoroastrian theology during the 19th century. The Parsi Zoroastrian tradition, long imbricated in the Indo-Persian intellectual milieu of Western India, suddenly came under attack with the arrival of Scottish missionaries in Bombay. After the Rev. John Wilson's "Lecture on the Vendidad Sade" (1833), debate raged about the perceived threat of Christian conversion. In 1851, Parsi students trained in English and conversant with Enlightenment philosophy formed a group intent on religious reform, the Rnum-e Mzdayasnn Sabh, advocating rational theology and denouncing Parsi tradition as superstitiously ritualistic. Meanwhile, in 1854, a German philologist named Martin Haug discovered that the Gths, a small section of the Zoroastrian scriptures, were composed in an older language than the rest of the religious corpus. For Haug, the scriptural authority of the other texts, along with traditional interpretations, was seen as a later corruption from an rationalistic Zoroastrian origin. Haug accepted a position at Government College in Poona in 1859, with the purpose of reforming native learning. During the same year, a leading member of the Parsi reform organization, Khurshedji Rustamji Cama, had come to Germany to study with Haug's academic rival, Friedrich Spiegel. Upon Cama's return to Bombay, debates broke out within the Parsi community not just between traditionalists and reformists, but between different camps of Parsi philologists. In this paper, engaging with the work of Talal Asad and Edward Said, I hope to illuminate these complex debates and the intellectual networks in which they occurred, to demonstrate that Orientalist knowledge was not simply accepted unilaterally by colonial Parsi subjects, but rather that they critically engaged with this knowledge, even using it subversively against other power structures during the ambivalent encounter with colonial modernity.

Sai Bhatawadekar

Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures, University of Hawaii (Honolulu, USA)

*Symptoms of Withdrawal: Hegel's and Schopenhauer's Conceptual Structuring
of Hindu Religion and Philosophy*

My paper examines G.W.F. Hegel's and Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophical reception of India and their crucial role in streamlining a conceptual definition of "Hinduism," which permeates its global understanding till date. I argue that even though Hegel rejects Indian thought as primitive and savage, and Schopenhauer embraces it as timeless wisdom, they both impose three concepts on Hinduism as its defining features: they establish that Hindu religious thought presents 'brahman' as the absolute divine principle; it declares the manifest world as an impermanent illusion; and finally, as ultimate knowledge it upholds the insight into the oneness of all things in 'brahman.' This analysis is significant in tracing how the school of non-dualism – Advaita Vedanta – and intense world-renouncing meditation come to homogenize the variety of schools in Hindu religion and philosophy. Rather than judging "misunderstandings," my study is a comparative philosophical endeavor that reveals the complexity of cross-cultural history of ideas: with Gadamerian "hermeneutic consciousness" I examine the precepts of Hegel's and Schopenhauer's philosophical systems that dictate their interpretation, and with "hermeneutic suspicion" (to use Ricoeur and Habermas) I uncover their appropriation, selective reading, and restructuring of the then available European sources on Hinduism. However, contrary to the insistence on Eastern passivity in its Western interpretations, I propose a step to rethink Eastern agency in this encounter: I demonstrate that the interpretation and incorporation of Hinduism not only influenced the direction but on occasion subverted the conceptual consistency of Hegel's and Schopenhauer's systems of thought. 19th century European re-construction of Hinduism found its way back into 20th century reformulation of it within Hindu traditions themselves, and it was as instrumental in the self-definition of Europe at the time, as it is in the self-projection of India today. In the globalized politics of representation, in which, as Hegel and Schopenhauer, we communicate one tradition in the vocabulary of another, negotiate being universalists and relativists of culture, and create and subvert power relations, my study self-reflexively presents a crucial chapter in the trans-regional emergence, consumption, and history of "Hinduism."

Debalina Banerjee

English Department, Vidyasagar Evening College, University of Calcutta (Kolkata, India)

Indias of the Mind: Representations and Misrepresentations in Sister Nivedita's

Web of Indian Life and Katherine Mayos' Mother India

Katherine Mayos' *Mother India* begins with an account of Hindu religious life as seen through the myopic lenses of the colonizer, burdened with the need to liberate Indians from the morass of ignorance, religious dogma and pagan practices: Kali is a Hindu goddess, wife of the great god Siva, whose attribute is destruction and whose thirst is for blood and death-sacrifice. Black of face she is, with a monstrous lolling tongue, dripping blood. Of her four hands, one grasps a bleeding human head, one a knife, the third, outstretched, cradles blood, the fourth, raised in menace, is empty. "Kali! Kali! Kali!" shout all the priests and the suppliants together, some flinging themselves face downward on the temple floor. Meantime, and instantly, a woman who waited behind the killers of the goat has rushed forward and fallen on all fours to lap up the blood with her tongue – "in the hope of having a child" (Mayo 5). On the contrary, Margarete Elizabeth Nobel or Sister Nivedita in her *Web of Indian Life* provides a secular and liberal perspective, from which she herself observes, "How happy were those days in the little lane! How unlike the terrible pictures of the Hindu routine which had embittered my English childhood! Constant ablutions, endless prostrations, unmeaning caste restrictions, what a torture the dreary tale had been! And the reality so different!" (Nivedita 17). But interestingly Nivedita's assessment fails in giving a composite view of Hindu religious life as does Mayo's pejorative and maligning portrayal of the Hindu way of life. It is only when the two texts are read comparatively, as analogous to the dominant ideology, do we see a dynamic discourse emerging, that is both challenging and enlightening.

Olga Real-Najarro

El Colegio de México y Universidad Valle del Bravo (Tamaulipas, México)

Beyond Conventions or Stereotypes: Sri Aurobindo's Revision of Hinduism

Following the guiding questions, our intention is to offer an insight in what may have been the perception of a well-known syncretizer, a thinker that created a cultural bridge between Western and Eastern cultural paradigms. Knowing that his attitude towards religion in general and Hinduism in particular changed dramatically over the course of his life, from agnosticism and ignorance of Indian traditions towards an acute interest in Hindu culture, we will revisit some of his positions on conventional Hindu worship and observed Hindu social practices. We will discuss briefly the appropriation of his discourse by the Indian right, and more specifically, his proposal for a new syncretic model for human society. In other words, we will outline what may have been his peculiar response to the idea of Hinduism as a European construction or not.

Polly Hazarika

Department of English, SNTD Women's University (Mumbai, India)

Between a Teacher and his Student: Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda and the 'Modernisation' of Indian Tradition

This paper will examine the famous Guru-Shishya pair of Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and their approach to practices. At the heart of the Reform moment the discourses of this pair embody significant shifts in articulating native practices. The master's discourse is untouched by colonial valuative categories. In his discourse practice is related only to the transformation of the self or the individual who performs the practice and never to a wider group. The swami on the other hand speaks in the new colonial discourse. His discourse is deeply influenced by the master, but he employs colonial categories and its evaluative framework. He often speaks of practices as the practices of a group. In a study of the two figures we can see how colonial discourse interferes with the continuance of native practices.

The 19th century Bengali mystic, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, rose to popularity in the thick of the reform period, but was himself remarkably untouched by the reform project. His nearest connection to the reform movement were the young men from Calcutta who flocked to see him in the last ten years of his life. The master's most beloved disciple was Narendranath Dutta (1863-1902), who he first met in 1881. Narendra was a young boy in college pursuing the new learning of his times. Narendra spent 5 years in association with Ramakrishna, and became the face of the Ramakrishna Mission and Math, after his masters' death.

On his many travels to the West the swami often spoke of a Hindu identity and a Hindu nation. The swami's terms and distinctions are uniquely his; his master never spoke of either the Hindu religion or nation. The master's concern on the other hand was always with the individual and his actions. The shift in discourse between master and disciple, especially when they speak about practices and 'rituals' is deeply influenced by their location at the edge of the colonial reform movement.

Tomáš Avramov

Faculty of Theology, University of South Bohemia (České Budějovice, Czech Republic)

Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, the Father of Indian Catholic Theology and the Contemporary Theology of Indian Christians – their Relation to the Indian Philosophy (especially Vedanta) and Spirituality

Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861 – 1907), who called himself “Hindu- Catholic”, was one of the representatives of the Bengal Renaissance and is considered as a father of Indian Christian Theology. His main effort was to integrate the Christian faith with the experience of Vedanta. So he considered the philosophy of Vedanta as the summit of the natural human quest for the fundamental unity in the reality of Divine and the Christ is for him the fulfilment of what the supernatural divine revelation can offer to humanity. However, Upadhyay, when facing certain texts of ancient Indian scriptures, positively asks if they are “mere speculations” of human mind or if they could be a result of the manifestation of Divine to their authors. Upadhyay, after becoming Christian, remained in a way faithful to the philosophy of his native land and tried to apply it for the Christian theology in the similar way that Thomas Aquinas applied the Aristotelian philosophy in the scholasticism. Upadhyay arrived even to the conclusion that the philosophy of Vedanta is more suitable for the philosophical basis of Christian theology than the philosophy of Aristotle. Especially the openness of Vedanta to the mystical experience is according to Upadhyay very valuable and can immensely enrich the Christian theology which is somehow exaggeratedly theoretical. The particular example of Upadhyay's theologizing and use of the Advaita Vedanta philosophical terms in this context is his use of Sankara's description of the nature of Supreme Brahman as sat – cit – ananda in the trinitarian theology, namely in his Cantic to the Holy Trinity. What Upadhyay had tried was to create an original theology of India that would be profoundly Christian in its faith and at the same time Indian in its culture and features. He rejected the presentation of Christianity in an Eurocentric cultural manner and had faced in his lifetime rather a misunderstanding and disrespect from the side of the Catholic church, nevertheless his influence has been since then significantly growing and the contemporary theology of Indian Catholic church is largely based on the Upadhyay's ideas.

Rosa Maria Perez

Department of Anthropology, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Lisbon University Institute (Lisbon, Portugal)

Reversible roles. Subalternity and religion in Hindu Goa

To Inden, as well as to Dirks, castes not only used to contribute to the legitimization of colonial rule but after independence in 1947 were used to reinforce the position of the dominant groups (Inden 1993, Dirks 2001), thus cementing the processes of social exclusion and marginalization. This has occurred to such an extent that Partha Chatterjee was led to argue that no matter how we choose to characterize it, subaltern consciousness in the specific cultural context of India cannot but contain caste as a central element in its constitution (Chatterjee 1994[1989]:168). Indeed, a caste-centred interpretation of Indian society has precluded other social interpretations and has silenced alternative perspectives, namely those pertaining to gender (see Jeffrey 2001).

As an exemplary presence in colonial and postcolonial studies, India invite us, as few other places do, to evaluate issues of cultural perception, that is, the way that local cultures are perceived by foreign ones, and how this perception affects the way that the social hierarchy is seen from bottom up; and how rooted stereotypes produced by orientalist texts (mysticism, exoticism, caste, gender representations such as sati, purdah, child marriage) have rationalized the European presence in the country.

Goan society may provide some answers to this debate, particularly when we analyze the Goan devadasis, stigmatized dancers of the Hindu temples who, in an attempt to establish their social status, formed a 'caste' with the other ritualists of the Hindu temples. By looking at this particular group, my aim is to propose an analysis of Indian society from its margins, a perspective that has received no major analytical formulations, and that in Goa allow us to voice subaltern perspectives. A long term fieldwork carried out in a Hindu temple of Goa will be the basis for my analysis.

Malcolm Voyce

Department of Law, Macquarie University (Sydney, Australia)

Buddhism and the Vinaya: An Edward Said Approach to Buddhist Disciplinary Texts

While Said has been regarded as not concerning himself with Buddhism in general or with law his work may be used to understand the Vinaya (Buddhist rules). This paper builds on my forthcoming book to explain how Said's ideas on the construction of colonial knowledge may be deployed to understand early understandings of Buddhist disciplinary texts.

The paper makes an examination of early translations of the Vinaya into English to show how European ideas of law coloured understandings of the Vinaya. These ideas concerned the expectations that laws were universal and were meant to formulate a consistent form of identifiable behaviour.

I argue that the utilisation of Said's approach helps to discard and read through European perceptions of law to take into account other considerations such as the theories of transgressions as advanced by Bataille to show that the Vinaya may be seen as a training scheme. I also show that a rereading utilising Said helps us to understand the role of sexuality in religious life.

The paper concludes by showing that the work of Said contributes to the perspective that early readings of the Vinaya were influenced by European perceptions of law.

Mukesh Bhatt

School of Law, Birkbeck College, University of London (London, UK)

India Before and After - Diderot's Encyclopédie as Watershed

Published in the middle of the 18th century in France, the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot marks a convenient point straddling the five centuries of direct European participation in the Indian Ocean and India in particular. Descriptions of India by earlier travellers (Duarte-Barbosa) from Portugal, England (Henry Lord), France (Tavernier and Bernier) and elsewhere in the 16th and 17th centuries are presumably the raw material from which Diderot and his contributors would have summarised entries on India and Indian culture, along with oral contributions from unknown sources, thus providing an end-date for these early modern descriptions. Later writers travelling through India, especially those British (Macmurdo amongst others) after 1800 who helped run the English East India Company, and set up the later Empire have in their turn contributed to a European perspective on India, helped in turn, as with the earlier travellers, by local informants. An examination of items related to India in Diderot's *Encyclopédie* therefore might help in a comparative study of the evolution that has taken place in European views on India. These can be further compared with contemporary or extrapolated reports from local inhabitants, ideally those who have had little or no contact with the Europeans, the latter providing a control environment for the purposes of this study. There is also a third set of data available from Græco-Roman records around 2 millennia ago.

Jana Valtrová

Department for the Study of Religions, Masaryk University (Brno, Czech Republic)

Images of Indian Christianity in the Context of Historical Studies of Christian Missions

The paper deals with the problem of representation of Indian Christianity in the context of modern scholarly works related to the history of Christian missions. Although Indian Christianity has been acknowledged by many Indologists or Anthropologists as a specific Indian phenomenon and has been studied with regard to the postcolonial theory, within the mission studies it is still widely viewed as a somewhat exotic variation of a true (i. e. Western Catholic or Protestant) Christianity. I argue that this point of view builds upon a legacy of old missionary works and adopts their discourse. The paper will present several examples of a close relation between medieval missionary images of Indian Christians and conclusions of some modern historians. Medieval images of Indian Christians as presented in the accounts of such missionaries as Odoric of Pordenone, John of Montecorvino, John of Marignolli or Jordan of Catala will be analysed with reference to some modern historical studies concerning Christian missions (Adolphus Medlycott, Stephen Neill etc.). As one of the most influential missionary concepts applied to Indian Christians, the idea of Nestorianism and its connotations will be discussed.

Sharada Sugirtharajah

School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham

(Birmingham, UK)

Orientalists and their 'Hinduisms'

There is much discussion in contemporary academic discourse about definitional ambiguities surrounding the term 'Hinduism'. My concern is not so much about these ambiguities but rather about the hermeneutical factors that inform European representations of what has come to be called 'Hinduism'; or 'Hinduisms', and about how these factors continue to impact on the academic study of 'Hinduism'; and Hindu self-understanding. The paper will also examine the extent to which the Orientalists concept of a fair and impartial study of religion was compromised in their writings.

This panel examines German scholarship on Indian literature, especially the Sanskrit epics. As is well known, Sanskrit studies experienced an unparalleled renaissance at German universities between 1819 and 1919. Some of the most significant contributions of this renaissance took the form of canonical "histories" of Indian literature and philosophy. Besides Winternitz' *Geschichte der indischen Literatur* (3 vols., 1905-1922), other representatives of this genre include Glasenapp's *Die Literaturen Indiens. Von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (1961) and Mylius' *Geschichte der altindischen Literatur* (1988), Windisch's *Geschichte der Sanskrit-Philologie und Indischen Altertumskunde* (2 vols., 1917-1922), and Frauwallner's *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie* (2 vols., 1953-1956). Many of these works, however, relied on constructions of Indian history that were never subjected to a critical examination. Scholars frequently relied on *a priori* constructions of Indian history, such as the distinction between an early period of rationalism followed by a decline into superstition and faith mongering, in order to account for the historical and genetic relationships of the literature under consideration. Yet, this literature was then frequently used in turn as confirmation of the basic historical scheme already in place. Besides the manifest circularity of such an undertaking, this method was also frequently used to create and confirm stereotypes of the Oriental other. Frauwallner, for example, famously made use of such a historical scheme in order to separate out the Āryan element in Indian philosophy in his article "Der arische Anteil an der indischen Philosophie" (1939). Even before Frauwallner, however, C. Lassen had provided crucial impetus for such scholarship, by attempting to reconstruct Indian ethnography and history on the basis of the *Mahābhārata*. In what is perhaps the earliest instance of the reciprocal relationship between constructions of Indian history and scholarship on Indian literature, Lassen writes, "I will leave out here a discussion of the names Pāndu and Krisna, white and black, and merely throw out the suggestion that they are a reference to the two races that fought each other in Indian pre-history, the original native black [einheimische schwarze] and the light-skinned [hellfarbige], Sanskrit-speaking interlopers from the North, whose westernmost racial kin even now are fighting a similar battle with similar supremacy against the red races of America" (Lassen 1837: 75). This interdisciplinary panel will examine the consequences of this mutual dependence of German constructions of Indian history and its literary representation, while offering suggestions on how to develop hermeneutically more circumspect approaches to the study of both.

Vishwa Adluri

Adjunct Assistant Professor in Religious Studies, Hunter College (New York, USA)

Text-Historical Reconstruction and the Struggle for an Objective Canon:

German Gītā Interpretations between the Two World Wars

Ever since A. Schlegel first translated the text into German in 1823, the Bhagavadgītā has exercised a unique fascination on the German mind. Wilhelm von Humboldt, for example, considered the Bhagavadgītā one of the greatest literary creations from India, noting of it that “the Oupnek’hat [Upanisad] cannot compare with the sublimity, the precision, and the perfectly concise presentation of the Bhagavad Gītā.” Indeed, von Humboldt considered the Bhagavadgītā not only to be essential to an understanding of Indian philosophy but also to be part of a universal educational canon on par with the great works of classical antiquity. For him, “philosophical language” was “already more fully developed” in the Bhagavadgītā than in “the Greek [language], at least in Parmenides’ time.” Yet, this fascination with the Bhagavadgītā was soon to take a darker turn: once Hegel closes the door on Indian philosophy in his lectures and article on the Bhagavadgītā in 1827, the German interest in the Bhagavadgītā becomes deeply ambiguous. On the one hand, scholars continue to be fascinated by the Gītā; on the other hand, this fascination takes darker forms such as an insistence on the superior objectivity of German scholarship or that of the claim that the Bhagavadgītā acquires its contemporary significance in India owing to the efforts of German academics (a claim explicitly made by Jürgen Hanneder in a recent review). In many ways, then, the Bhagavadgītā can be seen as a barometer of German sentiment toward India. In my presentation, I will present an overview of the history of German Bhagavadgītā scholarship: claims of greater objectivity notwithstanding, I will show that German Gītā interpretations were always motivated by uniquely German considerations, not least the anxiety of establishing a neo-Brahmanic order in the form of the German Indologist in place of traditional commentators on the text. In particular, I would like to ask: why does this one text come to exercise such a fascination on the German mind (Heinrich Himmler, as is well known, always carried around a copy of the Gītā with him)? Why does it become so crucial for German Indologists to appropriate the Bhagavadgītā? And what is at stake in German readings of the Bhagavadgītā as an “Indo-Aryan metaphysics of battle and action”? What lessons does the history of German Gītā scholarship hold for a future dialogue between the two traditions?

Alf Hiltebeitel

Columbian Professor of Religion, History, and Human Sciences, Department of Religion,
The George Washington University (Washington DC, USA)

*Tribes, Castes, and Gazetteers: European Templates for Interpreting India's Epics
from Germany, France, and Great Britain*

My presentation will begin from a primary observation: that, whereas German scholarship on India's epics, and principally the *Mahābhārata*, began from notions of its Indo-Germanic *tribal* origins, and French scholarship on the epics began from understandings of *caste*, British scholarship did little with the epics but began the colonial enterprise of authoring regional gazetteers and manuals *on* tribes and castes. In so doing, British ethnography, albeit dismissively, laid some small foundations for understanding where, among whom, and in what ways the epics were important in and to specific caste and tribal cultures in India. Until Madeleine Biardeau's work in the early 1970s which grounded her fieldwork in some preliminary scanning of the colonial record on the Tamil Draupadī cult, European scholars of the epics totally ignored such colonial information on the epics' *real* tribal and caste relevance within Indian subcultures, and preferred to continue constructing fantasies of the epics' *imagined* tribal or caste origins (or in George Dumézil's reformulation, meant to incorporate caste structures, “tri-functional” origins). The presentation will document and work out the implications of the opening observation, and conclude with some discussion of the Draupadī cult written in anticipation of viewing and discussing Shashikanth Ananthachari's film “Listen Draupadi.”

Joydeep Bagchee

Post-Doctoral Fellow, Marburg University (Berlin, Germany)

The Invention of Difference and the Assault on Ecumenism: Paul Hacker becomes a Catholic

The German Indologist Paul Hacker is known, above all, for introducing two words into the English lexicon: “neo-Hindu” (developed as a means of distinguishing “traditional” Hinduism from its contemporary adherents, and as a way of delegitimizing the practices of the latter) and “inclusivism” (developed as a way of setting apart Indian pluralism from Western and Christian concepts of tolerance and Nächstenliebe, and as a way of showing how Western scholars, in contrast to Indian scholars, were attentive to differences between traditions). But while many scholars took up Hacker’s conceptual vocabulary, and applied it to the study of Hinduism, few cared to actually examine the theological context of Hacker’s own research. A convert to Catholicism, Hacker in fact struggled all his life with his Protestant inheritance: in his later years, he had many fights with the Catholic church precisely over the latter’s greater ecumenism—anathema to one of his disposition and training. Thus, in a radical critique of the Catholic church in India, he asserts that the monks that have gone to India “have not introduced the Hindus to Christian spirituality and encouraged them to reflect on what is truer, their own or Christian spirituality; on the contrary: the Christians have adapted ... more and more to Hindu spirituality. In this area ... a most radical paganization of Christianity in India is underway.” Seen in this light, Hacker’s comments on the Indian practice of including or subsuming different religious strains under an overarching conception can actually be seen as a sotto voce attack on the very tradition to which Hacker had converted: an attack made all the more scurrilous by the fact that it came from one allegedly sympathetic to the Catholic worldview. In this paper, I show that Hacker never changed his Protestant commitments: as a neo-Catholic he was an arch-Protestant, while as a neo-Evangelical he was an arch-critic of Catholic ecumenism. Reading the story of Hacker’s life as an allegory for the conflicted relationship of German Indologists toward India, simultaneously justification for their existence and source of deep unease, thus lets us cast new light on the literary encounter between the two traditions. Drawing on Adluri’s analysis of the Lutheran origins of the modern textual sciences (see the forthcoming *The Nay Science: A History of German Indology*), I will show how Hacker’s research is driven by his own religious agenda: given this ideological approach to the study of Indian texts, how credible is Hacker as a scholar?

Conducted by # Koenraad Elst

What went wrong in the California textbook affair of 2005-2009: with the Board of Education procedure, and especially with the case presented by the Hindu organizations? The procedure showed certain mechanisms of American society in which the California Hindus had been living for decades and which they should have understood. It contained an element of gross unfairness, with academics gate-crashing into the procedure with an emphatically partisan purpose yet getting appointed as arbiters. However, anyone familiar with the current debates on Indian history would have foreseen this, yet the Hindu organizations managed not to. While the more established religions in the US habitually get their demanded more-than-fair textbook presentation of their religion, Hindus jeopardized their opportunity by unnecessarily linking their proposals with historical claims far outside the received wisdom. The intellectual culture among Hindu activists (“under-informed and over-opinionated”) was such that, when proposing amendments to the schoolbook presentation of Hindu history and doctrine, they disregarded the unfavourable climate and chose to go ahead with a counter-narrative certain to provoke a hostile reaction from circles more powerful than them. However, all this was secondary to the more radical flaw in the Hindus’ approach to their own doctrine and history. We reread their proposals more closely and see the pattern of a particular stage of religious thought not quite matching modern standards. Ironically, on this occasion the old Orientalists would have found their alleged prejudices so maligned by the California Hindu activists confirmed in the latter’s performance. The really important question then becomes: why are all the fabled Hindu brains elsewhere, in secular pursuits or on the “secularist” side of the battlefield?

Friday 14 October, 14.30-17.00

Room # Larger Knights' Hall

On the last day of the conference, we want to reflect upon the progress that has been made in answering the questions of the conference: Are the descriptions we have of religion in India the products of a process of collaboration and dialogue between Europeans and Indians? Are these descriptions the result of a dialogue between a European and an Indian conceptual framework or do they reflect a monologue of the West? Are the Indian responses part of a dialogue or do they reflect an Indian monologue? Have scholars developed ways of understanding the respective conceptual frameworks? Can we come to better mutual understanding?

This final workshop session is meant to allow the participants of Rethinking Religion in India to sit together and reflect on the conclusions that have been arrived at, the problems that have been identified, the new questions that have arisen and the steps that have been taken in the course of the conference. Jointly, we will try to identify the questions that need to be addressed in the subsequent conferences, think about changes of format to allow more fruitful discussions, and more generally brainstorm about the steps to be taken next. We invite all participants to actively partake in this session.

The closing workshop will be followed by a **closing address** (17.00-17.30).

Conference output

It is our aim to publish the proceedings of the Platform and Roundtable sessions in the form of an edited volume.

The papers of Platform and Roundtable sessions of the first conference were published by Routledge in 2010: *Rethinking Religion in India: The Colonial Construction of Hinduism*.

Conference documentary and audio recordings

A 10-15 minute documentary is produced of each conference in the conference cluster. The respective documentaries give an overview of the different sessions and include interviews with the invited speakers and other conference participants. In the course of the five years, the documentaries should represent the contribution of Rethinking Religion in India to answering some of the main questions in religious studies and in developing an alternative framework for the study of religion in India.

The overall objective of these documentaries is to make the conference themes and results accessible to a wider audience, to promote reflection and discussion about the conference themes and questions in between conferences, and to introduce the conference themes in institutions of higher education in India and abroad.

Besides these 15-minute documentaries some of the discussions, presentations and interviews with speakers and participants will be uploaded on YouTube. The sessions of the previous two conferences have been watched by a large number of people and we hope the same will be the case for the videos of this conference too.

<http://www.youtube.com/user/cultuurwetenschap>



The University of Pardubice ...

- # prepares specialists for successful careers in a wide variety of professions,
- # contributes by its education and research activities to the development of a knowledgeable society,
- # offers Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degree study programmes with almost 130 study specializations,
- # broadens the universal scale of scientific disciplines - in natural, technical, economic, social and health sciences, and arts,
- # creates an open international community,
- # opens study opportunities for handicapped students and provides them with personal assistance programme,
- # is an active part of the European Higher education and research area.

The University of Pardubice is one of 26 public higher education institutions in the Czech Republic, and the only university in the Pardubice Region. The University of Pardubice has been extending a more than sixty year long tradition of higher education in the City of Pardubice. Since 1994, the new name - the University of Pardubice – has been used. The university's study and applied research programmes have developed extensively since then, the number of students has increased to 10,500, and research and development results from the university's academic staff have been recognised by Czech and international scientific communities.

Nowadays, the university consists of seven faculties.

JAN PERNER TRANSPORT FACULTY
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND ADMINISTRATION
FACULTY OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND INFORMATICS
FACULTY OF ARTS AND PHILOSOPHY
FACULTY OF CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY
FACULTY OF RESTORATION
FACULTY OF HEALTH STUDIES

Apart from teaching, the University of Pardubice is also renowned for its numerous scientific and research activities. It has been ranked among the leading higher education institutions in the Czech Republic. Research and development have been carried out on a broad scale, ranging from fundamental to specific applied research activities that reflect the particular needs of industry and other institutions and companies. Within the scope of contracts concluded with foreign partners, and outside of them, international cooperation is maintained with over 220 universities and research institutions in 40 countries, which also include student and staff exchange programmes and scientific projects. Prestigious international sessions, workshops, conferences, and seminars are organized every year by the University as well.

The modern facilities of the university campus create ideal conditions for the all-around development of young people. Pleasant surroundings and many sports and cultural life opportunities, in combination with quality and demanding study programmes, are comparable to those of leading European universities.

University of Pardubice, Studenská 95, 532 10 Pardubice, Czech Republic
www.uni-pardubice.eu



Pardubice, the seat of the Pardubice region, is situated at the confluence of the Labe and Chrudimka rivers and is one of the most beautiful cities in East Bohemia. The first preserved mention of the existence of Pardubice dates from the year 1295, but the municipal emblem refers to a legend of an older event: during the siege of Milan in 1158, the falling gate reputedly cut the horse of Ješek of Pardubice, the bravest knight from Vladislav II's army, in half. In 1340 Arnošt of Pardubice, the first archbishop of Prague, inherited the town which already had municipal rights.

The peak of development in Pardubice came after 1491 when the town was bought by Vilém of Pernštejn, the most powerful nobleman in the Bohemian Kingdom at that time. In addition to other things Vilém started the Late Gothic reconstruction of the local water castle and his sons Vojtěch and Jan then continued the work in the Renaissance style. Thus was created a historically unique object, a change from a defensive water castle into a spacious and comfortable castle which we can admire today. We also have the Pernštejns to thank for the entire historical city centre with a Renaissance square, picturesque streets and Pardubice's dominant feature the Green Gate. The exceptionality of the built up work is best expressed by an old saying "It stands out like Pardubice". The glorious age of the Pernštejns ended in 1560 when the indebted manor was sold to Emperor Ferdinand I.

Pardubice also confirmed its strategic significance during the Thirty Years War. It withstood all attacks, the worse of which was the siege by the Swedish General Torstenson in 1645; but it paid a high price. The town almost completely burned down and its population decreased by one half. Restoration proceeded slowly but surely. Baroque, Rococo, Classicistic and Empire edifices, built in later centuries, still fascinate visitors. The next important moment in Pardubice's history came in the year 1845 when for the first time a train passed through Pardubice on the Prague – Olomouc railway line. Gradually the town became an important crossing station. The railway contributed to the development of trade, machinery, chemical, food and electro-technical industries which in turn transformed the social and cultural life of the city.

The history of the University of Pardubice is closely linked to the development of the traffic network and industry in the town and region. Teaching at the newly established Higher School of Chemistry in Pardubice commenced in 1950. With an increasing number of faculties, the one-department school became an institution providing an academic education of university type and in March 1994 it was renamed the University of Pardubice. Currently there are almost 10,000 students studying at seven faculties of the University of Pardubice.

Culture and sports are inseparable parts of contemporary life in Pardubice. In addition to the aforementioned University of Pardubice you can find here the East Bohemian Museum, East Bohemian Gallery, Chamber Symphony Orchestra and East Bohemian Theatre. The rock club "Žlutý pes" ("Yellow Dog") is famous far and wide with younger generations, the "Devěťadvacítka" ("Twenty-Nine"), which is the city scene for open culture, has already gained a name too. Many sport events, including international, take place here every year in addition to the programmes of regular cultural institutions. In sports, Pardubice is connected with horse racing, particularly with the Velká pardubická steeplechase which has been organised regularly since 1874. Other traditional sport events are the Junior Tennis Open, the Zlatá přilba (Golden Helmet) speedway race and the Czech Open international chess tournament. The dense network of bicycle trails and paths which interlink the town and its surroundings, the water recreation area in Cihelna and the indoor swimming pool with an outdoor water area are evidence of the fact that in sports Pardubice thinks also of the general public. Pardubice is also a green city. Vegetation grows in the city along both rivers. There are three forest complexes at the perimeter of Pardubice and maintained parks in the middle of the city. 1,400 plant species currently grow within the city! Pardubice and its beautiful surroundings are definitely worth seeing, enjoying the view from the Green Gate, cruising on a cabin cruiser or experiencing the greenery along the Labe or Chrudimka, on foot or by bicycle.

PARTICIPANT LIST



Aakash Singh, aakashsinghrathore@yahoo.com
Adéla Prokšová, a.proksova@seznam.cz
Ahmed Sohail, sohaibnirvan@gmail.com
Alexander Naessens, alexander.naessens@gmail.com
Alf Hildebeitel, beitel@gwu.edu
Anil Rao, mr.anilrao@gmail.com
Anindita Chakrabarti, aninditac@iitk.ac.in
Anna Sochová, sochova@centrum.cz
Anne Cardinael, anne@india-platform.org
Arvind-Pal Mandair, amandair@umich.edu
Balangangadhara S.N., Balu@ugent.be
Barbora Štefková, barbara.maloe@yahoo.ie
Barbora Červová, barcika@seznam.cz
Brian Pennington,
brian.pennington@maryvillecollege.edu
Daniel Sheffield, sheffiel@fas.harvard.edu
David Bradna, davebradna@post.cz
Debalina Banerjee, debalina.banerjee@gmail.com,
debalina@vec.ac.in
Debika Saha, sahadebika@yahoo.com
Devendra Ingle, ingledevs@gmail.com,
devendra_i@rediffmail.com
Dinesh Shenoy, dineshenoy@gmail.com
Dunkin Jalki, dunkinjalki@gmail.com
Dušan Deák, gzeleznica@gmail.com
Emanuel Maes, emanuel.maes@helena.be
František Brendl, frantisek.brendl@mmp.cz
G. Sivarama Krishnan, gsiva49@hotmail.com
Geoffrey Oddie, geoffrey.oddie@gmail.com
Gurminder Singh, gsingh.edu@gmail.com
Helena Hejnová, helenajirsova@seznam.cz
Indudhara S.E., indudhara.s.e@gmail.com

Irena Pštrosová, irena.pstrossova@seznam.cz
Ivana Švecová, ivana.svecova@upce.cz
Ivona Baklíková, ibaklikova@suz.cz
Jakob De Roover, jakob.deroover@ugent.be
Jana Valtrová, jvaltrova@phil.muni.cz
Jana Horáková, pidalkaj@seznam.cz
Jana Balcarová, jana.balcarova@upce.cz
Jayprakashreddy Patil, pjslugum@gmail.com
Jiří Cakl, jiri.cakl@upce.cz
Jiří Gebelt, jiri.gebelt@upce.cz
Jiří Binder, jiri.binder@mmp.cz
Jitka Genserová, jitka.genserova@upce.cz
Jitka Rychlíková, rychlikova@vcm.cz
Jitka Vojtková, vojtkova.j@gmail.com
Jolana Šafránková, jolana.safrankova@seznam.cz
Joydeep Bagchee, jbagchee@gmail.com
Kaliyaperumal Mutukrishnan, souagfa@gmail.com
Kateřina Danielková, k.danielkova@gmail.com
Kateřina Kvochová, st21622@upce.cz
Kavitha P.N., csckavithaa@gmail.com
Khiro Moharana, khirodmoharana@gmail.com
Klára Suchá, icpardubice@suz.cz
Klára Kudláčková, st28428@upce.cz
Koenraad Elst, koenraad.elst@telenet.be
Lenka Zilvarová, st16005@student.upce.cz
Luboš Ježek, st21615@student.upce.cz
Lucie Šárová, posli.mail.sem@gmail.com
Lucie Břízová, lucie.brizova@mmp.cz
Lukáš Málek, monocyt@centrum.cz
Lukáš Prskavec, willi2ams@post.cz
Mahesh Kumar C.S., maheshslc@gmail.com
Malcolm Joyce, malcolm.voyce@gmail.com

Manjunath Bhandary, president@sahyadri.edu.in
Marianne Keppens, mariannekeppens@gmail.com
Markéta Kociolková, kociolkova.marketa@seznam.cz
Martin Fárek, martin.farek@upce.cz
Mihaela Gligor, mihaelagligor@gmail.com
Milan Fujda, milky@mail.muni.cz
Milana Volková, mvolkova@centrum.cz
Miroslav Košťál, killmore@seznam.cz
Miroslav Diviš, mikedike27@seznam.cz
Miroslav Ludwig, miroslav.ludwig@upce.cz
Mitan Chakma, portierprashad@yahoo.com
Monika Vejchodová, monika.vejchodova@upce.cz
Monika Makovičková, tejaha@centrum.cz
Mukesh Bhatt, mcbhatt@gmail.com
Muthukrishnan Saradha, pdrlingam@gmail.com
Namrata Ganneri, namgan@gmail.com
Naomi Goldenberg, naomi4339@rogers.com
Nebojsa Nikolic, nebojsanikolic10@gmail.com
Nele De Gersem, nele.degersem@ugent.be
Nishikant Kolge, kolge270477@gmail.com
Nora Melniková, vlastofka@gmail.com
Olga Real-Najarro, olgarealn@gmail.com
Pavlna Kubová, kubova.pavlina@seznam.cz
Peter Kiraly, pedrokiraly1990@yahoo.es
Péter Losonczy, lospeter@yahoo.com
Peter Gottschalk, pgottschalk@wesleyan.edu
Petr Vorel, petr.vorel@upce.cz
Polly Hazarika, polly.hazarika@gmail.com
Prakash Shah, prakash.shah@qmul.ac.uk
Praveena T. L., praveenslc@gmail.com
Robert A. Yelle, robertyelle@hotmail.com
Romana Vojířová, vojirova@kcpardubice.cz

Rosa Maria Perez, rperez.perez@gmail.com
Sabina Kuncová, sabina.kuncova@centrum.cz
Sadananda Janekere S., sadananda_2001@yahoo.com
Sai Bhatawadekar, saib@hawaii.edu
Sandeep Kumar Shetty, sankushetty@gmail.com
Santanu Dey, santanudeys@gmail.com
Santhosh Kumar P.K. Shetty, santhuappu@gmail.com
Sarah Claerhout, sarah.claerhout@ugent.be
Sarika Rao, sarika09@gmail.com
Sashikanth Anathachari, sashikanth4@rediffmail.com
Shankarappa N. S., shankar.swarappa@gmail.com
Shanmukha Armugam, shanmukha24@gmail.com
Sharada Sugirtharajah, sharada@blueyonder.co.uk
Štěpán Lisy, stepan.lisy@upce.cz
Subrahmanya B.K., aasha.research@gmail.com
Sufiya Pathan, sufiya@gmail.com
Svetlana Ryzhakova, lana@mega.ru
Tomas Avramov, tomasavramov@yahoo.com
Torkel Brekke, torkel.brekke@ikos.uio.no
Umesh Bagade, ubagade@gmail.com
Valentina Gentile, vgentile@luiss.it
Varuni Bhatia, varunib@umich.edu
Venkat D. Rao, telvenkat@gmail.com
Veronika Hudcová, Bwerush@atlas.cz
Viktor Hejna, v.hejna@centrum.cz
Vilém Skopal, ragabash@seznam.cz
Viola Pargačová, viola.pargacova@upce.cz
Vishwa Adluri, vadluri@hunter.cuny.edu
Vít Machálek, vit.machalek@upce.cz
Yannick De Clercq, Yannick.DeClercq@ugent.be
Zuzana Černá, cerna.zuzka@gmail.com
Zuzana Drahorádová, komar.bzuk@seznam.cz

THE FIVE-YEAR CONFERENCE CLUSTER

Rethinking Religion in India is a five-year conference cluster. The five conferences form an integrated whole, with each conference building on the previous one. Each year the issues and problems to be addressed will get delineated more sharply. It is the objective of this conference cluster to come up with a series of answers and new approaches to this set of questions.

	PLATFORM SESSIONS	ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS	PARALLEL PAPER SESSIONS
YEAR 1	Are there native religions in India?	Colonialism and religion in India	(1) Evolutionary explanations of religion (2) Indians are Aryans, so what? (3) The caste system and Indian religion (4) Colonialism and Indian religion
YEAR 2	Is secularism the solution to communal conflict in India?	Rethinking secularism	(1) Indian Religion and the Issue of Conversion (2) The Caste System and Indian Religion (3) Colonialism and religion in India (4) Religion and law in India
YEAR 3	Monologue or Dialogue?	The Indian Response	(1) Rethinking the caste system (2) European representations of religion in India (3) Said and Orientalism: dead or alive? (4) The colonial construction of Hinduism (5) Indian responses to the European Descriptions (6) Secularism in Europe and India (7) Islamic mysticism in European and Indian perspective.
YEAR 4	Religion and law in India	Religious conversion in India	(1) The caste system and Indian religion (2) Does India know of religious rivalry? (3) Inter-religious dialogue & conversion in India
YEAR 5	Hinduism and the caste system	Did Buddhism challenge Hinduism?	(1) The Christian theological framework of the religious studies (2) The construction of Hinduism and colonial consciousness (3) Western representations of India and its religions