

BRITISH ASSOCIATION

for the

STUDY OF RELIGIONS

BULLETIN

No 96 June 2002

The BASR COMMITTEE

Peggy Morgan **President and Chair** **Hm 01865-556464**
Dr Helen Waterhouse **Hon Treasurer** **Wk 01908-659028**
h.j.waterhouse@ open.ac.uk
Dr James L Cox **Hon Secretary** **Wk 0131-650 8942**
cox@div.ed.ac.uk
Dr Steven Sutcliffe **Bulletin Editor** **Wk 01786-467969**
steve.sutcliffe@ stirling.ac.uk
Dr Marion Bowman **Conference Organiser** **Wk 01908-659381**
m.i.bowman@ open.ac.uk
Mathew Guest Occasional Papers Editor **Wk 0191-374 3937**
m.j.guest@durham.ac.uk

The British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR), formerly the British Association for the History of Religions (founded in 1954), is affiliated to the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) and to the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), whose object is the promotion of the academic study of religions through international interdisciplinary collaboration. The BASR pursues these aims within the United Kingdom through the arrangement of conferences and symposia, the publication of a Bulletin and an Annual General Meeting. Membership of the BASR is open to scholars whose work has a bearing on the academic study of religions and who are normally resident in the United Kingdom. Those interested in membership may apply directly by writing to the **Hon Secretary** to whom all general correspondence concerning the BASR should be sent: **Dr James L Cox, University of Edinburgh, New College, Mound Place, Edinburgh EH1 2LX.**

Correspondence concerning the **Bulletin**, including information and contributions, should be addressed to **Dr Steven Sutcliffe** at steve.sutcliffe@stir.ac.uk or at **Department of Religious Studies, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA**. Deadlines for submissions are: 15 October for November issue; 15 February for March issue; 15 May for June issue.

Orders for the **Occasional Papers** should be addressed to: **Professor Kim Knott, Dept of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT.**

The annual subscription for the BASR and Bulletin is £15.00 (£8 for postgraduate students and researchers without full employment). Scholars residing abroad may subscribe to the Bulletin for £10.00 a year. Subscriptions are due in October. The BASR is a registered charity (No 801567), and members are encouraged to pay their subscriptions by Gift Aid (if in taxed employment), by direct debit or annual cheque. Cheques should be made out to the 'British Association for the Study of Religions' and sent to the Treasurer: **Dr Helen Waterhouse, Religious Studies Department, The Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA.**

****Visit our website at www.basr.org.uk****

CONTENTS

I BASR NEWS

Chips from the Editor's Workshop	4
A Message from the Treasurer	5
Details of BASR Occasional Papers	6
BASR Conference Details, September 2002	7

II RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS (UK, Europe, International)

EASR news (conference and general assembly, 2002)	8
Conference Report: 27th Spalding Symposium, UK	10
Forthcoming Conferences and Seminars	17

III DISCUSSION PAPER

'Religious Studies and Professional Ethics'	21
--	-----------

IV RESEARCH IN PROGRESS REPORT

'Consumerism and Community: the Case of Christian Publishing'	23
--	-----------

V BOOK REVIEWS **26**

VI TURNING POINT

<i>Purity and Danger</i> by Mary Douglas	31
---	-----------

VII RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY BASR MEMBERS **33**

I BASR NEWS

Chips From the Bulletin Editor's Workshop

'Sumer is i-cumen in': so goes the C13th 'Cuckoo Song'. But I can't hear this without thinking of the finale to 'The Wicker Man' (1973), in which the most spectacular male Christian martyrdom in cinema is accompanied by a rousing 'folk' rendition of this song. Robin Hardy's horror film about the 'Pagan' enclave of 'Summerisle' is still provocative. A recent still of the wicker man on the cover of an arts guide to Galloway (where the film was shot), advertising a local music festival, has elicited some fierce opposition. Meanwhile, with considerable irony, the June issue of the Church of Scotland's magazine *Life and Work* carries the front cover slogan 'It's Official: Scotland is Pagan', from a survey of post-Presbyterian values and attitudes.

I mention this because increasingly we see cause and effect and representation and contestation being played out on our doorstep: 'international sites' are necessarily indigenous 'backyards'. Christianity first entered Scotland in Galloway, at Whithorn in 397 CE, with Ninian. Significant roots of the so-called 'New Age movement' lie here, too, in a vision of a Theosophical 'Master' received by Alice Bailey near Gatehouse of Fleet in the late C19th. And at Eskdalemuir, one of the largest Tibetan Buddhist sites in Europe has evolved since the late 1960s. The cultural bricolage that produced 'The Wicker Man' is, at least in part, a post/modern fruit of *locality*.

I'm pleased to introduce a new feature in this issue: a research in progress slot. Many thanks to Richard Bartholomew for his incisive contribution here. George Chryssides also outlines an important AUDTRS project on ethics in Religious Studies and invites your responses. And Graham Harvey focuses on Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger*, in our third 'Turning Point' feature, following accounts of Baird's *Category Formation* and James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. To all these and to the conference reporter and the book reviewers: many thanks.

The September conference is shaping up well. Details of the keynote lecture and panel sessions are on p.7 and also on our website. If you haven't already done so, please register by July 15th. Finally, BASR protocol requires us to elect a President-Elect at this year's conference to shadow the current President in her final year of office (2002-2003) and then to assume full office in 2003-2006. A nomination slip is enclosed; please give this matter your full and careful attention. Please also note the Treasurer's communication on p. 5 and take appropriate action!

Dr. Steven Sutcliffe

Important news about 2002/3 subscriptions

In order to save postage costs and an administrative burden we will not be posting out individual subscription reminders this year. Therefore, *if you do not pay your annual BASR subscription by standing order* this communication represents notification that your 2002/2003 subscription is due for payment on 1 September. The current rates are £15 for waged members, £8 for unwaged and £10 for international members. Please send your cheque to the Hon. Treasurer, Dr Helen Waterhouse, Arts Faculty, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA. A Standing Order form is enclosed and we urge you to use this method of payment if you can. If you are a tax payer and have not yet signed a Gift Aid declaration please request a form from Helen.

There will be a further subscription reminder in the November Bulletin .If we do not receive your payment before the end of the year we will assume that you no longer wish to be a member of the BASR. If you have any queries please e-mail Helen on H.J.Waterhouse@open.ac.uk

BASR OCCASIONAL PAPERS (order from Kim Knott)

- 1 Miranda Green, **Women and Goddesses in the Celtic World**, 1991
- 2 Christine Trevett, **The Quaker Margaret Fell: Religion and Gender in a C17th Dissenting Group**, 1991
- 3 Ann Bancroft, **Hildegard of Bingen to Meinrad Craighead**, 1991
- 4 Julia Leslie, **Religion, Gender and Dharma: The Case of the Widow Ascetic**, 1991
- 5 Peter Antes, **How to study religious experience in the traditions** 1992
- 6 Marion Bowman, **Phenomenology, fieldwork and folk religion** 1992
- 7 George Chryssides, **Unificationism: A study in religious syncretism** 1993
- 8 Michael Pye, **Syncretism versus synthesis** 1993
- 9 Ria Kloppenberg, **A Buddhist-Christian encounter in Sri Lanka: Pandura Vada** 1994
- 10 Peter Donovan, **Maori rituals add magic to contemporary civic Life**, 1995
- 11 Ninian Smart, **Sacred nationalism** 1995
- 12 W.S.F. Pickering, **Locating the sacred: Durkheim and Otto** 1995
- 13 Terence Thomas, **'The sacred' as a viable concept in the contemporary study of religions** 1995 (bound together with 12)
- 14 Margaret Chatterjee, **Do we need authority in religious life?** 1996
- 15 Chris Arthur, **Media, meaning, and method in the study of religion** 1996
- 16 Gerrie ter Haar, **Chosen people: The concept of diaspora in the modern world** 1996
- 17 Richard Gombrich, **Religious experience in early Buddhism** 1997
- 18 James Cox, **Alterity as identity: Innovation in the Academic Study of Religions** 1998
- 19 Elizabeth Amoah, **African spirituality and religious innovation** 1998
- 20 Ian Reader, **Religion, conflict and the sacred mission: On understanding the violence of Aum Shinrikyo** 1999
- 21 Brian Bocking, **Religious Studies: The New Queen of the Sciences** 2000
- 22, 23, 24: Papers from the 2001 Conference by **Kim Knott, Armin Geertz and Guilia Gasparro** are in preparation

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2002

September 9 - 11

School of Humanities and Cultural Studies
University of Surrey, Roehampton.

RELIGION AND THE STATE

KEYNOTE LECTURE: Multiculturalism, Muslims and the British State.

Tariq Modood, MBE , Professor of Sociology, Politics and Public Policy, University
of Bristol

Panels

Islam

War & Peace

Inner Cities

Education

National Identity

Social Inclusion

Persecution

India

Minorities & Identity

Church State & Establishment

Law & Ethics

Civil Religion

Please see the BASR website (www.basr.org.uk) for a full draft programme and registration details. **Registrations by 15 July** to Dr Marion Bowman, Religious Studies Department, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA. email: M.I.Bowman@open.ac.uk

II: RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS (UK, Europe, International)

EASR: European Association for The Study of Religions

President: Giulia Gasparro (Italy)

Vice Presidents: Halina Grzymala-Mosczcinska (Poland) & Helena Helve (Finland)

General Secretary: Tim Jensen (Denmark)

Deputy General Secretary: Emilo Juarez de la Torre (Spain)

Treasurer: Willem Hofstee (The Netherlands)

Deputy Treasurer: Philippe Borgeaud (Switzerland)

Membership Secretary: Kim Knott (United Kingdom)

Publications Officer: Giovanni Casadio (Italy)

Internet Officer: Michael Pye (Germany)

CALL FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY of EASR 2002

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 14, 2002, 10 A.M.

SALLE F, ECOLE NORMALE SUPERIEURE, 45, RUE d'ULM, PARIS 5e.

The General Assembly 2002 of the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) takes place in connection with the conference entitled 'Le monothéisme: diversité, exclusivisme ou dialogue?' in Paris, September 11-13, 2002

Agenda:

1. Adoption of final agenda
2. Reports by the President and the General Secretary
3. Treasurers report
4. Proposals. Amendments to the statutes:
 - a) Article 6i(b): "IAHR" to be replaced by "EASR" and accordingly the article to be read as follows: "one member each delegated by the European affiliate associations of the EASR in accordance with their own electoral provisions".
 - b) Article 7ii. Following the sentence "The elections shall be conducted by postal ballot" the following sentence should be added: "In cases where a candidate is unopposed there should be no postal ballot".
 - c) Article 7iii. "§" to be replaced by "article".
5. Any other business

Please note that proposals for additions to the agenda shall be sent to the general secretary not less than 3 weeks before the meeting (i.e no later than August 24,

2002), and that the rights and privileges of membership and participation in the General Assembly depend on payment of the membership fee no later than August 24, 2002, if no special arrangements have been made with the treasurer.

The EASR Member Associations at June 1st 2002, with names of appointed representatives to the committee at large, are:

- BASR, British Association for the Study of Religions (James Cox)
- Ceska Spolecnost Pro Studium Nabozenstvi (The Czech Society for the Study of Religion) (Bretislav Horyna)
- DAHR, Dansk Selskab for Religionshistorie (Danish Association for the History of Religions) (Marianne Q. Fibiger)
- DVRG, Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionsgeschichte (German Association for the History of Religions) (Hubert Seiwert)
- NGG, Nederlands Genootschap van Godsdiensthistorici (Dutch Association for the History of Religions) (Herman Beck)
- NRF, Norsk Religionshistorisk Forening (Norwegian Association for the History of Religions) (Knut A. Jacobsen)
- Polskie Towarzystwo Religioznawcze (Polish Association for the Science of Religions) (Halina Grzymala-Mosczcinska)
- RAHR, Asociaia romani de istorie a religiilor (Romanian Association for the History of Religions) (Eugen Ciurtin)
- SECR, Sociedad Española de Ciencias de las Religiones (Spanish Association for the Science of Religions) (Santiago Montero)
- SGR/SSSR: Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Religionswissenschaft/Société Suisse pour la Science des Religions (Swiss Association for the Science of Religions) (Maya Burger)
- Società italiana di storia delle religioni (Italian Association for the History of Religions) (Fabio Scialpi)
- Société Ernest-Renan. Société Francaise d'Histoire des Religions (French Association for the History of Religions) (Charles Guittard)
- Société Belgo-Luxembourgeoise d'histoire des religions (Association for the History of Religions of Belgium-Luxembourg) (André Motte)
- SSRF, Svenska Samfundet för Religionshistorisk Forskning (Swedish Association for Research in Comparative Religion) (Britt-Mari Näsström)
- Suomen Uskontotieteellinen Seura (Finnish Society for the Study of Comparative Religion) (Nils Holm)

Individual members of EASR are P. Pachis, G. Lease and Gustavo Benavides

****Visit the website of EASR: www.easr.de****

REPORT ON THE 27th SPALDING SYMPOSIUM ON INDIAN RELIGIONS
22 March-24 March 2002, London

This is only the second year at which the Spalding Symposium has been held at Regent's Park College but it proved to be one of the most successful conferences both academically and socially. The life of ISKCON guru, devotee and scholar Tamal Krishna Goswami who had intended to participate but who died tragically in a car crash in India several days previously was commemorated in loving silence before we began and the Symposium was dedicated to him.

Dr Arvind Mandair (Hofstra) opened the Symposium with a paper entitled 'Reconstituting Gurmat: Time, Transcendence and Subjectivity in Sikh Reformist Discourse'. He argued that, although it is rarely considered in this way, the central factors in the current debate on Sikh identity - namely, the reform movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the construction of a theologico-political imaginary and the shift towards Sikh separatism - are indissociably linked to the 'successful' enunciation in the 1920s of a systematic concept of God ('Sikh theology') and an authentic Sikh narrative ('Sikh history'). Together these neo-colonial knowledge formations comprise the intellectual core of the response by reformist Sikhs to the project of colonial translation instigated by Ernest Trumpp's *The Adi Granth* (1877). The definitive neo-colonial response, coming almost fifty years after his translation was first published, appeared in the form of short treatises on Sikh history and longer more systematic works of scriptural exegesis (*tikas*) which were of a broadly theological nature. One of the most far reaching effects of these works was the crystallisation of a particular way of representing the central teachings of the *Adi Granth*, in which the terms '*gurmat*', 'theology' and 'tradition' become interchangeable.

Dr Mandair attempted to trace the complex interweaving of time and ontology in the enunciation of an authentic Sikh narrative and theology by leading Sikh reformist scholars such as Bhai Vir Singh, Principal Teja Singh, Kahn Singh Nabha, Sahib Singh and Dr. Jodh Singh whose respective works are widely regarded as the basis of modern and 'orthodox' Sikh thinking. His focus was therefore restricted to the discussion of two aspects that become central to future treatments of modern Sikh ideology. In the first section of his paper he referred briefly to the first narratives outlining the emergence of Sikhs as a nation ('Sikh history'). In the second section, the major part, he focused on the construction of a systematic concept of God ('Sikh theology'). He argued that linking history and theology is the conceptual dynamic of transcendence which becomes foundational

to both. As a conceptual tool the dynamic of transcendence is specifically outlined according to the following threefold process: (i) the historical justification of the reformist project as the fulfilment, i.e. nationalisation, of Sikh tradition, (ii) the reconstitution of *gurmat* as 'Sikh theology' i.e. the construction of a systematic concept of God within the exegetical commentaries, (iii) the enunciation of a peculiarly modern Sikh subjectivity, a move whose consequences are as much theoretical as political.

Professor Alexis Sanderson (All Souls, Oxford) followed with a paper on 'The Impact of Saivism on the Religions of Asia' in which he urged scholars to look over the walls of their particular disciplines. This became possibly the dominating theme of the Symposium, referred to constantly by contributors and audience. Professor Sanderson commented that certain general similarities between Saivism and Esoteric Buddhism had long been recognized. Indeed the expression Tantrism had been coined to accommodate this recognition. But until now the question of how they came to resemble each other had not been taken up with any rigour. There are several reasons for this. Partly responsible may be a reluctance among scholars of Buddhism to look beyond the boundary of their literature, if not out of a prejudice that Buddhism is an entirely self-contained phenomenon then out of an understandable unwillingness to overextend themselves. But a greater difficulty awaited anyone interested to examine this question. This was that most of the materials on which a comparative analysis would have to be based appeared to be lost or hard of access. Professor Sanderson referred to the scriptural literatures of the two traditions. In place of the relevant Saiva sources we seemed to have only a tantalizing body of citations preserved in the learned exegesis that imposed itself on and tended to replace the primary texts. Most of the Buddhist literature seemed to have survived only in Tibetan translations. In Professor Sanderson's own work on the development of the Saiva religion over the last twenty-five years he had turned up a substantial part of the Saiva literature that he had presumed lost, mostly in Nepalese manuscripts, many of which, thanks to the climate of Nepal, are as old as or older than the learned Saiva literature. The collections that contained these materials also contained manuscripts of many of the relevant Buddhist works in their original Sanskrit. Though his work had been primarily on the Saiva materials it had included studying these Buddhist sources and their early commentaries in the hope of shedding light on the question of their relationship to each other. Professor Sanderson then presented in brief outline some of the conclusions he had reached or was presently considering through this comparative reading.

Professor Sanderson argued that there is incontrovertible evidence that the latest phase of Tantric Buddhism (c. 10th century), evidenced in the Tantras that teach the cults of Heruka/Cakrasamvara and Vajravaaraahii, is so closely dependent on a parallel Saiva tradition that the greater part of its principal scripture, the *Herukaabhidhaana*, also called the *Laghusa.mvara* or *Cakrasa.mvaratantra*, has been redacted directly from materials extracted from these Saiva sources, and that this use of Saiva works was repeated for certain later works in the same tradition.

The earlier Buddhist Tantric systems represented by the *Vairocanaabhisambodhi* and *Tattvasamgraha* were the substance of the Esoteric Buddhism that flourished in China in the eighth century and passed to Japan in the ninth through Kuukai, where they survive down to modern times in the Shingon and Tendai schools. Professor Sanderson asked whether these too were the product of Saiva influence. There is no evidence of the redacting of Saiva textual materials in this case. However, he proposed that this phase is the result of a creative remodeling of Buddhist practice based on Saiva prototypes. Why did Buddhism develop in this surprising direction? The last part of Professor Sanderson's paper offered some suggestions for further thought on this question.

On Saturday, 23 March Dr Ulrich Pagel (SOAS) presented an immensely scholarly paper on 'Stupas and Stupa worship in Mahayana Sutras: New Evidence'. This paper aimed to examine the role of *stupas* in Mahayana Buddhism, mainly based on the *sutras* collected in the *mDo sde* section of the Tibetan *Kanjur*. Dr Pagel said that while scholarship has spent a fair amount of effort to identify the function of *stupas* in the origin of the Mahayana, relatively little is known about the Mahayana perception of *stupa* worship in the middle and late phases. Although we do not have any *sutra* that gives a comprehensive account of the roles played by *stupas* in Mahayana soteriology, there are many texts that contain scattered references to the worship of *stupas*, their construction and maintenance. The purpose of Dr Pagel's presentation was to survey the available evidence, to formulate a hypothesis about the use of *stupas* in Mahayana Buddhist circles and to contrast his own findings with the views held on *stupa* worship in the early period.

Professor Richard Gombrich (Oxford) entitled his paper 'Staying with Brahma: the history of an important misunderstanding'. Like preceding papers it was as interesting for its methodology as for its content. Professor Gombrich noted that while it is essential, in interpreting any ancient Indian text, to take account of what the commentarial tradition has said, it should be obvious that interpretations change over time, so that there is also room for us to exercise judgement by examining

other kinds of evidence to derive an interpretation. Since the Buddhist commentators seem to have known little or nothing about the Upanishads, whereas the Buddha addressed many of his arguments to brahmin opponents, we may well gain insight into his meaning by interpreting his words in that context. Sometimes the Buddha flatly rejected, and even ridiculed, the views of his opponents; sometimes he accepted them; most often he ironised or reinterpreted them. The case of the *Brahma-vihaara*, “boundless” states of kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, is particularly interesting. Scrutiny of the texts made Professor Gombrich wonder whether the Buddhist tradition that ethics is a pre-requisite for enlightenment but that enlightenment itself transcends ethics does justice to the Buddha’s intention.

Alexander Wynne (Oxford) in his paper ‘Meditation in early Buddhism: the jhanas and their position in the Sutta Pitaka’ explained that in an important list of meditative states found in the *Sutta Pitaka* of the Pali Canon, the four *jhana-s* are followed by the four formless spheres (the infinity of space, the infinity of consciousness, nothingness and ‘neither consciousness nor non-consciousness’) and ‘the cessation of ideation and feeling’. In this list of nine meditative states, the four *jhana-s* are often called ‘ideations’ (*sa--a*). The term ‘ideation’ is commonly associated with the formless spheres throughout the *Sutta Pitaka*. However, the *jhana-s* are not known by this term when listed apart from the formless spheres. When listed alone, the four *jhana-s* usually lead directly to liberating insight. Alex argued that the list of nine meditative states (*jhana-s* and formless spheres) had been artificially constructed out of two quite different meditative practices. A study of the various occurrences of the nine-fold list in the *Sutta Pitaka* might support this idea. After this stimulating paper Lance Cousins challenged the assumption that these lists could be seen as systematically meaningful but Alex defended his position strongly.

Will Douglas (Oxford) in ‘The Last Amoghapasa Across All Asia’, like earlier speakers, chased his subject across history and geographical and cultural boundaries. He informed us that Amoghapasa, ‘He who has an infallible lasso’, was one of the earliest distinct forms of Avalokitesvara to emerge. He was the patron and guarantor of a Mahayana fasting rite which spread very rapidly across the Buddhist world, extending from the Indic region to Central Asia and Japan within 150 years. Will explained that the early cult is a good example of what would later be called a *Kriya Tantra* within Vajrayana, and is remarkable for its insistence on the widest possible participation.

Will said that a second wave of propagation occurred in the 12th century. Although the old Silk Road centres of Buddhism were defunct, this time Amoghapasa's cult spread within Indic Vajrayana from Kashmir to Indonesia. This later cult was bound up with Buddhist royal rituals and iconography. However, roughly contemporary Kashmirian developments saw Amoghapasa displaced from his role in the ritual fast for those lineages which survived in Tibet, to be replaced by the more familiar thousand-armed Avalokitesvara. Today Amoghapasa survives in isolated images and texts, mostly forgotten by contemporary Buddhists, scattered across South, Central and East Asia. Only in Nepal do we find an enduring and vivacious Amoghapasa cult which preserves features of both the earlier and later propagation.

Dr Ron Geaves (Chester) in his paper 'From Totapuri to Maharaji: Reflections on a Parampara (lineage)' told us that during the early years of the 1970s, Divine Light Mission experienced phenomenal growth in the West. The teachings of the young Guru Maharaji (now known as Maharaji), based upon an experience of fulfilment arrived at by four techniques that focused attention inward, spread quickly to Britain, France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Scandinavia, Japan, South America, Australasia, Canada and the USA. Today, the teachings have gone worldwide to over 80 countries.

Dr Geaves sought to demonstrate firstly that those various scholars who identify Maharaji's roots as Sant Mat, or more specifically Radhasoami, are mistaken. Secondly, he argued that a more accurate exploration of Maharaji's historical background provides an excellent opportunity to study the complexity of the various ways of organising such lineages and can demonstrate how intricately major strands of Hinduism can interweave with each other to create new paradigms to assert an ancient teaching capable of transcending discrete religious borders. Thirdly, he sought through this investigation of lineage to throw light on the relationship between charisma and institutionalisation in the Indian context and to allow for a revisiting of Gold's classification of Sant tradition in particular. This paper attracted much discussion as many participants had informed knowledge of the Divine Light Mission's history, schism and subsequent transformation.

Dr Rachel McDermott (Barnard)'s talk - 'Such a Pretty Face: The Sexualization of Durga in 19th-20th Century Bengal' - was illustrated magnificently by slides taken during her fieldwork in Calcutta. Her talk examined the rise of the contemporary image of the Goddess Durga as she is found in Bengali homes and public *pandals* during her annual festival. The presentation opened by tracing the development of the image as a means of representing the Goddess; historically, as a deity of

agricultural plenty, she was first invoked in grain, then in a water pot, then in coloured drawings, and finally in clay *murtis*. The remainder of the talk focused on the image itself: a comparison of the old-style, eighteenth- to nineteenth-century depictions of her face and body (huge, elongated eyes; small mouth; frontal, static body) with current styles featuring supple bodies and realistic, youthful, even glamorous faces; an investigation of the artistic revolution in the 1920s which led to this humanization of *Puja* images; and interviews with present-day artisans, elite family scions, and *pandal* organizers on their preferred types of image, and why. The talk closed by proposing two theoretical lenses through which one might understand the increasingly sexualized Goddess: the universalization, humanization, and popularization characteristic of rising urbanism; and the influence of individualism, romanticism, and nationalism - in literature, art, and popular attitudes from the late nineteenth century onwards - on conceptions of women.

On Sunday Dr Jeanne Openshaw (Edinburgh) gave a paper on 'Seeking Bauls of Bengal'. She told us that images of Bauls of Bengal underwent a complete reversal towards the end of the nineteenth century, in which godless and depraved entertainers of the common folk were transformed into isolated (male) mystics, intoxicated by music or dance, with 'only the wind as their home'. In the eyes of most scholars and the Bengali educated classes, this familiar icon has come to represent the 'authentic Baul'. Dr Openshaw examined the recent provenance of the image, and the total contrast it presents with those called 'Baul' in rural areas in the light of discussions on Orientalism. She asked how far it is appropriate to see this image as a creative appropriation of the myth of the Spiritual East by the Bengali elite. Participants were fascinated to see stylised images of the ecstatic Baul inspired by Rabindranath Tagore followed by slides of contemporary Baul musicians surrounded by their families or demonstrably communicating with their audiences.

The paper by Dr Elizabeth Arweck (Warwick and King's College, London) 'A Hindu-Related New Religious Movement as Sponsor of an Educational Programme: Issues and Perspectives'. This paper provided a strong contrast to preceding presentations and generated much discussion. Dr Arweck reported on current research regarding the educational programme of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, a Hindu-related new religious movement which has an international membership and which seeks to work towards world peace through personal change. Under the aegis of the World Spiritual University, an educational programme has developed which is inspired by and organised around a set of what are regarded as universally applicable 'Living Values'. The material is designed for use in school and in parents' groups and the paper therefore analysed the way in

which this approach is used in classrooms by focusing on schools in the UK. Dr Arweck also explored the perspective which informs the programme by outlining the history and the theology of the Brahma Kumaris as well as raising issues regarding research in this area. Participants were eager to question Dr Arweck over the ethical questions implied in the sponsorship of an educational programme by such a movement but she wisely refused to prejudge the results of her research by jumping to unscholarly conclusions.

For many participants the main value of the Symposium lies in the opportunity for discussion and conversations whether after a paper or in the Eagle and Child or over Mrs Long's treacle tart. This year we thank all contributors for the inspiration of their presentations and the Spalding Trustees for their continued support.

Dr. Anna King, St. Alfred's College, Winchester

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS: ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HINDUISM

(RoutledgeCurzon)

Editors: Denise Cush; Catherine Robinson; Michael York

International Editorial Advisory Board: John Brockington; Wendy Doniger; Dermot Killingley; Kim Knott; Arvind Sharma

We are editing a new one-volume Encyclopedia of Hinduism which is aimed at a student and scholarly audience. This Encyclopedia is intended to highlight recent developments in the study of Hinduism and to focus on ethnographic and contemporary, as well as textual and historical, material. We are in the process of identifying contributors and invite anyone who would be interested in participating in this international project to contact us, indicating areas of expertise. We intend to develop a website to facilitate communication between editors and contributors.

Contact the editors via d.cush@bathspa.ac.uk or tel: 01225 875468

Study of Religions Department, Bath Spa University College, Newton Park,
Newton St Loe, BATH, BA2 9BN

Forthcoming Conferences and Seminars

**University of Gloucestershire
Francis Close Hall Campus, Cheltenham**

Tuesday 12th November 2002

Islam and the West - post September 11th

Speakers:

Mashuq ibn Ally, formerly Director of the Centre for Islamic Studies, University of Wales, Lampeter, and presently Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, Wales:

Islam and Terrorism

Phil Andre, teaches Islam at the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne:

Islamic Fundamentalism and the Taleban

Gary Bunt, lecturer in the Centre for Islamic Studies, University of Wales, Lampeter:

e-Jihad and the Online Fatwa: Cyber Islamic Environments after 9-11

Bishop Kenneth Cragg, well-known Islamicist and author of many monographs on Christian-Muslim relations:

Islam and the West

Theodore Gabriel, University of Gloucestershire:

Is Islam against the West?

Ron Geaves, Senior Lecturer, Chester College:

Who Defines moderate Islam post-September 11th?

Further information from Mrs Patricia Downes, Theology and Religious Studies, University of Gloucestershire, Francis Close Hall, Swindon Road, CHELTENHAM GL50 4AZ

tel: 01242 532747 fax: 01242 543314 email: pdownes@glos.ac.uk

7th international Conference of the Dharam Hinduja Institute of Indic Research

Faculty of Divinity
University of Cambridge

DHIIR Indic Health Conference I:
The Case of Modern Yoga

20-21 September 2002

The phenomenon of Modern Yoga and of its health- and medicine-related applications will be discussed and contextualised. There will be Q & A sessions after each paper, and small group discussions moderated by the Conference speakers at the end of each day. (The *DHIIR Indic Health Conference II*, planned for 2004, will examine the case of Modern Ayurveda). Both Conferences are part of a wider-ranging research programme (the Indic Health and Medicine Research Programme) run in conjunction by the Faculty of Divinity and the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge.

Confirmed speakers / chairs include:

Prof Joseph Alter (University of Pittsburgh, USA)
Prof Sally Blank (Washington State University, USA)
Dr Otto Brusis, M.D. (LVPR Baden-Württemberg, Germany)
Lila Crutchfield (Dr Dean Ornish's Preventive Medicine Research Institute,
Sausalito, California, USA)
Dr Françoise Barbira Freedman (University of Cambridge, UK)
Dr. Ruth Gilmore (Queens University, Belfast, UK)
Dr Fredrik Leboyer, M.D. (Author of *Birth Without Violence*, Switzerland)
Dr Elizabeth De Michelis (University of Cambridge, UK)
Robin Monro (Yoga Biomedical Trust, London)
Prof Peter Schreiner (University of Zurich, Switzerland)
Prof Kenneth Zysk (University of Copenhagen, Denmark)

For information on the conference and on the DHIIR Indic Health and Medicine Research Programme please contact Mrs Rajashree Dhanaraj on +44-(0)1223-763013 or dhiir@divinity.cam.ac.uk or see our website at <http://www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/carts/> and then click on Dharam Hinduja Institute of Indic Research

CALL FOR PAPERS - Alternative Spirituality and New Age Studies

A major international conference on **Alternative Spirituality and New Age Studies** is to take place from **Friday May 30 to Sunday 1 June 2003**, in association with the **11th Annual Contemporary and New Age Religions** conference at the **Open University**, Milton Keynes, England. This joint conference will review the emergence of New Age Studies as a specialised field and act as a catalyst for further disciplinary developments, including an Association for Alternative Spirituality and New Age Studies (ASANAS). Offers of papers and multi-paper sessions are requested on the following themes:

- ✓ definition, theory and method in New Age studies
- ✓ New Age and mainstream Western culture, globalisation, post-Sept 11th
- ✓ New Age and Christianity; New Age and other world religions
- ✓ New Age and marginal cultures (eg. indigenous, neopagan, astrological, UFOs)
- ✓ contemporary New Age groups and communities
- ✓ historical New Age groups and communities

Proposals for multi-paper sessions are required by 30 September 2002; proposals for individual papers require a title and abstract (200 words) by 30 November 2002. Please respond to: **James R. Lewis, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, WI 54481, USA or email: jlewis@uwsp.edu**

NETWORK FOR THE STUDY OF IMPLICIT RELIGION **FORTHCOMING SHORT COURSES AND STUDY DAYS**

- ◆ ‘Spirituality Across the Curriculum’, 13-14 September 2002, Cold Ash Centre, Thatcham, Berkshire
- ◆ ‘The Way of Love, Liberating Church’: 56th Winterbourne Study Day, Thursday 10 October 2002, Winterbourne Rectory, Bristol
- ◆ ‘The Underlying Religion of Our Parishes - and our Response’, led by Edward Bailey: 19 October 2002, Edward King House, The Old Palace, Lincoln

For further information on these and other NSIR events, contact **Edward Bailey, 95 High Street, Winterbourne, Bristol BS36 1RD, tel 020 8362 6220, email eibailey@csircs.freeserve.co.uk**

From Vernacular Religion to Contemporary Spirituality: Locating Religion in European Ethnology: 10-11th January 2003

Hosted by the Belief Beyond Boundaries Research Group @ The Open University

This is the fourth in the current ESRC European Ethnology seminar series and it will bring together European scholars working in a variety of disciplines who have research interests in vernacular religion (religion as it is lived) and contemporary spirituality.

We anticipate two lively and stimulating days. Offers of 30 minute papers, with titles and abstract, by September 15th 2002 to:

Dr. Marion Bowman, European Ethnology Conference, Religious Studies, The Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA or email c.hancon@open.ac.uk

Spirituality, Science and Religious Experience
A Weekend Conference at the University of Wales, Lampeter
20-22 September 2002

Featuring Paul Badham, Keith Ward, Peter Fenwick, Alan Race, Chris Arthur, June Boyce-Tillman and Peggy Morgan.

The purpose of the conference is to explore spirituality and religious experience and consider its enduring value in the light of both reflective and scientific analysis. Pre-conference workshops are also offered. In addition, the conference marks the re-launch of the Alister Hardy Religious Experience Research Centre in its new home in Lampeter.

Further details from:

Anne Watkins, Conference Administrator, Dept. of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Wales, Lampeter, SA48 7ED tel: 01570 424821

III: DISCUSSION PAPER

Religious Studies and Professional Ethics: Towards an AUDTRS Code of Practice

For many teachers of Religious Studies, ethics is a subject for debate between colleagues and among students. Many of us have lectured at length on whether morality depends on religion, whether God commands actions because they are right or vice versa, or what the various world religions have to teach on burning moral issues. There comes a time, however, when theorizing must come to an end, and decisions have to be made about live ethical issues that confront us. These may not be the 'life or death' issues which may excite a handful of students in a seminar room, they are mundane issues such as whether one should accept funding from a controversial religious organization, whether one should teach a course for which one lacks credentials, or whether one should cause students to declare their own religious allegiance.

For a number of years, the Association of University Departments in Theology and Religious Studies (AUDTRS) has put forward the idea of promoting a professional code of ethics for teachers of Religious Studies and Theology. The topic was raised at the last AUDTRS annual general meeting in London in December 2001, and the present writer was appointed to chair a working party with the task of drafting a code of practice. Following the December AGM, the AUDTRS committee wrote to all TRS departments in higher education, seeking nominations, and is now in the process of inviting a nucleus of nominees to an inaugural meeting which will set in motion the drafting process. The draft will then be brought to the next general AUDTRS meeting at the end of 2002, for comment and - it is hoped - approval.

For those of us who have been accustomed to ideals of academic freedom and personal autonomy, the idea of a professional code of practice may seem foreign. Indeed, one colleague has already written to me, stating that he objects very strongly to the idea, and is concerned that it might be done too hastily, without sufficient consultation with colleagues and with students. His letter expressed fears that it might lead to 'kangaroo courts' in which colleagues pass judgement on their peers concerning situations about which they have insufficient evidence, or which might better be left as matters of individual conscience.

While fully acknowledging that there are dangers in unduly hasty or unduly intrusive formulations of codes of professional practice, I believe that there are

strong advantages in assembling such a code. First and foremost, it is often regarded as the mark of a profession that it has a self-regulated code of practice, and does not exclusively rely on external bodies to ensure that its standards are acceptable. Several HE institutions and academic subject areas have already developed their own statements of professional ethics, and once such a process has commenced, it becomes incumbent on others to demonstrate that their own standards of ethics are at least as high.

A code of practice has a two-fold function. First, it serves to define to those inside a profession what the minimal standards of acceptable practice are; and, second, it indicates to other 'stakeholders' what they have a right to expect. As academic life becomes more and more entangled with issues of validation, benchmarking, quality assurance, and institutional ethics committees, it becomes increasingly important for professional groups to define their own standards of acceptability. Courses (or 'modules') in research methods are also gaining momentum, and research ethics forms an important aspect of this.

The topics that finally feature in any code of practice is a matter for discussion amongst AUDTRS, and not necessarily the ones I have mentioned above. Of course, to identify such issues is not to presuppose answers to ethical dilemmas with which many of us have struggled, and on which researchers may reach different conclusions. It is certainly not the intention, I trust, for the majority of AUDTRS representatives to impose a dominant view on a minority of dissenters. Any code of practice must recognize the desirability of different shades of opinion, and not impose moral uniformity where there should be legitimate debate.

Principally for financial reasons, the AUDTRS working party will be relatively small, although it is intended to include as wide a range of contributors as possible. However, since codes of practice affect everyone in a profession, it is vital to consult widely. I should therefore be more than happy to receive any observations, comments, opinions, or accounts of experiences of working with codes of practice from all colleagues in the subject area.

Dr. George D. Chryssides

University of Wolverhampton, Religious Studies, School of Humanities Languages and Social Sciences, Dudley Campus, Castle View, Dudley, DY1 3HR, England UK. Tel: +44(0)1902 323523 Fax: +44(0)1902 323379. e-mail: G.D.Chryssides@wlv.ac.uk

IV: Research in Progress Report

Consumerism and Community: the Case of Christian Publishing

Most scholars interested in Christianity in the UK will have read materials produced by Christian publishers and will probably have visited a Christian bookshop. Yet these institutions have received very little attention from Religious Studies. My thesis has sought to explore the British Christian book industry by considering its historical background, interviewing industry figures, examining its products and relating it to the culture and values of British Christianity.

Several key questions inform my study: how important is profitability to Christian retail? How far does the business reflect the “consumer culture” of British society? Why do Christians read Christian books? What is the influence of these books? Answering these questions has required using insights not only from religious studies, but also theory from media and cultural studies. Unexpectedly, I have also had to contribute to the interpretation of leadership in Charismatic Christianity.

The first part of my inquiry considers the history of Christian publishing and bookselling. Since its beginnings, the production of Christian print materials has been inspired by both religious vision and business opportunism. In some cases an organisation’s religious vision has evolved, and in others it has been displaced by secularisation. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), which began as a tool of the establishment in 1698, gradually moved away from didacticism to promoting discussion. Collins, which was founded in 1819 to publish the works of Thomas Chalmers, is now HarperCollins and is owned by News International. There has also been a long-standing connection between publishing and the promotion of Christian revivalists.

This historical overview leads to an examination of the modern industry. Here I review a number of business reports, articles in trade magazines and discuss interviews with industry figures. Over the past ten years, conservative Christian retail has become dominated by one organisation: Send the Light, founded in the 1960s. During the 1990s STL came to dominate conservative Christian book distribution and set up an ever-expanding chain of Wesley Owen book stores. STL can be compared to the other two main retailing chains, Christian Literature

Crusade (CLC) and SPCK. Each has a very different approach to their business: STL believes profitability to be vital to survival and is guided by rationalised business principles; CLC relies on volunteers and church support; SPCK considers profitability less important than serving the church. There are also different priorities from different publishers: Kingsway produces profitable “branded” series of books; the religious books department of HarperCollins concentrates on popular books which will sell well in secular bookshops; Continuum (a secular owner of several old “liberal” Christian companies) has the resources and the will to produce some unprofitable books *pro bono*, as was the practice in publishing generally until recently. Unexpectedly, I have discovered that Evangelical organisations are often quite ruthless about profitability. Despite a wish to serve the church and to missionise, there is competition between different publishers over authors and over being involved with parachurch events such as Spring Harvest.

My study also considers the products themselves in order to understand the priorities of Christian publishing. By studying Christian best-sellers over a twelve-month period and noting which books were being promoted in bookshops, I have discovered that spirituality is the most significant genre of Christian book across all kinds of Christianity. Spiritual books by Tommy Tenney (a Charismatic revivalist), by Philip Yancey (an Evangelical intellectual) and by Basil Hume (the late Cardinal of Westminster) are all equally popular in different sectors of Christianity. However, within conservative “Bible-based” Christianity there is a developed subculture of books on family and social issues which one does not find in SPCK shops.

This subculture also includes novels. In particular, my thesis considers two Christian novels from America, *Left Behind* by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, and *This Present Darkness* by Frank Peretti. LaHaye, whose non-fiction books on eschatology sell well in the USA but not in the UK, has done very well in the UK with *Left Behind* and its sequels, which use premillennialism as the basis for a thriller. I argue that the eschatological *Left Behind* novels avoid the problems of non-fiction eschatology (failed prophecy) by turning a religious doctrine into entertainment and, while appearing counter-cultural, actually ape pop-culture products such as the film *Deep Impact*. This also allows an American product to travel better. In the same way, *This Present Darkness*, coming after the discrediting of various “Satanic conspiracy” ideas in conservative Christianity, repackages those

ideas into a spiritual allegory concerning angels and demons. However, this allegory has itself been reinterpreted by Charismatic Christian readers interested in demonology. Christian retail, therefore, promotes the use of the idiom of entertainment to spread religious ideas and, by providing a neutral space where these ideas can be purchased, provides greater opportunity for their reinterpretation by consumers.

To understand more about the role of Christian books in contemporary Christianity I visited Spring Harvest, a large Evangelical parachurch event, and studied a particular Charismatic church in London which publishes its pastor's works. In some strands of the Charismatic movement, I discovered, books serve as iconic fan memorabilia of spiritually powerful pastors, and to understand the purpose of some books I have had to theorise the Charismatic Christian leader/author as celebrity. It also became apparent that contemporary Christianity reflects the consumer culture within which it is embedded: authors are used as "brands" and books are rationalised into series. However, this culture also promotes a globalised sense of community, as publishers provide not just the means for ideas to be spread, but for the promotion of particular Christian leaders.

I conclude that Christian publishing and bookselling show how the idioms of consumerism and entertainment define, to a great extent, the nature of Christianity in the UK, and that the less commercialised publishing culture of SPCK and publishers like it is actually more counter-cultural than the products of conservative Christianity.

**Richard Bartholomew, PhD candidate, School of Oriental and African Studies
rbarthy@yahoo.co.uk**

V: BOOK REVIEWS

Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Biblical and Pagan Societies, Frederick H. Cryer and Marie-Louise Thomsen, London: Athlone Press, 2001, pp. xvii + 168, ISBN 0 485 89101 8, Pbk £17.99

The Athlone history of Witchcraft and Magic seem likely to be a valuable and important scholarly survey of Europeans from ancient times to the present day'. This first volume provides one part of the 'prehistory', 'genealogy' or 'backdrop' of the material of real interest to the series, i.e. witchcraft and magic in Europe from medieval times to the twentieth century. A second volume (similarly underlying the series) is devoted to Greek and Roman witchcraft and magic. A general introduction notes that there are far wider possibilities - i.e. the entirety of 'Eurasian' migrations and 'Indo-Aryan' diffusions. Presumably, notions about Africa and other allegedly 'savage' realms might be debated as originating some European notions of magic too. In short, the series editors and authors are required to justify their starting points, their decisions about what to include and debate, and their view of what defines their subject matter.

The Bible has undoubtedly been significant in a variety of ways in European engagement with what it has labelled (at various times and in various very different ways) as witchcraft and magic. The notion that 'witches' must be killed has frequently been justified by biblical texts. However, not only did pre-Christian Europeans kill those they accused of witchcraft, but the popular image of the witch, in early modern Europe at least, is derived from Roman classical sources. The Bible does not tell its readers what a witch looks like, what she does (but it does usually assert female gender). In short, there are good reasons for a European history to pay attention to the Bible.

But what does the series mean by the Bible? Is it the text as read by Europeans in each of the periods for which the series provides a volume? Or is it the literatures as read, deconstructed and reconstructed by critical (not to say sceptical) scholars in modernity? Almost anything might be interesting and even valuable - but not everything is the same. In what way would the real facts of Israel's ancient history matter to medieval witch-finders if that history was not as the Bible claims? Also, in what way would the real facts of Israel's ancient history matter to a scholar interested in what medieval witch-finders thought biblical or contemporary witches were?

The issues are even more problematic with reference to what this volume calls 'pagan societies'. As long forgotten societies, Mesopotamian cultures (which are the ones of interest here) provided nothing to the explicit discourses of European witchcraft and magic. Thus nowhere do the authors make any links between what they say about Mesopotamia and what might be said about European magic. It is only the series editors who explain that a variety of 'magical' practices seem common to both Babylon and medieval Europe. But they note that these 'look almost archetypal' and that 'we have no difficulties in recognizing the basic and perennial social drama underlying these efforts to control the forces of life'. It is not argued that Babylon's magic went underground to emerge again in Europe. It is only suggested that any and all humans might do magic and that we happen to have a lot of interesting information about Mesopotamia now. That is, there is no good reason for this series to begin with this volume.

The further fact that the above assertion is about the best we get as a definition of 'magic' also weakens the whole thing. In case you missed it, magic is 'an effort to control the forces of life'. This is stated at greater length in the volume, but never reaches the point of becoming a convincingly useful critical term. There is no justification for calling this a discussion of 'magic' rather than one of 'religion'. At best, 'magic' is what passed for religion for those who saw it differently from us. And that is clearly a poor polemic.

This is a very interesting and, in parts, important series. But it could well have begun without this volume.

Graham Harvey, Reader in Religious Studies, King Alfred's College, Winchester

Faith and Praxis in a Postmodern World, edited by Ursula King, London: Cassell, 1998, ISBN 0-304-70261-7 pbk, 200pp.

This rich and interesting volume tackles a central question that has almost totally been left untouched by postmodernist scholars, that is, the interconnectedness of postmodernism and religion. The etymology and scope of postmodernism is hydra-headed, eclectic and bereft of specificity. The distinction between modernism and postmodernism is hardly unequivocal; the former is like and unlike the latter in a variety of ways. It is even suggested that the easiest way to conceptualise postmodernism is by thinking about modernism, from where it seems to have grown or emerged. In this vein, postmodernism is often characterised sometimes confusingly as a critique of modernism and the project of modernity; a revision of modernist premises; or simply as anti-modern.

In this volume, scholars from diverse academic and religious persuasions, and geographical backgrounds, engage critically and reflectively with different perspectives on postmodernism and their impact on philosophical, theological, ethical, spiritual, sexual and political issues. A significant point of convergence in these essays lies in addressing the place of religious faith and praxis in contemporary postmodern, pluralistic society. Although these reflective essays do not pretend to be exhaustive as far as the connotations of faith and praxis are concerned, they attempted to illuminate the intricate relationship between faith and praxis from a wider, contextual point of view. While there is no consensus with regards to intensity, all the essays mutually contend that postmodern configurations are making remarkable imprints on contemporary perceptions and praxis of religion. Postmodernism is characteristically ambivalent, thus its influence on religion as some of the essays demonstrate, must be perceived as a double-edged sword - positive and negative.

The book is chronologically structured into two main sections: theoretical issues and case studies, and with an introductory essay. The first part is thematically constructed, with the first three chapters (1-3) considering philosophical, theological and ethical issues, and the next two chapters (4&5) tackling gender and sexual differences within the framework of postmodernism. Chapter 6 binds both sections together. The second part of the book (Chapters 7-11) is devoted to carefully selected case studies dealing with religious traditions and cultures, and with national and religious identities affecting contemporary politics.

Ursula King's introductory essay is followed by Keith Ward's concise account of the philosophical background of the dominance of reason during the modern era. He delineates the demise of reason from modernity to postmodernity through the philosophical developments of the Enlightenment process, and shows the extent of involvement of Christian theology in the process. As a "modern-postmodern" response to this profound failure of the Enlightenment Project, Ward vaguely posits a new theological task for the Christian tradition (p. 27). Gavin D'Costa undertakes a critical, historical excursion into the contemporary era in order to explicate how basic ideas, such as 'the Other', have influenced modern and postmodern configurations. He argues for "a theological view of other religions which does not distort them into Sameness or Otherness (as negative Otherness), but abandons the binary logic of identification and control, for a trinitarian logic of relationship, freedom, love and service" (p. 41). Anne Primavesi approaches pluralism differently by being preoccupied with a wider purview of pluralistic diversity, in this case a more inclusive horizon of biodiversity which operates at the level of species, at a genetic level, and at the level of a whole ecosystem. She identifies 'responsibility' in ethical relationships as a form of stimuli to biodiversity.

Rosemary Ruether and Sean Gill both deal extensively with the question of gender and sexual imparity. The former focuses on the historical track of gender inequalities vis a vis the premodern roots of modern and postmodern Christian experience, while the latter locates sexual difference within the crisis in Christian sexual ethics. Chapter 6 *Spirituality in a postmodern age* by Ursula King carefully weaves together the themes and case studies in such a way that makes its reading less abstract. She highlights the multi-faceted connotations of spirituality as concomitant with different historical epochs, and thus argues for a pluralistic stance and understanding of spiritual praxis in both traditional, modern and postmodern milieus. As she rightly concludes, "in our postmodern context it is not so important what spirituality *is* but what it *does*. What it does to us as human beings" (p. 109).

Stephen Batchelor (Chapter 7) argues that Buddhism relates very well to postmodern concerns, attributing this versatility to the intrinsic fluidity of Buddhism (p. 123). However, Batchelor becomes caught up in generalisations in his conclusions and his argument that Buddhism took a leap from a premodern to a postmodern phase at the expense of the modern (p. 124) raises a crucial question here. Martin Forward's point of departure (Chapter 8) is that the debate from the late 19th century about Islam's encounter with modernity, with its locus on the status of sacred scripture - the provenance of the Quran - is an on-going process. With a

test case of the Indian Muslim, he illustrates how and to what extent the presuppositions of the modern and postmodern world run counter to Islam.

Dan Cohn-Sherbok (Chapter 9) and Martin Prozesky (Chapter 10) both reflect on the relationship between faith, praxis and politics. The former illustrates the interconnectedness between faith and praxis in history culminating in the Jewish State of Israel, while the latter focuses on the new South African context, the profound ambiguity of religions, and the transformative powers of faith within the context of practical action and political praxis. Using the case of contemporary Britain, the concluding chapter (Chapter 11) by Michael Northcott examines the power and powerlessness of the modern nation-state.

Whatever misgivings may sometimes be aroused by some of the wide generalisations and not always convincing arguments in this volume, the works nevertheless deserves the admiration of scholars of religion, postmodernists and their fans. After all, Ursula King underscores the most profound limitations of the volume when she said "...postmodernism remains Western-derived and Western-oriented, in spite of all attempts to accord more recognition to the otherness of others. Given the formative, exclusively Western matrix of postmodernism, it cannot be sufficiently well equipped to account for alternative non-Western beliefs and practices" (p. 6). The editor is to be congratulated for her initiative of merging theoretical issues with case studies in a chronological order that makes for a less abstracted and contextualised reading.

Dr. Afe Adogame, Lecturer & Research Fellow, Department for the Study of Religion, University of Bayreuth, Germany.

VI: TURNING POINT

Purity and Danger: An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo, by Mary Douglas, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966 (and reprinted frequently since then).

Boundaries between academic disciplines have never been impermeable despite assertions and polemics of some academics. The Study of Religions has always applied methods derived from text-based disciplines, such as Theology and Classics, and from ethnographic ones such as Anthropology. Of course, this too is an insecure categorisation: Theology has always worried about what particular people think and do, while Anthropology has always had more than its share of library dwellers. Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger* is precisely about the permeability of boundaries - especially those that some people wish were solid and secure. It explores particular symbolic systems that might seem arcane and arbitrary but are in fact entangled with both everyday living and the abstraction of thinking cosmologically. The many and varied human complexes of food laws and dress codes (for example) establish order and structure dynamic relationships. That they establish difference and even division is banal when we are alerted to the far richer workings and applications of these systems in particular lifeways and cosmovisions. Again, 'systems' may itself suggest something secure and bounded. In fact, however, Mary Douglas argues convincingly that the strongest boundaries are insisted upon precisely in periods of flux and change. Permeability rather than security provokes ideologues to enhance boundaries, ramify rules and systematise the taken-for-granted. But that a lifeway can be taken-for-granted is a demonstration of the ubiquity of purity, danger, pollution and taboo. *Purity and Danger* is also significant in its consideration of embodiment (a theme further elaborated in Mary Douglas' later works, often far ahead of other scholars). Douglas is not concerned with a static symbolic system but with a contested realities of human and other-than-human interactions, especially when generated and symbolised by dealings with dirt - not as morality or hygiene but as that which is out of place.

It is perhaps unsurprising that Douglas' *Purity and Danger* had a considerable impact on me as I was migrating from Theology to Religious Studies via a study of Jewish identities. I was not particularly concerned with the food laws that distinguished Jews from gentiles and had not yet fully considered that they also functioned to distinguish Jews from other Jews. (That this later function is prior to the former one is now clear - Leviticus addresses priests, the Mishnah is

disinterested in actual gentiles.) I was most interested in the semantics of similarity and difference, conversation and polemic. Indeed, the influence of my PhD supervisor, Prof John F.A. Sawyer, must have made it obvious that I would edge ever nearer towards that boundary between text-based, largely historical, study and research more concerned with contemporary religiosity. His own semantic approaches required a reading of texts as people actually read and apply them, and they draw on many contexts in order to explain and inspire further thought and engagement. Douglas' *Purity and Danger* demonstrated the considerable value of dialogues back and forth across all these various divides. For example, her ethnography of the Lele and her close reading of Leviticus blend and invite consideration of the benefits of wide ranging cross-disciplinary approaches - or, rather, of applying approaches from different disciplines to related issues.

The danger of a recognised specialist or expert in one area appearing to dabble amateurishly in the concerns of another field must be clear to all those who face peer-review in the various ways academia requires. But Douglas refuses to retreat to the purity of a single disciplinary position. She can do so because her expertise is considerable in all the fields she enters. Evidence of this is abundant in both introductions and expert discussions of those fields: e.g. Jacob Neusner's application of her analysis to the further elaboration of Israel's purity system in the Mishnah, a host of leading biblical scholars' conversations with her about 'Reading Leviticus', her necessary inclusion in readers, introductions and companions to anthropology (including that of religion).

Purity and Danger was a turning point for me in its demonstration of the permeability of boundaries (a theme of increasing importance in my research and writing now). I believe it to be a significant work too in the continuing evolution of the Study of Religions in demonstrating the value of blending approaches and methodologies. That its argument about purity and danger, food and dress, bodies and ideas, and so much more, is powerful and generative is an added bonus of course! I have re-read it alongside recent Maori discourse about *tapu*, and I continue to refer undergraduates in several modules to its discussion of purity and boundary systems. It continues to provide inspiration for reflection on all manner of boundaries and transgressions.

Graham Harvey
Reader in Religious Studies
King Alfred's College, Winchester

VII RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY BASR MEMBERS

(please send in your details via email where possible)

Cox, James L.

2001 'Missionaries, the phenomenology of religion and 're-presenting' nineteenth-century African religion: A case study of Peter McKenzie's *Hail Orisha!*', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 31:3 pp. 336-353.

Clarke, Peter

2000 'The Encounter Between New Religion and Old Religion with special reference to Soka Gakkai and Catholicism in Brazil', in *Dialog und Unterscheidung Religionen und neue religiöse Bewegungen im Gespräch*, Reinhard Hempelmann und Ulrich Dehn (eds), Berlin: Evangelische Zentrale für Weltanschauungsfragen, pp. 251-60.

2000 'The Encounter of Buddhist Humanism and Catholic Culture' in *Global Citizens: Soka Gakkai International in the World*, D.W. Machacek and B.R. Wilson (eds), Oxford University Press.

2000 'Movimentos milenaristas japoneses e o papel do Brasil na construção do paraíso na Terra: a Igreja Messianica Mundial (Sekai Kyusei Kyo)', in *ILHA: Revista de Antropologia*, Florianópolis, vol. 2, no 1, pp. 104-123.

2002 'Islam in Tropical Africa' in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Neil J Smelser and Paul B Baltes (eds), Oxford: Elsevier Science.

2002 'Agon shu', 'Hon-michi', 'Kofuku no Kagaku', 'Konkokyo', 'Omoto', 'Sekai Kyusei Kyo', 'Shinnyoen', 'Tenrikyo', and 'Tensho-Kotai-Jingu Kyo' in *Religions of the World: A Comprehensive Encyclopaedia of Beliefs and Practices*, J.Gordon Melton and Martin Baumann (eds), New York: ABC-Clio.

Harris, Elisabeth

- 2001 'Buddhism in War: a study of cause and effect from Sri Lanka', *Culture and Religion*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 197-222
- 2002 'Christian Perceptions of the Buddha in Sri Lanka', in *Swedish Missiological Themes: Special Issue on Christian Perceptions of the Buddha*, Vol. 90, No. 1, pp. 39-62