

## Religion And The Specter Of The West

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~~Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, and the Politics of Translation . Author: Arvind Pal S. Mandair . Publisher: New York, Columbia University Press, 2009 . Pages 516+ A Review by Dr. Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon . Professor of History (retd.) Panjab University, Chandigarh~~

### ~~Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India ...~~

Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, and the Politics of Translation. Arvind-Pal Mandair. \$31.99; \$31.99; Publisher Description. Arguing that intellectual movements, such as deconstruction, postsecular theory, and political theology, have different implications for cultures and societies that live with the ...

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Mandair rethinks the intersection of religion and the secular in discourses such as history of religions, postcolonial theory, and recent continental philosophy. Though seemingly unconnected, these discourses are shown to be linked to a philosophy of "generalized translation" that emerged as a key conceptual matrix in the colonial encounter between India and the West.

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Mandair's biographical data and listing of his benefactors, supporters, and mentors in his book, "RELIGION AND THE SPECTER OF THE WEST" Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, and the Politics of Translation, (Religion and specter of west hereafter) evince (suggest) that during his higher education and employment stints he had association and coziness with academia and literati who have written treatises, critical of the Sikh Gurus, creed, traditions and reform movement Singh Sabha ...

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Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, and the Politics of Translation (Insurrections: Critical Studies in Religion, Politics, and Culture) by Mandair, Arvindpal at AbeBooks.co.uk - ISBN 10: 0231147252 - ISBN 13: 9780231147255 - Columbia University Press - 2016 - Softcover

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Arguing that intellectual movements, such as deconstruction, postsecular theory, and political theology, have different implications for cultures and societies that live with the debilitating effects of past imperialisms, Arvind Mandair unsettles the politics of knowledge construction in which the category of "religion" continues to be central. Through a case study of Sikhism, he launches an extended critique of religion as a cultural universal. At the same time, he presents a portrait of how certain aspects of Sikh tradition were reinvented as "religion" during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. India's imperial elite subtly recast Sikh tradition as a sui generis religion, which robbed its teachings of their political force. In turn, Sikhs began to define themselves as a "nation" and a "world religion" that was separate from, but parallel to, the rise of the Indian state and global Hinduism. Rather than investigate these processes in isolation from Europe, Mandair shifts the focus closer to the political history of ideas, thereby recovering part of Europe's repressed colonial memory. Mandair rethinks the intersection of religion and the secular in discourses such as history of religions, postcolonial theory, and recent continental philosophy. Though seemingly unconnected, these discourses are shown to be linked to a philosophy of "generalized translation" that emerged as a key conceptual matrix in the colonial encounter between India and the West. In this riveting study, Mandair demonstrates how this philosophy of translation continues to influence the repetitions of religion and identity politics in the lives of South Asians, and the way the academy, state, and media have analyzed such phenomena.

Explores the significance of Indian control spirits as a dominating force in nineteenth-century American Spiritualism. The Specter of the Indian unveils the centrality of Native American spirit guides during the emergent years of American Spiritualism. By pulling together cultural and political history; the studies of religion, race, and gender; and the ghostly, Kathryn Troy offers a new layer of understanding to the prevalence of mystically styled Indians in American visual and popular culture. The connections between Spiritualist print and contemporary Indian policy provide fresh insight into the racial dimensions of social reform among nineteenth-century Spiritualists. Troy draws fascinating parallels between the contested belief of Indians as fading from the world, claims of returned apparitions, and the social impetus to provide American Indians with a means of existence in white America. Rather than vanishing from national sight and memory, Indians and their ghosts are shown to be ever present. This book transports the readers into dimly lit parlor rooms and darkened cabinets and lavishes them with detailed séance accounts in the words of those who witnessed them. Scrutinizing the otherworldly whisperings heard therein highlights the voices of mediums and those they sought to channel, allowing the author to dig deep into Spiritualist belief and practice. The influential presence of Indian ghosts is made clear and undeniable.

This book conceives of "religion-making" broadly as the multiple ways in which social and cultural phenomena are configured and reconfigured within the matrix of a world-religion discourse that is historically and semantically rooted in particular Western and predominantly Christian experiences, knowledges, and institutions. It investigates how religion is universalized and certain ideas, social formations, and practices rendered "religious" are thus integrated in and subordinated to very particular - mostly liberal-secular - assumptions about the relationship between history, politics, and religion. The individual contributions, written by a new generation of scholars with decisively interdisciplinary approaches, examine the processes of translation and globalization of historically specific concepts and practices of religion - and its dialectical counterpart, the secular - into new contexts. This volume contributes to the relatively new field of thought that aspires to unravel the thoroughly intertwined relationships between religion and secularism as modern concepts.

□Masterful...An indispensable warning for our own time.□ □Samuel Moyn □Magisterial...Covers this dark history with insight and skill...A major intervention into our understanding of 20th-century Europe and the lessons we ought to take away from its history.□ □The Nation For much of the last century, Europe was haunted by a threat of its own imagining: Judeo-Bolshevism. The belief that Communism was a Jewish plot to destroy the nations of Europe took hold during the Russian Revolution and quickly spread. During World War II, fears of a Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy were fanned by the fascists and sparked a genocide. But the myth did not die with the end of Nazi Germany. A Specter Haunting Europe shows that this paranoid fantasy persists today in the toxic politics of revitalized right-wing nationalism. □It is both salutary and depressing to be reminded of how enduring the trope of an exploitative global Jewish conspiracy against pure, humble, and selfless nationalists really is...A century after the end of the first world war, we have, it seems, learned very little.□ □Mark Mazower, Financial Times □From the start, the fantasy held that an alien element—the Jews—aimed to subvert the cultural values and national identities of Western societies...The writers, politicians, and shills whose poisonous ideas he exhumes have many contemporary admirers.□ □Robert Legvold, Foreign Affairs

In the generation after Constantine the Great elevated Christianity to a dominant position in the Roman Empire, his nephew, the Emperor Julian, sought to reinstate the old gods to their former place of prominence--in the face of intense opposition from the newly powerful Christian church. In early 363 c.e., while living in Syrian Antioch, Julian redoubled his efforts to hellenize the Roman Empire by turning to an unlikely source: the Jews. With a war against Persia on the horizon, Julian thought it crucial that all Romans propitiate the true gods and gain their favor through proper practice. To convince his people, he drew on Jews, whom he characterized as Judeans, using their scriptures, institutions, practices, and heroes sometimes as sources for his program and often as models to emulate. In *The Specter of the Jews*, Ari Finkelstein examines Julian's writings and views on Jews as Judeans, a venerable group whose religious practices and values would help delegitimize Christianity and, surprisingly, shape a new imperial Hellenic pagan identity.

This book investigates the universalization of religious and secular knowledges that emerged in their particular modern forms originally in the Christian West. It is an attempt to explore the epistemological grounds and political implications of the formation and codependency of 'secular' and 'religious' discourses and practices.

Sikhism's short but relatively eventful history provides a fascinating insight into the working of misunderstood and seemingly contradictory themes such as politics and religion, violence and mysticism, culture and spirituality, orality and textuality, public sphere versus private sphere, tradition and modernity. This book presents students with a careful analysis of these complex themes as they have manifested themselves in the historical evolution of the Sikh traditions and the encounter of Sikhs with modernity and the West, in the philosophical teachings of its founders and their interpretation by Sikh exegetes, and in Sikh ethical and intellectual responses to contemporary issues in an increasingly secular and pluralistic world. *Sikhism: A Guide for the Perplexed* serves as an ideal guide to Sikhism, and also for students of Asian studies, Sociology of Religion and World Religions.

*Treacherous Faith* offers a new and ambitious cross-disciplinary account of the ways writers from the early English Reformation to the Restoration generated, sustained, or questioned cultural anxieties about heresy and heretics. This book examines the dark, often brutal story of defining, constructing, and punishing heretics in early modern England, and especially the ways writers themselves contributed to or interrogated the politics of religious fear-mongering and demonizing. It illuminates the terrors and anxieties early modern writers articulated and the fantasies they constructed about pernicious heretics and pestilent heresies in response to the Reformation's shattering of Western Christendom. *Treacherous Faith* analyzes early modern writers who contributed to cultural fears about the contagion of heresy and engaged in the making of heretics, as well as writers who challenged the constructions of heretics and the culture of religious fear-mongering. The responses of early modern writers in English to the specter of heresy and the making of heretics were varied, complex, and contradictory, depending on their religious and political alignments. Some writers (for example, Thomas More, Richard Bancroft, and Thomas Edwards) used their rhetorical resourcefulness and inventiveness to contribute to the politics of heresy-making and the specter of cunning, diabolical heretics ravaging the Church, the state, and thousands of souls; others (for example, John Foxe) questioned within certain cultural limitations heresy-making processes and the violence and savagery that religious demonizing provoked; and some writers (for example, Anne Askew, John Milton, and William Walwyn) interrogated with great daring and inventiveness the politics of religious demonizing, heresy-making, and the cultural constructions of heretics. *Treacherous Faith* examines the complexities and paradoxes of the heresy-making imagination in early modern England: the dark fantasies, anxieties, terrors, and violence it was capable of generating, but also the ways the dreaded specter of heresy could stimulate the literary creativity of early modern authors engaging with it from diverse religious and political perspectives. *Treacherous Faith* is a major

interdisciplinary study of the ways the literary imagination, religious fears, and demonizing interacted in the early modern world. This study of the early modern specter of heresy contributes to work in the humanities seeking to illuminate the changing dynamics of religious fear, the rhetoric of religious demonization, and the powerful ways the literary imagination represents and constructs religious difference.

In *The Specter of Salem*, Gretchen A. Adams reveals the many ways that the Salem witch trials loomed over the American collective memory from the Revolution to the Civil War and beyond. Schoolbooks in the 1790s, for example, evoked the episode to demonstrate the new nation's progress from a disorderly and brutal past to a rational present, while critics of new religious movements in the 1830s cast them as a return to Salem-era fanaticism, and during the Civil War, southerners evoked witch burning to criticize Union tactics. Shedding new light on the many, varied American invocations of Salem, Adams ultimately illuminates the function of collective memories in the life of a nation. "Imaginative and thoughtful. . . . Thought-provoking, informative, and convincingly presented, *The Specter of Salem* is an often spellbinding mix of politics, cultural history, and public historiography." *New England Quarterly* "This well-researched book, forgoing the usual heft of scholarly studies, is not another interpretation of the Salem trials, but an important major work within the scholarly literature on the witch-hunt, linking the hysteria of the period to the evolving history of the American nation. A required acquisition for academic libraries." *Choice*, Outstanding Academic Title 2009

This book is our century's most comprehensive and wise treatment of nihilism in all of its guises, comparing favorably with Rosen, Cavell, and indeed with Spengler. Crosby argues that our culture is genuinely haunted by nihilism expressing itself in the fideism of fundamentalism as well as in the debilitating alienation from all orientation. This results from a one-sided development of Western culture. Unlike most writers on this topic, Crosby acknowledges many sources colluding to frame the culture of nihilism, including "the death of God," the objectification of nature, the meaninglessness of suffering in a mechanical universe, the ephemerality of time in a world where value does not accumulate, the arbitrariness of historicized reason, the reduction of value to will, and the alienation of the Cartesian ego. These sources are reviewed in the first two parts of the book with the result that the phenomenon of nihilism becomes understandable. In its third and fourth parts, Crosby provides a critical analysis of the religious and philosophical forces leading to nihilism by discussing authors from the early modern period through Dostoyevsky, Sartre, Russell, and Derrida. He shows that these forces are skewed and impoverished and should not be allowed to determine our situation. The comprehensive attention to detail and the multi-perspectival interpretation demonstrates as well as asserts the richness of the culture that puts nihilism in its place. Part Five, finally, rephrases the criticism of the sources of nihilism in positive ways. Part Four in particular is a tour de force of philosophical argument. Its richness of nuance, plurality of views examined, and adroitness of critical interpretation provide cumulatively a powerful, non-nihilistic reading of the philosophic tradition. The force of the argument derives from its comprehensive, cumulative character. Crosby distinguishes and relates five areas of nihilism: political, moral, epistemological, cosmic, and existential. Throughout the book, he illustrates and examines these as they are expressed in literature and art, in daily life and practical affairs, and in philosophy. The book is richly erudite in its marshalling of consciousness from so many domains.

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