Postcolonial Philosophy of Religion
Purushottama Bilimoria  •  Andrew B. Irvine
Editors

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Springer
In memory of Bhibuti Yadav, Grace Jantzen, Ninian Smart.
Preface

The present collection of writings on postcolonial philosophy of religion takes its origins from a Philosophy of Religion session during the 1996 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion held in New Orleans. Three presentations, by Purushottama Bilimoria, Andrew B. Irvine, and Bhibuti Yadav, were to be offered at the session, with Thomas Dean presiding and Kenneth Surin responding. (Yadav, unfortunately could not be present because of illness.)

This was the first AAR session ever to examine issues in the study of religion under the rubric of the postcolonial turn in academia. Interest at the session was intense. For instance, Richard King, then at work on the manuscript of the landmark *Orientalism and Religion*, was present; so, too, was Paul J. Griffiths, whose subsequent work on interreligious engagement has been so noteworthy. In response to numerous audience appeals, revised versions of the presentations eventually were published, as a “Dedicated Symposium on ‘Subalternity’,” in volume 39 no. 1 (2000) of *Sophia*, the international journal for philosophy of religion, metaphysical theology and ethics.

Since that time, the importance of the nexus of religion and the postcolonial has become increasingly patent not only to philosophers of religion but to students of religion across the range of disciplines and methodologies. The increased internationalization of the program of the American Academy of Religion, especially in more recent years, is a significant outgrowth of this transformation in consciousness among students of religion. Several other of the contributions to this volume grow out of work presented at the AAR in the past decade, including those of Grace Jantzen, Richard King, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Arvind Mandair, Eduardo Mendieta, and Santiago Slabodsky.

We are grateful to all the contributors for their patience over the long course of the volume’s completion. We extend our thanks also to the American Academy of Religion for supporting vital debate and conversation around postcoloniality. In addition, thanks are due to Springer SBM B.V., particularly to Floor Oosting, Ingrid van Laarhoven, and Willemijn Arts, for their enthusiasm and care for the project. We also thank Serena O’Meley, who assisted with the original symposium in *Sophia*, Amy Katherine Rayner, graduate student at the University of Melbourne, for help with editing many of the chapters and working on the index, and Emerald Kimber for additional assistance with the indexing. We are grateful to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Dipesh Chakrabarti, Renuka Sharma, Morny Joy, Laurie Patton, and Devi & Rasa, among many others (some of whom may even be nameless or in worlds unseen), for their inspiration and encouragement.

This collection has been a long time coming. Indeed, in the course of its gestation, two of our colleagues were given to death. We wish to honour the memories of Bhibuti Yadav, Grace Jantzen, and Ninian Smart by dedicating this volume to them.
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Contributors

Purushottama Bilimoria is Professor of Philosophy and Comparative Studies at Deakin University, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne, and Visiting Professor at State University of New York - Stony Brook and Columbia University. His research and publications cover classical Indian philosophy and comparative ethics, Continental thought, cross-cultural philosophy of religion, diaspora studies, bioethics, and personal law in India. He is Editor-in-Chief of the journal, Sophia. Recent publications are Indian Ethics I (Ashgate 2007; OUP 2008), Sabdapramana: Testimony in Indian Philosophy, revised edition (DK Print-World, 2008), and Nietzsche as ‘Europe’s Buddha’ and Asia’s Superman, Sophia, vol 47/3 2008.

Thomas B. Ellis (Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania) is an Assistant Professor of Religion in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Appalachian State University. He specializes in the religious and philosophical traditions of South Asia, primarily Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain. Theoretically and methodologically, Ellis employs comparative philosophy, psychology, and biology in his research and teaching.

Jay Garfield (Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh) is Doris Silbert Professor in the Humanities, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Logic Program and of the Five College Tibetan Studies in India Program at Smith College, Professor in the graduate faculty of Philosophy at the University of Massachusetts, Professor of Philosophy at Melbourne University and Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at the Central University of Tibetan Studies. His areas of expertise include philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, Buddhist philosophy, and ethics and epistemology. Garfield’s most recent books are his translation, with the ven Prof Geshe Ngawang Samten of the Fourteenth-Fifteenth Century Tibetan Philosopher Tsong Khapa’s commentary on Nāgārjuna’s Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (Ocean of Reasoning) and Empty Words: Buddhist Philosophy and Cross-Cultural Interpretation, and Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna’s Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (Oxford University Press 2006 and 2006, 1995, respectively).

Andrew B. Irvine (Ph.D., Boston University) is currently Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Maryville College in Tennessee (USA). He previously directed the study abroad program in Comparative Religion and Culture at Long Island
University Global College. He is at work on a book with the working title, *God's Preferential Option for the Poor: Symbolic Liberation*.

**Grace Jantzen** (1948–2006)  (Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Calgary; D. Phil. in Theology, Oxford University) was Professor of Religion, Culture and Gender at the University of Manchester from 1996 to 2005 and Emeritus Professor until her untimely death. She wrote a series of studies on the philosophy of religion, including *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge University Press, 1995) and *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Manchester, 1998). Before she died she was working on a multi-volume study on Death and the Displacement of Beauty in Western philosophy and theology, including *Foundations of Violence* (Routledge, 2004) and two posthumous volumes *Violence to Eternity* (Routledge, 2008) and *A Place of Springs* (Routledge, 2009).

**Richard King**  (Ph.D., Lancaster University) is Professor of Religious Studies at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee (USA). He is a specialist of classical Indian philosophies, postcolonial approaches to the study of religion, and the comparative study of mysticism. He is the author of four books: *Early Advaita Vedanta and Buddhism* (State University of New York Press, 1995), *Orientalism and Religion. Postcolonial Theory, India and "the Mystic East"* (Routledge, 1999), *Indian Philosophy. An Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999), and, with Jeremy Carrette, *Selling Spirituality. The Silent Takeover of Religion* (Routledge, 2005).

**Nelson Maldonado-Torres**  (Ph.D., Brown University) is Associate Professor of Comparative Ethnic Studies in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, and current president of the Caribbean Philosophical Association. He is the author of *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity* (Duke University, 2008). In 2005, he co-edited with Ramón Grosfoguel and José David Saldivar the book *Latin@s in the World-System: Decolonization Struggles in the 21st U.S. Empire* (Paradigm Press). He is currently working on a book-length project entitled *Fanonian Meditations*, where he elaborates a theory of epistemic and material decolonization based on the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Gloria Anzaldúa, and other intellectuals of color.

**Arvind Mandaar**  (Ph.D. in Chemistry, Aston University; Ph.D. in Philosophy, The University of Warwick) teaches at the University of Michigan. His books include *Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality and the Politics of Translation* (Columbia, 2009), and, with C. Shackle, *Teachings of the Sikh Gurus* (Routledge, 2005). He is founding co-editor of the journal *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture and Theory* published by Routledge.

**Navdeep Mandaar** is presently completing his doctoral degree in the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham, U.K.

**Eduardo Mendieta**  (Ph.D., New School for Social Research) is professor of philosophy at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. He is the author of *The Adventures of Transcendental Philosophy* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002) and *Global
Fragments: Globalizations, Latinamericanisms, and Critical Theory (SUNY Press, 2007). He is presently at work on another book entitled Philosophy’s War: Logos, Polemos, Topos. His most recent book publications are a collection of interview with Angela Y. Davis, entitled Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Torture and War (Seven Stories Press, 2006), and an edited volume of interviews with Richard Rorty, Take Care of Freedom, and Truth Will Take Care of Itself (Stanford University Press, 2006).

Walter D. Mignolo (Docteur le Troisieme Cycle, L’École des Hautes Études, Paris) is William H. Wannamaker Professor of Romance Studies and Literature at Duke University and Director of the Center for Global Studies and the Humanities. His publications include The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization (The University of Michigan Press, 1995), Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking (Princeton University Press, 2000), and The Idea of Latin America (Blackwell, 2005), which received the Frantz Fanon Award from the Caribbean Philosophical Association. He also co-edits the web dossier, WKO (http://www.jhfc.duke.edu/wko/index.php).

Makarand Paranjape (Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) is a critic, poet, fiction writer, and literary columnist with over thirty books, 100 published academic papers, and more than 200 reviews, notes, and popular articles to his credit. He is currently Professor of English at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His latest book is Another Canon: Indian Texts and Traditions in English (Athem Press, 2009).

Santiago Slabodsky (Ph.D., University of Toronto) is assistant professor in Judaic Studies at St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan. He holds previous degrees from Duke University, the University of Buenos Aires, and the Latin American Rabbinical Seminary. His work has been published in journals including Majshavot, Paideia, Koinonia, the Journal of Human Architecture, and in the edited volume, Latin@s in the World System (Paradigm Publishers, 2006).

Sharada Sugirtharajah (Ph.D., University of Birmingham) is Senior Lecturer in Hindu Studies in the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. Her publications include chapters in edited volumes, journal articles, entries in reference works and contributions to resource packs on Hinduism. She is the author of Imagining Hinduism: A Postcolonial Perspective (Routledge, 2003).

Bibhuti S. Yadav (1943–1999) (Ph.D., Banaras Hindu University) was Professor of Hindu and Indian Buddhist thought and Comparative Philosophy of Religion at Temple University, until his untimely death at 56, on October 10, 1999. Born in Tulasipur, India, he was educated at Banaras Hindu University, from which he received a B.A. in Sanskrit and philosophy, as well as an M.A. and Ph.D. (1970) in philosophy. He spent a year at McMaster University, then came to Temple University in 1972. As a member of the Department of Religion, he also taught at Temple University Japan during 1993–94 and 1996–98. He published widely in the area of Indian philosophy and served on the editorial boards of a number of journals and foundations. He received Temple University’s Distinguished Teaching Award in 1992.