It is clear from his introduction to this volume that Oberhammer is well aware of the perils inherent in comparative study, since terms like "epiphany," "transcendence," "encounter," and "sacrament" are richly rooted not only in Western thought, but also in technical Christian theology, and it would be easy to reduce the complexities of Indian thought to settled Christian categories. Arguing by analogy, though, Oberhammer forthrightly insists that if religious traditions such as the Vedic, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions of India claim to lead practitioners beyond the confines of this temporal-spatial world, then there have to be ways in which mundane limitations are assessed, ruptured, and exceeded by way of temporal-spatial practices, constructions, and embodiments. If so, one can legitimately and usefully draw the parallels with the sacramental and liturgical practices of the Christian tradition.

Ten of the essays explore temporal-spatial meditations of the divine in Indian thought, covering a rich range of materials: the representation of Brahman in *pratīka* form (W. Halbfass), the sacramental character of *dharma* (A. Wezler), the Mīmāṃsā concept of *apūrva* as expressive of the transcendence of temporal-spatial limitations in Vedic ritual practice (J. C. Heestermann), the sacramental dimension of drama (A. Amaladass), the salvific immediacy of the transcendent in the Vaiṣṇava and Tantric text entitled the *Paramasaṃhitā* (G. Oberhammer), the tantric guru as a mediator of transcendence (A. Padoux), the physiology of *kuṇḍalinī* (M. Hulin), the temporal-spatial communication of the transcendent (T. Vetter), and "nature" as communicative of salvation (L. Schmithausen) in early Buddhism, and (in the single essay venturing farther east) divine embodiment according to the Shintō tradition (J. Laube). In a separate section (oddly labeled "theological," as if in contrast to the earlier Indological [and non-theological?] section), five essays deal with Western, largely Christian themes: a Protestant Christian view of the temporal-spatial communication of the divine (H. Adriaanse), Roman Catholic sacramental theology (F.-J. Nocke), a theology of "real symbols" in relation to a sacramental anthropology (J. Splett), the spatial dimension of religion according to Theresa of Avila and John of the Cross (L. Minnema), and the interrelationship between temporal-spatiality and transcendence according to Levinas (M. Schmücker). The essays are erudite scholarly contributions, well worth reading as individual pieces demonstrating how numerous traditions have reflected deeply on the temporal-spatial mediation of the transcendent, in theory but especially with reference to individual and communal religious practice.

In light of Oberhammer's introduction, the essays can be taken as validations of his intuition regarding the analogous role of the sacramental in traditions that otherwise remain very different, and as confirmation of his theological approach to the study of India. The reader presumes that the contributors have allowed their essays to be included because to some extent at least they share Oberhammer's theological project. One may even optimistically sense a comparative theological spirit infusing the entire volume. But only Oberhammer's introduction gives evidence of an explicit engagement in the comparative theological project. The essays on India rarely refer to Western materials, while the essays on Western materials do not refer to India. There is little evidence of interaction among the various authors, and none explicitly commits himself to Oberhammer's project. Nevertheless, this volume succeeds in placing a yet heavier burden of justification on those interpreters of India who avoid theological categories while serenely borrowing those indebted to Western literary, social scientific, and philosophical disciplines.

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Eclecticism and Modern Hindu Discourse. By BRIAN A. HATCHER. New York: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1999. Pp. xi + 200. $45.

This book is a sensitive, subtle, and catholic meditation on eclecticism as a category in the study of religion, using modern Hindu discourse as a test case. It elucidates the discussion by comparing and contrasting eclecticism with allied concepts such as skepticism (to which it is an alternative) and syncretism (with which it is sometimes confused). Similarly, while using modern Hindu discourse as its staple, it also includes comparative (late Roman, modern Western) and interdisciplinary (architectural) perspectives. It is also refreshingly restrained in its conclusions.

In this review I shall first critically address the issue of modern Hindu discourse as presented by the author and then (re-)evaluate its significance for the conclusions reached on eclecticism.

The author claims that modern Hindu discourse, in its quest for eclecticism, departs considerably from "traditional" Hinduism. I would like to claim the contrary, that efforts to sustain such a claim tend to exaggerate the discontinuity between neo-Hindu and orthodox Hindu positions on certain issues. (1) It is claimed that the "knowledge of *Brahman* [as] accessible to everyone . . . is somewhat against the traditional grain" (p. 118). The operative word is *somewhat* here, for even in traditional Advaita such knowledge is accessible to everyone through *smṛti* (see Śaṅkara on *Brahmasūtra* I.3.38) and direct experience of *Brahman* within this life is also possible *without* recourse to *śruti* (see Śaṅkara on *Brahmasūtra* I.1.30). (2) It is claimed that Vivekananda mistakenly alludes to the Vaiśeṣika school in the context of *śabda-pramāṇa* (p. 62). However:

> Praśastapāda, an author of the Vaiśeṣika school mentions another kind of knowledge—*ārṣa jñāna*. It is the knowledge of seers, the promulgators of scriptural tradition (*āmnāya-vidhātā*) which is generated by the contact of ātman and the mind, and by a peculiar quality. It is of the

> nature of intuition (*prātibha*) [*sic*] and the divine sages have it in perfection.[1]

Śaṅkara uses the expression *ārṣajñāna* verbatim in his gloss on *Brahmasūtra* I.1.30. (3) The provisionality of Buddha's teaching, as illustrated by the parable of the raft is recognized (pp. 168–69) but a similar recognition within Advaita of the *mithyātva* of the Vedas goes unnoticed (see Śaṅkara on *Brahmasūtra* IV.1.3). (4) The Buddha's disregard for mere learning is recognized as an influence on Vivekananda (p. 68) but Śaṅkara's reservations (see *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* 59) go unnoticed. (5) Some skepticism is implied regarding Vivekananda's universalism as stemming from traditional Hinduism (pp. 62–63). However, even Albiruni, who refers to the Hindus as "religious antagonists," concedes this point.[2]

Examples could be multiplied. However, the author's desire to play fair by his sources is so transparent throughout the book that it would be churlish to lay any blame at his door. Rather, this tendency to exaggerate the divergence between neo-Hinduism and traditional Hinduism on these points must be attributed to the prevailing climate of opinion in the field in general.

However, the author hits upon the right vein when he writes: "By construing India as an Other to a West it desires not to be, the nationalist unwittingly makes of India the Other the West always wanted it to be" (p. 152). But the ore needs to be further refined once it is mined. The Other the West wants India (or Hinduism) to be, finds its expression in the Western construct of Hinduism, while the Other that India wants to be in relation to the West finds its expression in neo-Hinduism.

The crucial question to ask then is: what kind of Other does India (or Hinduism) see the West as? And the answer briefly is that it sees the West as an Other which emphasizes otherness and moreover, its own otherness, even to the point of chosenness. In the encounter between India and the West, India did not choose the West, it was chosen by the West, and this is one kind of chosenness. It is often proposed that India cannot but choose the West. The Indian reply could well be that what India cannot escape is modernity—not the West, and that this Indian modernity, via neo-Hinduism, may not involve the eclectic duality of insider and outsider. In matters of eclecticism, after all, the neo-Hindu has always considered himself the "universal insider," because in neo-Hinduism ultimately there is no Other.

The implications of such a view for our understanding of eclecticism are foundational. One must here raise at least three issues to the level of discussion: (1) Why is it that we employ the word eclecticism for choices made from religions and cultures other than our own, that is, to external selection? I know of no person who accepts his own religion or culture in toto without individual preferences (choices). Why is such *internal* selection not called eclectic and does not set the same discourses in motion as when the choices are external? (2) Is eclecticism affected by the fact of whether the religion or culture involved is ethnic or missionary? How would the discussion be affected if one ventures the suggestion that the ethnic religions tend to be eclectic and the missionary religions syncretic? (3) This brings us to the most vexing question of all—is not the concept of eclecticism itself tied to one's concept of religion? If we typically do not apply the term eclecticism to internal choices (point 1 above) and if our ethnic confidence enables us to make guilt-free conscious external choices (point 2 above) then is not tying a strong sense of boundary to a concept of religion the original sin which expels us from the paradise of "universal religion," even if no religion exists in a universal form (p. 106)? And if such be the case then does not the alleged eclecticism of neo-Hinduism really reflect a recognition of such universalism, in which everyone is a legatee to the entire religious heritage of humanity, so that in the end no choices are really "external"? This might also explain why modern Hindu discourse oscillates between the themes of "unity of religions" and the "harmony of religions." Could it be that it is its heroic attempts to fit its insights into the inherently exclusive patterns of a Western mode of discourse that compel neo-Hindu pluralism to masquerade as inclusivism?

A marital metaphor may help clarify the point. In the regnant Western concept of religion one can only adhere to one religion at a time, just as monogamically one can only be married to one woman at a time. Today, in the modern West, one can change one's religion or one's spouse but only on a one-at-a-time basis. In such a world it is as permissible to change one's religion as it is to change one's spouse, that is to say, one can be a serial monogamist in the sphere of religion, but simultaneous adherence to more than one religion is viewed with horror as syncretic (i.e., something promiscuous). But what would be otherwise considered marital promiscuity constitutes acceptable quadrigamy in traditional Islam (in which the penalty for promiscuity is death!).

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Karṇamōkṣam: A Play by Pukalentippulavar. Translated by HANNE M. DE BRUIN. Publications du Département d'indologie, vol. 87. Pondichéry: L'INSTITUT FRANÇAIS DE PONDICHÉRY and L'ECOLE FRANÇAISE D'EXTRÊME-ORIENT. 1988. Pp. xxxvii + 260 (paper).

Recent studies by Alf Hiltebeitel and Richard Frasca have focused attention on a religionally based folk tradition of performing and interpreting the *Mahābhārata* which flourishes in

[1] K. Satchidananda Murty, *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1959), 136.

[2] Edward C. Sachau, tr., *Alberuni's India* (London, 1888), I: 104.