

only have had same-sex friends” (181). She also links the growing individual autonomy of middle-class youth and the increasing amount of time spent outside the home and in the public space to shifting responsibilities and transforming social roles. She characterizes the influence of individualization amongst those she studied as leading to deeper and closer friendships, taking on functions such as “caring, protection, learning and communion” typically performed by the family (184). At the same time, rather than simplifying these friendships as purely resembling parent-child relationships, Robinson fleshes out the deeply layered nature of such friendships. She reveals they are equally rooted in fun, frivolity, and a sense of mutual understanding caused by being similarly aged or experiencing a similar phase of life. Numerous examples are included to illustrate these complexities, including one referring to a form of intimacy between young men that would be hard to find within a family or family-like relationship, as she writes how “in their intoxicated states of mind, they would pour out their hearts to each other about their problems with the ladies” (180).

Robinson argues how young Puneites frequently “transcended the local while domesticating the global” (183), providing an example of a young man who regularly visited the temple whilst at the same time was a DJ. However, the argument could be further developed given the ambiguities surrounding what constitutes the “local” and the “global.” Overall, the book is a powerful portrait of the agency with which Indian youth have negotiated the changes around them. As she details how the flourishing public spaces which form the sites of her study not only reflect rapidly growing markets but are also used by young adults as “tools to make and remake themselves” (79), she helps to dispel the myth that India’s youth are mere consumers of Westernization and liberalization, but rather, are active agents of change engaged in writing a new narrative for themselves of what it means to be Indian in an increasingly global world.

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HINDU-CATHOLIC ENCOUNTERS IN GOA: Religion, Colonialism, and Modernity. By *Alexander Henn*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014. xi, 214 pp. (Illustrations, map.) US\$30.00, paper. ISBN 978-0-253-01294-4.

This is an exciting book that touches on many issues: colonialism and Christianity, community and church, Hinduism and Catholicism, conversion and memory, narrative and ritual. Henn’s methods are eclectic: historical and comparative, textual and ethnographic. His questions are two-fold: about the politics of religious identity and difference, and the relation between syncretism and liberalism and the role of religion at the onset of modernity.

Goa was the political and religious capital of the Portuguese Asian empire and the Catholic archdiocese of Asia and Africa. Vasco da Gama's arrival on the Malabar Coast in 1498 brought Christian theology, viewed as the only religion or "Truth," and was meant to contain Islam and eradicate the pagan. It transformed both the region's culture and religion.

Goa witnessed forced religious conversion, iconoclastic violence, and attacks on Hindu practices, rituals, and festivals beginning in the mid-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This involved the desecration of temples and idols and their replacement with churches, chapels, and crosses—the Vetal temple became St. Anthony's Church in Siolim. Some 90 percent of the population became Christian. Francis Xavier, heralded as the "Apostle of Asia," led the Counter-Reformation and was known to have targeted the famous Tirupati Temple, an important sacred centre of the powerful medieval Vijaynagara Empire. Simultaneously, Jesuit missionaries also became students of Indian languages and literature and produced the celebrated *Kristapurana*, authored by the English Jesuit Thomas Stephens (1549–1619) and which represented empathy.

Even as Goa experienced the Inquisition, Europe was giving birth to a modern understanding of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as Henn elaborates.

Humanism and the Enlightenment conceived of religion as a universal human quality, but the Portuguese and Spanish encounters with pagan cultures in Asia and America involved the experience of a plurality of religions. The modern Western concept of religion, Henn argues, became the "theoretical paradigm for the integration of global religious plurality" (169). Books published in the late seventeenth century used the term religion in their titles and the new classifications of religion—for instance, Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, and idolatry—led to the comparative study of religion.

The modern idea of religion had two philosophical sources: Lord Edward Herbert's idea of natural religion, which was the belief in and worship of a supreme power found in all human beings and the Protestant challenge to the Catholic claim of universal Truth.

Henn is also interested in the question of how religion relates to the social and economic realm, and its role in the coexistence and syncretism between Hindus and Catholics. Goa evolved into a cosmopolitan space including Moors, Jews, Armenians, and others. By the late eighteenth century Hindus began building temples in proximity to Catholic monuments. The book explores the village as the site of religious coexistence, the interaction of Hindus and Catholics and the affinity between village gods and Catholic saints and the Trinity. Goan Hindus came to worship Saiba St. Francis Xavier while Goan Catholics venerated the goddess as Saibini Sateri-Shanta Durga.

Syncretism constitutes religion, Henn argues. Goan syncretism comprises, as the ethnography demonstrates, spatial commonalities

(neighbourhoods or sacred sites), ritual commemoration of shared pasts and therapeutic iconographies, and ritual memory that resists the historicism of modernity. Henn might have fruitfully used the idea of anti-syncretism, as when Christian liturgy prohibited Hindu sacred objects including plants, flowers, rice, coconut, betel leaf, areca nut, and turmeric or the more recent intervention by Hindu nationalist organizations emphasizing reconversion and de-Christianization. Syncretism has its limits: while Goan Christian practice continued with incense burning and the offering of flowers and Hindus and Catholics pay ritual homage to each other's shrines, they do not challenge core religious identities; indeed, surface tolerance often reveals competition.

Henn addresses modern anthropology's neglect of cultural hybridization in favour of viewing cultures as unique and self-contained. His reconsideration of syncretism discusses the landmark Shaw and Stewart volume that, in his view, overemphasizes the *politics* of syncretism as against its other aspects. Henn does not, however, see as problematic the argument made by van der Veer in this volume that the idea of Indian civilization as essentially tolerant and pluralistic is a "Hindu idea" that denies the idea of Islam in India.

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BEING BENGALI: At Home and in the World. *Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series, 77. Edited by Mridula Nath Chakraborty.* London; New York: Routledge, 2014. xvii, 236 pp. US\$155.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-415-62588-3.

If Bengal has long been "one of the key centers of civilisation and culture in the Indian subcontinent," what does it mean to be Bengali, especially now that Bengal is divided between India and Bangladesh, and a large part of the Bengali diaspora does not live in either of those two countries? This is the inspiring question this edited volume sets out to answer. This book stems out of two workshops, one of which took place in Dhaka and the other in Sydney, and one would assume, therefore, that it would have a greater representation of chapters on Bangladesh; that, however, is unfortunately not the case.

"Using 'Bengalis' as a case study, this volume seeks to understand what constitutes Bengaliness, imagined or otherwise, as a way of entering the debate from a linguistic angle," because, as aptly argued by Chakraborty, "being Bengali is built around the idea of a common language" (1). Unfortunately, we do not have enough articles taking up this debate. Next, there are some inaccuracies such as "(T)he Bengaliness that started consolidating itself around the fifteenth century and reached its peak during the nineteenth century Bengal Renaissance, underwent religious divisions under Mughal