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On "Hindutva" and a "Hindu-Catholic," with a Moral for our Times

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THE PURPOSE OF this article is to comment on the term *hindutva*, viz. "Hinduness," with special reference to a 19th century Bengali thinker who sought to indigenise his Christian faith, and to draw some topical conclusions. The thinker is Brahmabāndhab Upādhyāy (1861-1907) whom his sometime friend, Rabindranath Tagore, Bengal's great luminary, described as "a Roman Catholic ascetic, yet a Vedāntin—spirited, fearless, self-denying, erudite and uncommonly influential."¹ No doubt Upādhyāy was influential then; he had a powerful impact on Tagore himself especially when they were jointly establishing what would later develop as Tagore's brainchild of Santiniketan.² For years previously Upādhyāy had made a name for himself among the educated in the land in his attempt to give content to his self-description as a "Hindu-Catholic," not only by a vigorous campaign of journalism and lectures but by his extraordinary life-style. Towards the end of his life, while his public image as a Christian waned, he became noted as a passionate nationalist, culturally chauvinist and virulently anti-British. As a journalist he wrote mainly in innovate Bengali now, distinctively expounding what it meant to be a Hindu in a broadly political context of cultural self-assertion. During this phase of his life he was in the forefront of Bengali nationalism. But after a half-century or so of obscurity, Upādhyāy is becoming influential—or at least noteworthy—today as well, not only as an important figure of Bengali cultural history,³ but especially for Christian Churches in India in their increasingly urgent quest to contextualise their faith. Upādhyāy's ideas on *hindutva* then are not without significance.

Hindutva is best translated as "Hinduness" (or possibly, "Hinduhood") rather than as "Hinduism" or some such alternative. Though this may appear a rather fine distinction to some minds and in some contexts, we shall see that it is a crucial one. It seems to have a number of counterparts, e.g. the distinctions between "Christianness" and "Christianity," "Jewishness" and "Judaism," and perhaps, "Muslimness" and "Islam."

Hindutva is a perfectly regular construction formed by the application of a well-known grammatical rule in Sanskrit. According to this rule, taught already by the magisterial grammarian Pāṇini (5th cent. B.C.E.?), the suffix *-tva* is added to the stem to form a neuter, abstract noun.⁴ The purpose of this construction is by and large to attribute a property in the form of a universal; it carries no implications about the metaphysical status of the property itself. Thus a statement in Sanskrit about the undesirability of "blindness" (*andha-tva*) is a statement about the undesirability of "being blind," about existing in a certain way, as determined by a certain property; nothing is being said about the existential status of the property itself. I am making no covert statement about the kind of *thing* blindness may be.⁵ Debates concerning the ontology of universals are a significant feature of the history of Indian philosophy no doubt, but it was generally understood by those who took part in them that to ascribe a property in the form *-tva* was equivalent to describing an existential orientation, a mode of being of the property-possessor, not to pronouncing metaphysically on the nature of the property in question.⁶

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Applying this to the construction *hindutva*, two things appear to follow.

(i) *Hindutva* is a property-term, appropriately used to describe a mode of being of the property-possessor. Its construction is primarily justified in order to describe a kind of orientation in the world. To say that someone has/exemplifies etc. *hindutva* is to say, properly, that they exist in a particular way; it is not to make an existential statement, explicitly or implicitly, about the kind of thing that *hindutva* may be. Philosophically, this is dealt with as a further question; it is not appropriately a conceptual component of the grammatical construction itself. The implications of this will be dealt with in due course. Since the term *hindutva* is *par excellence* a late 19th century construct of Indian thought,⁷ it will be instructive to note how an influential 19th century nationalist prescribed its usage towards and after the turn of the century. One hopes that this exercise will be all the more instructive in view of the increasing cultural prominence *Upādhyāy* is being given by Christians in India and of the tendentious use being made of the concept and term *hindutva* in political and other contexts in India today. We shall come to *Upādhyāy* presently; let us now move on to what appears to be a second consequence of our earlier analysis of the construction *hindutva*, one which follows on from the first.

(ii) It seems that by the construction *hindutva* exactly the reverse is intended conceptually to what is going on through the western construction *Hinduism*. In a seminal work, W.C. Smith has argued—and shown, I believe—that the designations “Hinduism,” “Buddhism,” “Christianity” etc., especially as established from the nineteenth century onwards, are classic instances of the western tendency of “reification,” viz. “mentally making religion into a thing, gradually coming to conceive [of] it as an objective systematic entity.”⁸ According to this tendency the religions of peoples who have a developed tradition of articulating their faith, are thought and spoken of as if they were substantive realities. This is an assimilative tendency for which religious *differentiae* are glossed over or regarded as somehow inessential or as stages of a subsumptive process or perspective which culminates in a par-

ticular ideal. The heyday of this tendency was the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As such, in an age of mental construction, it was a rationalistic and rationalising tendency. But as post-modernists increasingly aware of the irretrievable pluralism of religious reality, we must be wiser and de-construct the reifications that the expressions “Hinduism,” “Buddhism” etc. point to begin to do justice to the realities of religious commitment.⁹ Smith does not quite couch his thesis in this jargon, but I do not think that I’ve done it an injustice.

My studies of what people still tend to say about and understand by “Hinduism,” for example, largely bear Smith out. The reifying tendency is by no means confined to westerners or the layperson. It exists strongly among all those (including Indian academics) who, wittingly or unwittingly, still cling to the modernist conceptual heritage. A good example is Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975), Hindu apologist *par excellence* and still influential. Radhakrishnan’s exposition of Hinduism, and indeed of religion in general, is consistently assimilative to the advaitic or monistic stance. He writes as if Hinduism is a monolithic phenomenon comprising a hierarchical structure, with “animism” at the lowest levels, followed progressively by polytheism, incarnational and non-incarnational monotheism, and monism at the top. Of course he advocated monism himself in the form of Śaṅkarite (rather than Śaṅkara’s) Advaita. So he could entitle one of his best-known works, “The Hindu Point of View”—as if there is only one!

If my reading of the distinction between *hindutva* and “Hinduism” is correct, the two constructions should function at cross-purposes. The one is intended to specify a mode of being of the possessor of the property “Hinduness,” without simultaneously carrying ontological implications about the property itself, the other pronounces on the kind of thing Hinduism is supposed to be—a block reality—and in the process is assimilative of the religious and/or cultural commitment of Hindus. This is a fundamental difference, with far-reaching implications to which we shall return.

Now let us consider *Upādhyāy*’s views on *hindutva*. We can give only the barest outline of his life; this will help to contextualise his

ideas.¹⁰ Upādhyāy's given name was Bhabānī Charan Bandyopādhyāy (anglicised as Banerji). He adopted the name by which he is better known (Brahmabāndhab=Theophilus, viz. "God's friend," Upādhyāy=Teacher, from "Bandyopādhyāy") three years after his conversion to Roman Catholicism at the age of 31. He had been granted permission to wear the traditional saffron robe of a Hindu *saṃnyāsin* or renouncer, though as a Catholic he also hung an ebony cross from his neck. Thus clad he toured various parts of India lecturing and debating in defence of a muscular Catholicism, attacking not only Protestant Christianity but various Hindu beliefs and practices old and new (e.g. the doctrine of reincarnation, the teachings of the Ārya Samāj, and Advaita especially in its resurgent form as expounded by Svāmī Vivekānanda). This combative style was typical of the relationships between the major religions at the time. It also characterised the ebullient convert in the first flush of a new-found faith with which he hoped to draw many of his educated countrymen to Christ. But this did not mean that he repudiated Hindu culture (the way he dressed gainsaid this) or even Hindu religious belief without discrimination.

For even as a youth the then Bhabānī clung tenaciously to his ancestral religion. Having lost his mother during infancy, he was brought up by his paternal grandmother, who staunchly adhered to traditional ways. At 13 he received the sacred thread; by then he had read the Bengali *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* many times. His father worked in the British orbit (in the police force); thus, like so many of his contemporaries with similar backgrounds, Bhabānī was given a westernised education and excelled especially at English. But unlike so many of his contemporaries he did not allow himself to lose touch with his ancestral faith. On the contrary. Receiving the sacred thread became the occasion for a deepening of his commitment to and understanding of Hindu tradition. Conscious of his Brahmin status, he became a vegetarian and of his own initiative, outside College hours, studied the Sanskrit tradition at a well-known *ṭol* (traditional school) across the river from where he lived.

But he did not neglect the body. He had a stalwart frame and from early adolescence

sought to develop it by a regimen of physical exercise and sports. Later as a teacher he insisted that his wards follow suit. The stress on "physical culture" as it was sometimes called then was an important aspect of Bhabānī's articulation of Hindu identity, as it was in some strands of the nationalist movement towards the end of the nineteenth century. Only a healthy mind in a healthy body was fit for self-rule, not to mention standing up to the beefy foreigner. As is well known, the emphasis on physical culture persists in the programme of a number of especially chauvinist Hindu nationalistic bodies in India today.

At 15 Bhabānī had led his own band of Bengalis against some Armenian youths who had been harassing the local women as they came to the river bank to fetch water, in a punch-up which lasted for two or three days. Elders of both communities eventually succeeded in keeping the matter out of court. When Bhabānī, hoping for redress, reported the incident to the nationalist leader, Surendranath Banerjea, who had come to the area to deliver some patriotic lectures, he was told that Surendranath would personally petition the authorities on his behalf. Years later Bhabānī described his disappointment at Surendranath's response. Petition? Of what use are petitions he had thought. The foreigners have come to our land and grown fat on its good things. Then they want to quarrel with us. The arrogance of it! He made a decision: *juddhabid(y)ā śikhiba, phiringi tādāiba* – "I will learn the art of war and drive away the foreigner."

He tried to suit the action to the word. At 17 or 18 he twice played truant from College and made his way to Gwalior some 700 miles to the mid-north, the capital of the territory of the Maharaja Sindia (under British hegemony), and still reckoned as a centre of native military prowess. His aim was to learn warfare in the Maharaja's army. On the first occasion he was apprehended and brought home; during his second brief sojourn he heard enough to realise that Maratha prowess was now a thing of the past. So he abandoned the idea of seeking to liberate his motherland by force. In fact, he was searching restlessly for some guiding star in a patriotic cause. To this end he had already re-

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solved neither to marry nor to complete his undergraduate degree.

At about 20 he came under Brāhmo influence, eventually falling under the spell of Keshab Chandra Sen, and began to find the direction he craved. He would try to uplift his compatriots as a celibate Brāhmo missionary. In due course he would concentrate on teaching and journalism. In one way or another he would resort to these two activities for the rest of his life. He still had a discerning commitment to his ancestral culture, with particular stress on its Sanskritic tradition. At last his restless spirit had found an appropriate course to express its aspirations. By restraining his passions as a celibate, he would in time-honoured fashion acquire *tapas* or spiritual energy which could then gainfully be discharged through teaching and journalism for the spiritual and moral uplift of his compatriots. This was a broadly political aim, for by such education he would prepare Indians for *svarāj*, viz. self-rule both personally and collectively. For him as a Brahmin, this way of proceeding would be in accordance with *svadharma* (a code of life appropriate for him) rather than the life of a warrior which would be *paradharma* (a code of life appropriate for another). This is how he could live as a *karmayogin* or righteous activist, selflessly dedicated to his patriotic cause. These ideas took time to develop and clarify (which they may have done only up to a point), but they lay at the root of his thinking.

Thus when he converted to the Roman Catholic faith in 1891—his chequered religious development can be traced from Bible study classes in childhood culminating in the influence of Keshab's personal devotion to Christ¹¹—it was a sort of change of gear, of widening commitment, not a change of direction. Bringing his compatriots to Christ would accomplish spiritual *svarāj*, which in turn would assist political *svarāj* in the broad sense. As Upādhyāy perceived it, becoming a Christian was not inimical to remaining a patriotic Hindu. It is at this point that he began to formulate what it meant to be a Hindu. This articulation was based on a pivotal distinction to which he adhered for the remainder of his life (the *content* of the distinction changed, not its

form). The distinction is first clearly expressed in an article entitled "Our attitude towards Hinduism" published in January 1895 in *Sophia*, a monthly journal Upādhyāy was editing.

Here he declares that, unlike Protestant theology "which teaches that man's nature is utterly corrupt" with the result that Protestant missionaries are "incapable of finding anything true and good in India and in her scriptures," the Catholic Church "does not believe in the utter corruption of man." In fact, the Catholic Church teaches that "man, fallen man, can reason rightly and choose what is good, though he is much hampered in his rational acts by the violence of his lower appetites." Catholic thinking maintains that God's illumination in "the order of nature" is offered to all and that "every man partakes of the universal light of Theism which reveals to him that he is an imperfect image of a Perfect Reason, Holiness and Goodness." Except for ancient Greece perhaps, "nowhere has that universal light of Theism shone forth so brilliantly as it has shone forth in India." He concludes: "The religion of Christ is *supernatural*. All the doctrines of Christ, the Holy Trinity, the Atonement, the Resurrection, from beginning to end are beyond the domain of reason.... The truths in Hinduism are of pure reason illuminated in the order of nature by the light of the Holy Spirit. They do not overstep reason.... Though the religion of Christ is beyond the grasp of nature and reason, still its foundation rests upon the truths of nature and reason. Destroy the religion of nature and reason, you destroy the supernatural religion of Christ. Hence a true missionary of Christ, instead of vilifying Hinduism, should find out truths from it by study and research. It is one account of the close connection between the natural and the supernatural that we have taken upon ourselves the task...to form...a natural platform upon which the Hindus taking their stand may have a view of the glorious supernatural edifice of the Catholic religion of Christ."

So here is the crucial distinction—that between the natural and the supernatural—in terms of which Upādhyāy went on to formulate his understanding of the nature of Hinduness. Note that this distinction is soundly based in

19th century neo-Thomistic thinking as ratified in the documents of Vatican I (1869-70) and Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879). In Jan. 1896 Upādhyāy restated his programme in the *Sophia*, declaring that it was his aim to "baptise the truths of Hindu philosophy and build them up as stepping stones to the Catholic faith."

And what truths were these, and where were they enshrined? These were the truths of "Vedic Theism" located, in keeping with a classicist trend of the times, in the earliest or *Samhitā* portion of the Vedas. They included belief in the existence of one God, the maker of the world, in the "moral sense in man," and in "the law of retribution according to individual merit or demerit" (see e.g. *Sophia*, Jan. 1896). But by 1897 we can discern a re-locating of the most promising natural truths of Hinduism from Upādhyāy's point of view. Whereas earlier he had emphasised the virtues of Vedic Theism, now he stressed the potential of what we may call "Vedāntic Theism," viz. the interpretation of the teaching of the Vedas, especially of the Upanishads, in the light of the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Brahma Sūtras*, according to the school of Śaṅkara, the great 8th century monistic theologian. Whereas at first Advaita (viz. Śaṅkarite monism) had been dismissed as "the prevailing Hindu error" (*Sophia*, Jan. 1895), now it was lauded as containing the most fruitful natural insights on the basis of which the Hindu mind could appreciate the reasonableness of the Christian faith. In the process Upādhyāy gave Advaita, or rather the advaitic mentality, crucial significance for his articulation of Hinduness.

In July 1898, in affirming the natural-supernatural distinction with undiminished vigour, Upādhyāy writes in the *Sophia*: "We are Hindu so far as our physical and mental constitution is concerned, but in regard to our immortal souls we are Catholic. We are Hindu Catholic." That is, we are Hindu in the way we think and live, but Catholic from the viewpoint of saving belief. What does it mean to be thus "Hindu?" In striving to explain this in subsequent years, Upādhyāy turns the editorial "we" of the above statement into a collective "we" for Hindus. First let us consider his mature ex-

planation of what Hinduness means regarding "mental constitution."

The locus classicus for this is a Bengali article entitled "*Hindujātir ekniṣṭhatā*" published in *Bāṅgadarśan* (in the first issue of the new series when R. Tagore was editor) in April-May (*baiśākh*), 1901.¹² Here Upādhyāy argues that the "Hindu's Hinduness (*hindutva*) does not depend on any particular religious belief." The history of Hinduism is full of intellectual disension. "If Hinduness were based on consensus of belief the designation "Hindu" would have disappeared long ago." "Nor does the Hindu's Hinduness rest upon considerations of food and drink." There is much variety and disagreement here too among Hindus. No, "the basis of Hinduness, its essence, are the duties of caste and stage of life (*varṇāśramadharmā*) and the one-centredness (*ekniṣṭhatā*) directing them." We shall consider Upādhyāy's views on the traditional social system—*varṇāśramadharmā*—presently, but what does he mean by "one-centredness" here?

"With regard to the ground (*abalambane*) of a particular thing, it is the Hindu's distinctiveness to enter the core of that thing. And the distinctiveness of the European perspective is to know the relation (*sambandha*) between one thing and another and to perceive unity through that relationship. The mark of the first is one-centredness or interiority (*antardhān*), while that of the second is many-centredness (*bahuniṣṭhatā*) or integration (*samādhān*)." So to be a Hindu is to have typically a distinctive way of thinking, a particular epistemic approach which nurtures a form of intuition.

Upādhyāy describes how this approach was articulated more and more completely in the history of Hindu intellectual thought. The germ of the one-centred mentality was sown in Vedic monotheism, but in an implicit, unarticulated way. Subsequent philosophising sought to express this mentality with increasing, though not necessarily chronological, clarity and refinement—from *Sāṅkhya* through *Viśiṣṭādvaita* and finally to Advaita. "the tendency to one-centred thinking, the seeing into the thinghood of a thing (*bastur bastutvadarśan*), the experience of ultimate non-difference between agent and effect, the knowledge of the deceptiveness (*māyikatā*) of multi-

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plicity, are the Hindu's Hinduness. We find its beginning in the Veda and its completion in the Vedānta." And he makes quite clear what he means by "Vedānta." "The Hindu's one-centredness has found its highest fulfillment in Śaṅkara's teaching of pure non-duality (*śuddhādvaita*)."

Inter alia, on Upādhyāy's agenda here is to justify a contrast popular among the Bengali intelligentsia of the nineteenth century, and one which has come to be associated especially with Svāmī Vivekānanda, Upādhyāy's friend of earlier days. This is the contrast between western materialism so-called and eastern spirituality. To put it more specifically, the West seeks unity by relating and synthesising which is formally expressed in scientific statements at which the West excels; the East, on the other hand, of which India is representative, has learnt to unify by penetrating the unitive depths of being. The philosophical high point of this tendency occurs in Śaṅkarite Advaita, for which the ultimate spiritual principle, Brahman, is the only truly Real and the ground and source of the provisional and spiritually deceptive world of plurality in which we ordinarily function. The West may have realised the benefits of scientific progress, but India has made incomparable spiritual progress—for the advaitic mentality also represents progress of a kind—and in human affairs this is the more important advance of the two. So India can make use of western science and offer Hindu spirituality in return, and suffer no loss of self-esteem in the transaction. In his formulation of Hinduness, Upādhyāy has hierarchically assimilated various forms of Hindu thought to the advaitic viewpoint.¹³

Now to the other side of the coin of "Hinduness" in Upādhyāy's understanding: that of "physical constitution" or the behavioural pattern of *varṇāśramadharmā*, viz. the code of caste and the four stages of life (those of the celibate student, the married householder, the forest-dweller, i.e. the withdrawer from worldly concerns, and the renouncer). This too is a distinctively Hindu ideal and relies upon cultivating the advaitic mentality for its implementation. For *varṇāśramadharmā* nurtures the unity of society by encouraging its followers to be content with their social niche and to

progress selflessly in life with the integrity and good of the collective in view. "The aim of the [four] caste divisions is to make the different non-different (*bhinnake abhinna karā*), the many united" (*ibid*). And the four stages foster service to society and selflessness since they culminate ideally in a spirit of renunciation.

For Upādhyāy, the implementation of *varṇāśramadharmā* too does not violate the natural-supernatural distinction. Indeed following this code enables the Hindu to be distinctively Hindu and yet open to God's saving grace in Christ. For in essence the *varṇāśrama* system is a *natural* ordering of social life and as such should be supported rather than criticised by the Church, since grace is built on nature. For Hindus it is a major part of that "natural platform upon which...taking their stand [they] may have a view of the glorious supernatural edifice of the Catholic religion of Christ."¹⁴ The fourfold *varṇa* or caste order, writes Upādhyāy, "was framed on the basis of the human constitution.... The working class [i.e. Shūdras] represents the organs of work; the trading or the artisan class [i.e. Vaishyas] represents the senses, inasmuch as they minister to their comforts; the ruling class [Kshatriyas] corresponds to the mind which governs the senses; and the sacerdotal class [Brahmins], whose function is to learn and teach the scriptures and make others worship, is a manifestation of *buddhi* (or intellect). The psychological division of man and society is the natural basis on which this ancient system of social polity was framed" (weekly *Sophia*, 25 August, 1900). Just as the bodily faculties work together as one, so should society. The *āśrama* structure supports the caste order. For in teaching individuals (in particular twice-born males) to perform work non-acquisitively, it is conducive to social harmony in a spiritual cause under the leadership of the Brahmins.¹⁵ Far from being a divisive system—its contemporary divisiveness was a perversion of the original conception—it is ideally a wonderful device of social and religious unity.

The non-competitive Hindu ethic of work was totally at odds with the western work-ethic which was based on the competitive acquisition of wealth and power and which resulted in conflict and expansionism. So Hindus must re-

turn to their sources, indeed to the one-centred insights of their ancient sages. In this way they would derive the inner strength requisite for *svarāj* and be able, on the one hand, to cope with the enervating effects of colonialism and western modernism, and on the other, to integrate in their life-style what was useful from the West.

This in brief was Upādhyāy's conception of *hindutva* or Hindu identity.¹⁶ We can see that it is in accord with the general intention underlying the construction of the term. For, for Upādhyāy, *hindutva* is a property which is meant to determine its possessor's mode of being; it has to do with a particular mental and behavioural orientation to the world, a unitive attitude to life. In Upādhyāy's usage, it would be incorrect to translate the term by something like "Hinduism" in the sense of a monolithic religious phenomenon or a system of belief to which someone subscribes. It expresses a form of "one-centredness." It would be interesting to discover if other influential Hindu apologists or thinkers of the time used *hindutva* in the same way.¹⁷

Upadhyay's conception of *hindutva* was articulated at a time when many Hindus perceived a need for building Hindu unity and self-esteem in a context of distrust and antipathy towards local foreigners and their ways. As such the idea of *hindutva* was a construct, though with indigenous roots. Linguistically it was legitimately formed from a term which had a history of being used *inter alia* to distinguish Muslims as aliens from local non-Muslims. In India today, the term *hindutva* is acquiring currency in a context with similar resonances. The difference is that it has dominant political overtones, tending to stand for a "thing," a reality in its own right (rather than a property), for which followers are prepared to fight and even die, and which can be used as a weapon to beat the opponent with. This strikes me as a subtle but important shift of emphasis away from Upadhyay's own usage (whatever the drawbacks of its conceptual implications) and the terms traditional susceptibilities.

Footnotes

- 1 In Bengali; see the Preface to the first edition of *Cār Adhyāy*.
- 2 It is arguable that the eponymous character of Tagore's famous didactic novel, *Gorā*, was substantially modelled on Upādhyāy.
- 3 Recently a series of 9 letters written by Upādhyāy during a visit to England (with a tenth written upon his return to Calcutta) and first published in the *Baṅgabāsī* (Nov. 1902-Sept. 1903), was reprinted in a well-known Calcutta newspaper, the *Bartamān* (see Sunday 3rd June, 1990 and following Sundays).
- 4 Rule 5.1.119 of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* introduces the *taddhita* suffixes *-tva* and *-tā* (*tasya bhāvas tvatalau*). On this, Eivind Kahrs, lecturer in Sanskrit at Cambridge University, comments: "The two suffixes, *-tva* or *-tā*, are added after a nominal stem with a genitive case ending to derive a form which denotes the property of being whatever that nominal stem denotes" (personal note).
- 5 Indeed, it could be argued that the property blindness is ontologically the *absence* of being.
- 6 The same comments would apply to the parallel construction of abstract, feminine nouns in *-tā*, e.g. *bandhutā*, kinship, togetherness. Note that Pāṇini introduces the suffixes *-tva* and *-tā* "as equal options" (Kahrs) by the same rule, 5.1.119.
- 7 The designation "Hindu," however, is much earlier of course, yet it is not such an outsider term as is commonly assumed. In brief, in the *Rg Samhitā*, in part the oldest portion of the Veda—the scripture of the so-called Aryans who settled the north-west of the subcontinent by about 1200 BCE—there are references to a river (or rivers) called "Sindhu" (e.g. 5.53.9; 8.20.24), which may be a throwback to some great (mythical?) river(s) with mystical properties in a distant homeland. In the plural, *sindhu* is used for rivers in general with emphasis on their regenerative waters. This would, in the first instance after entry into the subcontinent, be applied to the great river and its tributaries of the north-west. In the middle of the first millennium BCE, the Persians under Darius I, began to conquer this territory and referred to its inhabitants as "Hindus," a geographical-cultural description clearly derived from the word *sindhu*. In due course the Greeks, as a result of various contacts, reflected this vague description by the use of such terms as *Indos* and *Indikoi* (Latin: *Indus*, *Indicus*). The Muslims in turn followed suit, referring to the land as *Al-Hind*, and to those in it who were neither of their faith nor Buddhists as "Hindus." Interestingly, in a survey by Joe O'Connell (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1973, p. 340f.) of 3 Sanskrit and 10 Bengali Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava hagiographic texts ranging

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from the first half of 16th to the second half of 18th century, the word "Hindu" is used a handful of times but only in the Bengali material. It generally occurs in contexts in which Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava devotees wish to distinguish themselves or the indigenous populace from the Muslims who are called "Yavanas" or "Mlecchas," i.e. foreigners. The term "Hindu" is often put in the mouth of a Muslim. What seems to emerge is that "Hindu" is a separatist term, distinguishing "them" from "us," originally imposed by foreigners on the local inhabitants and appropriated by these inhabitants in their dealings with the foreigners. The use of the term here exploits ethnocentric and other cultural connotations, including reference to habits, manner and religious beliefs. "Hindu" is not used, as the survey-maker points out, in an "intra-mural" sense, that is, to distinguish between local non-Muslim groups. In the nineteenth century "Hindu" was fully appropriated by the westernised intelligentsia as a self-designation ironically with separatist overtones, and only in recent times is it being used (self-consciously) by the ordinary person in the same way.

- 8 *The Meaning and End of Religion*, Macmillan, New York 1962, and SPCK, London, 1978; see SPCK edition, p. 51, and especially chs. 2 & 3. Apparently the term "reification" is meant to apply paradigmatically in a religious context.
- 9 In fact Smith recommends that we do away with such designations as "Hinduism," "Judaism," "Christianity" altogether. I do not agree with this impractical proposal; we can cope well by using these terms with methodological sensitivity.
- 10 For more information on Upādhyāy see the author's "A Case-Study in 'Hindu Catholicism': Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861-1907)" in *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* January, 1988, and "Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861-1907): A Resume of his Life and Thought" in *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, vol. 1, ed. by J. Lipner & G. Gispert-Sauch, The United Theological College, Bangalore, 1991.

- 11 The role of his uncle Kālī Charaṇ as Christian trail-blazer in the family must also not be underestimated.
- 12 Translated by the author under the heading "the One-Centredness of the Hindu Race" in *Vidyajyoti*, October 1981.
- 13 How he sought to reconcile his Christian Trinitarian faith with his endorsement of Advaita is another question. The clue lies in his reinterpretation of the concept of *māyā* in terms of the neo-Thomistic understanding of the doctrine of creation. But we cannot go into this here.
- 14 See quotation from "Our attitude towards Hinduism," *Sophia*, Jan. 1895.
- 15 Echoes here of the Comtean vision of social structure then in the air.
- 16 In the last years of his life, as he sought to articulate this concept, Upādhyāy became increasingly disenchanted with the uncomprehending intransigence of his Church's supreme authority in the land; consequently, his commitment to popularising his Hindu ideal in a broadly political context grew in proportion as his public profile as a Christian declined (though there is sound reason to believe that he never repudiated the underlying rationale of the natural-supernatural distinction). He became virulently anti-British, writing mainly in Bengali with a view to fomenting public self-esteem and political awareness. Eventually he was arrested on a charge of sedition; the trial became a cause célèbre. While still under arrest, he died of tetanus in hospital in October 1907 after surgery to ease a hernia complaint. He was cremated according to Hindu rites amid the pomp accorded to a leading patriot. In the press he was lauded as an influential contributor to the nationalist cause.
- 17 The eponymous character of Tagore's greatly popular *Gorā* (see note 2) champions a chauvinistic though existential ideal of *hindutva* till he is made to realise its debilitating personal and social implications.