

Thesis review by Dr. Prakash Shah, School of Law, Queen Mary, University of London, 17 May 2022

The Saiva Dravida Nation: Maraimalai Adigal and the Transformation of the Nation-Religion-Language Framework, doctoral thesis submitted by Arvind Kaushik, MBA at the University of Pardubice

The substantive content of the thesis is fairly impressive and interesting. I believe the candidate is able to make and to substantiate an original claim with respect to a key Tamil 19-20th century thinker Maraimalai Adigal and the extent to which prior European claims about India were mapped by him onto an Indian cultural framework. As I read it, while divided into two main parts, the thesis makes three broad claims. The first is to do with how Christianity provided the bedrock for the nation-religion-language conjunct to constitute the idea of a people. This theological conception then became secularised in European thought and turned into accepted theoretical ideas which European took as basic to their understanding of human societies. Second, a group of British thinkers and missionaries adopted this background framework when trying to understand Indian society and culture as did other influential thinkers on India, including Max Muller. The thesis hones in on British writing concerning the south of India and the emergence of a conception of a Tamil nation that brought together the nation-religion-language conjunct and applied it to Indian data. In effect, these writers were mapping what they saw in India onto their European cultural framework. Third, the thesis turns to the Indian reception of the European ideas in the thought of Tamil nationalist ideologues, with a focus on Maraimalai Adigal, whose work mapped the European ideas onto his Indian cultural framework and resulted in the distortion and hollowing out of those European ideas.

My overall recommendation with respect to the thesis is that it ought to **proceed to public defence**. I have had the opportunity to read an earlier version of the thesis and made some recommendations some of which have been met by the candidate. These changes have brought the thesis to the stage where I believe it is justified to recommend that it proceed to the defence stage.

I would nevertheless want to retain the freedom to make the following comments some of which I hope could be raised at the oral defence.

1. The chapter outline (pp. 14-16), while improved and lengthened, is still fairly brief and broad brush and would normally be more elaborated, allowing the reader to understand how the chapters form links in the chain of the overall argument.
2. There is still no literature review spelling out how the thesis contributes to knowledge in light of existing literature, how it distinguishes itself from any received view, and what original claims it makes in that light.
3. Some references are still missing from the bibliography.

4. The candidate still does not provide, where appropriate, the year of birth and death of the main authors the thesis refers to e.g. Herder, Herbert, Hume and the same could have been done for others e.g. Stevenson, Wilson, Caldwell. This cannot be a blanket rule of course but the candidate does not appear to give close consideration to presenting the arrival and sequencing of ideas although they appear to be an important element of the argument of the thesis.

Prakash Shah, 17 May 2022