



ATTENDANCE LIST
Defence - Arvind Kaushik, MBA - H20452
Religious Studies

20. 6. 2022, meeting room 05005, building G, University of Pardubice,
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Name and surname	Signature
doc. Mgr. Filip Grygar, Ph.D.	
doc. Mgr. Tomáš Hejduk, Ph.D.	
doc. Mgr. Ondřej Beran, Ph.D.	
doc. PhDr. Aleš Prázný, Ph.D.	
ThDr. Jan Rokyta, Ph.D.	
PhDr. Jiří Holba, Ph.D.	
Mgr. Martin Hříbek, Ph.D.	

Protocol Defence

Branch of study: P6101 - Philosophy

6101V014 - Religious Studies

PhD candidate: Arvind Swaminath Kaushik - H20452

Doctoral dissertation: The Saiva Dravida Nation: Maraimalai Adigal and the Transformation of the Nation-Religion-Language Framework

Course of defence:

11:13

- The chair of the committee doc. Mgr. Filip Grygar, Ph.D. (FG) started the doctoral defence.
- FG introduced the doctoral student Arvind Kaushik (AK) being a student at the Department of Religious Studies, University of Pardubice, and a part of the Comparative Study of Cultures research programme which has the centre at the Gent University, Belgium.
- FG introduced members of the Committee: doc. Mgr. Tomáš Hejduk, Ph.D (TH), doc. Mgr. Ondřej Beran, Ph.D. (OB), doc. Mgr. Aleš Prázný, Ph.D. (AP), ThDr Jan Rokyta, Ph.D. (JR), PhDr. Jiří Holba, Ph.D. (JH) and Mrg. Martin Hříbek, Ph.D. (MH).
- FG introduced opponents of the doctoral thesis: Prakash Shah, LLB, LLM, Ph.D. (PSh) and prof. Jakob De Roover, Ph.D. (JdeR).
- FG introduced the programme as follows:
 - 1) AK will provide a summary of his work.
 - 2) Opponents will present their opinions.
 - 3) AK will respond to opponents.
 - 4) Opponents will response to AK.
 - 5) Open debate.

11:16

- AK starts his summary by two general observations. First, thorough the 20th century a rise of nationalisms can be observed around the globe while colonies and ex-colonies of European empires are no exception. This counts for India as well. Second, since the 19th century, nationalist movements had risen also in Tamil Nadu, a southern state of the Republic of India. Then AK describes important notions of the Tamil nationalism. This movement puts emphasis on the Tamil language by an inclusion of Tamil-speaking inhabitants into the Tamil nation. Another aspect concerns religion. *Saiva siddhanta* is regarded as the Tamil religion and Śiva whom members of *Saiva siddhanta* worship as the unique Tamil deity. Defining a foreign aspect another important conception of the Tamil Nationalism while brahmana *jatis* using Sanskrit during their rituals are considered as non-Tamil part of the southern Indian society. Hence, one of the struggles of Tamil nationalism is to constitute a pure Tamil language without any Sanskrit influence. One of the most influencing authors of Tamin nationalism was Maraimalai Adigal and hence, AK's thesis provides analysis of his works. Since the Tam-

il nationalism is not to be observed before the 19th century, AK claims that the notion of nationalism is of a European import. The following questions shall help to build arguments supporting this claim:

1) What is the Tamil religion? How to understand *Saiva siddhanta* as a religion?

2) What makes Tamil-speakers into a nation?

3) What is the link between religion and language in Tamil nationalism?

4) What is the link among religion, language, and nation?

- AK argues for a claim that the nation-language-religion framework is of European origin stemming from the discourses of both philosophy and Christian theology. When Europeans first arrived in India, they observed the India culture through the lens of philosophical-theological conceptualisation of the world. Hence, they saw members of brahmana *jatis*, users of ancient texts and performers of rituals, as priests of pagan religion using Sanskrit as their sacred language. Since Sanskrit had not been used as a vernacular, a suspicion occurred among Europeans that brahmanas are of non-Indian origin. In late 19th century, William Jones discovered connection between the Sanskrit and European languages and on this finding, he has developed an idea of Indo-European nation of which brahmanas are descendants. Moreover, brahmanas avoid contacting other inhabitants of India which was compared with Jewish avoidance of those who has violated Mosaic law. Meantime, a text Purusha sukta has been discovered by European scholars, a text containing a story of an origination of people: brahmanas are from the mouth of *purusha*, the original man, while other groups are from inferior parts of his body. These observations served as a foundation for the Arian-invasion theory stating that Sanskrit-speaking Indo-European tribes had conquered the India from the north-west of the continent. South-Indian communities whose languages are not derived from Sanskrit were considered as descendants of original inhabitants of the subcontinent.
- Tamil nation: Since Tamil language is not connected to Sanskrit, it was argued that Tamils are not related to north-Indian communities deriving their languages from Sanskrit. On this basis it was argued that Tamils have a different religion with their own rituals and deities while Śiva was considered as the main Tamil deity. Hence, the *Saiva siddhanta* having worship of Śiva in its centre was considered as the Tamil religion.
- Maraimalai Adigal: He has established the Tamil nationalism by connecting *Saiva siddhanta* and Tamil language. One can be considered as a member of the Tamil nation only if he or she is a member of *Saiva siddhanta* and speaks Tamil.
- AK's analysis of the works of Maraimalai Adigal shows, that this author did not understand both European conceptions religion and nation. Adigal translated as religion Tamil word *matham* which encompasses different rituals and other practices while religion in Christian theology is the Revelation of God. Nation is understood by Adigal as *jāti*, more particularly his own *jāti*, the *vellala jāti*, not as a community inhabiting one territory and guided by a definite set of laws. Therefore, he understood Tamil nation as Saiva Vellala.
- On these grounds AK 1) shows how specific European nation-language-religion framework has been used by Tamil nationalism and 2) that the same framework has been distorted by the Tamil nationalists. The distortion signifies a different and specific Tamil use of terms originated in European intellectual milieu. An analysis of the distortions enables to find out specific Tamil patterns presented in the distortions while these patterns allow us to formulate new understanding of Tamil and more general even of India culture.

11:32

- FG invites opponents to read their reviews
- PSh considered the thesis as inspirational and interesting while the main claim of the work has been defended. He also appreciated the subsequence of chapters allowing a reader to understand the main arguments. AK first introduced key ideas of the nation-language-religion framework, then showed how the framework was used by British in order to understand South India's culture and lastly, AK describes Indians' peculiar reception and distortion of the framework. PSh also appreciated that AK reflected all suggestions given during the writing of the thesis. PSh recommended positive evaluation of the defence.

11:35

- JdeR appreciated the core chapters of the thesis focusing on Tamil Nationalism and Maraimalai Adigal. The thesis is considered as a valuable contribution to our understanding of the topic and as a model how to study other Indian thinkers. The clarity and focus of the work were also appreciated.
- The vulnerable part of the thesis is according to JdeR the profundity of the terrain of European intellectual tradition elaborating conceptions of nation, language, and religion. But this weak point is no reason to reject the defence. A particular point was mentioned by JdeR, namely that the claim formulated by AK about a religion being a constituent of a nation is too strong because it implies that before a religion there is no nation. Despite conceptions of the nationalist discourse are built on Christiana theology, it is an open question why the nations of India are seen as founded in religion. JdeR agrees that this question is a topic for another dissertation and thus he does not require a full answer from AK.
- Another question by JdeR concerns the idea of distortion. Why did Indians adopt terms from foreigners whose language and culture they did not know? Why did not Indians undergo research into the European intellectual history? But again, this topic is a matter of subsequent research.

11:45

- AK's responses to the opponents' reviews.
- To PSh: 1) A reproach for not providing sufficient literature overview. AK argues that Tamil nationalist movement is so huge that to provide full literature overview is hard to present in a doctoral thesis. 2) No provision of dates of birth and death Maraimalai Adigal and hence no knowledge of a succession of his thoughts. AK responded that he gave century when Adigal lived and provided an overview of how his ideas were adopted by later authors.

11:48

- PSh: The literature overview is a standard item included in the doctoral thesis. But since the main arguments of the thesis are sound, this reproach is of minor importance and hence no reason to reject the defence.

11:50

- To JdeR: 1) A problem stated above concerning the link between religion and nation. A question is what made British into a nation. AK argues that Christian faith was a unifying factor connected with an emphasis on English language. Nevertheless, a deeper research into the topic is needed. JdeR admits that this problem is a topic of another dissertation. 2) JdeR asked why AK put such an emphasis on an idea, that ob-

servations of Jewish communities by Christians served as a model for nationalism. Why not a Christian observation of Romans and others? AK answered that he was dependent on research of other authors. They have found that an understanding of *jātis* was built on a reflection of Jewish tribes and that the understanding of so-called pariahs or “the untouchables” on a reflection of those Jews who violated Mosaic law. 3) The question of why Indians did not inquire into the European intellectual history is indeed a matter for further research.

11:57

- JdeR’s reaction: AK should be more careful with the comparison of Jews and *jātis*. It might be that the example with Jews is just one from many and thus it is an expression of deeper underlying ideas. But it is a minor fault and no reason for a rejection of the thesis.

12:00

- FG commenced the open debate
- AP: Herder’s concept of nation or *humanitat* is inseparably linked with a concept of development or progress. Did Tamil nationalists use these two conceptions together as Herder did? The same question counts for a concept of *bildung*, cultivation or education.

12:02

- AK: Despite it is true that Herder worked with an idea of a circle of chosen people (from Rome to Egypt etc.), this idea is not to be found in Tamil nationalists’ teachings. Regarding the cultivation, Tamils did use it but in a different way. They understand it as a following a tradition with its rituals.

12:05

- OB: When AK speaks about distortion, isn’t it too judgemental? There is no need to criticise Maraimalai Adigal for using different notion of religion etc. since his approach is more inclusive for admitting more phenomena to be religious phenomena. Moreover, what about contemporary notions of nation which are of non-Christian origin?

12:06

- AK: In European context, the importance of doctrines is crucial whereas in India there is an emphasis on activities. This problem is connected to deeper debate on what is religion, and it is not an ambition of the thesis to answer it.

12:07

- MH: 1) AK speaks about European nationalism but there are different notions of nation through European intellectual milieu while some are more connected to religion than others. 2) Was there any direct contact between the Tamil nationalists and German ones? There was in Bengal since both Germans and Bengals opposed Brits. 3) Agrees with OB that talking about distortions is too judgmental. Different distortions happen all the time. Maraimalai Adigal is just one example.

12:14

- AK: 1) The thesis does not concern nationalism *per se* but how Tamil nationalists connect concepts religion, language, and nation. It is true that some authors do not see

the connection. It is also true that there are different notions of nation but all of them share the same trends of ideas. 2) There was no direct contact. Tamil authors only cite German authors such as F. Max Müller.

12:17

- JdeR: Distortion is not judgemental at all. Saying that Indians used Europeans conceptions in a different way is just an observation. Regarding the note that distortions happen all the time needs to be corrected. If Europeans and Indians using the term nationalism are compared, we can observe that Europeans formulate hardly any innovation but variations to the same topic. While Indians come up with completely new theories.

12:19

- Since there were no other questions, FG closed the open debate and asked those who are not members of the Committee to leave the room. The Committee shall prepare for the final evaluation of the doctoral defence.

12:30

- FG announced that the Committee had unanimously acknowledged that AK has successfully defended the doctoral thesis.

Examination Committee:

doc. Mgr. Filip Grygar, Ph.D (Chair)

doc. Mgr. Tomáš Hejduk, Ph.D.

doc. Mgr. Ondřej Beran, Ph.D.

doc. PhDr. Aleš Prázný, Ph.D.

ThDr. Jan Rokyta, Ph.D.

PhDr. Jiří Holba, Ph.D.

Mgr. Martin Hříbek, Ph.D.

In Pardubice, 20 June 2022

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doc. Mgr. Jiří Kubeš, Ph.D.
Dean

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- Arvind Kaushik's responses to the opponents' reviews.
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Vote by secret ballot (tajné hlasování):

- Members of the Commission present (přítomných členů komise): 7
-
- Voted (hlasovalo): 7
-
- Positive votes (kladných hlasů): 7
-
- Negative votes (záporných hlasů): 0
-
- Invalid votes (neplatných hlasů): 0

Result of the vote (Výsledek hlasování): PASS

In Pardubice, 20 June 2022

.....
doc. Mgr. Filip Gygar, Ph.D.
Chairman of the Examination Committee

.....
doc. Mgr. Jiří Kubeš, Ph.D.
Dean