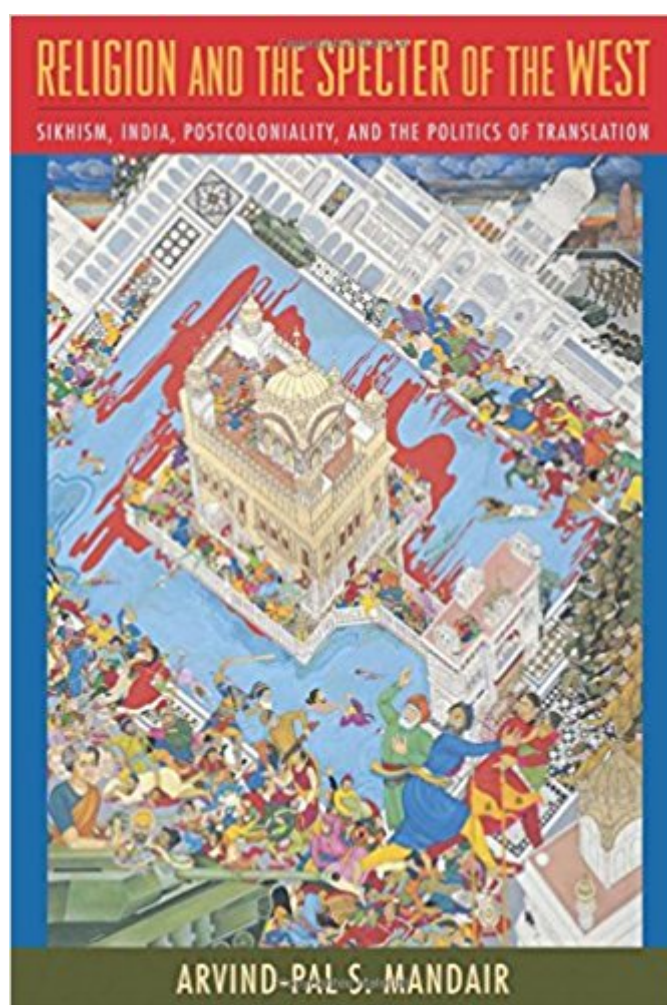


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# Religion And The Specter Of The West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, And The Politics Of Translation (Insurrections: Critical Studies In Religion, Politics, And Culture)



## Synopsis

Arguing that intellectual movements, such as deconstruction, postsecular theory, and political theology, have different implications for cultures and societies that live with the debilitating effects of past imperialisms, Arvind Mandair unsettles the politics of knowledge construction in which the category of "religion" continues to be central. Through a case study of Sikhism, he launches an extended critique of religion as a cultural universal. At the same time, he presents a portrait of how certain aspects of Sikh tradition were reinvented as "religion" during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. India's imperial elite subtly recast Sikh tradition as a sui generis religion, which robbed its teachings of their political force. In turn, Sikhs began to define themselves as a "nation" and a "world religion" that was separate from, but parallel to, the rise of the Indian state and global Hinduism. Rather than investigate these processes in isolation from Europe, Mandair shifts the focus closer to the political history of ideas, thereby recovering part of Europe's repressed colonial memory. Mandair rethinks the intersection of religion and the secular in discourses such as history of religions, postcolonial theory, and recent continental philosophy. Though seemingly unconnected, these discourses are shown to be linked to a philosophy of "generalized translation" that emerged as a key conceptual matrix in the colonial encounter between India and the West. In this riveting study, Mandair demonstrates how this philosophy of translation continues to influence the repetitions of religion and identity politics in the lives of South Asians, and the way the academy, state, and media have analyzed such phenomena.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE "ABDA-GURU". And the "abda-guru" was with god; and the "abda-guru" was god. Mandair's new book on how the east can move beyond colonialism to post-colonialism is a significant contribution from Columbia's insurrection series. This time, however it is not post-modern thought. It goes beyond that to post-colonial thought. The fundamental premise is to move forward by adopting Zizek, with a few modifications. This means that Europe and India look at the same events and hold the same purpose from two distinct perspectives. Their paths will run parallel to each other, but will never converge or synthesize. A past attempt at a synthesis was colonialism and it absorbed and obliterated India's distinct identity. Parallax is the only workable solution. neo-colonial texts have emerged that provide false signification for India. These were Singh's Sikh theology and McLeod's systematic theology. What is needed is a new signifier to couple with the hermeneutic of parallax. That new signifier is "sabda-guru" or "word". The word-model will transcend both false models of "humanism" and "post-modernism". This model is constructed through the "vanishing mediator of an authentic India-identity and voice. something you should be aware of: the presentation of de-construction and neo-colonialism is very detailed and is no problem assimilating. However, the material dealing with re-construction is full of gaps where you are expected to already be familiar with zizek; very familiar. This problem shows up in two places: an introduction that ends abruptly without completing itself; and the last chapter which is supposed to give the finer detail of re-construction. I like Mandair. I watched him on u-tube also.

ARVIND PAL SINGH MANDAIR MALIGNS SIKH CREED, GURUS, REFORMISTS CHARNJIT SINGH BALPREAMBLE Arvinder Pal Singh Mandair (Mandair hereafter) was educated in UK to 2 doctorate graduations. He drifted around from academic discipline to discipline during his schooling, natural sciences, to philosophy and religion, to history of religions, to modern European philosophy to Sikh studies and field to field during his employment stints, academics to human rights (with NGOs), chemical industry (superconductors research) and back to academics. During his Ph.D studies in *Thinking between Cultures: Metaphysics and Cultural Translation*™ at University of Warwick and SOAS (School of Oriental Studies), he worked as Sikh Studies Lecturer at Coventry University (1997-99). He had an academic stint at SOAS, London UK, from where Sikh-Studies W (wizard). Hewat McLeod got his Ph.D in Sikh-Studies for a joke in 1960s (see my book *Target: Sikhism*™, p 37). Mandair moved to, Sardarni Kuldeep/Kuljit Kaur Bindra Sikh Studies Chair at Hofstra University, New York and finally to Ann Arbor University, Michigan, as *Assistant Prof. of Religion and Philosophy*™. Mandair's biographical data and listing of his benefactors,

supporters, and mentors in his book, *RELIGION AND THE SPECTER OF THE WEST*™  
Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, and the Politics of Translation™, (Religion and specter of west hereafter) evince (suggest) that during his higher education and employment stints he had association and coziness with academia and literati who have written treatises, critical of the Sikh Gurus, creed, traditions and reform movement Singh Sabha stalwart Sikhs. I have published critiques of the works of this ilk™s half dozen associates (see my book, *Target: Sikhism*™, pp 33-172).

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