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SHIFT INTO THE AVERAGE OR HOW TO COMBINE IMAGES OF PARADISE WITH A WAR ZONE: THE SRI LANKA CASE

BOŠTJAN KRAVANJA

Images of ‘paradise’ are average representations of e.g. different sights, beaches, etc. What happens, when a paradise has to incorporate ‘unpleasant’ subjects into its imagery? Shifting into the average consists of establishing and reproducing conventional highlights in relation to their shadows. In this vein, also anthropological production is average, its ‘paradise’ being chains of citations, and her shadow mass media practices. However, by continuing to cultivate its
ethnographic presence, the discipline is moving on. The author explores shifts into, and moves out of the average representations on the case of tourist Sri Lanka.

*Key words:* Sri Lanka, tourism, representations, paradise, war

**WESTERN “EASTERN WISDOM” AND THE CONCEPT OF NEW RELIGIONS: REMAPPING THE FIELD**

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Terms “new religions” or “new religious movements” refer usually to 1950s or 1960s as the time of the origin of particular religious groups/movements. Yet to set up a date is something else than to clarify why the date is important. The debate concerning NRMs is, however, either surprisingly silent on this issue or inconsistent in subsuming particular cases under this heading. Sociologists and scholars of religion seem to do, in this field, little more than balancing the anti-cultist discourse with minor terminological differences creating an impression of value neutrality. In the following article I will examine the concept of “new religions” on the background of an introduction of communication through the printed media. Using data from my research on acculturation of Hinduism in Czech occultism during the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, I will point out that this factor played a significant role in modernization of religions in general – “new” as well as “old” – and that after contrasting new religiosity with traditional religiosity while dwelling on a more conservative understanding of the “traditional”, the difference between “new” and “old” religions will largely vanish while new possibilities of understanding more important distinctions in the field of religion in modern societies might emerge.

*Key words:* new religious movements, Hinduism, occultism, communication,
The goal of this article is to describe and explain the ways how Balkan is constructed and perceived as a metageographical and metaphorical concept. Author discusses the flexibility of demarcation of the Balkan borders in the mental maps and the flexibility of the category of the Balkan as well. In this article it is assumed that the relation between “Europe” and “Balkan” is in fact the relation between the power centre and the periphery. Thus Balkan is Orientalised and quasi-colonialised by the “Europe” through the mechanisms related to the power discourses, ways of reporting, thinking and perceiving the Balkan. Moreover, the author suggests that the final consequence of such discourses is manifested in the policy of European institutions towards some Balkan countries. The author’s argumentation is based on the comparison of orientalist and balkanist discourses and on the reactions to postcolonial studies that come from the Balkan researchers themselves.

Key words: Balkan, Europe, balkanism, orientalism, discourse, postcolonialism, metageographical representations