

Thesis Outline for: BEING DIFFERENT, by Rajiv Malhotra

A		Indians' ability to deal with "chaos" compared to westerners
Chapter 3: Order and Chaos	1	<p>Personal lived experience in western businesses for 40 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indians' greater comfort with complexity, uncertainty, ambiguity, improvisation, blurred boundaries, inter-connectedness • Westerners' greater need for control, yes/no, true/false, predictable scenarios • Useful study for business dealings
	2	<p>Andrew Rotter (and others') research on US government views of Indian leaders during Cold War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polytheism causes multiple truth, leading to moral ambiguity, "wooly headed" • Non-alignment is proof of cognitive deficiency of reality • Hence an unreliable ally
	3	<p>Article in Scientific American on Asian/Western cognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asians more perceptive of complex inter-relationships
	4	<p>My formal study of classical Indian and Western metaphysics to find root causes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biblical absolutism of binary opposites; chaos = evil • Aristotelian Law of Excluded Middle • Indian narratives like samudra manthan, inherent uncertainty, improvisation in music/dance/cuisine, balance of opposites in Ayurveda, banyan tree motif of inter-dependency, acceptance of "is-ness" • Immense Indian creativity, adaptability, ability to absorb what's new
	5	<p>Impact on American history</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Frontier" between Civilization (order) and Natives (savagery, disorder) • American Exceptionalism, march of civilization and "development"
	6	<p>Civilizational metaphors</p> <p>Forest (Indian) and Desert (Western)</p>
B		Western Religions are History-Centric
Chapter 2: History-Centrism	1	<p>What is History-Centrism?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's Truth accessible <u>only</u> via unique lineage of prophets • This history is exclusive, literal, absolute and universal • Non-negotiable because it is from God • All other accounts of history of God's interventions must be falsified (or else there will be chaos)
	2	<p>Implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One History, One Truth, One Institution to control it and spread it uniformly; dissent is dangerous and chaotic • Source of exclusivism, expansionism, religious conflicts • Religion = History Club = Centralized authority and control
	3	<p>Secular versions (Hegel's influence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grand Narrative of America, Founding Fathers, Manifest Destiny • Tens of thousands of historical societies across USA
C		Nature of Unity: Integral or Synthetic?
Cpt 3: Integral / Synthetic	1	<p>Dharmic idea of Integral Unity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No "thing" exists separately by itself; (Brahman in Hinduism, Dependent Co-arising in Buddhism); Unity in Diversity
	2	<p>Biblical synthetic unity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate essences of: God/humans; one soul from another; God/Cosmos; humans/cosmos
	3	<p>Secular: Aristotle to Descartes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inherent self-existence of "building blocks" • Intellectual project is to create unity out of part = synthesis • Hellenism vs. Hebraism; Science vs. Religion; Colonial appropriations
	4	<p>Implications for West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial unity always at risk of filing apart; need for control, aggression.
	5	<p>Implications for dharma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort with diversity, "chaos" because unity is inherent in existence

Ch 2: Embodied Knowing	D	Embodied Knowing: Dharmic alternative to History-Centrism	
	1	Definition of Embodied Knowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each human has the innate potential to achieve the highest state of consciousness without recourse to any historical events This is because the human being is inherently divine and not a separate essence from God
	2	Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No limit to number of enlightened masters, hence no exclusive prophets New enlightened masters refresh old canons, challenge central institutions Pluralism galore: Open Source architecture of knowledge Creative experimentation, no finality, closure or imperialism
Ch 1: Difference	E	Being Different or Getting Digested?	
	1	Digestible Difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That which can be resolved by one appropriating from the other Example: Inculturation
	2	Non-Digestible Difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutual contradiction, hence cannot be resolved by appropriation Example: Status of Jesus in Islam vs. Christianity Example: Karma-Reincarnation vs. Nicene Creed (core Christian belief)
	3	Poison Pill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dangerous to the host if swallowed Example: Yoga undermines History-Centrism of Nicene Creed
Ch 5: Sanskrit	F	Non-Translatable Sanskrit Mantras	
	1	Unique <i>claim</i> of Sanskrit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vibrations, not merely meaning; each vibration has a defined effect One vibration cannot be substituted for another; hence non-translatability
	2	Sanskrit protects dharma from digestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When fully translated, dharma dissolves as subset of Judeo-Christianity Add certain Sanskrit words into English: potential as poison pills Sanskrit influence on pan-Asian Sanskriti
	3	Examples of non-translatables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous mis-translations explained in the book
6: Western Universalism	G	Challenging Western Universalism	
	1	Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of west's historical experiences, ideas and assumptions as basis for a universal standard on which all civilizations are mapped and judged Went hand in hand with conquests, genocides and colonization Implicit today in language, worldviews, "development", institutions
	2	Major challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Islamic Universalism and Confucian Universalism Postmodern critiques within the west
	3	Expanding Western Universalism by digesting others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book explains Hegel and colonialists using Indology to appropriate and construct notions of European selfhood, while trashing the source
Conclusion	H	Purva Paksha: Reversing the Gaze Upon the West	
	1	Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the other authentically, with mutual respect Responding/evaluating through our own siddhanta/lens
	2	Indians gazing at others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditionally a central part of education, research Inadequate purva paksha of the west Postcolonialist gaze at west is not based on Indian siddhanta
	3	Necessary today	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undermines the fashionable teaching of "sameness" Helps us understand "who we are" on own terms Helps resist being digested into western civilization as junior partner Dharmic Universalism deserves a seat at the table