

**Two is One:
Nondualism Metaphysics, Aesthetics,
Society in a cross-cultural perspective**

Organized by
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Hybrid Format:
Online & @EUR Rotterdam,
Summer 2024

Short description

One of the oldest philosophical questions is how to relate the One and the Many. Nondualism is a radical (dis)solution (of)to this question, since it argues that the One and the Many are neither reducible to one another, nor genuinely different from one another. The One is essentially Manifold, and the Many are essentially Unified. This seemingly abstract metaphysical view is rich in ontological, cognitive, linguistic, aesthetic, and socio-political implications. The goal of this summer school is to create an interdisciplinary platform to explore the metaphysical, aesthetical and sociological ramifications of non-dualism in a cross-cultural perspective.

As reference points for this investigation, we shall take two of the most representative non-dual philosophies emerged both in Western and Eastern thought. We shall bring into dialogue Baruch Spinoza's philosophy, rooted in the early modern period in Europe, with the non-dual strands of the Advaita traditions flourished in early medieval India (including authors such as Bhartṛhari and Śaṅkarācārya) and which than developed through the Vedānta and Śaiva philosophical schools.

This summer school aims at creating a platform for the cross-cultural study of nondualism in both these sources, by fostering interdisciplinary exchanges between established scholars, and engaging advanced students and early career researchers as well.

Format

The event will be hybrid. We'll host four weekly online reading groups before the in-person period (to be held for the first edition in Rotterdam). These online activities will enable all participants to gain an equal footing in the root texts of both sources. The in-person event will have the format of a conference, with keynote speakers and shorter presentations. This will then be followed by another online period for joint-presentations and round table discussions from the participants. There will be an option for online participation in cases where it is not possible to attend in person.

Structure of the event

June-August 2024 (online): reading groups on key-texts from both sources

The purpose of the reading groups is to create a shared background understanding among all participants of the main texts and topics, as they are covered by both sources.

28-30 August 2024 (on-site): 3-day conference

During the conference, invited speakers will deliver in-depth presentations on specific topics, mirrored in each tradition.

29 September 2024 (online, format TBA): final symposium and joint-student presentations

The final symposium is meant to collect collaborative and cross-cultural research developed on the basis of the previous two phases of the event, including student presentations, and joint-discussion pieces by invited speakers (if they wish so).

Online Reading Groups Program

1st online meeting: Sunday 16th June, 2024, 4-7pm CET

Han van Ruler (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

Reading group: Spinoza's *Ethics* part 1, propositions 1-15 and Appendix.

Marco Ferrante (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Reading group: excerpts from Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*.

2nd online meeting: Sunday 7th July, 2024, 4-7pm CET

Clare Carlisle (King's College London)

Reading group: Spinoza, *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*

Gianni Pellegrini (University of Turin)

Reading group: Basics of Advaitavedānta's metaphysical non-dualism. Śāṅkara's Adhyāsabhāṣya as the Axiological Foundation of Advaitavedānta (text: Śāṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, first chapter)

3rd online meeting: Sunday 21st July, 2024, 4-7pm CET

Sanja Särman (Uppsala University)

Reading group: Spinoza, Introduction to *Cogitata Metaphysica*, E2p8 and its scholium, Letter 23; Plato, *The Sophist*, 237b till 239c.

Talia Ariav (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Reading group: Literary articulations of the Advaita experience: speaking to the goddess and to oneself in seventeenth-century South India.

Text: Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita's *Ānandasāgarastava*, or *Hymn to the Goddess of Ocean-deep Bliss*

4th online meeting: Sunday 4th August, 2024, 4-7pm CET

Thomas Cushman (Wellesley College)

Reading group: (paper) F. Vandenberghe, “Immanent Transcendence in Georg Simmel’s Sociology of Religion”

Maayan Nidbach (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Reading group: Introduction to theatrical language of Kerala Sanskrit theater as a form of Advaita: selections from Naṭāñkuṣa (The Actor’s Hook) 4.9 and selected verses from act VI of Āścaryacūḍamaṇi (The Wonderous Crest-jewel).

In-person Conference Program

The whole event takes place at the [Erasmus University, Mandeville Building](#), room: **T3-10**.

Wednesday 28th August 2024

13:00-15:00

Marco Ferrante (Austrian Academy of Sciences): Introduction to Indian non-dualism: Bharthari and Kashmiri Advaita

Han van Ruler (Erasmus University Rotterdam): Residual dualisms in Spinoza’s philosophy

15:00-15:30 break

15:30-17:00 x3 short presentations (cfp)

17:00-17:30 break

18:00-19:00

Hugo David (EFEO, Paris): Uttering Non-Duality: Developments in Sentence Semantics in late Advaita (8-14th c.)

Thursday 29th August 2024

9:00-11:00

Sanja Särman (Uppsala University): Spinoza, non-dualism and non-being

Talia Ariav (Hebrew University of Jerusalem): Articulating Shared Selves in Early Modern Devotional Poetry from South India

11:00-11:30 break

11:30-13:00 x3 short presentations (cfp)

13:00-15:00 break

15:00-16:30 x3 short presentations (cfp)

16:30-17:00 break

17:00-18:00

Clare Carlisle (King's College London): Spinoza and India

19:30-onwards: conference dinner (@ TBA)

Friday 30th August 2024

9:00-11:00

Maayan Nidbach (Hebrew University of Jerusalem): The Wonderous Play of a Single Actor: On Kūṭiyāṭṭam and Non-Dualism.

Thomas Cushman (Wellesley College): Toward a Non-Dual Social Theory: Immanent Transcendence in the Work of Georg Simmel

11:00-11:30 break

11:30-13:00 x3 short presentations (cfp)