

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

Curriculum Vitae

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University Address:

Department of South Asian, Tibetan and
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1 Research Interests

My primary research interest is in the doctrine and practices of South Indian devotional traditions, particularly the Mādhva tradition of devotional Vedānta in the early-modern period (ca. 1500-1800). My PhD thesis focused on a philosophical text known as the "Nectar of Logic" (*Nyāyāmṛta*) which was written at the turn of the 16th century by an intellectual known as Vyāsātīrtha. As a political leader who acted as a Guru to the King Kṛṣṇadevarāya and public philosopher, Vyāsātīrtha was largely responsible for his school's success in the South Indian Vijayanagara Empire. Philosophically, the *Nyāyāmṛta* contains a classic defence of theistic realism ideas over and against Advaitin monism. I am particularly interested in the impact of the ideas of the school of epistemology and logic known as "Nyāya" over the Vyāsātīrtha's thought. I am currently working on a project to critically edit an earlier Nyāya text known as the *Nyāyabhāṣya*. A closely related interest, stemming from my MPhil research is the narrative, is in Vaiṣṇava narrative traditions, particularly the hagiographical texts of the Mādhvas.

2 Employment History

October 2015 - Present: Researcher at the University of Vienna

October 2012-September 2015: Project Research Associate at the University of Vienna

Employed on the FWF Project "Metaphysics and Epistemology of the Nyāya Tradition III" (Grant No. P24388) Institut für Sudasien-, Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde, Wien.

The *Nyāyabhāṣya* contains one of the oldest systematic expressions of Hindu theory of knowledge. It gives us insight not only into the Nyāya tradition of epistemology and debate, but also into the early intellectual history of Buddhism, Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and

other traditions with whom the philosophers of the Nyāya school debated. The goal of the project is to use the extensive digital collection of manuscripts collected by researchers at the University of Vienna to reconstruct the transmission of the text and gain new insight into its ideas. In my role as Research Associate, I was responsible for continuing the study of manuscript resources, writing chapters of the forthcoming project publication and overseeing postgraduate students in the revision of the collation of manuscripts.

3 Teaching Experience

The University of Manchester

October 2009 - July 2010: *I was fully responsible for designing and teaching the following courses at the University of Manchester:*

- Indian Philosophy (MA Level)
- Advanced Sanskrit (MA Level)
- Intermediate Sanskrit (Undergraduate Level)

October 2010 - June, 2011: *I was fully responsible for designing and teaching the following courses at the University of Manchester:*

- Questions in Indian Philosophy (Undergraduate Level)

The University of Chester

October, 2009 - June 2010:

- Visiting lecturer in the module “Hindu Religion and Theology” and the sub-module “Death and Dying in Dharmic Religions” at Chester University
 - Co-lecturer on the undergraduate course “Women and Men in Indian Religion” at the University of Manchester
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4 Education

- **September, 2008 - June, 2012: PhD “Non-Realism on Trial: a Mādhva Critique of Advaitin Metaphysics.”**
Religions and Theology, School of Arts, Histories and Cultures, University of Manchester.
Supervised by Dr. Jacqueline Suthren Hirst.
- **September, 2006 - July, 2008: Awarded Masters of Philosophy in Classical Indian Religion with Distinction.**
Wolfson College, University of Oxford.
Supervised by Prof. Alexis Sanderson, Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics, All Souls College.

Thesis: The Kṛṣṇa Upaniṣad: Critical edition, annotated translation and analysis of the text. Supervised by Prof. Christopher Minkowski, Boden Professor of Sanskrit, Balliol College. *Awarded a distinction.*

- **October, 2003 - July, 2006:** BA Philosophy and Theology and Religious Studies, joint-honours. *Awarded First-class Honours.*
Department of Arts and Humanities, University of Cardiff.

5 Grants and Awards

- **2009:** Awarded a research grant by the Arts and Humanities Research Council to travel to India for the purposes of working on Sanskrit texts with Prof. D. Prahladachar of the Pūrṇaprajña Vidyāpīṭha, Bangalore
 - **September, 2008- June, 2010:** Awarded a scholarship by the Arts and Humanities Research Council fully funding two year period of PhD research at the University of Manchester
 - **2007:** Awarded a research grant by the Boden Fund, University of Oxford, to travel to India and procure and document Sanskrit manuscripts for dissertation research
 - **October, 2006- July, 2008:** Awarded a scholarship by the Arts and Humanities Research Council fully funding a two year MPhil at The University of Oxford
 - **July, 2004:** Awarded scholarship for “Best Results in Year Two” at Cardiff University
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6 Publications in peer-reviewed journals and books and conference papers

- I have written, on request, the chapter “Raghunātha Śiromaṇi’s New Metaphysics in the Examination of the True Nature of Things” for the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Indian Philosophy*. It is currently under review by the editor, Jonardon Ganeri.
- Williams, M. (Contributor). “The *Trisūtribhāṣya*: Text, Sources and Transmission”. By Karin Preisendanz, Yasutaka Muroya and Alessandro Grahelli. With contributions from Sung Yong Kang and Michael Williams. (Forthcoming)
- Williams, M. (2015). “Jayatīrtha and the Problem of Perceptual Illusion”. *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Philosophy*. Ed. Jonardon Ganeri. (Forthcoming).
Available online: Williams, M. (2015). “Jayatīrtha and the Problem of Perceptual Illusion”. *Oxford Handbooks Online*. Ed. Jonardon Ganeri. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199314621.013.33
- Williams, M. (2014). “Mādhva Vedānta at the Turn of the Early Modern Period: Vyāsatīrtha and the Navya-Naiyāyikas” in “Innovation in Hindu Traditions” ed. Jonathan Edelmann and Sushil Mittal, special issue, *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 18.2, 119-152. doi:10.1007/s11407-014-9157-7.

- Williams, (2012). “Problems and Perspectives in Interpreting the Texts of the Mādhva Tradition”. “Tradition and the Re-Use of India Texts” in *Religions of South Asia*, 6.2, 22-31. Edited by Jacqueline Suthren Hirst.

6.1 Further articles and book contributions

- Williams, Michael (2010). “Knowledge, God and the World in the Theology of Madhvācārya”. *Rivista di studi sudasiatici*, 4, 63–74.
- Williams, Michael (2013). “Can we infer unestablished entities? A Mādhva contribution to the Indian theory of inference” in *Puṣpikā: Tracing Ancient India Through Texts and Traditions*. Oxford: Oxbow.

6.2 Books edited

- Williams, Michael (2013). “Puṣpikā: Tracing Ancient India Through Texts and Traditions”. Oxford: Oxbow. (Co-editor of the volume along with Nina Mirnig and Peter Szanto).

6.3 Unpublished Conference Papers

- Williams, Michael (September, 2015). “The Metaphysics and Epistemology of Supernormal Perception in Early and Late Nyāya”. Unpublished conference paper presented on the panel *Knowing the Unknown: Extra-Ordinary Cognitions in Brahmanical Philosophies* at the Sapienza University of Rome.
- Williams, Michael (May, 2013). “Debate and Reason in the Vijayanagara Empire: The Impact of Navya-Nyāya on Vyāsātīrtha”. Unpublished conference paper presented at the Oxford Early Modern South Asia Workshop ‘Discipline, Sect, Lineage and Community: Scholar Intellectuals in India, c. 1500-1800’, Oxford, United Kingdom
- Williams, Michael (September, 2010). “A Mādhva critique of the Nyāya theory of Inference: Vyāsātīrtha on *vyāpti*”. Unpublished conference paper presented at the Second International Indology Graduate Research Synposium, Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- Williams, Michael (June, 2010). “The value of traditional commentaries in the study of Mādhva texts, including a translation of the the first portion of the *Nyāyāmṛta* and its commentaries”. Unpublished conference paper circulated at the Sanskrit Traditions in the Modern World Conference, the University of Manchester
- Williams, Michael (September, 2009). “The relationship between God and the world in the theology of Rāmānuja and Madhvācārya”. Unpublished paper presented at The 14th World Sanskrit Conference, Kyoto, Japan
- Williams, Michael (June, 2008). “Madhva’s defence of the concept of difference (*bheda*)”. Unpublished conference paper presented at the Indology Graduate Research Seminar, Magdalen College, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
- Williams, Michael (March, 2008). “The problem of Kṛṣṇa’s Consorts and the Kṛṣṇa-Upaniṣad”. Unpublished conference paper presented at the Indology Graduate Research Seminar, Magdalen College, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

- Williams, Michael (November, 2005). “The concept of nothingness in the philosophy of Nishida Kitaro”. Unpublished conference paper presented at the University of Wales Undergraduate Philosophy Conference, Gregynog Hall, Powys, Wales
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6.4 Further conference work

- **2009:** Co-founder and organiser of International Indology Graduate Research Symposium, held at Oxford University from 23rd-24th September, 2009
- **2009, 2010:** Administrative assistant in the organisation of the Sanskrit Traditions in the Modern World Conference

6.5 Anonymous peer-review evaluation

- In 2013 I worked as an anonymous peer-reviewer for the journals “Critical Study of Religion” and “Hindu-Christian Studies”.
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7 Language Skills

- Ten years of experience in working with and teaching the Sanskrit language, including Vedic Sanskrit
 - Two years experience of working with the Pāli language (including Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit)
 - Intermediate German (spoken and as an academic language)
 - One year experience with modern spoken Tamil
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8 Referees

- Prof. Dr. Karin Preisendanz,
University of Vienna,
Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies,
Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies,
Spitalgasse 2, Hof 2.1,
A-1090 Vienna, Austria.

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- Prof. Christopher Minkowski,
Boden Professor of Sanskrit,
University of Oxford,

The Oriental Institute,
Pusey Lane,
Oxford, OX1 2LE,
United Kingdom.

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- Prof. Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad,
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