

# Max Müller's Sacred Books and the Prehistory of Comparative Literature

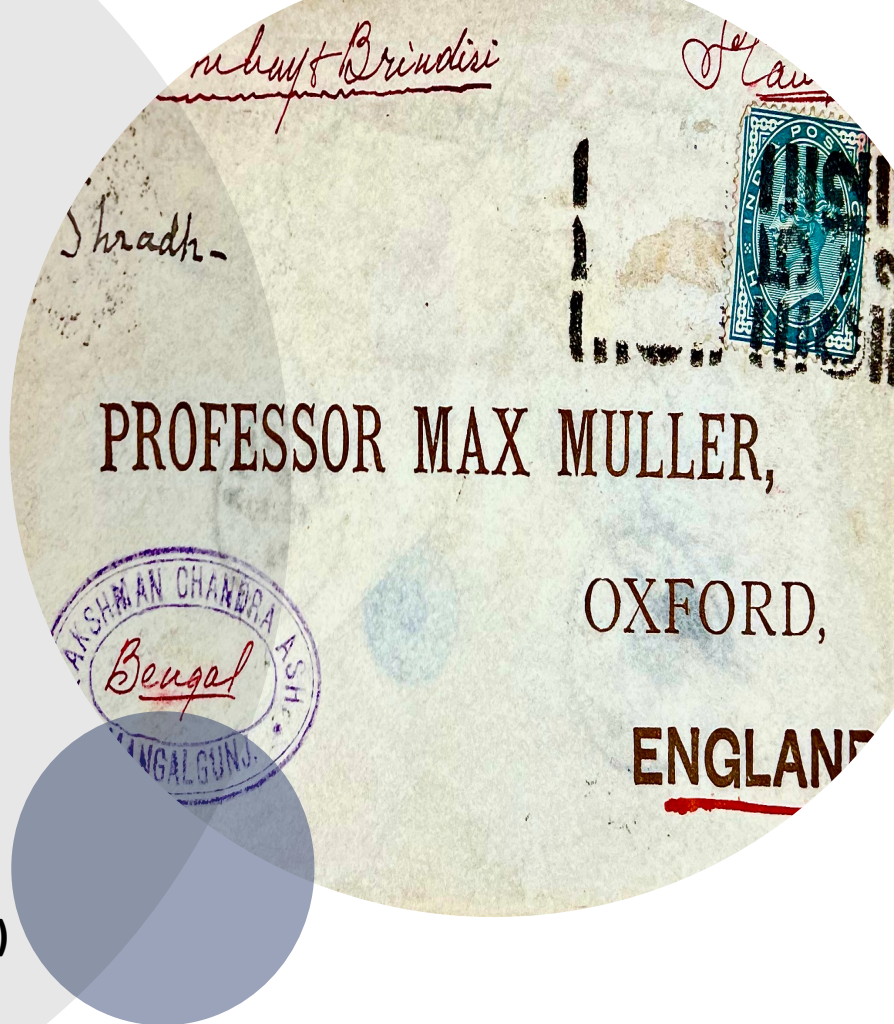
Public lecture held by  
Prof. Angus Nicholls  
(Queen Mary University of London)

Wednesday, 1 November 2023

6:15 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.

In Europe, literary studies emerged as an academic discipline during the final decades of the nineteenth century. While national canons dominated this period of discipline formation, the question of a global canon also received increased attention, with the first Western journal devoted to Comparative Literature appearing in 1877.

This lecture will propose that another evolving nineteenth-century field – Comparative Religion – exerted a key influence on the formation of both Comparative Literature and so-called World Literature. Its focus is the monumental project overseen by the Oxford Indologist Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900), the fifty-volume collection of Asian religious texts translated into English and published by Oxford University Press between 1879 and 1910, known as the Sacred Books of the East. Drawing on the Bodleian Library's Max Müller papers, as well as the archive of Oxford University Press, this lecture will explore epistemological issues relating to comparison in the formation of the Sacred Books of the East.



## Time and Location

Wednesday, 1 November 2023, 6:15 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.  
Freie Universität Berlin  
Room 2.2051 (Holzlaube)  
Fabeckstr. 23-25  
14195 Berlin

Part of the lecture series »The Invention of the Modern Religious Bookshelf« organised by Christian Meyer, Project »The Invention of the Modern Religious Bookshelf: Canons, Concepts and Communities«, Research Area 3 »Future Perfect«, Cluster of Excellence »Temporal Communities: Doing Literature in a Global Perspective«

Participation is possible without registration both in person or online via Webex. The links as well as further information about the project and the lecture series can be found on the project's website:  
[www.temporal-communities.de/research/future-perfect/projects/religious-bookshelf](http://www.temporal-communities.de/research/future-perfect/projects/religious-bookshelf)

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