



Extended essay cover

Candidates must complete this page and then give this cover and their final version of the extended essay to their supervisor.

Candidate session number			
Candidate name			
School name			
Examination session (May or November)	May	Year	2015

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: Social & Cultural Anthropology
(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: Are There More Similarities than Differences in the Usage of the Ideal of Purity in the Pre-colonial Hindu Caste System than the Colonial Caste System of New Spain?

Candidate's declaration

This declaration must be signed by the candidate; otherwise a mark of zero will be issued.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

This is the final version of my extended essay.

Candidate's signature: _____

Date: 17/12/14.

Supervisor's report and declaration

The supervisor must complete this report, sign the declaration and then give the final version of the extended essay, with this cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator.

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) _____

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

had the opportunity of traveling to India previously. She had an earlier idea of the country and their religions. She had mentioned that she had started her project with a negative idea of what Hinduism is, probably due to her Western perspective. She also mentioned that ever since she had studied Historia de Mexico with Professor Miguel Angel Soto she wanted to compare both caste systems, India and Mexico. She felt happy with the outcome, she also found out the similarities between India and Mexico.

This declaration must be signed by the supervisor, otherwise a mark of zero will be issued.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

As per the section entitled "Responsibilities of the Supervisor" in the EE guide, the recommended number of hours spent with candidates is between 3 and 5 hours. Schools will be contacted when the number of hours is left blank, or where 0 hours are stated and there lacks an explanation. Schools will also be contacted in the event that number of hours spent is significantly excessive compared to the recommendation.

I spent hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature: _____

Date: 15/E/15

Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number		
--------------------------	--	--

Achievement level

Criteria	Examiner 1	maximum	Examiner 2	maximum	Examiner 3
A research question	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="2"/>	2	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	2	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
B introduction	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="1"/>	2	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	2	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
C investigation	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="2"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
D knowledge and understanding	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="2"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
E reasoned argument	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="2"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
F analysis and evaluation	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="1"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
G use of subject language	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="1"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
H conclusion	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="2"/>	2	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	2	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
I formal presentation	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="3"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
J abstract	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="2"/>	2	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	2	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
K holistic judgment	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="2"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	4	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Total out of 36	<input style="width: 60px; height: 25px;" type="text" value="20"/>		<input style="width: 60px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>		<input style="width: 60px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>

Name of examiner 1: _____ Examiner number: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Name of examiner 2: _____ Examiner number: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Name of examiner 3: _____ Examiner number: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

IB Assessment Centre use only: B: _____

IB Assessment Centre use only: A: _____

**Are There More Similarities than Differences in the Usage of the Ideal
of Purity in the Pre-colonial Hindu Caste System than the Colonial
Caste System of New Spain?**

Extended Essay

Subject: Social and Cultural Anthropology

April 30th, 2014.

Word Count: 3957

P

Table of Contents:

Abstract-----pg. 3

Introduction-----pg. 4

A Historic and Cultural Background on Both the Caste Systems----- pg. 5

 The New Spain Caste System-----pg. 5

 The Hindu Caste System-----pg. 9

Evaluation of the Sources Concerning Castes-----pg. 10

Comparison of the Economic, Religious, and Social Implications-----pg. 11

Conclusion-----pg. 15

Works Cited Page-----pg. 17

Abstract

The aim of this essay is to discover whether there are more similarities than differences in the usage of the ideal of purity in the Pre-colonial Hindu Caste System than the Colonial Caste System of New Spain. The library, Jstor, online magazines (such as Hinduism Today and National Geographic), and online books proved to be a bonanza of information, from which the research was done.

With the fall of the Great Tenochtitlan in 1521, the Aztec Empire collapsed and New Spain, as a *meztizo* entity, was born. With the mixing of races and a need for the reestablishment of order, the Spaniards imposed a hierarchical system where “pure bloods” (*Peninsulares* and *Criollos*) ruled above the natives and blacks (once slavery reached Mexico). The mixes, or the castes, of the “pure” and “impure bloods” began the arduous process of cleansing the “lesser bloods” that made them, until they reached the caste of *Nuevo Español*, a being that had such minimal Indian/Black blood that had redeemed his/her ancestry. The Catholic Religion played the role of the justifier and appeaser of the population.

In similar ways, the Pre-colonial Hindu Caste System used the idea of purity to separate individuals into different castes. If one was closer to attaining *moksha*, or Enlightenment by combining with the Divine One: *Brahman*, one was purer of soul and body. People of higher castes had to safeguard their purity by following stricter spiritual and material guidelines (*dharma*), in an attempt to be separated from “less pure” beings, like *Dalits* or *Untouchables*. Both systems show how economic and political power was tied to the higher Castes, religion was seen as a mediator, and a Purity/pollution scale governed both hierarchies. However, within these basic “categories” there are more differences than similarities, as the basic values of each system sharply contrast.

Word Count: 299

Introduction

India and Mexico are both countries with colorful cultures and histories. They are teeming with baffling complexity that cannot be easily unraveled. Social and Cultural Anthropology is a subject that gives a wide scope to analyze a community's culture and society, and with the previous fascination of the two countries, the topic was narrowed down to a clear comparison of their cultures (for their similarities and differences can give one a better understanding of each individual culture). The topic began with the Hindu and New Spain (colonial name for Mexico) Caste systems. They are both phenomena that have deeply shaped their respective societies, almost like the heart of all understanding regarding their natures. Without comprehending the caste systems, there is no true grasping of the mystical concepts of India and Mexico. This is why it is fundamental to study these prime examples of cultural and social structure. Hinduism, as a religion, has no confirmed beginning, but it has at least a couple of thousands of years and still lives on today in modern India (some experts believe that it commenced with the arrival of the Aryans in the Indus River Valley). The New Spain system spanned officially for 300 years (during the colonial years under Spain); however, its deep roots continue to partly demonstrate the Mexican perspective and way of living

With a lifetime living in Mexico and a trip that kindled a passion for India, a comparative topic between these two cultures was woven with words. When searching both the caste systems, purity became a theme of great interest and of overwhelming importance to the overall topic. It kept on resurfacing for both of the caste systems, so that it became the bridge between them. The multiplicity of language lends the word "purity" a variety of meanings, each taken by the systems in India and New Spain in contrasting ways. Thus, the research question was born: "are there more similarities

needs
def.

than differences in the usage of the ideal of purity in the Pre-colonial Hindu Caste System than the Colonial Caste System of New Spain?" This question clearly relates to both the subject of Cultural Anthropology and the topic of castes in India and New Spain, for even if both social structures have deep ties with religion, the following essay will sharply focus on the cultural aspects of each. Religion does play a part in the understanding of said hierarchies, but culture is a reflection of religion in many ways. The Hindu system, as an example, is a major world religion, but its teachings create specific ways in which an individual has to act depending on his or her age, gender, caste, and etcetera. This is a person's *dharma*. The society of India was directed by religious guidelines, making cultural aspects that will be promptly analyzed. In other words, religion can deeply influence culture, just like geography and language can.

Culture can also affect religion; thus, the cycle of complexity begins. The Hindu and New Spain Caste Systems have the idea of purity as a core belief; Moreover, the Spanish implemented the idea of "blood purity" in their colonies, while Hinduism explained how the purity of the body (by certain customs) reflects the purity of the soul.

needs further exp. and conceptualization of key terms.

A Historic and Cultural Background on Both the Caste Systems

The New Spain Caste System

The moment that Hernán Cortés stepped on the shores of today's state of Veracruz, an encounter of cultures of a scale not seen since the opening of the silk route connecting Europe and Asia, began. Dr. Jaime Rodríguez, a PhD from Columbia University, and Dr. Colin M. Maclachlan, a PhD from UCLA, explain the event as "sudden" and "unexpected" (Maclachlan, Rodríguez), having the Indians (natives) believe that the god Quetzalcoatl had returned. Moctezuma II's confusion allowed the Spanish forces to organize and acquire more power by joining armies with the

neighboring groups that had been oppressed by the Aztec reign. Meanwhile, the Spanish nurtured the idea that the “expedition to be a Christian Crusade-hence discovery became, in essence, a spiritual revelation, with God directing, as well as protecting the Spaniards” (Maclachlan, Rodriguez). Thus, the fusion of cultures began (and races, too, the day the Malinche- the Spaniard’s translator- had a child with Cortés). It was only possible because of “shared values” (Maclachlan, Rodriguez), and the awe of the natives after seeing their powerful gods (Huitzilopochtli, the god of war) be toppled by those of alien peoples. After the fall of the Great Tenochtitlan, the Aztec Capital, natives decided that “a victorious god, powerful enough to topple the Mexica-Aztec empire, obviously could not, and should not, be ignored” (Maclachlan, Rodriguez), apart from the fact that they had to be “reassured and incorporated into an acceptable institutional structure that guaranteed a reasonable degree of order and predictability” (Maclachlan, Rodriguez). The hierarchical system, lasting until the call for equality from the leaders of the Mexican Independence, had as a base both the Aztec and Spanish systems (Moors in Spain had been considered “inferior” to Catholic Spaniards, providing a template for the new system). Christianity and Spanish law were introduced as a way of social control, under the Pope’s *requerimento* that “required them to submit to Spanish authority under penalty of being declared rebels and being reduced by force to slavery”. (Maclachlan, Rodriguez). Christianity was forced upon the natives (the Spanish having decided that they had a soul), having churches built with the stones of the pyramids as a symbol of one God defeating all the others. Black slaves and Asian merchants added to the population of Spanish and Indian, mixing the four races into the gradual process of becoming a *mestizo* entity.

Quintero Gregorio Torres worked as a professor and as the Secretary of Interior in Mexico during the early twentieth century. He was one of the first individuals to open

Also needs
conceptualization

the study of Mexico's mestizo society. He described New Spain as a "melting pot" of cultures and races (Torres, 5). The hierarchical system that included the castes (mixes) of different races was marked by the Spaniards idea that "the Indian's color, ignorance, and misery put them "far off from true Spaniards"" (Torres, 6). The Spanish were, in their eyes, "making men out of orangutans" (Torres, 6). The only way for an Indian to gain more rights was to be of "purer of blood" (Torres, 5), slowly cleansing out their Indian/African heritage. This is how the system was created. On top were Spanish/*peninsulares* (or creoles, the Spanish born in New Spain). On the bottom were the Indians (only higher than the Black slaves). Between them were castes, the mixes, who had become slightly purer than those in the bottom of the system. Some of these included *Mestizo*, *Castiza*, *Nuevo Español*, *Mulata*, *Morisca*, *Albina*, and *Torna Atrás* (each being higher or lower in the system based on the amount of Spanish blood in their veins). In the case of the *Nuevo Español* (mixture of Spanish and Castiza), they had reached full purity, as the amount of Indian blood was minimal. The cleansing of the "inferior" bloods was complete.

Dr. Magali M. Carrera, a PhD from Columbia University and a frequent publisher of Latin American books, writes about the *Casta Paintings*, representations of the "breakdown of the richness and diversity of races and mixes" (Carrera). The panels were made so that people could identify themselves with any of the individual paintings that "showed the "purification" of casta blood, moving from mestizo to castizo and finally to español" (Carrera). The drive to become the "superior" oppressors characterized the New Spain Society.



Mix of *Spaniard* and *Mestiza*: *Castiza* by Miguel Cabrera



Mix of *Mestizo* and *Indian*: *Coyote* by Miguel Cabrera



Mix of *Indian* and *Spaniard*: *Mestizo* by Miguel Cabreras

The Hindu Caste System

The Hindu Caste System differs from the New Spain system in some ways. The idea of purity is applied somewhat to the physical self (body) but much more to the soul, or *atman*. It is true that the *Varna*, or the four major ranks in the Hindu Caste System, mean *color*: a reference to the fact that the castes could have been connected to skin color in the time of the Aryan's invasion (Desai). Still, it is not the Hindu culture and religion's main focus or purpose for the Castes.

Life Magazine published an edition of a book that encompassed the five major religions, including Hinduism. It explained the basics of Hinduism, how the *atman* reincarnates (is reborn) to reach a higher place in the Caste system (a hierarchical system that sprang from the body of *Brahman*: the Divine One). As one becomes purer (having a good *Karma*- all of one's actions in life, both good and bad, by completing one's *dharma*- a person's duties based on their caste, gender, and age), a person is born into a higher caste. The aim of all living things is *moksha*: to unite one's *atman* with *Brahman* by being born out of the caste system as one has reached enlightenment (purity of soul and body, self-control, non-violence, etcetera.).

Sonalde Desai, from the University of Maryland, describes how a person's *dharma* is much stricter as one moves up the castes and sub castes. Desai explains how "the Vedic texts assigned supremacy to Brahmins based on the location on a purity/pollution scale where they gain higher status" (Desai). At the bottom of the caste system (some even argue that outside of it) exists the Dalits, or Untouchables "who engage in such polluting activities as cleaning toilets and scavenging and hauling carcasses" (Desai). Tom O'Neill, a senior writer of the National Geographic Magazine, writes about the lives of the "polluted" Untouchables. He explains how "all men are created unequal" (O'Neil) in the eyes of Hinduism. The Untouchables "are outcasts—

people considered too impure, too polluted, to rank as worthy beings” (O’Neil). Untouchables are shunned, insulted, banned from temples and higher caste homes, made to eat and drink from separate utensils in public places, as a result of their “lack of purity”. They are raped, burned, lynched, and gunned down (O’Neil). They are so low in the purity/pollution scale that their very presence was believed to be impure. Under the scale that determines one’s place in society, when “an Untouchable parent gives birth to an Untouchable child, [he or she is] condemned as unclean from the first breath” (O’Neil).

Evaluation of the Sources Concerning Castes

All of the sources were written by the leading figures of their respective fields. Their arguments were based on historical and primary source evidence, especially those concerning the New Spain side of the comparison. There was some bias in most of the Hindu Caste System sources, as they were written in the perspectives of outsiders. In many occasions, the religion was oversimplified and not examined fully. One example of this is O’Neil. He states with great eloquence the injustice that Dalits have lived in India since its beginning. Still, if one reader did not have background knowledge, one would not understand the cause of such discrimination. Long history and a complex religion cannot be summarized correctly in a concise article. It makes this Indian religion stand in a complete negative light without a true explanation of its causes (or the improvements made along the years). A balanced source includes an objective perspective if it is made from an outsider, or a more experienced view of an insider. This is why the author Torres is the best source, for he writes in the perspective of a Mexican who knows his culture from within (greatest contribution in the New Spain side). He greatly supported the research by using the knowledge given to him by his

? not
s. Torres
e. Torres

background. His work reads in a way that describes not only the topic at hand, but also its consequences in the Mexican society. However, all authors have outstanding credentials and logical conclusions.

Comparison of the Economic, Religious, and Social Implications

India and Mexico are countries of the extremes. They have many similarities even if they are in the antipodes of the earth. By a strike of chance, they both developed hierarchical systems based on castes. Both systems organize a society into varying levels of importance, where some groups are more privileged than others. The groups in the highest of levels are in charge of handling the greatest amounts of political and economic power (although the Hindu system is not strictly tied this way, for a king can be a Kshatriya, a caste below the Brahmans). Sonalde Desai, from the University of Maryland, stated that there is “greater power and wealth among upper castes than lower castes – which would suggest that status and wealth in India go hand in hand” (Desai).

In the New Spain System, *peninsulares* (Spanish-Americans born in Spain) held the best places in the government. *Criollos*, the “pure” sons of Spaniards born in the viceroyalty, were not permitted in the courts. They claimed to be true Spaniards that were treated as second-class citizens for not having been born in the motherland. For this reason, in 1810 the unhappy group organized the Independence to create the nation of Mexico. In both systems, as one goes down the different levels of the society, power decreases in a direct relationship. Africans/Indians and Dalits both shared the most meager jobs in their respective birthplaces. Dalits were in charge of cleaning the streets, creating leather from the skins of the dead animals, and disposing of corpses in the hillside (Hindus will not bury their bodies so that the matter of which they are made is recycled into other living things). Indians/Africans tended the earth and worked in the

needs
for the
decision

mines. These positions do not reflect much leadership and control. The lower classes must look at the higher ones for reference and structure. In the Spanish colony the *peninsulares* were the role model that all followed. In India, the Brahmins occupied that position of honor, having the perfect “Brahminical way of life” (Desai).

Another commonality amongst them is the presence of religion. In New Spain it was used as a way to control the population to accept their suffering (even if, ironically, all men are equal in the eyes of the Catholic God). In Hinduism, being a religion, all souls or *atmans* are reborn to a higher caste, depending on their *karma* (which in turn is based on a person’s *dharma*), to be reunited with Brahman (*moksha*). Moreover, what makes a person in either of the hierarchical systems different from the other levels? It is their purity. Both systems have purity as a core belief. This purity is measured in a purity/pollution scale for both systems.

In the Hindu Caste System, there is a “purity/pollution scale” that “establishes the supremacy of the Brahmins” (Desai). As an *atman* is reborn into a higher caste or subcaste, it means that it has more responsibilities and rules of conduct that it must abide by to be separated by those who are more impure. A Brahmin, a member of the highest caste, must abstain from “polluting food (meat), polluting activities (farming, leatherworking and scavenging) and polluting sexual behavior (remarriage of a widow)”. (Desai). These three activities are controlled by a person’s *dharma* (duties), which change as the castes near perfect purity (*moksha*). Thus, a Brahmin cannot be in the presence of an impure being such as a Dalit. It was considered that an “untouchable” could not be touched by beings inside the caste system, for being too impure. The Brahmins have set rules that prohibit mixing their presence with that of unclean sources. Marriages are made before adolescence and food can only be cooked by one of the same or higher caste. If the body becomes polluted, then the soul too takes on this state. Thus,

needs
analysis
desires

a person must safeguard the temporary body to protect the eternal soul. A Hindu follower must follow their dharma to the best of their abilities, for the better they do it the higher they reincarnate. Pollution keeps the wheel going in the cycle of rebirth.

In New Spain, when two (and sometimes four) races and cultures started to assimilate, there was a need to organize these new members of the "Cosmic Race" (a name for the children of multiple worlds). It had been clear how the Spanish had set their "supremacy" over that of the native peoples, but how, they asked, should one treat a son of theirs with that of "impure" peoples? The answer was clear. These mixes, also known as castes, would be treated depending on the amount of Spanish blood in their veins. The more of it they had, the "purer" they would become, as they were closer to that of the mighty conquistadores (a "favored group" of peoples by the gods or God). In the case of the "Nuevo Español" caste, the son of a *castiza* (Spanish and mestizo) and a Spaniard was considered to have redeemed the Indian ancestry, and so be called a New Spanish (literal translation of the caste name). It was a gradual process of cleansing, much like the Hindu Caste system with the gradual cleansing over several lives, just over many generations. The mestizo castes stayed in the caste they were born in, and would die without the ability to change anything. Once they left the material world, they would have no other chance of returning to another body to try to become purer (as opposed to the Brahmin goal-oriented system). Mestizos (and all the other hundreds of castes) could mix with other castes, eat meat, and marry at an older age. Their soul did have to be pure to go to heaven, for if it didn't, when they reached their deathbed their soul could be condemned to the eternal pit of hell. They had only one chance to make it to the gates of gold, while the Hindus stayed in this cycle that can only be broken by true purity. If one does not get it in the first 100 lives, one can still achieve it in 1000 more. Plus, if a New Spaniard was impure of soul, that would not affect his position in

society's hierarchy. In many ways, the moral implications that the Hindu holds dear are ignored in this more secular seeming hierarchy imposed by the Spaniards. For them, even if Christianity preaches equality (juxtaposed by the hierarchy of the church), it was certain that they did not see the newly conquered peoples as equal.

The paradox of using religion to control the natives, yet not abiding by its basic teachings, is just one way that culture is full of complex contradictions. The material body, as opposed to an eternal soul, was the main basis of the social structure. The main tattletale of a person's stance is the "purity scale" was their color of their skin. White became a symbol of purity and goodness (a symbol still acknowledged and understood today), while in contrast black/darkness horrifies the crowds with its taintedness and mysteriousness. Moreover, the new continent and its people were also mysterious. It was the "new world", full of satanical groups (like the Aztec's human sacrifices to help the Sun god win the battle against the night). The dark color of their skin, in the minds of the Europeans, reflected the state of their souls. So, a new religion and a purifying social system, wiped away the darkness and the sins of the natives. As the Indians gained (generation by generation) a paler complexity, the castes had to be represented in visual form, so that each group could identify in the caste that they belonged. This was done by the *Casta Paintings* that "gave a breakdown of the richness and diversity of races and mixes ... [having the] intersection of certain physical, economic and social spaces in colonial Mexico" (Carrera).

The physical body of the New Spain castes reflected their level of "blood purity". The purity of their souls, in the most practical sense, had no effect on their social stance. In Hinduism, in contrast, castes' souls provided the golden ticket to a higher reborn body. The soul can be tainted by physical means, but the "purity of

blood” does not affect them. The Hindu and New Spain castes both used purity as an engine to their whole system; however there were clear differences between them.

Conclusion

The essay was guided by the question of “are there more similarities than differences in the usage of the ideal of purity in the Pre-colonial Hindu Caste System than the Colonial Caste System of New Spain?” The Hindu and New Spain Caste Systems have the ideal of purity as a core belief, yet there are more differences in their usage of purity than similarities. It is clear that the similarities that are present are the categories from which many more differences arise. It is an astounding fact that both cultures have caste systems, but by looking closer, one can realize that they are both unique in distinct ways. The Spanish implemented the idea of “blood purity” in their colonies, while Hinduism explained how the purity of the body (by certain customs) reflects the purity of the soul. The idea of “blood purity” was visited by analyzing how a native could attain greater “purity” siring a baby with a Spanish “pure blood”, thus slowly washing away the impurity of “lesser bloods”. The clear sign of this mixture was seen in the skin colors of the mestizos (combination of two races), which were in turn represented in the *Casta paintings*. For Hinduism, abstaining from impure activities (eating meat, marrying a widow, or even making leather) could signify the purity of one’s soul. A Brahmin (the highest caste) was higher than the Kshatriyas (second highest caste), because of a greater placement in the “purity/pollution scale” (Desai). So, in the Hindu system one’s fate is on one’s hands (for one can abstain from “polluting activities”), while in New Spain it was parents’ actions (choice of mate) that determined the life of the individual. It is true that if one’s parents are Brahmins, then the child will also be a Brahmin, but it is not their actions that made the child be born

under such level of the system. It was the ability to aptly comply with one's *dharma*, which ordained the quality of the next life if one had a good *karma*, and then one will be reborn in a higher caste. The New Spanish baby had no such capability. Her or she had one life, characterized by the blood mix of both parents. Nevertheless, this too can be debated if one does not believe in Hinduism (and the idea of reincarnation). Then, lower castes would never have the chance of living the "Brahmatical" life, but comply (and not rebel) with a system that promises that their suffering was not in vain. Only if seen this way, the caste systems have another commonality. Nevertheless, the differences amount to much greater numbers than the similarities between these two Caste Systems.

There were no real limitations in the comparison of cultures. It can sometimes be hard to separate the cultural aspects from that of religion, for they can sometimes be one and the same. Moreover, if the research had to continue it would probably focus more on religion. It would make an interesting essay as a sequel this writing. In Hinduism, it could have the possibility to explore the causes of the importance of purity. For the New Spain social structure, one could further grasp the methods in which the Spaniards used to submit the indigenous people of the Mesoamerican cultures. The comparison could continue for these two cultures. Plus, one interesting topic would be to find the commonalities between the Catholic saints of Mexico and the multiplicity of Hindu Gods. How do the people act towards multiple divine figures? Can monotheism and polytheism be one? Finally, could one believe that the Caste system is a way to keep people who are treated unequally from rebelling against their superiors? Or is that just a Western mentality that has no true grounds in the real Hinduism? Truly, this chosen topic can lead to infinity of rich possibilities. This essay provides the leeway of great research into a new perspective of two very similar and very different cultures.

more historical approach than anthropological - the nature of the essay is thus problematic. Needs further outtop. trends, contexts and methodology.

Works Cited Page:

- Cabrera, Miguel. *Castiza*. Digital image. Museo De América De Madrid, n.d. Web.
- Cabrera, Miguel. *Coyote*. Digital image. Museo De América De Madrid, n.d. Web.
- Cabrera, Miguel. *Mestizo*. Digital image. Museo De América De Madrid, n.d. Web.
- Carrera, Magali M. *Locating Race in Late Colonial Mexico*. 3rd ed. Vol. 57. N.p.:
College Art Association, Autumn, 1998. 36-45. Print.
- Desai, Sonalde. "Caste in 21st Century India: Competing Narratives." *IHDS*. University
of Maryland, Dec. 2008. Web. 11 Oct. 2013.
- "Life: The World's Great Religions" 1957, Print New York
- MacLachlan, Colin M., and Jaime E. Rodriguez. "The Forging of the Cosmic Race: A
Reinterpretation of Colonial Mexico." *Google Books*. University California
Press, n.d. Web. Oct. 2013.
- O'Neill, Tom. "Untouchable." *National Geographic*. National Geographic, June 2003.
Web. Oct. 2013.
- Torres, Quintero Gregorio. *México Hacia El Fin Del Virreinato Español: Antecedentes
Sociológicos Del Pueblo Mexicano*. [México, D.F.]: Consejo Nacional Para La
Cultura Y Las Artes. Dirección General De Publicaciones, 1990. Print.