An annual religious procession makes its way along darkened brick-paved and packed-earth streets through the various neighbourhoods of Arampur, a village in Bihar, India. Young men chant familiar slogans while ritually clashing in shows of weapon-handling. Women, men, and children stand in the night or sit on string beds outside their homes watching the lively action come and go on their otherwise non-eventful street. Occasionally they shout their support for the prancing adolescents. In this village with nearly equal numbers of Hindus and Muslims, is this procession Hindu or Islamic? Scholars have become increasingly aware of how political interests have depicted ‘Hindu’ and ‘Muslim’ identities as artificially singular to suit their own agendas, whether of the colonial state, Pakistan movement, or Hindu or Muslim cause. Despite their disagreement of militant attempts to both equate ‘Indian’ with ‘Hindu’ and denigrate Muslims, scholars demonstrate far less cognizance of their own acceptance of a monolithic understanding that suffuses post-colonial Western scholarship regarding South Asian cultures. This is to say, Western scholars may recognize the socio-political ramifications of essentialized religious identities but do not often enough practise scholarship in ways that challenge problematic categories. The example of the procession described above demonstrates a crisis in identification for religious studies, the import of identity politics on the national level, and the dynamics of identity practices on the local level. The description could accurately portray two different annual processions in Arampur: one which occurs on Muharram and another on Durga Puja. Attempts to categorize these events as Muslim or Hindu demonstrate both the multiple meanings each term allows and the uncertainty which commonly accompanies their use. With equal vitality and energy for the procession, their heroes, the boys and young men of each procession brandish long, hardened bamboo staves and differ only by the headdress worn. Each procession brandish long, hardened bamboo staves and differ only by the headdress worn. Hence they memo...