

New Zealand Association for the Study of Religion

2008 Conference

“Being Heard, Being Engaged:
Religious Diversity and the Diversity of Religious Studies Research”

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LIST OF ABSTRACTS

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Erica Baffelli, University of Otago
Sōkagakkai and “Buddhist politics”
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Sōkagakkai, the largest of the new religious movements in Japan and one of the most powerful, was founded in 1930 by the educator Makiguchi Tsunesaburō, but started its political involvement during the 1950s, under its second president Tōda Jōsei. Sōkagakkai was not unique among new religions in being actively involved in politics after World War II. Several religious groups, such as Tenrikyō, Risshō kōsei kai, and Seichō no ie, supported their candidates or joined political committees. But Sōkagakkai political involvement culminated in the formation of its own political party, the Kōmeitō (Clean Government Party), in 1964, renamed shin Kōmeitō in 1998.

Sōkagakkai political views are based on Nichiren’s idea that salvation of a nation depends on its conversion to the true faith of Buddhism. Nichiren’s political viewpoint is expressed in the ideas of *ōbutsu myōgō* (fusion of Buddhism and politics), *kaidan* (worship hall), and “virtuous ruler”. Following this view, Ikeda Daisaku (Sōkagakkai’s president) proposed to adopt the “True Buddhism” as guiding principle for Japan’s politics, the ideal combination of religion and politics, and the ideal solution for social and welfare problems. The prerequisite for a fusion of politics and religions is the conversion of sufficient numbers of individuals to the “True Buddhism”, the *kōsen rufu* (propagation of Buddhism) in Nichiren terminology.

This paper will explore and discuss Ikeda’s political views and his program for a “Buddhist democracy” (*buppō minshushugi*), which he called “humanitarian socialism” (*ningen shakaishugi*) seeking “equality of value” and aiming at the unification of social and individual welfare. Sōkagakkai proposes a “politicised sacrality” (Stalker), affirming that religion would serve as the basis of politics, and that for the attainment of the “true democracy” a conversion to the “True Buddhism” is necessary.



Arthur Buehler, Victoria University of Wellington
Invisible boundaries in Religious Studies methodology
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Those in Religious Studies are aware from methodology classes how our discipline is clearly separate from theology. This may be termed (among other alternatives) the conquest of the rational study of religion over the mythical, pre-rational conception of religion. This is a visible boundary that separates theology from religious studies. However, the rational study of religion in the academy – like the mythical, pre-rational conception of religion – rejects the post-rational (mystical) direct experience of contemplatives (mystics). It is ironic because most primary religious scriptures are a result of some kind of post-rational experience (by rishis, prophets, contemplatives, or shamans). If religion were a plant then the vast majority of scholarship in the field of religious studies up to now has concerned the visible part of the plant, essentially neglecting its experiential roots [which like a plant are at least as vast as the visible part]. One would logically expect that scholars in religious studies who specialize in mysticism would be the pioneers in the experiential

inquiry of human consciousness. But they are not. This paper will investigate the apparently invisible boundaries that structure religious studies in this peculiar fashion.



Marg Coldham-Fussell, University of Waikato
"Quantum" spirituality: an exploration of contemporary spiritual interest in quantum theory
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In the captivating first sentence of the foreword to Brian Hine's *God's Whisper, Creation's Thunder*, John Davidson tells us that "The last century has seen a remarkable explosion in [humanity's] exploration of physical phenomena."¹ What I find interesting is that, simultaneously, there has also been an explosion in humanity's exploration of *spirituality*. This is evident not only in the fact that reference to the concept of *spirituality* has become increasingly prominent in studies dealing with religion, but also in the rising tide of spiritually-centred philosophies that are flooding contemporary Western society.

While this "New Spirituality" takes a myriad of forms, the area on which I will be focusing is the contemporary spiritual interest in quantum theory with particular reference to the way in which this is expressed in popular culture. In doing so, I will explore the contemporary spiritual trends that have informed this phenomenon and make reference to some of the ways in which it has been expressed. Within this context I will identify such key themes as "interconnectedness", "oneness", and "wholeness" that appear to be central to both the contemporary scientific and spiritual worldviews, and which reflect Heisenberg's observation that "the common [dualistic] division of the world into subject and object, inner world and outer world, body and soul, is no longer adequate."²

In taking this quantum journey "down the rabbit hole", I hope to address such questions as 'what is quantum theory telling us about our "reality"', and "how does this relate to the human spiritual endeavour?"



Bill Cooke, Auckland
The Secular Age and how to study it
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Charles Taylor's massive work *A Secular Age* (Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2007) has been hailed as a major intellectual event, one of those rare must-read books for anyone interested in the secularisation debate. He has also been praised as offering a uniquely civilised account of the contemporary situation which, as one reviewer put it, is 'so generous and understanding of all the possible positions, including those furthest from Taylor's own'. Comparison is occasionally made with the scholarship and civility of Taylor's

¹ John Davidson in Brian Hines, *God's Whisper, Creations Thunder* (Vermont: Threshold Books, 1996), p. v.

² Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Beyond* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971)

account and the supposed stridency and dogmatism of the so-called 'new atheists'.

How reasonable are these claims and comparisons? Are they even true? What is Taylor saying, and is his research as well grounded as his supporters claim? This paper undertakes an in-depth look at Taylor's principal thesis and examines the range and quality of research he has brought together to sustain it. Some suggestions about his view of history will be made.



Gregory W. Dawes, University of Otago

Entitlement and justification: towards a defence of evidentialism

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As a first step towards defending evidentialism, I articulate a distinction between doxastic entitlement and justification. Entitlement, as I understand it, is an ethical question, having to do with a person's behaviour in relation to belief. Justification, by way of contrast, is an epistemic question: an act of believing is justified if it stands in a truth-indicative relation to other known facts. The two are distinct insofar as justification is neither necessary nor sufficient for entitlement. Coupled with Jonathan Adler's conception of tacit corroboration, this distinction enables the evidentialist to answer the challenge posed by so-called "basic" (non-inferential) beliefs. In forming such beliefs, we tacitly rely on a range of assumptions—such as the reliability of sense perception—on whose epistemic status we rarely (if ever) reflect. But this does not mean that such beliefs are "groundless"? On the contrary, they have overwhelming empirical support. Here, too, our acts of believing rest, as they should, on adequate reasons.



Ron Fogel, University of Otago

Construction of identity in a dispersed Rainbow Family community in Byron Shire, Australia

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The Rainbow Family are an international affiliation of individuals who share common goals and interests and collectively describe themselves as a "family" or a "tribe". Gatherings of the Rainbow Family take place all over the world, and people who participate draw their inspiration from a variety of sources such as Indigenous peoples (for example Native American and Australian Aboriginal folklore) counterculture politics and music festivals, New Age spirituality, and egalitarian communities (such as the Hutterites and Israeli Kibbutz). The Rainbow Family claims to have no formal organisation or hierarchy, and its structure has been described by Niman (1997) as "intentional community anarchy".

Although members of the Rainbow Family are dispersed around the world, and come from a diversity of cultures, they share collective identity symbols, and cultural enduring occurs. In this paper I will use Spicer's (1981) concepts of "oppositional process", "sphere of participation", and "indoctrination of

new members" to describe how a dispersed community of the Rainbow Family living in Byron Shire, Australia constitute their cultural identity and maintain the boundaries between themselves and the outside world.



Anna Gade, Victoria University of Wellington
Contemporary Indonesian biography of the Prophet Muhammad
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Modern biographical literature about the Prophet Muhammad in contemporary Indonesia reflects current trends in Islamic religious outreach. Based on classical *sira* literature, some of the material recently published focuses thematically on the *dakwah* of the Prophet Muhammad. These sources develop models of theory and practice in the present by highlighting features of the authoritative prophetic model that relate to topics such as Dialogue, Interaction and Question-and-answer. This represents revitalized interpretation that blends classical text and theory with contemporary terms and concepts.



Michael Grimshaw, University of Canterbury
Regionalism or provincialism? Beyond the crisis in Religious Studies
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Religious Studies, here and abroad, is undergoing a type of mid-life crisis. Russell McCutcheon, amongst others, has raised central questions as to just what does the study of religion mean — and entail. While in *The Discipline of Religion* (2003) he categorizes his position as “an extended letter from a provincial” (xvi), is provincial necessarily the proper self-designation? Reading McCutcheon through Allen Tate’s 1945 essay *The New Provincialism* via a re-engagement with the Enlightenment roots of ‘religion’, this paper attempts to offer a way past the mid-life crisis informed by James Clifford’s observation (1997) that “‘Post-’ is always shadowed by ‘neo-’”.



Elizabeth Guthrie, University of Otago
Cambodian Buddhist painting during the late colonial period
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Since 2004, I have been studying the mural paintings in Buddhist temples in Cambodia and in the Mekong Delta region in Southern Vietnam. These murals portray the standard iconography (episodes from the life of the Buddha and the *dasajataka*) found in Buddhist temples throughout Asia. The techniques and styles of representation used by these Khmer artists reflect the political and social changes affecting Buddhists during the 20th century. They also demonstrate the existence of transnational routes of iconographic transmission in the region, and are thus important sources for understanding the developments that took place in what we now call “Theravada” Buddhism.

This paper will focus on a series of murals painted during the late colonial period (1930s – 1950s) at Wat Cetiya in Siem Reap province, at Wat Angkor Raj Borei in Tra Vinh province, Vietnam and Wat Prek Ampil, Kandal province, Cambodia. Comparisons will be made to more recent paintings ca. 2000. I suggest that the primary iconographic sources used by these artists are lithographs produced in Thailand during the reign of Rama 5. I conclude that despite efforts by the French colonial authorities and the subsequent governments of Cambodia and Vietnam to control and limit the influence of “foreign” Buddhism on religion, the presence of a stable and independent Thailand on Cambodia’s borders has had an important influence on Buddhists throughout Indochina up to the present day.



Ann Hardy, University of Waikato
Spirituality on sale: spiritual metaphors in advertising for state-owned enterprises

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In a mediated social environment characterised, Frederic Jameson claims, by a “flattening of affect”, contemporary advertisers and social marketers have to both dig deep and aim high to create an impact on the memories of audience members. A particularly useful and increasingly popular set of symbolic resources available for this purpose consists of images and motifs referencing spirituality, especially spiritualities of nature and human community.

This paper examines three sets of television advertisements from New Zealand: selling alternative energy sources, domestic airline travel and the services of the state television broadcaster itself respectively. The first two products have divergent connotations in respect of their environmental sustainability yet are treated similarly in terms of visual and aural style; employing metaphors of psychic, disembodied, travel to encourage emotional yearning for the idealised relationships between human beings and nature that they depict. The third set of advertisements, for the channel Television One, mobilises a multi-cultural national imaginary that merges media celebrities and ‘ordinary’ people in the acting-out of a country-wide quest to seek ‘enlightenment’, and in the process lays bare the paradox of utilising symbols of the transcendent for what are ultimately commercial purposes.

In researching the production and reception of these advertisements I seek to understand both the motivations and discursive choices of those who commissioned them and their expectations of audience response. These are compared with the meaning-making and evaluative activities of actual audience-members, with the aim of gaining a better sense of the lived social landscape in which these commodified discourses of spirituality circulate.



David Kim, University of Sydney
Being engaged as 'Your Mathētēs': the Thomasine Salome in the community policy
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The paper explores the socio-religious position of Salome interpreted in the Thomasine community. Each author of the Canonical texts regardless delivers the names of some women, providing very little information about them. The traditional scene denies the discipleship of the feminine characters in the context that women were only part of a large number of people followed Jesus, and that none of them were seen as the 'major actresses' in any of the narratives. The marginalisation of Salome is not excluded from the anti-feminine policy of the Canonical Jesus tradition. Is the contextualism continued in 'the Fifth Gospel'? If the Thomasine Salome does not belong to the company of onlookers in the crowd, how is this woman known to the Thomasine community? Does the feminine ideology of the early Christian community indicate any significant issue for the historical value of the text? The NHC 2. II, 43: 23–34 of *Logion* 61, with the apocryphal writing of the *Secret Gospel of Mark*, will argue a new theory of the Salome tradition in terms of the community policy, as well as its textual purpose in relation to the Thomasine-Q hypothesis.



Peter Lineham, Massey University, Albany
Can religion survive religious diversity?
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In this paper I analyse the history of religion as a marketable commodity, and ask whether religious diversity is necessarily bad for religious faith. I seek to analyse those models of religions which allow for competition between religious traditions, and acknowledge from the phenomenology of religion that some types of religion respond to competition more successfully than others, and that all religions are changed by the competitive context. I next seek to explore two historical contexts of religious competition within the Christian field. The first of these is Industrial England, and the rise of evangelical Nonconformity. The second of these was the change in 19th century rural settings from one community church to denominational diversity. Finally I analyse the current growth of diversity across different religious traditions, and to what extent this is in fact competition.



Paul Morris, Victoria University of Wellington
From liberal Christian theology to something else: a history of Religious Studies in New Zealand universities, 1960-2008
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This paper, originally commissioned for the festschrift for Sydney University's Professor Gary Trompf, traces the development of Religious Studies in New Zealand universities from the early 1960s to the present. The paper explores the relationship of the university study of religion to theology both within

and beyond the universities and examines the churches that supported its beginnings in all centres except Victoria. A number of different models of Religious Studies emerged during the 1970s with markedly different agendas and public profiles. The eighties and nineties saw the growth of students and staff numbers and the challenge to the by then established orders. The first section ends with a survey of Religious Studies departments/programmes today in New Zealand universities focussing on the pressures facing the 'discipline' and staff losses as the Humanities and Social Sciences are restructured across the country.

The second part of the essay looks specifically at the ways in which Religious Studies in New Zealand has changed over time and frames this discussion in its international context. Is Religious Studies in decline in New Zealand? What public role has Religious Studies played or might play in New Zealand? The paper concludes with a discussion of the possible futures of New Zealand Religious Studies.



Todd Nachowitz, University of Waikato
Quantifying ethnic and religious diversity in New Zealand: past and present census data and future projections
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Historically, Aotearoa/New Zealand has recorded numerous shifts in the composition of its human populations over time. Indigenous Māori were later joined by large numbers of European, Pacific Island and, more recently, Asian populations. Smaller numbers of Middle Eastern, Latin American and African populations continue to migrate to New Zealand. But while migration continues to have a significant impact on the cultural and ethnic landscapes of New Zealand, less attention has been afforded to its associated rise in religious diversity. This presentation briefly reviews historical census data on cultural and religious diversity, takes an in-depth look at recent census data on ethnicity and religious affiliation, and discusses current implications and future projections for religious diversity in New Zealand.



Douglas Pratt, University of Waikato
From religious fundamentalism to ideologies of terror: contemporary Christian extremism
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This paper will argue that the fundamentalism with which religious extremism is associated follows an identifiable ideological paradigm. In its religious mode, 'fundamentalism' is a complex phenomenon that can migrate from the relative harmlessness of an idiosyncratic belief system to a harmful reality of religiously driven and fanatically followed pathways of terrorist activity. I shall attempt to describe and critically discuss this paradigm, paying particular attention to contemporary forms of Christian extremism.

Eric Repphun, University of Otago

The crow was standing on the sky: the role of the esoteric in the fiction of Douglas Coupland

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This paper explores the role of the esoteric in the work of the Canadian novelist Douglas Coupland, best known for his seminal 1991 novel, *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*. Many of Coupland's novels turn on the discovery and exploration of a 'secret world just underneath the surface of our own world'. His characters find access to this secret world through a variety of means, some of which – ecstatic visions, for example – take on distinct echoes of traditional mystical and esoteric practices. However, the primary means of access is through the communal act of storytelling; for Coupland, economies of story and storytelling are a privileged form of communication that allow access to worlds of knowledge and experience that are inaccessible to other, more technological forms of information exchange.

Taking a cue from Arthur Versluis's recent book, *Restoring Paradise*, this paper argues also that Coupland's novels can be understood as contemporary representatives of a long tradition of esotericism in the Western world. Along similar lines, I wish to suggest that Coupland's work itself can be viewed as a medium for the transmission of hidden knowledge to the reader. More broadly, this paper addresses the main theme of the conference and claims that the study of contemporary literature and other forms of narrative popular culture is crucial for understanding the contemporary religious landscape.



Phramonchai Saitanaporn, University of Sydney, NSW

Theravāda approaches to mind cultivation

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Regarding Theravāda Buddhism, the mind can be developed by means of the purified, calm and undistracted mental states of *samatha* and the intelligent process of *vipassanā*. Despite their frequent appearance in the Buddhist scriptures, most scholars have not settled the exact role of *samatha* and *vipassanā* for the cultivation of mind. They are still divided over the question as to how *samatha* and *vipassanā* are related. This paper aims to determine the answer of this question for the Buddhist presentation of the way to liberation. The determination will rely on the exegetical issues of what kind of psychological states *samatha* and *vipassanā* are intended to produce, what is the relationship between these two types of meditative processes, and how the perfect release from all cankers is fulfilled in both processes of *samatha* and *vipassanā*.



Norman Simms, University of Waikato
The Brotherhood of the Penitentes' Holy Week rituals as festivals of blood
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Though the contemporary Penitentes in the southwest of the USA argue to be taken primarily as an orthodox Catholic community organization, mainly concerned with the social welfare and spiritual well-being of their fellows and their families, this cannot erase the history of the movement's origins and developments marginal to or sometimes in opposition with ecclesiastical rule and the phenomenology of their fundamental definition as participants in bloody acts of self-flagellation and crucifixion. In this paper I will focus on these acts as festivals of blood, place them in several pertinent historical and "rhetorical" contexts, and discuss the significance of these rites—showing how different they are from the popular, shocking and yet ephemeral bloody displays in Mel Gibson's *Passion of Christ*.



Chaisit Suwanvarangkul, University of Otago
About the body in Buddhism: the Dharmakāya
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The concept of *Dharmakāya* has been one of the most important themes of Buddhist thought, and one of the differences between the *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna* schools that leads us to examine the question of the *Kāyas* of the Buddha. The conceptual background to the *Trikāya* doctrine of Buddhism is eminent for its complexities. The *Dharmakāya* is considered to be the ultimate and is often linked with various terms for reality, such as *dharmatā*, *dharmadhātu*, and so on, and has always been regarded as a kind of Buddhist absolute. The purpose of this paper is to grapple with the notions that *Dharmakāya* introduces into Buddhism. It will probe the extent to which it is possible to defend the concept of *Dharmakāya* from a purely Buddhist view in terms of purely Buddhist philosophical principles. It argues that this will reflect a true understanding of the *Dharmakāya*. It introduces this view by discussing the concept of *Dharmakāya* in the text itself, and seeks to show in this way that the author does not think in simply monistic terms, but bases his philosophy from the ground up on entirely other principles. A "Buddhist" defense of *Dharmakāya* relies upon an explanation of the notion in terms of both action and practice.



Will Sweetman, University of Otago
Hyperreal Hinduism: the mūrti as simulacrum
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This paper is an attempt at interpreting the Hindu practice of image-worship. It begins by surveying accounts of the practice given by both Hindus and early European observers of Hinduism, and moves on to offer reasons for rejecting the modern Hindu apologetic for images as representations of the divine rather than divine. It concludes by examining whether conceiving the temple image (*mūrti*) as a third-order simulacrum, a copy without an original,

an image that is not an image, enables us to understand the worship of images without being forced into Christian or neo-Hindu understandings of it as either idolatry or symbolic worship of something else.



Christopher van der Krogt, Massey University, Palmerston North
Christians as a religious minority in contemporary Egypt
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Most Egyptian Christians are Copts, but there are significant representations of other Eastern and Western churches in the country. They probably account for between six and ten percent of the population, but Christians themselves typically cite much higher figures than Muslims do. Egyptian society is overwhelmingly Muslim, and religion is a strong marker of personal and communal identity. This places Christians in a complex position. While some feel they are unfairly treated, for example in the matter of building or restoring church buildings, others argue that all Egyptians suffer equally from the corruption and inefficiency of the state – or even that Muslims have a more difficult relationship with a government that is wary of religious enthusiasm. A more accurate view is that while Egypt's complex and inefficient bureaucracy encourages feelings of unfair treatment, freedom of religious practice in any given locality largely depends on personal relations between government officials and religious leaders. The presentation will be illustrated by photographs from a recent visit to Egypt.



Roel van Leeuwen, University of Waikato
An unholy alliance: Satanism, Nazism and Kerry Bolton
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New Zealand's most prolific, influential, and high-profile 'neo-Nazi' is undoubtedly Kerry Bolton. Having joined the New Zealand National Socialist party at age 14 in the early 1970s, Bolton has been actively involved in neo-Nazi, Nationalist and Nouvelle Droit parties and movements since that date. While today (2008) Bolton identifies himself as part of the Christian Right, between the late 1980s till the end of the 1990s Bolton identified himself a Satanist and it was during this period Bolton formed a Satanic Order, the Order of the Left Hand Path, that was to bring together a both Satanism and neo-Nazism in a coherent and articulate package. This paper will briefly outline the major elements in Bolton's Satanic/neo-Nazi synthesis and show a continuity of thought and philosophy from 1990 till today, illustrating that while his faith-identity has changed radically (from Satanist to Christian), his political centre remains unchanged.



Katharina Voelker, University of Otago
**Commonalities between H.G. Gadamer's Hermeneutics and Nasr Hamīd
Abū Zayd's Presuppositions for Modern Qur'ān Exegesis**
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To prove the existence of signs of modernization in Islamic text interpretation, this paper will present the exegetical criteria proposed by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and compare these with Hans Georg Gadamer's criteria for understanding in the more universal sense. Let's see whether there is a common spirit the Muslim and the Western scholar share and what potentials they reveal for further modification of Muslim thought.

The paper will show that both Gadamer and Abu Zayd take the hermeneutical act as a living dialogue. In addition, both understand dialogue as a creative act that can be regarded as interaction between human reason and texts, nature, music and art. Although Abu Zayd apparently continues to assume that the Qur'ān is a superior (to nature, art and music, etc.) code which is subject to human decoding, he shares with Gadamer the confidence that the human part in all processes of understanding is as important as the element (e.g. a text) to which the hermeneutical act is directed. This paper also seeks to open a discussion about the potential of applying "Western" hermeneutics to *ta'wīl* and *tafsīr*, in order to achieve an approach to the Qur'ān that supports a broad reconciliation of sacred scriptures with democracy, human rights, equal rights etc. Abu Zayd gives many good examples how such a reconciliation might take place, without ignoring traditional methods of Islamic text interpretation. In his hermeneutical criteria, practising interpretation as lively discourse becomes most important and resonates with Gadamer's non-method of hermeneutics. Nevertheless, Gadamer's concept of understanding seems broader, since he emphasizes the universality of hermeneutics due to its view that any human conversation can reveal ontological truths.



Rick Weiss, Victoria University of Wellington
The official authority of lost knowledge in Siddha medicine
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While secrecy has been a central feature in the transmission of siddha medical knowledge for centuries, the morality of secrecy in South India has dramatically changed since the beginning of the twentieth century. In Tamil-speaking South India and in South Asia more generally, secrecy as a mode of disseminating knowledge has undergone a radical change in value, from its consideration as a moral duty that keeps powerful knowledge in the hands of the good, to its regard as a selfish act that has led to the disintegration of a unified Tamil community. This paper will examine these shifting views of the obfuscation of medical knowledge, arguing that the function of secrecy as a strategy for garnering prestige is now served by another form of concealed knowledge, that is, Tamil medical knowledge that has been lost in the ravages of time.

Pamela Welch, Dunedin

Religious diversity and interchange in early and contemporary Dunedin: a kaleidoscope

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Dunedin was the centre of the Free Church settlement of Otago, founded in 1848 and it continues to exhibit, to a considerable degree, the character of a Scottish and Presbyterian city. From its beginning, however, settler religion in Otago has displayed diversity. A Methodist minister had arrived at Wakouaiti (Karitane), the settlement and whaling station on which the early Otago settlers were dependent for their supplies, as early as 1840. Anglicans were also already active in the area, as was a missionary of the North German Missionary Society. The discovery of gold in 1861 then brought with it large numbers of Irish and Irish-Australian miners and small communities of Jews, Chinese and Maronite and Orthodox Lebanese, each with their own form of religion. A variety of Protestant churches also opened their doors. Modern Dunedin has seen both change amongst existing religious bodies – Presbyterian churches now offering Samoan and Cook Island services, for instance or Anglicans services in Maori - and also a further increase in diversity, signalled by such developments as the opening of a mosque, a Coptic church, a (Tibetan) Dhargyey Buddhist Centre and the formation of many religious groupings with an ethnic base, Korean and Chinese Methodist churches, for example or Zimbabwean Pentecostals. This paper explores some of the complexities of relationship between these various bodies: their competition, co-operation and interchange.



Pushpa Wood, Rotorua

Face/s of Hinduism in New Zealand – a practitioner's perspective

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In the past 20 years, there has been an upsurge of temple building activity in New Zealand that also coincides with a great increase in the Hindu population in this country. This presentation will outline the current changes that are taking place in the local Hindu community and what is driving these changes. The presentation will also shed some light of the various types of religious activities personal and communal, the local community is being involved in and the impact this is having on the New Zealand society in general and the Hindu community to be specific.

