Introduction

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This volume honouring Victor Hayes is a collection of essays relating to the theme of multiculturalism and religion in Australia. Multiculturalism is a term variously understood by Australian authors, including authors in this volume. For some it is simply a neutral term referring to the social fact of peoples from diverse cultures living together - happily or otherwise - in the same country.

For others multiculturalism is a social ideal, a catchword for principles of social justice which promote the rights, worth and equality of groups from diverse ethnic and cultural traditions. Multiculturalism implies not only a tolerance but also approbation of other cultures as being worthy of equal promotion in society. This understanding of multiculturalism is associated with a demand, for example, to affirm Aboriginal Australian cultures by striking a genuine bi-cultural treaty between the indigenous and invading peoples of the land.

For others again multiculturalism refers to a form of social engineering as a political agenda. This concept of multiculturalism was first introduced into Australia by the Whitlam Government in 1972 and subsequently promoted by papers such as the Galbally Report of 1978 which asserted that each person should be able to maintain his or her culture without prejudice or detriment.

As a result of this and similar reports multiculturalism became a component of the educational program of the government in school and society. This program sought to implement government policy to enrich Australian society by the promotion of a variety of ethnic cultures within the constraints of existing Australian law.

Some would argue that, in spite of the rhetoric, the government multicultural policy was but a facade for assimilation. Ethnic groups were not given a genuine right of self-determination; their ethnic ways were tolerated as long as they did not challenge the core values and power centres of the dominant Australian society.

Others would contend that the infusion of diverse ethnic groups and a raising of consciousness about Aboriginal Australians brought about a valuable, if somewhat unexpected, transformation of Australian society. Progressively, the isolation mentality, the cultural cringe and the lingering colonial orientation of Australian society were challenged. Being forced to open their minds to peoples of other cultures, Australians were being freed from the narrow limitations of their past. Multiculturalism, as social engineering, was believed to be a form of liberation.

The subject of multiculturalism, however it is understood, takes on new dimensions when the question of religions or religious sub-cultures enters the debate. As a policy of the Australian Government multiculturalism seems to have been understood as a secular ideal. There still seems to exist in the minds of many Australian political and academic leaders the belief - or should I say the hope - that the religious component of culture is private. As policy multiculturalism has to do with public values; for Australian politicians in general religion belongs behind closed doors.

Religions are nevertheless part of the Australian culture. Religious sub-cultures are integral to the changing value systems of Australian society. Religions have influenced peoples' lives - for good or for ill - since the arrival of the first Europeans in this land. The religions of the Aboriginal Australians are now beginning to influence the thinking of segments of Australian society especially in the areas of ecojustice and spirituality.

An alternative ideology such as religious pluralism is hardly thinkable for the media, academia or the government of Australia. For multiculturalism as policy has tended to promote a broad tolerance without ever seriously considering the deeper commitments and religious beliefs practiced in the diverse subcultures of our society.

In this volume the significance of religious cultures and the issues they pose in the multiculturalism debate are brought into greater focus. Some of the articles tackle theoretical aspects of the debate, some analyse specific religio-cultural contexts or issues of society and some explore particular religious traditions in the context of the multicultural question. Together these essays provide an appropriate introduction to this subject for all those interested in the nexus between religion and multiculturalism.

I. Theoretical Framework for Mulitculturalism

The initial selection of papers in this volume explore a number of theoretical issues in relation to culture, multiculturalism and religion. These articles provide a theoretical framework for much of the discussion which follows in subsequent papers.

Robert Crotty

Robert Crotty presented his study as a 1991 Charles Strong Trust Lecture in Sydney. Crotty begins by exploring the meaning of culture. He follows Geertz in arguing that culture is basically an inherited system of symbols. Culture, however, is not static or deterministic, but dynamic and adaptable. Culture provides an ordered world in which both the group and individuals find meaning. Multiculturalism is a policy which seeks to preserve a variety of cultures in a given society.

Each religion is a cultural system providing order and meaning at points of existence where chaos threatens. Ultimacy is a symbolic representation of that order and meaning which reaches beyond everyday order and meaning. The individual in contemporary multicultural society is faced with a range of religious and secular world cultures which may have conflicting world-views. This diversity raises the possibility of religious pluralism where all religious cultures are acknowledged as variant but valid symbolisations of the Ultimate.

Into this discussion Crotty introduces the notion of a broad framework of values which may be shared by the dominant and minority cultures of a given society. In such a context assimilation seeks to gradually transform all minority cultures to fit the dominant mould. Separatism seeks to preserve protected enclaves of cultural groups. Multiculturalism, as an alternative, offers a policy of interaction between, and mutual enrichment of, both the dominant and the minority cultures involved. Religious pluralism offers an analogous policy of interaction.

Within the multicultural context ethnocentrism and religious exclusivism present formidable challenges. Ethnocentricity rejects the overarching framework of the multicultural society and is therefore a threat. Similarly, religious exclusivism, an assumed knowledge of the true and only valid symbol system, becomes both a tenet of faith and a strategy for cultural dominance. Both approaches lead to conflict. Where such approaches exist, the reality of a harmonious multicultural society may be a pipe dream.

Philip Almond

Philip Almond argues that religious pluralism rather than secularisation is the most pressing problem facing religion today. While the identity of Christianity was created, in part, by its encounters with other faiths, our modern understanding of religious pluralism only came with the European Enlightenment which gave rise to the notion of religions as entities definable outside the Christian economy and worthy of sympathetic enquiry.

Almond traces how Buddhism was discovered, or more accurately "created" by the nineteenth century scholars of the West, who assumed an imperial attitude of Western superiority. The problem we have with religious pluralism in the West today, contends Almond, is a legacy of this nineteenth century taxonomy of religions in an imperial colonial context. Almond's solution is to try and dissolve the problem of fictive entities like Buddhism and Christianity.

In so doing Almond highlights first the text-dominated way in which religions have been studied and thereby constructed. Religious life flourishes outside the text. Secondly, he points out the pluralism within religions which might suggest "Buddhisms" and "Christianities". Thirdly, he emphasises the close affinity that aspects of one religion may have with parts of another. And finally, he notes that religion is only one of the systems of discourse which determine our destiny.

Given these factors, argues Almond, there are no such things as Christianity and Buddhism but only the cumulative traditions so classified. The problem of religious pluralism is the conceptual order which we have imposed upon the world.

Vic Hayes

Vic Hayes' paper was given as a 1991 Charles Strong Trust Lecture in Sydney. He explores the universal phenomenon of syncretism, focusing especially on faithful syncretism as distinct from unfaithful syncretism. While syncretism is an aspect of all religions, it has generally been defined in negative terms. The term syncretism is derived from Plutarch who used it of Cretans who, though normally at feud and faction with one another, became reconciled and united whenever attacked by a common foe.

Modern usage derives from Erasmus and becomes synonymous with fusions of an illegitimate kind, a promiscuity of faith. The term came over into

Religion Studies from Christianity. Today a neutral meaning is being appropriated. Faithful syncretism is where the structure of faith is not compromised. Who then decides what is faithful syncretism? Is it those in power with control over the faith? Or is it the community of worshippers interacting within a multicultural context?

Morny Joy

Morny Joy explores some of the philosophical questions surrounding multiculturalism (with particular reference to religion) which she believes ought to be examined in the light of the Australian situation where non-Christian religions are still a symbol of otherness and difference which provokes fear, hatred, laughter or a shrug of indifference. She sees the issue of multiculturalism as a reworking of the old conundrum of "the one and the many".

She focuses especially on the recent contributions of Paul Ricoeur and David Tracy. She argues that the hermeneutics of Ricoeur, which moves beyond textual analysis to self-understanding and new ways of acting, forces us to recognise that "any attempt on our part to understand the other automatically involves us in the inextricable circle of self and other". The other, when allowed a claim on our attention, enlarges our perspective with regard to both thinking and acting.

Tracy, out of his experience of interreligious dialogue with Jews and Buddhists, is more specific in his expansive hermeneutic reading of otherness. He locates us in a post-modern climate where traditional formulae of our Eurocentric heritage, which pose problems of superiority and exclusiveness, are no longer applicable. Tracy's hermeneutic procedure demands "an attitude of openness to the other, a receptiveness that contains the genuine readiness to be persuaded by another's point of view". The other includes especially the voices of indigenous peoples, women and disenfranchised minorities in our midst. By merging elements of the mystical and prophetic, he seeks to offer an alternative model to handle the real issues of contemporary pluralism.

II. Multiculturalism in the Australian Cultural Context

While multiculturalism is supposedly characteristic of Australia today it is developing within a country which has traditionally been characterised by

various cultural features and traditions. These are significant for an understanding of contemporary multiculturalism and any attempt to consider religion, theology or morality in such a context.

Ian Gillman

Ian Gillman reflects on the culture of moralism, self-reliance and material reward as central to the religion of early Australia. The mysterium of religion receded into the ceremonial and lost any real significance as a cultural force within the church or Australian society. A contemporary journalist like Laurie Kavanagh can, almost in the name of God, issue a call to the churches to push the Gospel of "honesty" so as to bring out the good in all humans. Figures like Henry Lawson and leaders of the nineteenth century unionism echo the same theme to establish God's kingdom on earth by appealing to the ethics of true religion epitomised by mateship. This moralistic culture still dominates popular Australian religion today.

John Bodycomb

John Bodycomb utilises sociological data and social comment to challenge three basic assumptions about Australian society, namely, the primacy of Anglo-Celtic culture, the primacy of Anglo-Celtic religion and the primacy of Christianity itself. According to Bodycomb, Hawke's 1989 *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* implied a serious challenge to the normative status of Anglo-Celtic culture. The program was to ensure that all the people living in Australia were free from discrimination on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, religion or culture.

Bodycomb highlights how traditional Christian denominations have experienced an influx of ethnic Christian traditions which have challenged the primacy of the Anglo-Celtic heritage. The increase of major non-Christian religions, especially Islam, has begun to challenge the exclusivity of Christian truth claims. Bodycomb argues there is a need for information and education about other religious cultures than one's own. Freedom of religious and cultural expression are not just ideals of the 1989 National Agenda. Central to Christian faith ought to be the defence of others' freedom in a religiously plural society. Is the implication of this approach, as Bodycomb seems to suggest, Hick's belief that behind and beyond all forms of religion there lies the same higher reality?

Tony Swain

Tony Swain makes the claim that Aboriginal Australian religion "has recently been reinvented". Traditional features of a-temporal and non-cosmogonic Aboriginal religion have been transformed. Swain raises the question whether, with the long colonial dislocation of Aborigines, their new search to restore their ties with the land necessarily thrusts their religious thought towards temporality. The contemporary influence on Aboriginal people is as wide as their multicultural world.

Swain summarises the new macro-myth of Aboriginal religion as follows:

> Employing something of a Judaeo-Christian cosmic structure, Aboriginal people in rural and urban contexts speak of Eden-like Dreaming which endured for 40,000 years but which was defiled in 1788. The loss and theft - symbolised quintessentially by Captain Cook - was devastating, but salvation is possible, is in fact coming, through re-establishing contacts with place in both its social and geographical sense. This link is re-established by an unforeseen avenue of continuity - "blood" - which allows the Aboriginal spirit to rise re-born like a phoenix even though all around believe it delivered to ashes.

Swain then links this myth with a new understanding of the land as "Mother Earth", a term which only appeared in Aboriginal writing about a decade ago. Identity is now linked more with how Aborigines relate to the land (as Mother Earth) than to particular lands with which they have spiritual affinity.

Margaret O'Toole

Margaret O'Toole challenges contemporary Australian theology to "sniff the air" so as to find direction. In readiness for this sniffing she first clarifies the theological shift of the Catholic Church from its past exclusivist position linked, as it was, with an imperialist *modus operandi*.

O'Toole calls us to listen to Australian poets like Les Murray who direct us from the elite Holy Grail of medieval Catholicism to the Common Dish of multicultural Australian society. A Church who once justified its singular and absolutist ideas about the nature of the "other" from a patriarchal viewpoint now faces a ground swell of resistance and a proliferation of theologies.

In the Common Dish of theological and religious pluralism in Australia, O'Toole "sniffs" a "national ethic of humankind" and the Spirit as "the source of transforming society". One threatening ingredient is western secularisation

which may perhaps be overcome by uncovering the "god in hiding" down under the Australian spirit. Another ingredient is a consciousness that theology emerges from human suffering as exemplified by the Third World experiences of Aboriginal Australians.

Penny Magee

Penny Magee summarises her intention as a "wish to examine in a limited way some of Patrick White's 'unease' associated with religion and culture in Australia and argues that his dilemma in being Australian and religious is not an outsider's problem, but is precisely our own as contemporary Australians".

White's relation to Australia was one of dissonance, living at odds with those 'warm' Australians he called a 'colonial sheep race'. He was a foreign newcomer, a man who 'knew what it was like to be a reffo in Australia'. White's vision of Australia was in what it might be - not in the narrow bias against anything non-Celtic-AngloSaxon but in a true civilisation within which the spiritual values represented by all the cultures in Australia could join (without losing their various differences) to overcome leaders obsessed by money, muscle and machinery.

White also despaired of the sterility, vulgarity and bigotry of the Christian churches. He almost found God everywhere, a fallible God whose mistake was to make 'man'. For White searching for truth is religion; what matters is the quality of the search.

In the second part of her study Magee uses Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak to throw light on White's relationship to culture and religion. Spivak seeks to re-invent the margin as 'a critical moment rather than a de-centred moment'. White fiercely stresses his marginality but never with the intention of valorising the centre of comfortable consensus. White has opened up Australian culture like a text with multiple readings using his own experience of other cultures, marginality and paradoxical relation to the centre.

III. Multiculturalism and Religious Traditions

This group of papers deal with how particular religious traditions other than Christianity have functioned in multi-cultural Australia and the contributions they have made to the values of our multi-faith society.

Evan Zuesse

The study by Evan Zuesse seeks to understand the historical and cultural setting in which Jews lived their lives in Australia, describes the rise of the dominant form of Judaism in Australia during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, outlines its transformation by the immigration of refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe before and after the Second World War and explores some of the contemporary trends in Australian Jewish life.

In his comparison of early life in the USA and Australia Zuesse argues that unlike America, Australia did not begin as a diverse society made multicultural by a wide range of European immigrants. Australia was, and still remains, an extension of Great Britain; pluralism is not an Australian tradition. The Aussie egalitarian spirit was essentially how well one got along with mates. "No matter what a person's background, he or she was to be judged in terms of how well he or she merged with the group." This means a Jew could do well as an individual as long as he or she was not too Jewish.

Zuesse describes early Judaism in Australia as Anglo-Judaism. From the outset there was, for the small Jewish community, a strong desire to harmonise between Jewish affiliation and Australian allegiance. With the influx of more that 7,000 Jewish refugees from Nazi oppression between 1933 and 1939 and 18,000 in the decade following the war the character of Australian Judaism was slowly changed. The Orthodox traditions were affirmed and the socio-religious needs from birth to grave fully met through the promotion of these traditions in home, school, synagogue and community. The rise of Zionism expressed increasing Jewish solidarity, with Sir Isaac Isaacs being one of the last of the "old guard" to oppose it.

The study closes with a discussion of some trends in Australian Jewish life. Australian Jewry is strongly Zionist, blessed with strong leadership and has a highly effective day-school network. There is a strong commitment to multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Anti-semitic attitudes have already diminished in Australia. Left-wing Christian denominations are amongst the few groups that still have a big problem with Jewish topics. Overall, concludes Zuesse, the general tenor of Australian life for Jews is very positive.

Ajoy Lahiri

Ajoy Lahiri offers a sketch of Hinduism in Australia which covers the advent of Hindus and Hinduism to Australia and the various manifestations of

Hindu religiosity in Australia. Efforts of pastoralists to import "coolie labourers" from India early in the nineteenth century were opposed by the authorities on the grounds that Indians would introduce caste, lower wages, foster idolatry and "debase by their intermixture the noble European race". In spite of this official opposition individual Australians continued to bring Indian labourers to Australia.

The Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 meant an almost total prohibition of Indian immigration for many years. By then, however, there were apparently over 4,000 Hindus in Australia but little is known of their religious practices. After the Second World War the situation changed. In 1948 Indians were declared British subjects but not until 1966 could Indians apply for residential status in Australia.

Lahiri identifies five major varieties of Hinduism in Australia; denominational Hinduism on the basis of one's chosen deity, adherents of one of the Hindu reformers of the past, adherents of new religious movements, adherents of Yogic schools of various denominations and a group motivated by a strong sense of religio-political commitment to India. Hindu religiosity manifested itself in an organised way only in the mid 1970s. Lahiri outlines the rise of these organised Hindu bodies and their temples which he calls a "triumph of multiculturalism in Australia".

Rod Bucknell

Rod Bucknell traces the origins and development of Buddhist groups now active in Australia. He sees the appeal of Buddhism to Australians in its relative simplicity, its directness and its strong psychological focus on self-help toward enlightenment. Ritual tends to be de-emphasised in favour of meditation.

For the more recent Vietnamese Buddhists ritual and social activities are primary. Social centres promote and preserve Buddhist Vietnamese identity. Contrary to some assumptions, the Vietnamese Buddhists seem to find integration into Australian society easier than Vietnamese Catholics. Yet there seems to be little immediate likelihood that the various Buddhist groups will become united in Australia. Meanwhile Buddhism as a religion in Australia experiences a high level of tolerance as an exotic non-threatening presence.

Arnold Hunt and Bernard Clarke

Arnold Hunt and Bernard Clarke offer a cameo portrait of the multicultural character of the Uniting Church as a representative Christian denomination in Australia today. By 1989 sixty ethnic congregations had joined the Uniting Church. These include a wide range of groups including Tongans, Tamils, Koreans and Samoans. The Aboriginal Australian congregations have developed through a particular indigenous process into the United Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. The 1990 national consultation brought together representatives of 31 ethnic-migrant congregations who stressed enrichment of the Gospel in Australia though a diversity of cultural images and traditions.

IV. Multiculturalism, Education and Ethical Issues

The articles under this heading focus on the way multiculturalism serves as a catalyst to re-think educational and ethical issues in Australia today.

Basil Moore

At the beginning of his paper Basil Moore identifies his plan to
(1) present a specific understanding of racism,
(2) establish the extent of the silence about racism in Australian religion education curricula,
(3) argue for the issue of racism to be a core component of such curricula and
(4) develop a way of addressing this issue in religion education.

Moore argues that racism is "an ideology which has been constructed in the context of particular historical struggles to subject particular groups of people and to justify that subjection". Racism includes a false belief that there are races, a false belief that these are inherently different and that some are superior to others, and the rejection or subordination of the "different" or "inferior" races.

On the basis of the major religion education curriculum materials and 370 curriculum case studies over 15 years Moore contends that the study of racism is virtually absent and clearly not a priority item. This silence about racism in the curriculum, contends Moore, is itself inherently racist. He then argues for the inclusion of the study of racism on the basis of explicit directives from church authorities, the need to correct the falsified human record caused by this silence and the perpetuation of racism in the name of religion arising from the silence

about racism in the curriculum. Moore closes with some strategies of how to incorporate racism into the curriculum.

Eric Sharpe

Eric Sharpe contends that anti-racism is a defensive approach associated with the avoidance of insult of those made to feel "foreign" in the community. Racism, moreover, is not the functional opposite to multiculturalism. In contrast to Moore, Sharpe argues that race is "an accident of birth while culture is the sum total of all acquired characteristics and values". Anti-racism has become like "religion", a value system not to be questioned though rarely understood.

World religions, until the 1960s tended to be studied as museum pieces and rarely seen as living traditions alongside Christianity. The realignment of religions and cultures in the modern world during the past 30 years, however, means that Christianity is no longer the dominant religious power. Accordingly academia moved to pursue the "sympathetic" study of religion urging students "to judge Benares by the standards of Benares not those of Birmingham, Boston or Bendigo".

Multiculturalism as an ideology, argues Sharpe, is not ground in itself for introducing comparative religion. If a multicultural society aims no higher than peaceful co-existence the subject of religion may as well be omitted. For religion makes demands. It is divisive and discriminates between groups. Is it safer therefore to follow the secular path of avoidance? Not really! Sharpe wants to go beyond the impotence of anti-racism and the terror of syncretism to foster genuine dialogue between diverse religious traditions so that multiculturalism may be a constructive force in society.

Max Charlesworth

Max Charlesworth's paper was the 1990 Charles Strong Lecture given in Canberra. Charlesworth explores three ethical issues - bioethics, Aboriginal land rights and the Salman Rushdie affair - as arenas for considering what a multicultural context might mean for ethics.

Charlesworth poses the significant question of whether multiculturalism is essentially a secular concept assuming tolerance of other religions rather than any absolute relative claims to truth. He also challenges a static concept of culture, emphasising the "multi-cultural" within any culture, including for example, the Aboriginal Australian culture. It is modern western culture,

especially under the guise of the liberal ideal, which especially values cultural diversity and change.

According to the liberal ideal we all agree to disagree and there is no substantive consensus. In a traditional society we all agree to the same values. The Christian churches have, by and large, enhanced the spirit of liberalism. In Australia, argues Charlesworth, multiculturalism has so far not actually meant upholding this liberal ideal but merely "the toleration of ethnic diversity within a framework of a dominant culture which is white, English-speaking, with British legal and political institutions". The Aboriginal Australian culture has never been really accepted as a valued civilisation.

Tom Atherton, Nigel Hart and Genia Lech Hart

The study by Tom Atherton, Nigel and Genia Hart begins by clarifying the terminology they employ: foibles refer to individual mannerisms (moral values), ffoibles to the mores of historic ethnic groups, Foibles to the moral rules binding multicultural Australia and Fables to overarching ethical principles. This study argues that the Foibles and Fables espoused in Australia are "no more than Anglo-Celtic double ff ffoibles elevated by rhetoric into the multicultural centre of Australian life".

Much of the analysis in this article is a fruitful dialogue with J.J. Smolicz who distinguishes core values (= ffoibles) from overarching values (= Foibles/Fables). The core values of an immigrant group may tend to be fixed upon immigration; such values, however, are not singular but differ within that group by location, class and tradition. First generation immigrants tend to be preservationist, while later generations tend to adopt the "culture" of the new country. The possibility of third or fourth generation immigrants reactivating their heritage is therefore very limited.

It is suggested that so-called overarching values, such as parliamentary democracy, are often culture specific rather than universal. Such overarching values in Australia are "overpromoted Anglo-Celtic core values (ffoibles) writ large". A clash exists between Anglo-Celtic ffoibles such as freedom of religion or equality of women and non-Anglo-Celtic ffoibles such as Islamic theocracy and the subordination of women. Given these factors, Atherton, Hart and Hart ask what kind of multiculturalism is possible in Australia?

Garry Trompf

Garry Trompf contends that multiculture is a medium of the market and multiculturalism is in part a media product bearing marks of myth (à la Barthes). Mass communication has transformed the old narrative structures of myth into adventure films and the like which make possible the "epilepsy of allusions" in advertisements. Foreignness is domesticated by stereotypes of popular consumption. Advertising steals from myth suggesting the "legend behind the legend" even in jockey underpants.

Trompf argues that the evangelists of consumption desperately need myth as part of their repertory - that familiar archetype behind the pitch which viewers "see through". Advertising robs both myth and reality in the process by selling multiculturalism in superficial utopian images of collective humanity.

News-reporting is subjected to a similar critical appraisal. The distortions which arise from the pressure-packaging of purported "truth" include sensationalism, invention and suppression. Who, for example, learnt that Gorbachev announced to the seceding republics of the USSR late in 1991 that a new unity was only possible in the name of Jesus Christ?

The media has domesticated the socio-political ideal of multiculturalism. For the liberals multiculturalism remains a utopic myth on which the media feeds. The media, however, fails to relay what is actually happening in the world of ethnic diversity. His study, concludes Trompf, isolates "the myth that reality is a series of undigested media reports made with assiduous speed by a smart team that grabs and sells facts when both this prevalence and the utopic myth should be radically reconsidered".

V. Multiculturalism and the Biblical Text

The final selection of articles concerns questions raised by multiculturalism as the context for interpreting sacred texts.

Ed Conrad

Ed Conrad's study on re-reading the Bible in a multicultural world challenges the guild of historical criticism whose approach has dominated Biblical studies for several generations. The task is no longer to tame the Bible so that it is familiar literature but to read it as "other" addressed to an alien world.

A normative reading is no longer possible; there are many readings from diverse cultures and orientations which all deserve to be heard. Nor is the Bible the absolute authority; in a multi-cultural world other sacred texts also have an authority to be recognised. The expert reader who hears the "other" voice from the past also has a responsibility to evaluate that voice in terms of the contemporary situation. The key question which remains in a multi-valent world is the norm or criteria by which this evaluation is made.

Norman Habel

In my own paper I recognise that the context of the current land rights debate influences my hermeneutic. Following Conrad I attempt to isolate the ideological viewpoint of the Abraham narrative cycle as one addressed to an implied audience in a distant and alien past. The force of the ideology I discern in the text is not dependent on a precise historical identification of the audience but can be ascertained from a close literary analysis of the text as a social document.

The pivotal features of this ideology can be summarised as follows:

(a)   a sense of the land as the prior locus of God's presence discovered by the patriarchs in their travels

(b)   an unconditional entitlement to the land promised to the common people represented by Abraham; this promise was understood as a basis for future control of the land

(c)   a perception of the land as the centre and source of economic and political blessings for the peoples of the promised land and the extended land, the earth

(d)   a policy of promoting these blessings from the land through peaceful strategies of treaty, cooperation and justice

(e)   a respect for the culture of the existing peoples of the land, including their customs, deities and treaties.

I close by explaining some of the implications of this ideology. Why, for example, was the Joshua model more appealing to our invading ancestors than the Abraham model? And why were the ideals of the Abraham model so easily suppressed? After all, the friendly immigrant model of Abraham incorporates

genuine respect for the laws, customs, religion and space of the existing peoples of the land: Abraham acquires land by following the legal customs of the Hittites, acknowledges the god of Salem, deals fairly with the king of Sodom, finds God already located in the land among the existing peoples, including the Philistines, and makes treaties and agreements where there are disputes.

Anne Gardner

Anne Gardner seeks to illustrate the movement from a multi-cultural to a mono-cultural society in ancient Israel by tracing the topic of intermarriage. She discusses various legal rulings against inter-marriage, especially those in Ezra-Nehemiah.

Gardner also explores the significance of several cases of intermarriage, including those of Joseph and Moses. Some accounts view intermarriage as wrong while in others intermarriage is acceptable. Those texts which affirm foreign marriage belong to an early period. Later texts like Chronicles delete references to the foreign wives of David and Solomon. Solomon's Egyptian wife is located outside the sacred city.

Exclusive worship of Israel's God led to a rejection of close relations with other peoples, especially marriage. Gardner concludes that early Israel was not homogeneous in origin; it welcomed and lauded various ethnic groups. Movement towards exclusivity and fear of the non-Israelite was a gradual development of late Israelite history.