

Gadamer, Play, and Interreligious Dialogue as the Opening of Horizons

Paul Hedges

This paper explores the potential use of Gadamer's hermeneutical concept of play as a tool to understand and explore interreligious dialogue. In particular it brings this into a discussion about interreligious dialogue understood as theological or spiritual encounter and exchange, especially in the form of Comparative Theology. Thinkers like David Tracy and Ludwig Wittgenstein are engaged for their related discussions, while Gadamer's own concept of the Fusion of Horizons, which it is argued is best expressed as the Opening of Horizons in this context, is used to show how and why such dialogue is justified in hermeneutical theory. It is argued that play provides a useful model both for understanding the seriousness of interreligious dialogue but also how it stands apart from yet elides with many traditional perspectives within religious traditions.

Keywords: Hans-Georg Gadamer, interreligious dialogue, hermeneutics, Ludwig Wittgenstein, play, fusion of horizons, comparative theology

Introduction

In this paper I will explore a number of principles from Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy to assess their use and applicability within interreligious dialogue. One of these, the fusion of horizons, is well recognised within dialogue studies as a useful tool and so its employment and applicability within interreligious dialogue should not surprise us. However, I will suggest that in this context we need to rethink the Gadamerian concept, certainly at least the way it is expressed, so that we do not speak of a 'fusion' of horizons, but rather an 'opening' of horizons. I will explain this further as we proceed. The other principle I want to employ is one that may not at first sight seem so relevant, which is play. This he sees as a metaphor or model that may be suitable for certain areas within the human sciences, and I will argue that it is particularly applicable to interreligious dialogue. This will pick up a usage that has been used but not expanded upon by David Tracy (2010; for a fuller discussion on Gadamer, Wittgenstein and play in Tracy's thought more generally see also Andrejč 2016, 150–2, and Tracy 1981, 113–14).

Paul Hedges is Associate Professor of Interreligious Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He researches, teaches, and publishes widely in Interreligious Studies, and also in both Theology and Religious Studies. Current research and writing projects include the encounter of religion and atheism, intercultural hermeneutics and interreligious encounters, Comparative Theology, and the interreligious landscape of Singapore.

In using the term interreligious dialogue I am potentially invoking a huge swathe of different types of activity, often performed for different purposes. For instance, a common typology of dialogue is fourfold: the dialogue of theological exchange; the dialogue of religious experience; the dialogue of life; and the dialogue of activism (see Race 2008, 161–3). Jeannine Hill Fletcher meanwhile distinguishes between parliamentary-style dialogues, activist-type dialogue, and narrative-type dialogues (Fletcher 2013; for some other ways of dividing types of dialogue see also King 2011, 101–2, and Moyaert 2013, 201–04). The type of dialogue I will be discussing here is that which presupposes what can be called a learning encounter with the religious Other, and so may fit either into the dialogue of theological exchange or religious experience, and perhaps more readily into Fletcher’s narrative type rather than the parliamentary style. Further, I will make particular reference to Comparative Theology, which can be seen as a type of interreligious dialogue (see Clooney 2013), although my discussion is not limited to this practice. I will explore this further in due course.

I will proceed by initially offering a brief background discussion on the employment of Gadamer in interreligious dialogue. This will help set the stage for the use I will make of his thought within this context. Next, I will engage in a close reading of what Gadamer has to say about play in *Theory and Method*, intertwining within this discussion some points and insights about the role and nature of play within religion. This will draw from across several religious traditions and so open up a dialogic aspect of the paper. The following stage will be to discuss the concept of the fusion of horizons, which as noted I will suggest that we interpret as the ‘opening of horizons’. This will be related to the previous discussion, exploring how the concepts from the religious traditions discussed may potentially be employed in the dialogic encounter between them. The paper concludes with some discussion about further areas for exploration and the use of Gadamer’s thought in interreligious dialogue.

Gadamer and Interreligious Dialogue

That Gadamer is seen as a useful theorist in dialogue studies seems well established (e.g. Gill 2015, while issue 2.2 of the *Journal of Dialogue Studies* explicitly mentions Gadamer as a theorist to be addressed in its call for papers on ‘Dialogue Ethics’). Further, his concept of the ‘fusion of horizons’ is already employed within dialogue theory including interreligious dialogue (Demirezen 2011). However, we should note that there are some dissenting voices. At least one scholar has directly argued that his thought cannot be used within interreligious dialogue (Krieger 1991). Moreover, my arguing that he can be used in relation to spheres like Comparative Theology seems to go against Gadamer’s own injunctions that Christian theology resists hermeneutics (Gadamer 1979, 295, 330–1, for a commentary see Eberhard

2007, 287). What may have seemed a straightforward and natural employment is therefore complicated. I will suggest why we may employ Gadamer in this context through two main avenues. First, I will contest Gadamer's understanding of theology and Christianity. Second, I will point to the considerable number of prominent theologians and theorists of interreligious encounter who have argued that hermeneutics is relevant and useful.

To begin, Gadamer seemed to have an essentialist understanding of Christianity as a *sui generis* field and argued for a Barthian understanding against liberal theology. That is to say: Christianity is Revelation, not a humanly mediated realm (Gadamer 1979, 463, and Eberhard 2004, 2007). Both from the perspective of historical analysis and from the principles of hermeneutics which Gadamer sets out, whereby all of our understanding and interaction with the world are within the hermeneutical field, such an understanding is untenable (see, for instance, on the historical construction of our theological identities, Hedges 2010, 30–44; on the way politics and the imbrications of power informed the development of Christian theology, Woodhead 2004, especially 9–60). Further, I would suggest it is also bad theology; however, this is something discussed very much in the second point, to which we now turn.

As regards our second point, a number of prominent theologians have suggested that hermeneutics, especially that of Gadamer, provides the required tools to understand the way that Christianity not only may, but does, engage with religious Others. Space will not permit us to argue thoroughly, so I shall simply indicate some main points; nevertheless, the range of references given should indicate the solid foundations of the argument. First, it is clear historically that Christianity is not a 'pure' tradition but has always learnt from, and engaged syncretically with, other religions; as such, Christian theology is, of its very nature, interreligious (an argument and survey of some key literature can be found in Hedges 2010, 33–4, 38–9, 186–7). Second, although in the contemporary context a number of theologians have taken up the argument that each religion must be understood in its own particularity, and so they cannot be compared and engaged, this has been substantially (even overwhelmingly) undermined by a range of theological, philosophical, and historical critiques (see, for two of the primary examples, Hedges 2008, Moyaert 2011). Third, the actual encounter of religions in contemporary theological exchange (see, for instance Clooney 2010, Knitter 2009, Schmidt-Leukel 2009) has been shown to be well theorised by hermeneutics, especially that of Gadamer. Theologians such as Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (2000), Marianne Moyaert (2014), and Tracy (2010) have taken up this issue. Indeed, the direct applicability of Gadamer's hermeneutics to Comparative Theology has also been argued (Hedges 2016b). As such, against what may have been Gadamer's own

insistence that hermeneutics cannot be applied to theology, we find a plethora of arguments suggesting not only that it is well founded, but also extremely applicable. Certainly Tracy has suggested that Gadamer's thought may be the most compelling contemporary philosophy to analyse these issues (Tracy 2010, 4). I would also note that in his later work Gadamer has also suggested that interreligious dialogue is necessary and helpful and in 'Dialogues in Capri' (Gadamer 1998) he argued that the West could learn from its encounter with what are seen as Asian religions. While he may not necessarily see this directly as an encounter with Christianity, the possibility does seem potentially opened up within his thought.

Gadamer and Play in Interreligious Perspective

We move here into an area that Gadamer discusses at some length, which is 'play'. However, this concept is not often featured in discussions of dialogue studies. (It is not entirely neglected, however, as Vessey discusses it as an aspect of dialogue but in relation to interpreting art, while Vilhauer also suggests we can see all human interaction/dialogue as a form of play, see Vessey 2000, Vilhauer 2010, 49ff.) For Gadamer, play is something which in its non-seriousness, but also state of intensity, is a suitable metaphor or model for at least some aspects of the human sciences. We will here, more or less, follow his discussion with commentary as needed, especially as we approach interreligious topics. Gadamer tells us that while 'we play "for the sake of recreation", as Aristotle says', yet '[i]t is more important that play itself contains its own, even sacred, seriousness' (Gadamer 1979, 91). One reason for this 'seriousness' of play is that it enwraps the player within it so it becomes its own self-contained world. Or, to use a common phrase, we find Gadamer telling us that play's purpose is fulfilled only if the player 'loses himself in his play' (Gadamer 1979, 92). That is to say, as when we watch children play, their delight is in part at least in being in a world of their own creating. Therein the rules follow the rules of the game not those of the regular world. Here I suggest we may usefully bring to mind Wittgenstein's discussion of games in the context of his own reflection on language games (Wittgenstein 2009, 7).¹ In the game, according to Wittgenstein, there is an internal and self-ordering logic in which certain moves make sense in one game, but do not necessarily make sense in other games with their own logic, or rules. Importantly, for Wittgenstein, we can locate games and know them when we see them. However, he notes that given their inherent diversity, we may still ask: how can we define them in a meaningful way (Fogelin 1995, 112–3)? This is relevant to us here on two grounds. Firstly, Wittgenstein's thought on language games has

1 I am thankful to Gorazd Andrejč for helping me think through my usage of, and explain more clearly what I have to say about, Wittgenstein. In particular pointing out that I should discuss the fact that both are appealing to the same common term in German.

been applied to religion, especially as it relates to interreligious encounters. This raises the question as to whether the rules of one religion can be applied to another. Can the conversation take place? Pursuing this question would take us outside the remit of this paper, but it has been argued that Wittgensteinian principles justify interreligious dialogue (see Andrejč 2016, Hedges 2002, 2008, Moyaert 2011). Secondly, dialogue may itself be seen as a game in that it has particular rules and etiquette. Of course, different forms of dialogue will use different rules; hence with Wittgenstein we must recognise the particular game that is being played. We will refer to this further below. With relation to Gadamer, we need to be aware that within dialogue it is necessary to become immersed within the practice; hence we see the connection to his ideas of its seriousness in which we can become 'lost' as we engage. Interreligious dialogue may then be likened at this level to Gadamerian play, helpfully seen as well as a Wittgensteinian language game. It is worth mentioning here as well that play and game both refer to the same German term, *spiel*, with the different translations reflecting varying usages and meanings of that term in the original language. As such, we are still reflecting upon the same Gadamerian term, and so we could talk about the play of language instead of language games and the way that rules apply in one act of playing which do not apply in another. This, again, may be important for thinking about dialogue as play, for as we have noted there are many types of dialogue, and as discussed further below the aims and rules of one may not apply to another. Either way, to reflect with Gadamer or Wittgenstein on dialogue as play, or game, is to realise that we must enter into the logic and rules of the activity and become immersed (lost) within it to be truly dialogic practitioners.

Turning to some other aspects of what Gadamer says play involves, one of these is the 'primacy of play over the consciousness of the player' (Gadamer 1979, 94). This relates to what we have said about entering into the world of play, such that in a useful turn of phrase Gadamer also says 'all playing is a being-played' (Gadamer 1979, 95). That is to say, we may become lost in fascination as we are taken over by the game itself, and if played fully we live within the game world; in Wittgensteinian terms we inhabit the language game. In terms of dialogue, as noted above, we must become fully engaged in that activity as it presents itself to us. We are reminded here of Gadamer's words that we do not so much speak language, as it speaks us (Gadamer 1979, 421). This is because each refers to a whole world of meaning, a form of reasoning that shapes and informs the way we behave, act, and understand. Importantly, because play represents not just a small, trivial, sideline to life, but rather in the playing itself it can become the whole and needs no external justification. In addition to this, we should mention Gadamer's notion of the medial nature of play, something he repeats in several places (Gadamer 1979, 93, 94). While some scholars strongly stress mediality as

a defining quality not just of Gadamer's concept of play, but of his philosophical hermeneutics overall (most especially Eberhard 1999, 2004), this seems to overplay the occasional mentions found here. This is not to say that the emphasis given, on the grammatical concept of the middle voice, does not highlight an important element of Gadamer's thought. Nevertheless, it is not essential to take mediality beyond its occurrence in play and use it as a determining concept. With that said, the concept of the medial is connected by Gadamer to *spielen*. Commenting on this, Gadamer says play 'represents an order in which the to-and-fro motion of play follows of itself' (Gadamer 1979, 94). That is to say, between an active (sense of agent as doer) and passive (acted upon) play is an event in which both the player and the play (and other players) co-create the play. It is medial, neither (or not solely either) active nor passive, but part of a middle place. The player does not 'actively control' the play because she is within the rules; at the same time the very play is also constituted simply because there is a player willing to play and who is also involved in determining and potentially changing those rules. Therefore, the player is not simply passively receiving the game. In relation to hermeneutics as a whole, it can be suggested that this mediality is related to understanding because any interpreter is both receiving (taking in information) and creating (developing an understanding). Likewise, in relation to dialogue, it is noted that this has a grammatical medial nature because the activity 'to dialogue' is not determinative of the dialoguers; further, neither does either partner control the dialogue, rather it is a co-created activity. As such we can speak of all understanding and dialogue as medial (see McCormack 2014, 56–7). Nevertheless, it is not a defining Gadamerian concept developed at length; moreover, for Gadamer it is seen as removed in the move from play to art (Barthold n.d.). But it both usefully highlights an aspect of hermeneutics, and also for our purpose here shows a connection between play and dialogue: both are events which are neither directly active nor passive, but rather exist in a middle place. It concerns our 'being-played' or engaging in a dialogue.

Turning to another aspect, for Gadamer, play is something outside of the 'normal seriousness' of the world and its work-a-day habits and routines, almost a counter or reversal. Indeed, such routines of work are inhabited by a goal driven, even mechanistic rationale (here we may usefully bring to mind Foucault's analysis of the mechanisation of the body and modes of work in the modern age as part of his archaeological enquiry into the attitudes we have towards the body, see Foucault 1986, 173–89; we may also invoke Marx's critique of capitalist modes of production, see Marx 1985, 77–87; or less politically Ruskin's reflections on art and production, see Waithe 2015, 264). This routine can be said to be instrumental in its structure and ordering so that it has analogies to the natural science model which he is seeking an alternative to. For Gadamer, setting out into the world of play, like the sacred in its technical meaning, it is something set apart, and so denotes

‘a closed world without transition and mediation over and against the world of aims’ (Gadamer 1979, 96).² Countering, therefore, a market-driven, quantitative-assessment-based rationale of production and readily counted and graded outputs, we are offered play. However, not as a soft and purposeless alternative, but as a world with its own different ordering and meaning: ‘The movement which is play has no goal which brings it to an end; rather it renews itself in its constant repetition’ (Gadamer 1979, 93). In Christian theological terms it may be said to be analogous here to the liturgical calendrical system, where the year, although having goals and highpoints, does not reach a manufactured and gradable output, but rather finds value in the fact that it will be repeated, and the rounds and seasons will come and go, and come round again (for some reflections on time in liturgy and theological perspective, see Tillich 1968, III, 339–52, Williams 2000, 45–7, 51–2, 55–8). Like the *yuga* system of Hinduism (Kloetzli and Hilltebeitel 2007, 567–70), where the *yugas*, ages or epochs, of the world repeat the processes of creation, preservation, and destruction of the world through countless aeons and cycles, the aim is not in the operationalised commodity but the play, the *lila*, of the deity, be that Vishnu, Krishna, Shiva, Kali, or another divine entity (on *lila* see, Lipner 2010, 170, 279–83; on the cosmic cycle as *lila*, see Flood 1996, 112–3). Even before we come to speak about interreligious dialogue then, we can see that play has clear analogies and linkages with certain religious conceptions of time and activity. It should be noted, though, that although speaking of this as a counter or reversal, we should not envisage it as an antithesis or opposite, rather it exists as a relational concept. It is capable of offering a reversal because it is in relationship to the ‘normal seriousness’ of the world, not utterly divorced from it. This point is developed further below.

The above raises questions as to what we mean by dialogue, especially as it occurs between religions. On the one hand, interreligious dialogue may be undertaken for clearly mundane or strategic purposes, that is to say for social cohesion, peace building, or greater mutual understanding (see Knitter 2013, Kadayifci-Orellana 2013). These are certainly important aims for society and for interreligious dialogue; nevertheless, when understood as play I contend that we are dealing with different

2 It should be noted that there is much contestation around terms such as ‘sacred’ and even ‘religion’ within the academic study of religion, especially regarding whether they usefully engage any category that can be spoken of across cultural and linguistic boundaries. For instance, the sense of the sacred as ‘set apart’ seems to go against the very everydayness of much of what we typically classify as ‘religious’ in certain contexts. As this paper is written primarily from and into a Western context where a Christian employment and heritage gives meaning to these terms, and as they stand in Gadamer, I will employ them here, however, with due recognition of their problematic nature. (On such disputes, in relation to interreligious dialogue, see Hedges 2010, 64–87.)

areas of dialogue. In the well-known fourfold typology, playful dialogue would fit naturally into the dialogue of theological encounter as well as into the dialogue of religious experience. The famous Snowmass Dialogues would be one example of the kind of dialogue I am thinking of (see Bryant 2009, 87–99). That is to say, it is conducted for no other purpose than for further mutual understanding and development. It is an activity with its own logic and internal purpose and rationale. Indeed, we must consider that some of those who have engaged in such dialogue speak of themselves even leaving behind their old religious tradition or identity, crossing over into another religion, and then returning (Knitter 2009, 217). Such a logic and activity may certainly be at odds with the mainstream strictures of the religious tradition to which a person belongs, and so it becomes an act with its own internal rhythms. Of course, differing from child's play, areas like Comparative Theology (as noted this may be spoken of as a form of interreligious dialogue) aim to return to the home tradition and enrich it. Hence it will not stand alone and apart with no influence on the real world (see Clooney 2010, 111–4, 154–62), although it is well known in childhood studies that play is not simply 'downtime' but actually one of the most important tools and periods for learning. Therefore, I do not offer my contrast with child's play as an absolute rule; rather, at this level, play becomes a time of deep and intense learning, but outside of the usual structures such that it can return and enrich the other times (Whitebread 2012).

Returning to Gadamer, the connection of play to religion is indeed one that he makes himself, noting the relationship between children's play, and animal's play, and also 'the sacred plays of the religious cult' (Gadamer 1979, 93, citing J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens, Vom Ursprung der Kultur in Spiel*, 43). In German he further links another usage of the term *spiel*, an original meaning as 'dance' (Gadamer 1979, 93). This again relates to another form of recreation, or play. Further, for dance or play, it works not to any utilitarian end by, in, and for itself. We may note today that play and recreation is often linked to utilitarian ends, so that one goes to the dance class or yoga as part of a keep-fit regime and so the purpose of dance is no longer the dance itself but to keep fit. Likewise, meditation or Tai Chi may be used by certain individuals or companies as stress-release mechanisms to boost worker satisfaction, and levels of productivity – even play becomes commoditised in what may be a hyper-mechanisation of Foucault's theory (see Carrette and King 2004). Dance, again, has distinctively liturgical connotations, whether this be in shamanic rituals or the stylised arrangements of the Catholic, Orthodox, or Anglican liturgies. Extending this to think about interreligious dialogue, a connection is known between Shiva and Jesus as Lords of the Dance. For instance, the well known Christian hymn 'The Lord of the Dance' was inspired by its author having a statue of Shiva Nataraja (literally the Lord of the Dance), on his desk (see Hedges forthcoming). Here, however, I would like to extend this reflection

to a figure like Kali. Certainly it can be hard to comprehend the devotion to this benevolent mother, especially in her 'awe-ful' aspect, as in any way linked to a purely utilitarian or commoditised assessment:

Ever art thou dancing in battle, Mother. Never was beauty like thine, as, with thy hair flowing about thee, thou dost ever dance, a naked warrior on the breast of Siva.

Heads of thy sons, daily freshly killed, hang as a garland around thy neck. How is thy waist adorned with human hands! Little children are thy earrings. Faultless are thy lovely lips; thy teeth are fair as jasmine in full bloom. Thy face is bright as the lotus-flower, and terrible is its constant smiling. Beautiful as the rain-clouds is thy form; all blood-stained are thy feet.

Prasad says: My mind is as one that dances. No longer can my eyes behold such beauty, (Zaehner 1988, 146)

We may note here that the ferocious aspects of the Goddess represent her, in part at least, as creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe. All life and death is in her hands and so she represents the natural cycles and flow of the universe. This of course happens within the dance and so it is both play, dance, and recreation, or we may say here that her *lila* is also re-creation (see, Flood 1996, 112–3, specifically on Kali's *lila*, see Brubkaer 1995, 208). What applies here to Kali may on another level be said to be true of other forms of play, or recreation: the activity is the means whereby we are re-creating as renewal. Here, it is the game that is important, for it renews. The subject of the game is not so significant. What matters, if I may extend Gadamer's thought here, is that the importance comes about because of the player who plays and reaches the end of play through the playing. Which, as we have said, is not a goal except in as far as it is recreation, or here re-creation. This, indeed, is where I think we see a link, beyond the religious and theological aspect of play. Certainly for some forms of interreligious dialogue, where learning from the other is intended, as with Comparative Theology but also Scriptural Reasoning, it may be spoken of as play in the sense discussed here because it is involved in the act of re-creation of tradition (see Clooney 2013, Moyaert 2013). Its end is itself as part of the 'serious play' wherein one does not work for utilitarian ends but for the becoming of things anew. In this sense we may say that all interpretation, or translation (here linking us to discussions of hermeneutics in relation to interreligious dialogue, see for instance Moyaert 2014, 121–2, 143–50), is play because it is the act of re-creation. Yet, in as far as it reaches no final end, it is not reducible to the commoditised measurable output, but is continually open to the cyclic renewal. (See the discussion on religious time above.) I say 'no final end' because it is increasingly recognised in interreligious relations, interreligious dialogue, Comparative Theology and similar areas that the aim is not (as some

nineteenth-century and early advocates seemed to assume) to reach a final end in the creation of a new religion, or the final synthesis of all religions, instead, we can only expect a journey of further development and mutual learning (on the contrast of the so-called 'Old' and 'New' Comparative Theologies, see Nicholson 2011, Hedges 2012; on issues on mutual learning, see Hedges 2010, 243–52).

A final aspect of Gadamer's reflection on play also needs to be developed here, which is when he says that 'play is representation'. By this he means that, like a theatre, the play is 'representing for someone' (Gadamer 1979, 97). Here, I am not entirely sure that I agree with Gadamer. Certainly in child's play the young child, as he says, can be 'lost in a game' such that even if aware of others around, the play is for the sake of the play itself. As such not all play has this form of representation, and Gadamer actually argues that in general games are not aimed at an audience (Gadamer 1979, 97–8). Indeed, he even says that games and play are threatened by the loss of their character by becoming a 'show', even if the theatre is a 'closed world' rather than widely open (Gadamer 1979, 98). However, I think that we need to consider different forms and the nature of play. While one can play for oneself, as a child does, at other times the child will also play for, or 'perform' in front of, their parents or others as an act of play. Although, in show, there is presumably a danger of play being done too 'self-consciously', its meaning becomes other than for the play of the game itself and so has no meaning of recreation or being within its own world. But this acting out in front of parents or others, surely, is no less play for the child? Indeed, play is also very often with another and so the act of representation is very often an integral part of the play because one is acting out before another who is also part of the play. Here both share a role in the medial (re-)creation or nature of the playing. Gadamer makes a distinction, however, saying that if play is done for another then it becomes something else, it moves from 'play' to 'art': 'Artistic presentation, by its nature, exists for someone, even if there is no one there who listens or watches only' (Gadamer 1979, 99). I am not sure that Gadamer's distinction is maintainable, and relies upon a rather idealised representation of art as set out here: 'I call this development, in which human play finds its true perfection in being art, "the transformation into structure"' (Gadamer 1979, 99). Nevertheless, despite my reservations about the sustainability of Gadamer's linguistic distinctions, I believe we see something valuable in this discussion, which is about play being for, at least potentially, another. Certainly, as I have indicated, interreligious dialogue – especially as Comparative Theology – is generally seen as having to relate to its home tradition, and so is done in some sense as something that is performed for another (see Clooney 2010, 111–4, 154–5). As such it is perhaps always done with the intention of an audience in mind, the playful re-creation of tradition is not part of that tradition unless it becomes received and reflected upon. Indeed, even if rejected by much of the mainstream tradition it still becomes part of that tradition and its development and self-interpretation.

I would like to address one potential criticism – that in understanding play, and theology, as something set apart from the mechanised work-a-day world it becomes simply an alternative, an escape: somewhere to indulge in idealistic speculative reflection. This may be one reading, but it is not the only way. Play, by showing that there is a different way of being, is also a challenge to the rationalised and commercialised order. It has a liberative potential. It is a space where one may challenge the world not by withdrawal but because it may be represented (or, re-presented) to the world. As with Bakhtin's carnivalesque it is a place where the norms and ordering of the world may be turned upside down and shown to be other than they are. While this may be instrumentalised as a form of escape, like the traditional 'carnival' or times of 'misrule' when the boy-bishop rules for the day as simply a cathartic release so that the stresses and strains of the world may be released before the 'normal' run of things is resumed, it may also show that the 'normal' is not 'normal' and that there is another way of doing things. It can be a representation of the 'Kindom' to use Fiorenza's term (Fiorenza 2005).

As a final issue concerning play, I will discuss Gadamer's suggestion that there is a 'curious lack of decisiveness in the playing consciousness' that it cannot 'decide between belief and non-belief' (Gadamer 1979, 93). I understand, I believe, Gadamer's meaning here that it is sometimes very hard for the adult at least to fully suspend consciousness and lose oneself in another world that you may believe or perceive as lacking in 'reality'. A world that is, as it were, a fantasy creation. But adults' and children's play is different. For adults, play becomes time apart from the 'world of aims', whereas for the child there is no difference; indeed, play or imitation as it often is can be about learning or becoming into the 'world of aims' (make believe and fantasy). Moreover, some adults' play, for example, on the sports field, is about enforcing a sense of self which reaches over into the 'world of aims' or is never apart from it (e.g., we play chess to show intellectual superiority, or rugby, squash, etc. to show physical superiority). In some way is this not unlike animals' play for hunting or other skills. Even if one is not aware (as a child) of the role of play in becoming to the 'world of aims' this does not make it 'other' as the two intersect. Indeed, while I have drawn a distinction between 'play' and the 'world of aims', following Gadamer, I am not sure that this is maintainable. Play, or the game, as we have seen has its own rules, goals, and aims; not every game may have this, but many do. While play, or a dance, has its own rationale, also they often follow an internal rationale. This, as I have suggested, is not simply different, or other, from the 'world of aims', but elided. It exists alongside and in relation to it; hence the possibility that it can offer a challenge to it; if it were diametrically opposed it would be so other that the comparison would not make sense. I have noted above that we are not looking at dialectical opposites but areas that exist in relation, and will develop this theme further now. In theological terms it is, like the

sacred realm, a sphere that is not 'other' but interconnected and always in some way, if not part of, at least related to the 'world of aims'. Yet it exists in a (creative/constructive) tension. The sacred to be 'set apart' must always be 'set apart' from the secular/mundane, but this very act implies or shows its relation to that secular/mundane world. It is relational to it, not entirely other and distinct. If it were it could not be 'set apart' from it, but rather its otherness is a relational otherness. One's religious life and duties are not a separate corner of existence – though many treat it that way, it is what you do on a Sunday morning with other like-minded people before getting back to the hustle and bustle of work and life. Rather, the life of prayer is a part and an informer of the daily life, something deeply ingrained within the Islam practise of *salat*, or the five daily prayers, which become a rationale and a shaping compass to everyday life (Tayob 2003, 65–6). Indeed, in Mahayana Buddhist terminology, *nirvana* is *samsara* and *samsara* is *nirvana*, meaning that one is not looking to escape. In, for instance, the Zen Ox-herding pictures any escape is shown simply as a time of readjustment, a period for play/re-creation, before one re-enters the marketplace. In more technical language the *lokuttara* realm (spiritual realm) and the *lokiya* realm (the mundane realm or the everyday world) interlink (on the Ox-herding pictures, see Hart 2013; on Buddhist metaphysics of the connection between the spiritual and everyday, see Thich Nhat Hanh on *Interbeing*, 1996, 83–103). Therefore, I think we should not heed Gadamer's notion of a lack of decisiveness as showing that play is not an apt metaphor for the kind of serious interreligious dialogue I am discussing here. Rather, I think we need to suggest a different way to regard play and to take more account of certain parts of Gadamer's thought, concerning for instance play's 'seriousness'.

Summing up this discussion and its relationship to dialogue, we have shown various ways in which the concept of play relates to aspects of a number of different religious traditions. This has either been about aspects of Gadamer's thought, or the extensions of it offered here, and has shown ways in which religious ideas may be in dialogue. More broadly, we have developed various themes from Gadamer's notion of play as indicative of, or insightful for, understanding the activity of interreligious dialogue. We may note here that from the perspective of a Gadamerian inspired philosophical hermeneutics, to speak of dialogue as play is to see it as an act of sacred seriousness, but different from the work-a-day seriousness of the mundane world. Rather, it is a time or activity apart from the world, or tradition, to which it is related. To be in dialogue is to be engaged within a different world, a place where the dialoguers become consumed within the rules of the activity and the dialogue shapes their way of being in that dialogue. Nevertheless, it still informs our life or religious thought. Yet, as a medial event, it is a dialogue agreed to and arranged by the participants, so its logic is their logic. For a time they stand apart from but still engaged with, or related to, their tradition. The dialogue informs this worldview

and changes it on the return. They are re-created in the re-presentation of their tradition that the time of dialogue has offered up. To develop this discussion further we must now turn to Gadamer's conception of the fusion of horizons.

The Opening of Horizons

We turn now to the hermeneutical principle for which Gadamer is, perhaps, most famous: the fusion of horizons. It is necessary to place play in the context of this concept to see how they can be combined as part of a paradigm that grounds interreligious dialogue. Firstly, though, I will provide a context from Gadamer's own thought that it is useful to consider in relation to the fusion of horizons. As a starting point, Gadamer argues that we are shaped by our own tradition. He describes this as the set of prejudices (which may be both positive and negative, but are always necessary and so in that sense beneficial) that form our thinking, believing, and knowing. That is to say, we have a set of preunderstandings built into us by custom, tradition, and environment and these are the constituents of a worldview, and only with a worldview can we then interpret anything else. Moreover, all of this is encoded in language, which, as Gadamer says, is the shaper of our reasoning: 'Language is the language of reason itself' (Gadamer 1979, 363). In his terminology this tradition and set of prejudices form our 'horizon'. For Gadamer, the term represents the limits of our viewing: what we know and what can be known by us. Indeed, setting up this horizon is important to Gadamer, for in his thought: 'The key to a proper interpretation lies in acquiring the proper horizon' (Vessey 2009, 533). The horizon is what allows us to see to the limits of what we know, and is the basis for understanding and structures that which we understand.

For Gadamer, then, our current knowledge and worldview represents our present horizon. However, because of the hermeneutical tools of language, and belief in the possibility of translation, this horizon can be transcended, or opened up. Indeed, contrary to some who suggest that Gadamer's notion of horizon means that our ideas are enclosed within our prejudices, he claimed that we can never have a closed horizon, as we discuss further below (Gadamer 1979, 304). To put this in Gadamer's own words: 'In this the interpreters own horizon is decisive, yet not as a personal standpoint that one holds onto or enforces, but more as a meaning and a possibility that one brings into play and puts at risk, and that helps one to truly make one's own what is said on the text' (Gadamer 1979, 350). The notion of 'risk' here, we may note, accords with Moyaert's Ricoeurian notions of 'fragility' and 'vulnerability' – concepts she uses as the basis to develop another hermeneutics of interreligious encounter (Moyaert 2014). This fragility and vulnerability, she argues, carries its own dangers of needing to develop a 'post-critical faith' which is 'a difficult path to travel' (Moyaert 2014, 95). In the context of interreligious

dialogue and Comparative Theology, Moyaert explores and explains this, arguing that we need to be able to challenge the limits and prejudices of our own tradition (Moyaert 2014, 157–83).

For Gadamer, it is always the linguistic nature of our being and knowing that allows us to open up beyond the immediate nature of our horizons. As he says of language and speech: 'All human speaking is finite in such a way that there is within it an infinity of meaning to be elaborated and interpreted. This is why the hermeneutical phenomenon also can be illuminated only in the light of this fundamental finitude of being, which is wholly linguistic in character' (Gadamer 1979, 416). In his terms, we are opened up to an infinity of possibility through the finitude of our words. What this means is that our horizon and that of the Other may meet in what he terms the 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer 1979, 350). We may note that for him the term 'horizon' is a technical term he adopts from Husserl's use (*Ideas*, 1913). This can be readily understood as being open because if we walk a short distance we have a new horizon (Vessey 2009, 527; see Gadamer 1979, 217, 269 on acknowledgements to Husserl). Gadamer's thought also has links to Husserl's *Meditations* (1931), for whom perception has horizons, but nevertheless we come to 'know' or 'imagine' the whole (Vessey 2009, 528–9). A well-known example of Husserl's is if we walk into a room and see the back of a chair, we do not think that only the back of the chair exists, but as part of our perception we 'imagine/know' the whole chair, the seat, legs, cover, and so on. Hence, again, our horizon is not simply a fixed limit but is always pushing beyond itself. So, in various ways, Gadamer argues that his use of the term 'horizon' should never denote an absolute or fixed limit. Notably, though, while Husserl used the term for things, Gadamer extends it to propositions too, and hence our whole linguistic world (see Vessey 2009, 530). This further shows that in speaking of this Gadamer does not stress the limits of horizons but rather how they provide a meaningful context for expanding our knowledge and awareness.

One important note, though, is that Gadamer does not suggest that all horizons are equally open. He suggests the way philosophers are more or less open to new propositions is related to the kind of horizons they have (see Vessey 2009, 531). We therefore have different intellectual horizons, and as part of this we can speak of a 'historical horizon', which is about understanding something of the context of our ideas. Importantly, as Vessey has noted, 'it requires a special effort to acquire a historical horizon' (Vessey 2009, 531). Here I would take us back to our earlier discussion about Gadamer's perceptions about Christianity and theology being immune or exempt from hermeneutics, and suggest that this was one historical horizon he had not yet acquired. To note, I would suggest that getting this hermeneutical background is key to approaching theology. The

theologian, especially as interreligious interlocutor, must unmask and derobe theology from fideism and show its being-in-the-world-ness through its historical and hermeneutical imbrications within life (various references on this were noted above in discussing the applicability of hermeneutics to interreligious dialogue and need not be repeated here). In this context the following is a very useful quote from Gadamer: 'A person who has no horizon does not see far enough and hence overvalues what is nearest to him' (Gadamer 1979, 269). In interreligious terms we may say that if someone only knows their own religious tradition, they tend to overvalue it and assume its uniqueness, whereas in Max Muller's well known adage 'to know one is to know none' (see King and Hedges 2014, 47).

For Gadamer, this is tied up with his discussion of communication as a form of conversation. As he notes, in conversation one is not always premeditated but follows the flow of it and so he says, 'All this shows that a conversation has a spirit of its own, and that the language used in it bears its own truth within it, that is, that it reveals something which henceforth exists' (Gadamer 1979, 345). In other words, a new realisation, a new interpretation, or re-creation comes about through it. For him, the fusion of horizons is the 'full realisation of conversation' (Gadamer 1979, 350). That is to say, when the two proponents of the conversation have come to know what is alien and other within their partner, and so have 'overcome' their prejudices, this opens up new borders for their own horizons as they meet and integrate the horizon of the other within their own. Indeed, we should add that within this they also add to their existing prejudices. Of course, by conversation we should not see this limited to the talking face to face of two or more people; all of culture and society can be our conversation partners. Our horizons can be opened by exposure to a book, a work of art, or an act of play. However, whatever the situation, for this fusion of horizons, or opening of horizons (I will address below why I prefer this terminology) to take place an openness is needed: 'Reaching an understanding in conversation presupposes that both partners are ready for it and are trying to recognise the full value of what is alien and opposed to them' (Gadamer 1979, 348).

I would prefer to term Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' as an 'opening of horizons' for three reasons. Firstly, as a critique of Gadamer his notion of 'fusion' is problematic, even if I come to learn something from the other, it does not imply that I have grasped the fullness of her worldview, which the term 'fusion' seems to imply. Our worlds may have come together, but not 'fused' or 'merged' as one thing. Even if this is not Gadamer's meaning, and arguably he does not say this, the term 'fusion' seems problematic by implying this. Secondly, related to the last point, a fusion seems to suggest that two ideas come together, such that if we bring, for instance, Hindu and Christian ideas into discussion we make a new Hindu-Christian

creation. This is not really applicable to most interreligious dialogue, and not Comparative Theology as understood by Clooney. Rather, Christian ideas may be read in the light of concepts of another tradition in a way that opens new insight in the new tradition, not creating a novel third religion (see Clooney 2010, and in relation to hermeneutics, see Hedges 2016b). Therefore, it is simply the ‘openness’ that can be said to be our way to approach religious Others. My argument here has as much to do with the term as Gadamer’s understanding, for he sees dialogue as being about a new perspective, not necessarily agreement or creating a universal point of view (Gadamer 1979, 535). Thirdly, the idea of being open, or what I have termed having a ‘radical openness’ to the religious Other is language already current in interreligious encounters, and so may readily be understood (see Hedges 2016a). As such, we find a parity of language if we speak of an opening of horizons. Such openness speaks of the readiness to learn from and encounter the Other in meaningful exchange. It is not the purpose of this paper to engage in interreligious dialogue or Comparative Theology *per se*; however, as noted when we discussed play, we explored a number of concepts from various religious traditions which, potentially at least, might provide areas where such interreligious learning may occur. This it may be said may concern the possibility of our opening our horizon to new perspectives.

Conclusion: Openness, Play, and the Religious Other

As I have indicated in the discussion above, it is Gadamer’s concept of the fusion of horizons, understood in our context as the opening of horizons, which explains how and why interreligious dialogue is possible. Indeed, it explains how we can learn from other traditions, cultures, and worldviews in general. We have a worldview, which is the base that allows us to understand at all, and this gives us a horizon, the ‘limits’ of our vision. However, because of the linguistically constructed nature of all experience and understanding, we can always negotiate and extend that horizon when we encounter some Other beyond it, at least if we allow our horizon to be challenged (opened), for, as noted, Gadamer sees some people as limiting their horizons, or not having horizons as he puts it. This in and of itself will justify the activity of interreligious dialogue. Why then do we introduce the concept of play? Extending our discussion of this, I will advocate several reasons. Firstly, the notion of play and games, as we have seen, resonates well with aspects of particular religious understandings and worldviews. As such, in and of itself, as Gadamer noted, it is an area that can well be used to discuss matters of religious hermeneutics. Secondly, it opens up the possibility of a realm with its own rules and engagement which is outside our everyday discourse, but potentially elided with it. As we have discussed, this to some extent is what the practice of interreligious dialogue is doing. Especially in forms like Comparative Theology that are opening up a new space with rules within its own remit that is both outside the normal

understanding of most religious traditions, but which must also and importantly not be wholly divorced. This brings us, thirdly, onto the question of performance, and, as we noted, this can be part of play. Here, the interreligious dialogue while not necessarily done before or in front of others, must be something capable of being represented to them. Communicability must be an aspect of it. Gadamerian play, therefore, becomes a mode through which we explain not a justification for how the dialogue can happen in principle, that is the role of discussing the opening of horizons, but for mediating the discussion of how dialogue is enacted/performed.

Questions of course remain, though they are beyond the scope of this paper. For instance, if we can usefully employ the concept of Wittgensteinian language games alongside Gadamer's hermeneutics then it may be asked: what are the rules of dialogue? Here, of course, various propositions exist. These may range from guidelines of dialogue, to methods for the conduct of Comparative Theology. It is not the place of this paper to venture into the specifics of the various different types of dialogue which could make use of the principles set out here. Another question would be whether the home traditions of the dialogue practitioners of Comparative Theologians need to accept the outcome and results of the play of dialogue. That, again, is a question that exceeds the limits of this paper. It is very much an internal matter of theological dispute within each home tradition as to what is considered permissible, and in particular where it may wish to place limits upon horizons and the revision that may take place within them. As Clooney has noted of the Comparative Theologian, they may be a marginal person within the tradition in a somewhat liminal space (Clooney 2010, 157–60). This is not to say that the tradition does not value what is done. Certainly, in as far as the mainstream Christian traditions are concerned, interreligious dialogue has become part and parcel of their engagement with religious Others and has its own clear and well accepted rationale (see Hedges 2010, 58–62, King 2011, Moyaert 2013). Indeed, it has also been argued that engaging in interreligious dialogue actually strengthens people within their own tradition, including their commitment to it (Brecht 2014). Another question is what is intended or implied by speaking of openness and an opening of horizons. This may suggest good will in dialogue, the desire to engage in constructive ways, and an attitude that will learn and be changed. Again, the behaviour and ethics of dialogue is another area beyond the scope of this paper.

To conclude, I would argue that together Gadamer's notions of play and the fusion of horizons, understood as the opening of horizons, is a very useful model to understand those forms of interreligious dialogue which engage in dynamic learning with the religious Other. As a form of serious interaction that elides with but stands somewhat apart from the mainstream it opens a theoretical and practical space that can be understood in its own significance. As we have noted, this may

stand awkwardly to some traditionalist understandings of religious traditions, but such activity has an increasingly recognised role in mainstream Christianity at least. As such, it is important to use tools like Gadamer's hermeneutics to consider the nature and form of this activity.

Bibliography

- Andrejč, G. (2016) *Wittgenstein and Interreligious Disagreement: A Philosophical and Theological Perspective*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Barthold, L. S. (n.d.), 'Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002)', in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Available at: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/gadamer/>.
- Brecht, M. (2014) *Virtue in Dialogue: Belief, Religious Diversity, and Women's Interreligious Encounter*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series, Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications.
- Brubaker, R. (1995) 'Comments: The Goddess and the Polarity of the Sacred,' in J. Stratton Hawley and D. M. Wulff (eds.), *The Divine Consort: Rādhā and the Goddesses of India*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 204–9.
- Bryant, M. D. (2009) 'Meeting at Snowmass', in P. Hedges and A. Race (eds.), *Christian Approaches to Other Faiths*, SCM Reader Series, London: SCM, 87–99.
- Carrette J. and King, R. (2004) *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Clooney, F. X. (2010) *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning Across Religious Borders*, Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Clooney, F. X. (2013) 'Comparative Theology and Inter-Religious Dialogue,' in C. Cornille (ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, Chichester: Wiley, 51–63.
- Demirezin, I. (2011) 'Gadamer's Hermeneutics as a Possibility for Interreligious Dialogue,' *Ekev Akademi Dergisi*, 15(47), 113–30.
- Eberhard, P. (1999) 'The Mediality of Our Condition: A Christian Interpretation,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 67(2), 411–34.
- Eberhard, P. (2004) *The Middle Voice in Gadamer's Hermeneutics: A Basic Interpretation with Some Theological Implications*, Mohr, Germany: Siebeck.
- Eberhard, P. (2007) 'Gadamer and Theology,' *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9(3), 283–300.
- Fiorenza, F. S. (2000) 'The Conflict of Hermeneutical Traditions and Christian Theology,' *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 27(1), 3–31.
- Fiorenza, F. S. (2005) 'We are Church – A Kingdom of Priests', Women's Ordination Worldwide, Keynote Address, 22 July 2005. Available at: <http://womensordinationworldwide.org/ottawa-2005/2014/2/2/elizabeth-schussler-fiorenza-we-are-a-church-a-kingdom-of-priests>. Accessed 21 October 2015.
- Fletcher, J. H. (2013) 'Women in Inter-Religious Dialogue,' in C. Cornille (ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, Chichester: Wiley, 168–83.
- Flood, G. (1996) *An Introduction to Hinduism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fogelin, R. (1996) *Wittgenstein*, 2nd edn, London and New York: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1986) *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow, Harmondsworth: Peregrine Books.

- Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1998) 'Dialogues in Capri,' in J. Derrida and G. Vattimo (eds.), *Religion*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 200–211.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1979) *Truth and Method*, trans. W. Glen-Doepl. 2nd edn., London, UK: Sheed and Ward.
- Gill, S. (2015) "'Holding Oneself Open in a Conversation" – Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Ethics of Dialogue', *Journal of Dialogue Studies*, 3(1), 9–28.
- Hart, A. H. (2013) *The Ox-Herder and the Good Shepherd: Finding Christ on the Buddha's Path*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Hedges, P. (2002) 'The Inter-Relationship of Religions: A Critical Examination of the Concept of Particularity', *World Faiths Encounter*, 32, 3–13.
- Hedges, P. (2008) 'Particularities: Tradition-Specific Post-modern Perspectives', in P. Hedges and A. Race (eds.), *Christian Approaches to Other Faiths*, London: SCM, 112–35.
- Hedges, P. (2010) *Controversies in Interreligious Dialogue and the Theology of Religions*. London, UK: SCM.
- Hedges, P. (2012) 'The Old and New Comparative Theologies: Discourse on Religion, the Theology of Religions, Orientalism and the Boundaries of Traditions', *Religions* 3(4), 1120–37.
- Hedges, P. (2016a) 'The Theology of Religions Typology Defended: what it can and cannot do', in E. Harris, P. Hedges, and S. Hettiarachchi (eds.), *Twenty-First Century Theologies of Religions: Retrospection and New Frontiers*, Currents of Encounter series, Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Hedges, P. (2016b) 'Comparative Theology and Hermeneutics: A Gadamerian Approach to Interreligious Interpretation,' *Religions* 7(1), 1–20.
- Hedges, P. (forthcoming/ submitted) 'Lived Religion as Hermeneutical Comparative Theology: Employing Shiva Nataraja (Lord of the Dance) Imagery in Christian Art and Music', *Journal for Interreligious Studies*.
- Hedges, Paul and Anna King (2014) 'Is the Study of Religion Religious? How to Study Religion, and Who Studies Religion', in P. Hedges (ed.), *Controversies in Contemporary Religion*, Vol. I, Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 31–56.
- Kadayifci-Orellana, S. A. (2013) 'Inter-Religious Dialogue and Peacebuilding', in C. Cornille (ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, Chichester: Wiley, 149-67.
- Kearney, R. and Taylor, J. (eds.) (2011) *Hosting the Stranger: Between Religions*, London, UK: Continuum.
- King, S. B. (2011) 'Interreligious Dialogue,' in C. Meister (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Diversity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 101–14.
- Kloetzli, R. and Hildebeitel A. (2007) 'Kāla', in S. Mittal and G. Thursby (eds.), *The Hindu World*, London and New York: Routledge, 553–86.
- Knitter, P. F. (2010) *Without the Buddha I Could not be a Christian*, Oxford, UK: Oneworld.

- Knitter, P. F. (2013) 'Inter-Religious Dialogue and Social Action,' in C. Cornille (ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, Chichester: Wiley, 133–48.
- Krieger, D. (1991) *The New Universalism: foundations for a global theology*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Lipner, J. (2010) *Hindus: their religious beliefs and practices*, 2nd edn., London and New York: Routledge.
- McCormack, R. (2014) 'Gadamer and ALL: A hermeneutic understanding of Academic Language and Learning', *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 8(3), 49–61.
- Marx, K. (1977) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. by David McLellan, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Moyaert, M. (2011) *Fragile Identities: Towards a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality*, Currents of Encounter Series, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.
- Moyaert, M. (2013) 'Interreligious Dialogue', in D. Cheetham, D. Pratt, and D. Thomas (eds.), *Understanding Interreligious Relations*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 193–217.
- Moyaert, M. (2014) *In Response to the Religious Other: Ricoeur and the Fragility of Interreligious Encounters*, Lanham, MA: Lexington Books.
- Nicholson, Hugh (2011) *Comparative Theology and the Problem of Religious Rivalry*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Race, A. (2008) 'Interfaith Dialogue: Religious Accountability between Strangeness and Resonance', in P. Hedges and A. Race (eds.), *Christian Approaches to Other Faiths*, London: SCM, 155–72.
- Schmidt-Leukel, P. (2009) *Transformation by Integration: How Inter-faith Encounter Changes Christianity*, London: SCM.
- Tayob, A. (2003) *Islam: A Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oneworld.
- Thich Nhat Hanh (1996) *Being Peace*, Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.
- Tillich, P. (1968) *Systematic Theology*, 3 vol. combined set, Welwyn: James Nisbet.
- Tracy, D. (1981) *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*, London: SCM Press.
- Tracy, D. (2010) 'Western Hermeneutics and Interreligious Dialogue', in C. Cornille and C. Conway (eds.), *Interreligious Hermeneutics*, Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 1–43.
- Vessey, D. (2000) 'Gadamer and the Body across Dialogical Contexts', *Philosophy Today*, 44 [Supplement], 70–77.
- Vessey, D. (2009) 'Gadamer and the Fusion of Horizons', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 17(4), 525–36.
- Vilhauer, M. (2010) *Gadamer's Ethics of Play: Hermeneutics and the Other*, Lanham, MA: Lexington Books.

- Waite, M. (2015) 'Cultural Legacies,' in F. O'Gorman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to John Ruskin*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 263–.
- Whitehead, D. (2012) *The Importance of Play*. A report on the value of children's play with a series of policy recommendations written for the Toy Industries of Europe (TIE), available at: http://www.importanceofplay.eu/IMG/pdf/dr_david_whitebread_-_the_importance_of_play.pdf. Accessed 21 October 2015.
- Williams, R. (2000) *On Christian Theology*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2009 [1953]), *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker and J. Schulte, rev. by P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte, 4th edn., Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Woodhead, L. (2004) *An Introduction to Christianity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zaehner, R. C. (1989) *Hinduism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.