

not present itself as an autobiography, and yet it is not a discussion of “ancient stories in modern times” as the title and introduction suggest. It is a collection of ramblings, in which both autobiography and discussions of mythology collapse without direction.

The book is broken down into six chapters. Each chapter is presented as a thematic discussion of mythology. The following themes provide the structure for the book: creative struggle, time, mentorship, travel, the city, and sports. Each theme is fascinating in and of itself. He certainly demonstrates that each of these themes is found throughout the world of mythology, and that these themes continue to be used in the mythology of today. He has therefore thought his subject through, and has come to some interesting conclusions about the power of mythology in the modern world. The problem is not the core idea behind the book, but the presentation of this idea. Instead of providing his readers with a thorough discussion of these themes, we find rather a haphazard collection of autobiographical details, with the odd reference to ancient mythology. What is even more frustrating is that whatever references he does make, he makes by paraphrasing rather than quoting. There is not one properly quoted and referenced line in the book!

There is no doubt that Cousineau has a genuine passion and love for myth. It is clear that mythology is important for him, and that he has given it much thought. The problem therefore, is one of presentation. He has some potentially important ideas about mythology, but he does not express them clearly nor thoroughly. This book should either have presented itself as an autobiography, or he should have given himself more time to think carefully through his ideas and discuss them with more depth. As it stands, the book may offer a glimpse into a love for mythology, but cannot offer much more than that.

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*Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School.* By James W. Heisig. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001. ISBN 0-8248-2481-4. Pp. xi + 380.

Thanks to James W. Heisig, there finally is a book that gives an overview of the three key thinkers of the Kyoto School Nishida Kitaro, Tanabe Hajime, and Nishitani Keiji. Heisig's book, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, will be of great interest to those who are already familiar with this significant school of Japanese philosophy, as well as to newcomers to this complex, but fascinating body of thought. *Philosophers of Nothingness* will be particularly useful in graduate seminars, as well as upper level undergraduate courses. It also is an excellent resource for those who wish to begin their own, independent exploration of the Kyoto School.

The body of the book is divided into five main sections, supplemented by a Preface, Notes, Bibliography, and Index). The separate sections on each philosopher, which are nearly equal in length, delineate the principal ideas of these three thinkers within biographical frameworks. These three primary sections are bracketed by the "Orientation" and "Prospectus" sections. "Orientation" provides an introduction to the Kyoto School, as a whole, and includes preliminary remarks on "world philosophy," language, and a brief history of Western scholarship on the Kyoto School. Heisig also highlights "working assumptions" of the Kyoto School philosophers, including perhaps the most essential aim: "the pursuit of the transformation of awareness" (17). "Prospectus" gives a sense of where current Kyoto School scholarship lies and offers avenues for future work in the field, with an emphasis on the special promise that Kyoto School philosophy holds for the continued creation of world philosophies.

As an essay on the Kyoto School, *Philosophers of Nothingness* is to be read as a whole. Since the three main sections are written in an intentionally interdependent way (24), Heisig's complete picture of any one philosopher, therefore, can only be gleaned by also reading the sections on the other two philosophers. In addition, the term "essay" alludes to what Heisig openly admits: "this is as much a book of conclusions and judgments as it is an introduction" (25-26). *Philosophers of Nothingness* thus reflects Heisig's study of Nishida, whose goal was to encourage one to "catch the 'knack' of seeing the world from others' standpoints so that one could find a standpoint of one's own" (34).

A holistic reading of this book requires a thorough reading of the fascinating "Notes" section in the back of the book. The Notes often reveal the debates surrounding many of the viewpoints that Heisig discusses (26). Heisig's own narrative is so convincing that it is vital for readers to consult the Notes in order to be aware of these various interpretations. One criticism of the Notes section, however, is that too often Heisig quotes passages (especially from primary texts) in his main text for which citations in the Notes are difficult and, at times, impossible to find. The superb Bibliography is the best published Kyoto School bibliography. It contains both Western sources (English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish) and Asian sources (Japanese and Chinese).

Overall, the index seems more than adequate. Several subtopics that I searched for, including "Hegel," were listed in the index with numerous references to pages within both the main text and the Notes section. One term that is inadequately represented in the index, however, is the most important term, "nothingness." Even though Heisig states that nothingness is an idea "distinctive of the Kyoto-school philosophers" (61), the index does not list the term. There are two nothingness-related terms indexed: "Nothingness-in-being" and "Nothingness-in-love," which both refer to the section on Tanabe. The term "absolute nothingness" is listed, but has no entries of its own; instead, readers are instructed to "See Nothingness"—where, as already noted, one finds nothing.

Each of the 71 subsections in the body of the book highlights key philosophical concepts and provides excellent explanations. However, a general glossary of succinct definitions of key terms would be especially beneficial for neophytes. Inclusions of multi-lingual terminology also would be immensely helpful. Heisig sometimes includes such linguistic information in the Notes, as with his comments on Nishida's use of the Japanese term *basho*, translated as "locus" (299).

Heisig acknowledges that *Philosophers of Nothingness* has "one glaring omission" (25): explanations of the reinterpretations of Buddhist philosophical concepts by Nishida, Tanabe, and Nishitani. The fundamental reason for the lack of attention to Buddhism in the book seems to be Heisig's belief that Kyoto School philosophers "find their place [within the confines of traditional western philosophical thought] more than in the circles of Buddhist scholarship" (25). One wonders if Heisig is stating this belief as a reflection of only—and primarily—what has been and is the case, or also what he believes will be the case for these philosophers in the future. Regardless, and fortunately, the "glaring omission" is not total. There are multiple references to Buddhist concepts that at least begin to explain the "reinterpretations" that these Kyoto School philosophers made.

In conclusion, Heisig is to be commended for his willingness to share the vast knowledge and wisdom that he has gained from his many years of close association with the philosophers of nothingness. His comprehensive essay provides a welcome, and overdue, overview of the Kyoto School. *Philosophers of Nothingness* is also an excellent companion to another recent book: Yusa Michiko's *Zen and Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitaro*.

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*Jesus Through Jewish Eyes: Rabbis and Scholars Engage an Ancient Brother in a New Conversation*. Edited by Beatrice Bruteau. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001. ISBN 1-57075-388-1. Pp. xvi + 191.

Does Jesus belong to a Jewish heritage? Historical Jesus scholars have emphasized the Jewish nature of Jesus, grounding historical reconstructions within the Jewish social and political context of first-century Palestine. Christianity, however, has been the primary preserver of the Jesus traditions, mythologizing him into a divine being—the eternal Son of God, the Christ of faith. Over the centuries, much violence against the Jewish people has been committed and justified in the name of Christ. In our post-Holocaust world, both Christians and Jews have struggled with this antagonistic legacy, moving towards a mutual appreciation of their shared heritage, building points of contact rather than points of contention. Jesus, however, remains a central focus of bitterness for many on both sides of the divide. This collection of essays by Jewish scholars and rabbis addresses the place of Jesus within Judaism, raising the