

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 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.

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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

challenge for fellow Jews to re-appropriate their “lost” Jewish brother, Jesus of Nazareth. The essays are written by established scholars, many of whom are engaged in inter-faith dialogue, and are addressed to a popular audience. As the editor indicates, it is hoped that this book will be just one step towards a deeper appreciation and engagement of inter-faith discussion on the whole Jesus question. After an initial introductory preface by Beatrice Bruteau, and a copy of the letter of invitation to the contributors (both laying out the nature and focus of the book), Lara Bernstein offers a beautiful poem that sets the tone for the book. The essays themselves are organized into four parts. Part One (Historical and Theological Views) addresses the issue of the historical context of Jesus: Michael J. Cook, “Evolving Jewish Views of Jesus” (3-24); Arnold Jacob Wolf, “Jesus as a Historical Jew” (25-30); Bryon L. Sherwin, “Who Do You Say That I Am?” (Mark 8:29) A New Jewish View of Jesus” (31-44); and Herbert Bronstein, “Talking Torah with Jesus” (45-60). Part Two (Appraisals and Interpretations) is a very general section, more directly engaging Jesus’ place within (modern) Judaism: Andrew Vogel Ettin, “That Troublesome Cousin” (63-73); Daniel Matt, “Yeshua the Hasid” (74-80); Stanley Ned Rosenbaum, translator, “A Letter from Rabbi Gamaliel ben Gamaliel” (81-93); Daniel F. Polish, “A Jewish Reflection on Images of Jesus” (94-98); Arthur Waskow, “Jesus, the Rabbis, and the Image of the Coin” (99-102); and Howard Avruhm Addison, “What Manner of Man?” (103-106). Part Three (Personal Views) focuses more on individual engagements with the Jesus question: Allen Secher, “The ‘J’ Word” (109-116); Joseph Gelberman, “My Friend, Jesus” (117-121); and Lance Flitter, “Jesus and Me” (122-133). Part Four (The Conversation Continues) includes some further reflections and speculations on how to construct links between Jesus and Judaism for modern inter-faith discussion: Laurence Edwards, “How Do You Read?” Jesus in Conversation with his Colleagues” (137-145); Michael Lerner, “Fresh Eyes: Current Jewish Renewal Could See Jesus as One like Themselves” (146-147); Drew Leder, “Yehoshua and the Intact Covenant” (148-150); Lewis D. Solomon, “Jesus: A Prophet of Universalistic Judaism” (151-167); and and Rami M. Shapiro, “Listening to Jesus with an Ear for God” (168-180). A brief epilogue (181-182) concludes the book, highlighting once more the desire for inter-faith dialogue. The editor and contributors hope that this book will be the first step toward deeper reflection and discussion within the Jewish community on the place of Jesus. There are tentative plans mentioned in closing for possible future volumes of like nature.

This collection of original essays varies in its strengths as it does in length and depth of analysis. Being trained in the field of early Christianity, I found the lack of familiarity with some basic scholarship somewhat troublesome, though not unexpected given the intended audience. More problematic, however, is the anachronistic view of first-century Christianity and especially Judaism. Many of the authors tend to treat first-century, pre-70 C.E., Judaism as if it stood in a direct line of continuity with rabbinic Judaism of a century of two later, as well as with modern forms of Judaism. What is missing is a recognition of the diversity of the various competing “Judaisms” that existed when

Jesus lived. The Judaism of the *Mishnah* and *Talmuds* is a product of a very different historical context; i.e., different variables in social identity formation. Yes, Jesus was a Jew—but he wasn’t a rabbinic Jew, nor a Brooklyn Jew, nor an Israeli Jew. His “Jewishness,” just like that of Hillel or Philo, was grounded in a distinct social and cultural set of particularities. This collection of essays, of course, was not meant to engage serious historical and cultural issues. Yet, the criticism is still valid. Both Jews and Christians in our modern world, who wish to create some relational link to Jesus, and perhaps to each other through the Jesus figure, would likely gain something by recognizing the discontinuity, indeed the socially constructed nature of the Jesus-of-history figure. Perhaps such a discontinuous inter-faith hermeneutic would allow both sides to more freely play with their histories, their theologies, and their biases, thereby enabling a more useful, fluid dialogue (indeed dialectic engagement) to emerge.

Most useful in this collection—and hopefully this will be continued in any future volumes—is the serious struggling and openness that these Jewish scholars have in “reclaiming” their “lost brother.” This openness, however, is not limited to an academic audience. Although there are several scholarly tomes on Jewish-Christian relations (many of which would be inaccessible to non-specialists), this book is directed to a more lay audience. It is readable, personal, and engaging. It invites readers to begin contemplating serious issues of Jewish-Christian relations, without denying centuries of discrimination or bypassing a central point of contention: Jesus. I would recommend this collection more for those in communities of faith, or those in leadership of communities of faith, rather than scholars.

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