

ianity perpetually attempts to ground itself—knowledge, the West, the self, God, etc.—to reveal how these foundations signify absence and withdrawal.

If there is a criticism to be leveled at Nancy it concerns the opacity of his prose and the difficulty of his project. This thin volume is incredibly dense and requires the reader to be familiar with Nancy's larger body of philosophical work, and the continental tradition as a whole. *Adoration* is composed of a prologue, four chapters, and an appendix, and builds upon Nancy's work in *La décloison, Déconstruction du Christianisme 1* (2008). *Adoration* considers not just the atheistic core at the heart of monotheism—the topic that consumed much of *Dis-Enclosure*—but what is left for us to do in the wake of the re-treat of religion. Nancy argues that at the core of Christianity is a proclamation of address, what Derrida called the *Salut!* To “adore” the world is to address it without recourse to salvation, to greet it as a finite exposition of sense (meaning) without end (52). With this call to address, Nancy is not appealing to some Heideggerian notion of authenticity or Being; rather, he suggests that relation itself (as contiguity and incommensurability) is what gives rise to the world, and asserts that there is no Being to beings (no ground or origin).

Chapter 3, “Mysteries and Virtues,” is perhaps the most innovative chapter of the book. Here, Nancy argues that the three Christian mysteries (Trinity, Incarnation, and Resurrection) are atheological because they displace God of a foundation. For instance, the Christian Trinity describes a God who is defined entirely through relation (*rapport*), rather than through unity. The trinity does not describe a God of being, but an absolute relationality that is the “non-being according to which beings can make sense” (51). Additionally, Nancy suggests that the three theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity) describe a way of relating to the world rather than a commitment to particular beliefs. He

argues that “faith is a praxis, an act or a way of being in the world, more than the approval or assent given to certain dogmas” (51).

The most fascinating aspect of this book is how Nancy connects his overall analysis with Freud's notion of the drive (*Trieb*). Nancy suggests provocatively that the Christian mysteries and virtues can be understood respectively as “flashes [*Éclairs*] and drives” (46). That is, the mysteries and virtues can be understood as mythical explanations of the flashes (of relationality) and drives (“thrusts” of being) that make up our experience (exposure) in the world.

I would recommend both volumes of Nancy's project for graduate classes on Christianity and Continental philosophy. His work is a fascinating contribution to the tradition and sure to elicit response.

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***The Discipline of Philosophy and the Invention of Modern Jewish Thought.* Written by Willi Goetschel. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013. x + 270 pages. ISBN: 9780823244966. \$65 US, \$71.50 CDN.**

Willi Goetschel's new book is a bold attempt to reframe the discussion on Jewish thought and to show its relevance for modern philosophy. It is therefore of interest to scholars of Jewish thought and of modern philosophy, as well as to scholars who work in the field of postcolonial studies and are interested in the formation of academic disciplines and discourses in the modern university.

The book begins with two chapters that present the problem which philosophy faces since it was disciplined and emerged as an

academic field of study in the modern university. From its very inception, philosophy is in a state of constant perplexity: it makes claims for universality while being confined in itself and unable to recognize the particular. Goetschel is less concerned with the specific arguments of Western philosophy but rather with their origins. He genealogically traces the emergence of modern philosophy and the way it perceives itself as an heir to the Greeks. The Greeks in this founding myth are contrasted with the Hebrews, the famous Athens and Jerusalem distinction that will daunt the thoughts of many Jewish philosophers. As Goetschel shows, this distinction should also be of concern to modern thought, for it is precisely this distinction, with all its theological roots and biases, that grounds the modern discipline of philosophy. At the heart of the universalistic project of modern philosophy lies demarcation and exclusion.

Having convincingly framed the discussion this way, the importance of Jewish thought appears lucidly: Jewish thought's claim for its uniqueness, while appropriating and changing the philosophical discourse, serves as a critical impulse. It is the constant reminder of philosophy's limits and blind-spots, an Other that will not succumb, an alterity that will not be superseded. Jewish thought is the undoing and re-doing of philosophy that lies in its midst.

Jewish thought thus defined does not have a positive content, an essence. Instead, it is a discursive mode that is important insofar as it provides means for critique. Such a claim can be surprising at first, but the rest of the book is an elaboration of this thesis through the examination of several major Jewish thinkers. Contrary to what one is accustomed to, the presentation is not done chronologically. Rather, in moving back and forth, the book "reflects the often nonlinear movement characteristic for the course that the history of philosophy has taken" (10).

As one can expect from a book that centers on German-Jewish thought, the names of Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig appear (chapter 4). These thinkers are dealt primarily vis-à-vis their relation to the discipline of philosophy. While such an approach illuminates a certain thread connecting them, it obscures some of the complexities of their thought and institutional affiliations. Buber for example adamantly refused to be called a philosopher, but he did work as a scholar of religion and sociology in a university setting, first in Frankfurt am Main and later at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Taking these facts into consideration might have resulted in a more nuanced picture highlighting the fact that Jewish thinkers sought to conduct philosophy in the academy by turning to other disciplines.

Two other thinkers Goetschel analyzes are Baruch Spinoza (chapters 8-9) and Moses Mendelssohn (chapters 9-12). His analysis of their thought is a continuation of his *Spinoza's Modernity* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004) by means of introducing lesser known texts and offering novel readings of their political theory and ethics. Goetschel carefully presents the implication of their thought and both thinkers emerge as forcing society, as well as theory, to rethink itself via its relation to the Jew. In this they are harbingers of toleration that can still inspire us today.

All of the above mentioned thinkers are the immediate suspects when one speaks of Jewish thought. Goetschel does not stop there and he expands the canon of Jewish thought by bringing two somewhat less known figures to light: Margarete Susman (chapter 6) and Hermann Levin Goldschmidt (chapter 7). These two chapters are of special interest to scholars interested in post-Holocaust thought and can be considered a welcome addition to this field.

Goetschel's thought is saturated with postcolonial thinking. He speaks of Jewish thought as relating to general philosophy in a subaltern manner (43; 116) and refuses from the very beginning to offer a grand narrative, instead opting to maintain the particularity of moments of thought. Chapter 10 is exemplary in this regard. It provides a close and enlightening reading of Mendelssohn's political theory as part of a discourse on colonization and emancipation in Germany. There is an apparent interesting trajectory here between Jewish and postcolonial thought, but unfortunately it is not developed. Goetschel, while hinting at this exciting possibility with his terminology, does not clarify his alliance with—or divergence from—postcolonial thought and thereby misses what seems to be a very exciting and productive venture to explore.

This is not an easy text to read and some of the nuances in the book require effort from the reader before their full implication can be deduced. Yet it is worth the while, for *The Discipline of Philosophy and the Invention of Modern Jewish Thought* is a thought provoking work that problematizes the foundations of Jewish thought, and of philosophy itself.

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Minority Studies in India. Vol. 1 of Oxford India Studies in Contemporary Society.
 Edited by Rowena Robinson. New Delhi:
 Oxford University Press, 2012. 328 pages.
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 CDN.

In her introduction, Rowena Robinson asserts that minority or ethnic studies is not an established field of study in India the way it is

in other parts of the world. She attributes this gap in scholarship to a view by historic Indian leadership of religion as detrimental to the masses, and as an oppositional tactic to colonial endeavours, which used religion as a mode of division. As a term, “minority studies” is a creation of the western academy referring primarily to a homogenous ethnic “other.”¹ As such, this term is useless in the predominantly homo-ethnic landscape of India.

Robinson's robust introductory chapter lays out foundational knowledge for the trajectory of “minority studies,” as well as the current state of minorities—both religious and otherwise—in India today. Through this, Robinson lays out insightful reasoning for why “minority” as a term has difficulty existing in the Indian context, despite numerous historic attempts to address the status of minorities in India. Robinson's assertion that any investigation of “minority studies”—particularly in India—needs to be interdisciplinary, is certainly reflected in the breadth and depth of the dozen papers included in this volume.

Though each chapter is a stand-alone piece of writing—each exploring its own set

¹ This point is reiterated particularly well by Clara A. Joseph in her essay on the identity constructions of Syro-Malabar Christians in the diaspora. She argues that countries in the West, to which a significant population of Indian Christian immigrants have migrated, utilize the term “multiculturalism” as a catchphrase indicating a respect for differences, “where ‘difference’ stands for a strictly homogeneous ‘racial’ other.” Instead of allowing emic constructions of difference to identify members of the South Asian diaspora, these immigrant communities in the West are invariably classified under the “convenient rubric” of country of origin, instead of religio-cultural identity. Clara A. Joseph, “Rethinking Hybridity: The Syro-Malabar Church in North America,” in *South Asians in the Diaspora: Histories and Religious Traditions*, eds. K.A. Jacobsen and P.P. Kumar (Leiden: Brill, 2004).