

on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that can hardly claim to represent this vibrant period. Only the first two essays by Florian Krobb, who analyses in a succinct manner the depiction of Jews in the literature of the 1890s and Colin Walker's comparison of two literary anthologies from the mid-nineteenth century and the post-war period, provide the sense of a longer chronological perspective. For the post-war period, Jurek Becker is discussed in four separate articles, while W. G. Sebald and others attract only two studious readers. Maxim Biller and Martin Walser have unfortunately been omitted from this canvas. Nevertheless, despite an unevenness in quality and selection, taken as a whole, the volume represents an impressive scope and significantly adds to the quickly accelerating research in this field.

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MARTIN YAFFE (ed.), *Judaism and Environmental Ethics: A Reader*. Lexington Books, Lanham, MD, 2001. vii, 420 pp. \$26.95 (pb). ISBN 0-7391-0118-8.

This edited collection, comprising 24 papers, almost all previously published, and a substantial introduction, explores relationships between Judaism, philosophy and the environment. The editor, Martin Yaffe, is professor of philosophy and religion studies at the Center for Environmental Philosophy, University of North Texas, well known as the home of the journal *Environmental Ethics*. Although several other edited collections on Judaism and the environment exist, Yaffe's is the first that focuses closely on philosophical, and in particular ethical, issues.

The book begins with a lengthy introduction by Yaffe (at 70 pages, it constitutes about one sixth of the entire book). The introduction first provides a discussion of the aims of the book and a rationale for the selection and organisation of papers. Yaffe tells us that each reading has been selected because it is 'a thoughtful response to the current widespread but dubious opinion that Judaism and especially the Hebrew Bible, are somehow responsible for our environmental crisis'; because it has 'moral recommendations or philosophical implications' with regard to the environmental crisis, and it also 'recognizes that science, religion and philosophy approach the environmental crisis from different starting points'. These three criteria are helpful in setting up the context of the papers and in indicating Yaffe's own perspective on the debates in the book. In particular, both here and in the rest of the introduction, Yaffe makes clear his own skepticism about the claims—most famously associated with Lynn White's 1967 paper 'The Historic Roots of our Ecologic Crisis'—that the Hebrew Bible, in particular Genesis 1:28, has shaped environmentally destructive attitudes and practices. He also emphasises the inevitably interdisciplinary nature of work in environmental ethics; in later parts of the introduction Yaffe quite properly highlights the problems raised when those trained within one discipline (such as scientific ecology or philosophy) come to discuss issues raised within a quite different discipline.

Yaffe divides the papers into three sections, which he labels 'The Historical Question', 'The Ethical Question' and 'The Philosophical Question'. The rest of his introduction is devoted to consideration of these three sections in turn, with a critical discussion of each paper that often extends over several pages. Some of the detail in the summaries of the papers could have been omitted (though useful for someone lacking the time to read the papers themselves!) and the critical comments are perhaps oddly placed at the beginning of the book: structurally they might have been better in a conclusion. Having said this, Yaffe's discussion is thoughtful and helpful to the reader. He considers papers synoptically, showing how they can be viewed as interrogating—and often as reinforcing or as undercutting—one another's arguments.

Yaffe characterises 'The Historical Question' (somewhat unhappily, perhaps) as 'Does the Bible Spoil Things?' (p. 9). The eight papers in this section consider varying ways in which human relationships with nature are portrayed in the Hebrew Bible, mostly in the light of—and in negative reaction to—Lynn White's previously mentioned broadside. (Neither White's paper nor Arnold Toynbee's 1972 paper 'The Religious Background of the Present Environmental Crisis' appears in this collection, though their shadows hang over the whole book.) One paper, though, does not fall into this category: 'The Forestry of the Prophets' (p. 105–11), first published in 1920 by the forester Aldo Leopold, better known for his later formulation of the Land Ethic. Leopold's paper, wry in style and confessedly amateur in interpretation, considers how silviculture might have been practised in ancient Israel. The other papers in this section examine a variety of biblical texts, aiming to distill some sense of a 'Hebrew view of nature'. Genesis 1:28, of course, comes in for particular scrutiny: Sacks's paper (p. 143–57) provides a commentary on the whole of Genesis 1. Authors in this section also outline different interpretations of Genesis 1:28 across the centuries (for instance, Cohen's paper 'On Classical Judaism and Environmental Crisis', pp. 73–79) and relate it to other biblical texts that suggest rather different ways of interpreting proper human relationships with the environment. In 'Concepts of Nature in the Hebrew Bible' (pp. 86–104), Kay concludes that it is possible to think of a 'biblically based environmentalism', though this might contrast with other current forms of environmentalism. Schaffer (pp. 112–24) argues that the four species of *sukkot* are of ecological significance; Ehrenfeld and Bentley (p. 125–35) maintain that Judaism 'was one of the first great environmental religions' (p. 125) and, as such, demands a stewardship of 'restraint, noninterference and humility'; while Blidstein explores the ecological significance of the sabbatical year.

Yaffe suggests that 'How should the Jews face the crisis?'—otherwise expressed as 'what Jewish teachings best address the crisis?'—is the key to the second section, 'The Ethical Question'. A dominant aspect of this discussion concerns the way in which Judaism should relate and respond to environmentalism—especially significant as several of the six authors here interpret environmentalism as a form of quasi-religion. Environmentalism, Arvit maintains (p. 161), offers a 'new understanding of what it means to be human'; according to Troster (p. 172), it 'challenges' the idea that 'humanity was created in the image of God'; while Rosenblum (p. 184), using radical ecology as his example, maintains that such a perspective 'defines a new relationship between nature and humanity'. In response, several papers take the view that a specifically Jewish environmentalism at least as powerful as other modern environmentalisms can be derived from Jewish texts and traditions. Artson (pp. 161–71), for example, argues that the ideas of covenant and the sanctity of the land, deeply embedded in Jewish tradition, provide a sound basis for a 'Jewish ecology'. Both Troster (pp. 172–82) and Rosenblum (pp. 183–205) engage with James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis: Troster (p. 180) arguing in response for a panentheistic concept of God; Rosenblum maintaining that the sabbatical year and the Jubilee laws 'echo' principles of biocentrism, in harmony with (some interpretations of) the Gaia hypothesis.

The remaining three papers in this section are of particular interest. Benstein (pp. 206–29) takes seriously the idea that there may be (for good historical reasons) a 'wedge' between Judaism and the natural environment, and argues for a new vision of Jewish education, where learning Torah is bound up with learning about—and interacting with—the natural world (pp. 222–23). Schwartz analyses the idea of *bal tashchit* ('do not destroy') and the way this idea unfolds in halakhic history, emphasising the multiple possible interpretations which *bal tashchit* may carry and the difficulties of relating it to modern discussions in environmental ethics. Finally in this section, creating a bridge to the philosophical emphasis of the third section, Hans Jonas's paper

'Contemporary Problems in Ethics from a Jewish Perspective' argues that modern philosophy fails to respond to one of its 'oldest questions—the question of how we ought to live' (p. 250). At the heart of this failure, Jonas maintains, lie 'the modern concept of nature, the modern concept of man, and the fact of modern technology supported by both'. Against these modern concepts and their consequences, which Jonas regards as misguided and profoundly dangerous, he highlights traditional Jewish values of humility, reverence for the integrity of nature and reverence for man as made in the image of God (pp. 260–62).

Yaffe's third section 'The Philosophical Question' asks 'Do Ecology, Judaism and Philosophy mesh?' Although it is not clear quite how all the papers in this section address this question (or, at least, address it any more than other papers in the book), nonetheless, the section contains some important papers. It is headed up by Steven Schwartzschild's controversial essay 'The Unnatural Jew' (pp. 267–82), in which he argues that 'the main line of Jewish philosophy (in the exilic age) has paradigmatically defined Jewishness as alienation from and confrontation with nature' (p. 269). The Jewish God, Schwartzschild maintains, is 'absolutely transcendent' (a view that contrasts vividly with Troster's plea for panentheism). The natural world, he maintains, is servant to man; and while it is prudent to be concerned about 'shrinking natural resources', and while inflicting suffering on animals is 'offensive', nonetheless concern for nature independently of its usefulness for humans cannot, on Schwartzschild's account, be justified. Unsurprisingly, Schwartzschild's views have raised hackles among the other contributors; his paper is immediately followed by two short and strongly critical responses. However, as representing one extreme in a spectrum of responses to nature in this book—and as a foil for many of the other papers—the inclusion of Schwartzschild's paper seems essential.

The remaining seven papers in this section divide into two groups. Three—Wyschogrod, Schwartz and Katz—explore different ways in which Judaism and Nature might be thought to relate to one another; all contrast with Schwartzschild's approach. Wyschogrod (pp. 289–96) and Schwartz (pp. 297–308) both consider Judaic responses to the sacralisation of nature, and specifically to paganism; while Katz (pp. 309–20) maintains that there are links between the domination of nature and the domination of human beings. The final four papers in the collection focus on issues relating to animals. Levy (pp. 321–32) argues, in a somewhat scattergun way, for the adoption of a weak animal rights position, where 'man's life and health take precedence over animal welfare' (p. 330) but where industrial farming and painful animal experimentation except for important medical research are regarded as unethical. Bleich (pp. 333–70 and 371–83) has two papers in this section. In the first, he considers how far, and in what ways, animal welfare is of significance in Jewish traditions, with a view to drawing out what this means with respect to animal experimentation; in the second he considers whether vegetarianism is commanded, desirable or even permitted within Judaism. His detailed and nuanced accounts provide compelling evidence of just how complex and contested principles about cruelty, the use of animals and the killing of animals have been in Jewish debates. Finally, Kass (pp. 384–409) considers Jewish dietary laws in their broadest sense, maintaining that they 'pay homage to the articulated order of the world and the dignity of life', that they acknowledge 'the problematic nature of eating as a threat to order, life and form', and also provide grounds to 'celebrate in gratitude and reverence' (p. 386).

*Judaism and Environmental Ethics* is a substantial collection of essays brought into dialogue with one another in Yaffe's careful introductory overview. Of course, there are a few quibbles: one might, for instance, have wished the extensive introduction to have critically explored other issues—it is just assumed that there is an 'environmental crisis'; what that expression might mean is left unexamined, as are the terms 'ecol-

ogy' and 'ecological'. But these concerns are, perhaps, churlish. For someone teaching a course on Judaism and environmental ethics, this book is obviously an invaluable resource. But for anyone interested in exploring relationships between religion and nature in general, and Judaism and nature in particular, this book provides an insight into the many and complex attitudes to nature that have emerged within Jewish traditions.

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