Concepts drawn from multicultural theory essentially function as analogies throughout this book with almost no indication of the vast metaphysical claims they are supporting. How do ‘relationality’ and ‘contextualization’ relate to classical Christological terms like subsistence, assumption, and habitus? Is ‘transparticularity’ something like a participatory ontology or is it being conceived of univocally (as it sometimes comes across)? Does ‘mutual formativity’ uphold the mixed relation between the natures or is it making the relation an accident of the divine nature, thereby denying divine simplicity? Driedger Hesslein never addresses these questions. Further, these analogies are acting as arguments and not just illustrations, with the result that the author has transformed the criteria by which we are asked to make Christological judgments. When approached in these terms, politics becomes the determining factor for answering profound theological and metaphysical questions. That is not to say that her claims are necessarily wrong. In fact, this reviewer is inclined to agree with many of the critiques offered by Driedger Hesslein, but for reasons quite removed from the logic that supports them in this context.

This book is striking for its creativity, and it is a model of how to approach difficult topics with care. Although she does an admirable job of defining her terms throughout, Driedger Hesslein’s prose is packed with terminology that will be foreign to those not trained in multicultural theory. The book follows a coherent structure and is impressively wide-ranging in its choice of dialogue partners. However, the details of her positive Christological proposal, which receive little attention relative to her critiques of others, remain elusive, largely because they are never translated back into ontological terms. Despite her insistence to the contrary, it is difficult to see how her concluding proposal that Jesus is both normative and not normative for Christians today (see esp. comments on p. 185) can amount to anything besides practical relativism.

Austin Stevenson
Girton College, University of Cambridge

★★★★


As David Horrell states at the outset of this book, ‘Ethnicity, race, religion … signal some of the most complex, contested, and controversial aspects
of human social relationships’ (p. 1). These concepts, and the controversies in which they are embroiled, are explored under three headings: ‘Ethnicity, Religion, and Identity in Antiquity: Jews and Christians in the Hellenic World’ (Teresa Morgan, John Barclay, Judith Lieu); ‘Ethnicity, Race and Religion in European Traditions of Biblical Scholarship’ (Gregory Cuellar, Kathy Ehrensperger, Halvor Moxnes, James Crossley); and ‘Challenging White, Western Traditions of Interpretation: Critique and Alternatives’ (Denise Kimber Buell, Musa Dube, Ma. Marilou Ibita, Love Sechrest, Wei Hsien Wan). Each part has its own particular focus, but common themes emerge across the book.

A first theme is the matter of definitions and of deciding which of our categories can appropriately be mapped onto antiquity. There are several calls for an end to essentializing discourse and a recognition of cultural complexity. Morgan, examining what it meant to be Greek, and Barclay, debating the connotations of Ιουδαιος, raise questions about ethnicity. Does a group treated as an ‘ethnicity’ need, at some stage, to have enjoyed political autonomy? Is shared ancestry (real or imagined) essential? Morgan argues that in the Hellenistic world, in many cases, ‘ethnicity clearly became an assigned rather than inherited identity’ (p. 32). Alexandrian Jews, for example, were classed as Greeks for tax and legal purposes. She demonstrates that individuals could own multiple identities, ‘code-switching’ between them. Barclay takes ethnicity as a polythetic, rather than a monothetic category – no one element being essential for inclusion in the category. Judean ethnicity ‘was a cluster-formed polythetic category that did not depend on shared ancestry’ (p. 53). He treats the translation of Ιουδαιος separately, arguing that ‘Judean’ and ‘Jew’ are both in some respects unsatisfactory and should not be viewed as stark alternatives.

Another Greek term whose translation is at issue is γενος. It occurs in Letter to Diognetus 1.1, in a phrase sometimes translated as ‘this new race’. Rather than arbitrating between ‘race’ and ‘kind/type’ as translations of γενος, Lieu highlights the rhetorical strategies of the text, which compares the practices of Greeks and Jews with those of the Christians: ‘Difference is being constructed by ignoring anything that might be shared’ (p. 70). Ehrensperger examines how German-language scholarship, past and present, has engaged with such terminology as οθος, γενος, and λος. She is adamant that ‘there can be no rehabilitation of the term Rasse/race’ (p. 103), arguing that the concept of ‘race’ is a construct of the racist theories of early modernity and has no place in discussions of antiquity. Buell, by contrast, writing from the United States context, invokes ‘whiteness’. She is aware that the concept jars as anachronistic. ‘But gender, ethnicity, and religion are no less anachronistic than race or whiteness if we mean that our discursive and material productions of these concepts differ significantly from ancient formations’ (p. 158). She contends that biblical studies has perpetuated whiteness as normative, not only by its institutional structures but also by its ‘racialized logic of essential
essences’ (p. 161) and its denial that all biblical interpretation is located, situated, and partial.

Buell’s contribution exemplifies a second theme of the book: the importance of taking power dynamics seriously and of ascertaining whose interests are being served. Dube vividly illustrates how biblical translation has been bound up with the ideologies of empire and race. Her research into Setswana Bible translation reveals that nineteenth century missionaries refused to listen to Batswana readers, sticking to a translation riddled with inadequacies. Particularly shocking is the translation of ‘demons’ by *badimo* – ‘ancestors’. Since ancestors represent the extended memory of families and ethnic groups, ‘what a perfect way of proving that Batswana were helpless heathens lost in the darkness’ (p. 180). However, Dube also uncovers Batswana strategies of resistance, from ignoring the text as written in order to align pronunciation with their oral cultural base to reading *badimo*, together with Jesus, as divine forces of positive power.

Several contributors unmask the Orientalism informing biblical scholarship. Cuéllar dissects S. R. Driver’s ‘distinctive English version of Higher Criticism’ (p. 79), which reflected Victorian notions of progress. Driver’s Genesis commentary, whose final edition was published in 1948, offers ‘scientific supplements’ to the Table of Nations in Genesis 10, taking for granted a racial hierarchy of differences, with white humanity at the apex. Moxnes focuses on the French scholar Ernest Renan (1823–1892), whose negative picture of Jews in his *Life of Jesus* was based on his impressions of Arab Muslims in Syria and Jerusalem. Moxnes traces the continuity in anti-Semitic and Islamophobic stereotypes from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century by comparing Renan’s writings with the views of the Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik. He homes in on the fantasy of fixed identities. Breivik dreams of restoring the Norway of a bygone era and in the process attributes to Islam ‘just the fixity and homogeneity that Norway has lost’ (p. 122). Crossley examines contemporary British New Testament scholarship, particularly the writings of N. T. Wright, showing that despite Jesus and Paul being described as ‘very Jewish’, they are assumed to have transcended problematic aspects of Judaism. Crossley suggests that ‘essentialized “Judaism” and “Jewishness” are part of wider cultural, geopolitical, and post-racial discourses’ (p. 142), drawing attention to Slavoj Žižek’s argument that ‘liberal Western multicultural inclusiveness is typically an acceptance of the Other without the Otherness’ (p. 136).

Hence, a third theme – the critique of ‘universalism’, or, in Ibita’s phrase, ‘the Western brand of trans-ethnicity’ (p. 190). She asks: ‘While we who are non-Western endeavour to learn the Western methods, are Western scholars also ready to learn from us?’ (p. 193). She points out the clear Western bias in, for example, the pattern of scholarly exchange, with conferences timed to fit the Western hemisphere’s calendar. She questions the Western academic tradition of treating the Bible as ancient
literature to be studied ‘objectively’. Filipino Catholic Bible readers, by contrast, ‘continue to regard the Bible also as God’s Word, revelatory of God’s will’ (p. 192). On the same issue of how to read the Bible, Sechrest uses the speeches of Martin Luther King to illustrate how preaching in the Black church ‘is an interpretive poetry that correlates the shape of the biblical text to material conditions in the contemporary world’ (p. 204). She develops an African–American reading of the parable of the Good Samaritan, correlating the ancient Samaritan–Jewish conflict with ‘contemporary ethno-racial tension regarding the “forever foreigner” trope in the United States as applied to all Americans of colour’ (p. 214). Wan concludes the book by emphasizing how biblical studies ‘continues to draw from roots in its early modern, racialized, colonizing European context’ (p. 226). ‘Alternative’ criticisms, such as feminist or postcolonial criticism, are treated as ‘other’, thus ensuring that traditional historical criticism is not challenged, disrupted, or transformed. Wan asks us to ‘reimagine a biblical scholarship that handles difference in wholly new ways, not bound to relations of mastery of tools but rather to interdependent, human relationships’ (p. 228). This volume is a good place to start.

Ann Conway-Jones
University of Birmingham

★★★★


When you enter into a beautiful party, you expect to see specific items and specific guests. At times there is that absent guest whom everyone seems to know, but no one is talking about. In some cases, the absentee guest is the central fixture of the party, but without her, everything else feels a bit out of place. After reading *The Emergence of Personhood: A Quantum Leap?*, the informed reader may come away feeling: ‘yes, this is a beautiful party with several important items and guests, but what about this or that’. Before jumping into those absentee individuals, we must consider the work and its positive contributions.

*The Emergence of Personhood* is a compilation of essays from a variety of scholars representing a variety of positions and disciplinary perspectives (e.g. biblical scholars, theologians, philosophers, scientists, and social scientists). This is undoubtedly one of the strengths. The authors are concerned with one broad theme namely the origins of personhood, a feature or property conceived by most as somehow distinctive to human