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Review

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ways of thinking and knowing. "Where such an awareness is absent, the old 'colonial' research goals are perpetuated" (p. 73).

Accordingly, Malik urges Indian intellectuals to incorporate both the ancient insights of the Indian speculative traditions and the implications of quantum physics in their reconceptualization of research methodologies within the social sciences and the humanities. Both the speculative traditions and the implications of quantum physics provide epistemological and ontological perspectives that transcend the limitations of a purely materialistic view of reality and encourage the development of a holistic view of reality that embraces both matter and consciousness. Within the last century the Western scientific worldview has been confronted by the implications of quantum physics. The objectivity and predictability of science have been put into question by quantum experiments that show how "the scientist is inextricably tangled with the objects he observes" (p. 191). It is impossible to be an objective or passive observer, for the observing mind or the conscious mind influences the way matter manifests itself.

In the social sciences and the humanities the implications of quantum physics challenge the basic assumptions inherent in many traditional research methodologies. If observation influences manifestation, then the observer and the observed are connected to one another through consciousness. In the reconceptualization of research methodologies, as envisioned by Malik, consciousness is posited as the ground of existence and time is perceived as an abstract concept. This is a complete reversal of the Western scientific paradigm that reifies time and understands consciousness as merely epiphenomenal. The task that Malik sets out for academics in the social sciences and the humanities is not a minor paradigm shift, but a major transformation in our "understanding of the Self and Consciousness both at the individual and universal level" (p. 280).

While Malik's critique of the West's reification of time and marginalization of consciousness will undoubtedly strike sympathetic chords with many readers, the argumentation in this book should be carefully scrutinized. Vilifying the dominant paradigm is easy sport—suffering is a constant. The political overtones of this work do add an emotional dimension, but is blaming and finger-pointing a valid methodological approach? Is it an aspect of Malik's envisioned integral approach? Despite its "us versus them" element, this book provides an interesting voice in the area of integral studies.

*The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy*. Edited by Robert K. C. Forman. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. 320.

Reviewed by **Ramakrishna Puligandla** University of Toledo

Robert Forman and the other contributors to *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy* richly deserve to be congratulated for their courage and boldness in raising and systematically discussing the question of non-intentional

consciousness—pure, objectless consciousness—which is central to any discussion of mysticism and mystical experience. It is well known that the possibility of non-intentional consciousness is categorically denied by Western philosophers in general, including phenomenologists, whose proclaimed task is the systematic investigation of the variety of modes of consciousness. Thus, even according to Husserl, the founder of the phenomenological movement, all consciousness is intentional; that is, consciousness is always *of something or other*, and hence there simply cannot, in principle, be non-intentional consciousness—consciousness without any intentionalities, objects. This denial of non-intentional consciousness is so entrenched and pervasive among Western philosophers that anyone who is even willing to consider the possibility of non-intentional consciousness is summarily dismissed as irrational and muddleheaded. However, it is also well known that many mystical traditions, Eastern as well as Western, maintain that non-intentional consciousness is at the very heart of mystical experience; and it is further known that the philosophico-religious systems of India in particular, such as Advaita Vedānta, Patañjali's yoga, and Yogācāra Buddhism, firmly acknowledge not only the possibility but also the actuality of non-intentional consciousness. In light of all these considerations, a systematic discussion of non-intentional consciousness and its possibility and actuality is a most welcome and timely scholarly labor.

The driving force behind this book is the desire on the part of the contributors to examine carefully and refute Steven Katz' Constructivism, which has gained considerable support among Western philosophers. For this reason, it is essential that the reader clearly bear in mind Katz' own characterization of Constructivism:

There are No pure (i.e., unmediated) experiences. Neither mystical experience nor more ordinary forms of experience give any indication, or any grounds for believing, that they are unmediated. . . . The notion of unmediated experience seems, if not self-contradictory, at best empty. This epistemological fact seems to me to be true, because of the sorts of beings we are, even with regard to the experiences of those ultimate objects of concern with which mystics have had intercourse, e.g., God, Being, nirvana, etc. (*Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, p. 26; p. 9 of the book under review)

Simply put, Katz' Constructivism is the claim that there can be no experience, whether ordinary or mystical, untouched by the culture and belief—formative and shaping concepts, percepts, and expectations—of the subject. Hence there cannot, in principle, be any non-intentional (mystical) experience transcending language, culture, belief, and expectations. It is to be emphasized that the claims of mystics contradict Constructivism. Katz is not alone in defending Constructivism; on the contrary, it has been upheld by Bruce Garside, R. C. Zaehner, Robert Gimello, Peter Moore, Ninian Smart, and Jerry Gill.

The Constructivist does not deny mystical experience and is eager to affirm the Pluralism Thesis, which, according to the Constructivist, does full justice to the variety and diversity of mystical traditions:

Thus, for example, the nature of the Christian mystic's pre-mystical consciousness informs the mystical consciousness such that he experiences the mystic reality in terms

of Jesus, the Trinity, or a personal God, etc., rather than in terms of the non-personal, non-everything, to be precise, Buddhist doctrine of nirvana. Care must also be taken to note that even the plurality of experience found in Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist mystical traditions, etc. have [*sic*] to be broken down into smaller units. (Katz, p. 41; p. 10 of the book under review)

The Pluralism Thesis of the Constructivist contradicts the Perennialist Thesis, according to which “mysticism is by and large the same across time and tradition” (p. 11); that is, there is a core of mystical experience that is universal—the same everywhere and everywhen—transcending language, culture, beliefs, and expectations.

The present work consists of an introductory essay by Forman, followed by two parts. Forman’s introduction deals with mysticism, Constructivism, and forgetting. He begins with a clear definition of “mysticism,” subjects Constructivism to incisive analysis, and argues that the Pure-Consciousness event involves, contrary to Constructivism, neither memory nor acts of differentiation nor computation; it is the noninvolvement of any Constructivist elements, which Forman refers to as “Forgetting.” With clarity and insight, Forman exposes the shortcomings and inadequacies of the Constructivist thesis.

The first part of the book, titled “The Empirical Investigation,” consists of essays by Christopher Chapple, Paul Griffiths, Robert Forman, and Daniel C. Matt. All these essays approach the problem of pure consciousness in different traditions from the empirical standpoint. The Pure-Consciousness event in Sāṃkhya is discussed by Chapple, in Yogācāra by Griffiths, in the Christian tradition (with special reference to Meister Eckhart) by Forman, and in the Jewish mystical tradition by Matt; each concludes that there is considerable empirical evidence in the tradition examined for not only the possibility but the actuality of non-intentional consciousness. Matt’s essay is particularly interesting in that it sheds light on the Jewish mystical concept of Ayin (Nothingness). The essay is very learned but somewhat disappointing in that Matt does not compare Ayin with śūnyatā (Emptiness) of the Mādhyamaka. Some of these authors also discuss their own personal experiences in the practice of meditation or narrate the experiences of others. It is commendable that the authors take into account the neurophysiological data in their discussions of the Pure-Consciousness event.

The second part, “Philosophical Investigation,” consists of essays by Donald Rothberg, Philip C. Almond, Stephen Bernhardt, Anthony N. Perovich, Jr., Mark B. Woodhouse, Norman Prigge, Gary E. Kessler, and R. L. Franklin. Given that in the first part it has been shown that there is evidence “which demonstrates that there are reports of the experience of pure (nonintentional, objectless) consciousness found in a variety of traditions” (p. 28), the second part deals with the following questions:

What philosophical implications do these experiences (as reported) have? Does such an experience require a novel form of analysis? Are the extant forms of analysis and current models adequate to account for these experiences? (p. 28)

Rothberg argues, on purely a priori epistemological grounds, that the Constructivist excludes by sheer fiat the possibility of a Pure-Consciousness event and dismisses traditions that acknowledge non-intentional consciousness. He points out that the Constructivist, contrary to the latter's oft-repeated claim, is not an impartial and neutral inquirer but is opposed to certain religious traditions, and offers some suggestions and modifications toward an epistemology that will do justice to the Pure-Consciousness event.

Perovich lists a series of objections against Constructivism and attempts to show that the Constructivists' claim to base their approach in Kantian lineage is not supported by the Kantian corpus. I should point out, however, that Perovich's arguments to show that Kant does not exclude the Pure-Consciousness event are somewhat strained and not very convincing (particularly in light of the Kantian declaration that the human being has only sensible but not intellectual intuition). Further, Perovich, along with Bernhardt and Almond, tries to unravel the logical, methodological, and hermeneutical presuppositions of Katz' Constructivism and show them to be highly questionable and indefensible.

The essay by Woodhouse and the joint contribution by Prigge and Kessler undertake a phenomenological investigation of the concept of consciousness and point out that traditions that rule out the possibility of a Pure-Consciousness event suffer from a basic flaw in their very conception of consciousness. They then go on to investigate whether there is a way of understanding consciousness that allows for the possibility of non-intentional consciousness. Among all these contributors, only Woodhouse has the insight that somehow the analysis of the deep-sleep state (as discussed in the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*) is central to the whole question of the possibility and actuality of the Pure-Consciousness event. His analysis of the deep-sleep state is quite illuminating; however, it is unfortunate that Woodhouse does not pursue the analysis to its logical conclusion.

The final essay is by Franklin. His discussion of the philosophic and salvific significance of the Pure-Consciousness event, the interpretation of mysticism, and whether it is possible to do justice to claims of personal as well as impersonal forms of mystical experience is quite learned and illuminating.

I shall bring this review to a close with the following observations. I am quite surprised to note that Forman talks of mystical *phenomena*: "And finally, what is the relationship between these pure consciousness events and other—perhaps more advanced—mystical phenomena?" (p. 43). Why am I surprised? Because "phenomena" always refers to some intentionality or other; and it is hard to understand what "mystical phenomena" means. Forman should have clarified this matter. I myself submit that the term "mystical phenomena" is self-contradictory; and it is quite puzzling as to how something more *advanced* than Pure-Consciousness could be a phenomenon.

There is a central question that has not been considered and answered either by Katz or by the contributors to this volume: what, in the first place, allows one to classify different claims from different traditions as *mystical*? If one acknowledges

theistic mysticism as well as nontheistic (not atheistic) mysticism, one first needs to clarify the grounds on which one regards both as mysticism.

This book is an important and significant contribution to the study of mysticism, insofar as it deals with the central problem of non-intentional consciousness, a topic until now summarily dismissed by Western philosophers. It is not necessary to agree totally with the views and claims of any contributor in order to recognize that the essays comprising the book are at once truly learned and thought-provoking. All students of phenomenology and mysticism will find the book richly rewarding.

*Medicine, Philosophy and Religion in Ancient China: Researches and Reflections.* By Nathan Sivin. Aldershot, England: Variorum, Ashgate Publishing, 1995. Pp. xvii + 278.

Reviewed by **Mary Tiles** University of Hawai'i

*Medicine, Philosophy and Religion in Ancient China: Researches and Reflections* reprints three of Nathan Sivin's previously published essays, which appeared between 1978 and 1990. In addition it contains a revised version of one essay and a bibliography along with four new essays. The new essays are "Comparing Greek and Chinese Philosophy and Science" (chapter 1), "Emotional Counter-therapy" (chapter 2), "The Myth of the Naturalists" (chapter 4), and "Taoism and Science" (chapter 7).

Sivin describes the motivation underlying these studies as an intense curiosity about how people in a civilization very different from that of Europe have gone about understanding nature and defining their relation to it. He further comments that studying other cultures historically is at least as serviceable a way as philosophic speculation to learn about ways of thinking that never evolved in Western traditions. Nevertheless, Sivin claims at the beginning of chapter 1, although historians have already spent three hundred years comparing European and other scientific traditions, we have learned embarrassingly little from these three centuries of comparative studies. How are these historical studies to be made more fruitful? Sivin suggests that disappointment will continue to outbalance hope as long as we insist on comparing things out of context one at a time. He tries to steer clear of what he calls two major fads in the history of science: the context-free study of ideas and the sociological approach, which attends to social context while ignoring what scientists thought and did. He has no use for the idea that science is separable from its context, but instead studies ideas, their use, and the social processes that created and elaborated them as a single phenomenon.

This stance leads Sivin to challenge assumptions underlying much of the work of earlier historians of Chinese science, including, of course, that of Joseph Needham. This is the thrust of many of the essays included in this volume. Although Sivin acknowledges the enormous value of Needham's work, he nonetheless takes issue with some of the generalizations to which it has led, and which are frequently re-