

Steven W. LAYCOCK, *Mind as Mirror and the Mirroring of Mind: Buddhist Reflections on Western Phenomenology*. State University of New York Press, 1994. xvi + 337 pp. ISBN 0-7914-1997-5 (cloth), US\$21.95; ISBN 0-7914-1998-3 (paperback).

This is a heady book, overflowing with ideas. Unfortunately, the ideas are poorly worked out and badly expressed. There is a constant striving for stylistic effect, which produces much turgid verbiage: "Invoking the benign Origin—the transcendental present—bathing in its luminiscence we are suddenly denuded, our chrysalid and crustacean essences dropping like a robe, our pristine being buoying up, individual-yet-formless like a mirror" (p. 202). The author evidently feels that every word here is loaded with precise meaning and that the effect is one of beauty. Unfortunately he exhibits no mastery of a plain, functional middle style, and the result is that his arguments all possess a fringe of opacity. His many neologisms—alethic, befallment, eikonic, sublimiation, alterior, enfusing—include some useful coinages, but I see little merit in his practice of spelling "lose" as "loose."

The text of two hundred pages is accompanied by ninety pages of notes; these notes, however, are difficult to consult. If one does try to keep track of them as one reads, one finds that their relation to the text is so tangential and associative that it makes concentration impossible. Worse, the main body of the text shifts constantly from reference to reference, as seen in the following passage, which I have chosen, I assure you, at random:

In Sartre's notion of the body-as-a-point-of-view (BN, 433), we find a poignant reminder of the field-particle structure, that interfusion of particularity and universality altogether typical of the dialectic. [A note here gives a quotation from Adorno on Heidegger.] We are reminded, as well, of Whitehead's "actual occasions," each uniquely reflecting within its momentary immanence the vast buzzing welter of immediately elapsed occasion-events, and thus, in its universality, warning us of the fallacy of simple location. The body is "co-extensive with the world". [A note cites Merleau-Ponty.] And extrapolating, we might imagine a Buddhist theory of rebirth as envisioning a certain order of such bodily, perspectival world-insertions. [A long note here discusses Hawaiian mythology and Dōgen.] We must, in Hui-neng's consonant counsel, "separate...[our]selves from views." (p. 107)

Perhaps the author subscribes to the postmodern esthetic of intertextuality which, with the computer's help, has licensed so many shoddy, cluttered books of late. A doxographic cult of authorities keeps him from formulating his own thought with confidence. This ammunition is used very ineffectually, and the cross-references generate misleading conflation (such as that between the early and the later Husserl on pp. 85-86). The author seems unaware of Proust's advice that a good book is "made of sacrifices." The hectic speed and uncontrolled dispersion of his writing is in performative contradiction with the calm and concentration he would preach to us from Heidegger and Zen.

Chapter 1, "The Mirrorless Mirror" is characteristic. Arguing for a spherical dialectical logic against two-dimensional analytic logic, the author discusses in pell-mell order a list of thinkers ranging from Aristotle to the modern Zen master Yamada Koun. G. Spencer Brown and Merleau-Ponty are invoked on the flatness of explanatory analysis, after which the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence and Heraclitus's *coincidentia oppositorum* are adduced as Western witness to the Buddhist global logic. Descartes is quoted as showing "the entwining of the mirror's negative spatiality and its positive reflectivity," confirming the Buddhist view of the mirror-mind whose "equanimity is a function of its negativity, the utter dis-identity with which it abjures its reflections" (pp. 36-37). Kant is cited in an argument that any particular affirmation implies a statement about reality as a whole, and so is fraught with self-contradiction; Zen kōans are said to confirm this. Via Heidegger, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and G. Spencer Brown we reach Suzuki, who teaches that the will "differentially values *theoria*, not simply above *praxis*, but, more importantly, above the primordial fusion of *theoria* and *praxis* prior to their differentiation" (p. 43). The author himself proposes that a fourth "transcendentally more primal parturition [does he mean "partition"?] is that between choosing and not-choosing" (p. 43). Whorf, Saussure, and Heidegger, as radicalized by Derrida, teach us to think a difference more originary than being itself, a reflexive movement of perpetual self-effacement; this suggests the image of a cylindrical mirror that reflects itself. Rambling reflections on the oddity of mirrors confirm that "the logic of mirroring rivets us inescapably to phenomenal undecidability" (p. 48). There is an obscure discussion of Rorty,

and a quotation from D. E. Harding causes Hui-neng to smile. "The very visibility of the mirror is its invisibility" (p. 49); Sartre and microbiology confirm this, as does Nicholas of Cusa and a Vietnamese monk who states, "The free man sees all, but nothing is seen by him" (p. 50). Husserl corrects Kant, making the noumenon phenomenal; things appear as they are. The gap between such experience and analytical logic is described in mythological language: "But wait! Great Bivalence, battle-girt, has fallen. The counsel of Experience has proven a mighty potion. Bivalence, now twisted and divided against himself, has quaffed the unholy cup of conjoint falsehood" (p. 56). The chapter ends with a discussion of Michael Dummett on intuitionism and constructivism in mathematics.

The author has read widely, and his comments on difficult theories in philosophy and Buddhism sometimes show acuity and inventive felicity. He speaks well of the subordination of logic to a preconceptual *logos* inscribed in the phenomena (p. 76), though I wonder if he does justice to a possible autonomy of reason from the phenomenological level. He has some good comments on the notion of truth, though again in a rather one-sidedly phenomenological vein. His analyses of consciousness and self-consciousness in Husserl and Sartre and the correlations he makes with Buddhist meditation, and many of the other cross-cultural comparisons he touches on, are suggestive, and he might have written an interesting book had he selected the best of these topics and dwelt on them patiently.

Joseph O'Leary
Sophia University