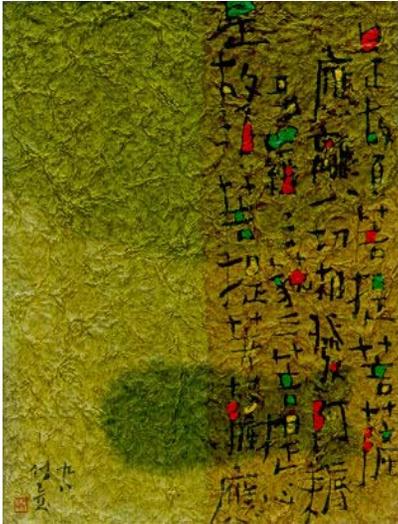


Book Review

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Tibetan Buddhism Going Global? A Case Study of a Contemporary Buddhist Encounter with Science.

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Book Review

Tibetan Buddhism Going Global?

A Case Study of a Contemporary Buddhist Encounter
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The Tibetan diaspora has led to a growing awareness of Tibetan Buddhism as a viable and increasingly globalized Buddhist tradition (Cabezón 2006, and, more extensively, Zablocki 2005). In this essay, I want to add to the case for viewing Tibetan Buddhism as a global Buddhist tradition by focusing on its contemporary encounter with science. More specifically, I suggest that the recent Tibetan Buddhist dialogue with the sciences provides one avenue to understand the dynamic character of this tradition as an emerging global presence.

Elsewhere, I have argued a similar thesis by analyzing the dialogues between the Dalai Lama and Western scientists (Yong 2008). Here I want to focus on the work of B. Alan Wallace as a case study in the globalization of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. I will show not only that Wallace's work has complemented that of the Dalai Lama, but also that he has done yeoman's labor in bridging the Tibetan tradition and the modern world. Although Wallace's Buddhist training, as we shall see, is rather eclectic, it is also fair to say that his most formative influences have derived primarily from the Gelug tradition and then secondarily from the Nyingma school. However, Wallace himself usually refers to "Tibetan Buddhism" rather than focusing specifically on these lineages when discussing

his own work. Hence I will follow Wallace in this regard, although readers should be attentive to the contextual clues that may further specify the references to "Tibetan Buddhism" in the remainder of this essay. We will proceed in three steps: a) a brief overview of Wallace's life against the backdrop of globalization processes; b) a focused review of four of his books devoted to Buddhism and science; and c) a brief assessment of his work from the perspective of two global conversations: that of religion and science, and that of the Buddhist-Christian dialogue.

Three caveats need to be registered before proceeding. First, I am suggesting neither that Wallace is the only or best representative of contemporary Tibetan Buddhism in its encounter with the modern world nor that his work is the foremost exemplar of the globalization of Tibetan Buddhism; rather, I want to look at Wallace's bridging of Tibetan traditions with modern science as but one aspect of the encounter between ancient Buddhism and the contemporary global context. Second, I am not seeking to reduce the globalization of Tibetan Buddhism to its encounter with the sciences; rather, I think the Buddhism-science dialogue provides one window into the processes of globalization with which Tibetan Buddhists are engaged. Finally, I approach this essay as a Christian theologian interested in the religion and science encounter rather than as either a Tibetologist or a scholar of Buddhist studies. My scholarly training lies in comparative theology, interreligious dialogue, and the exploration of how ancient religious self-understandings are being transformed in our new global context, and these interests will be reflected especially in my comments in part three.

I. B. Alan Wallace as "Globe-trotter": A Biographical approach to Tibetan Globalization

Born in southern California in 1950 to a biblical scholar, David H. Wallace (1924-), B. Alan came into adulthood during the tumultuous 1960s with the civil rights movement, feminism, and the war in Vietnam all in full swing. (Wallace 2006, p. xiii-xv). His college journey took him from studies in biology and ecology at the University of California, San Diego, for the first two years, during which his interests expanded to include the philosophy of religion, to the University of Göttingen, West Germany, in 1970. He would not complete his undergraduate degree for another sixteen years (on which more, momentarily), since his studies pushed him even further east (relative to his southern California roots), taking him from Göttingen to India.

From 1971-1975, Wallace immersed himself in Indo-Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, psychology, and meditation in Dharamsala, India, home since 1960 to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan "government-in-exile." Wallace received oral transmission in 1973 from Ku-ngo Barshi, a lay teacher of the "mind training" tradition traced back to Atīśa (982-1054 CE), one of the founding figures of what later came to be known as the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism. Wallace has since written two commentaries on the "mind training" teaching, which he also considers as valuable for "heart training" (Wallace 1992, Wallace 2001). He was thereafter also fully ordained by the Dalai Lama, himself, in 1975.

From 1975-1979, under advisement from the Dalai Lama, Wallace lived in Switzerland studying at the Tibet Institute under the renowned Gelug monk Geshé Rabten (1920-1986). While there, he began teaching at the Center for Higher Tibetan Studies in Mt. Pelerin, Switzerland. Toward the end of this period, Wallace produced a book on the life and teachings of Geshé Rabten, focused particularly on the topics of renunciation, awakening

mind, mental quiescence, and penetrating insight (Wallace 1980). This would be the first of many volumes from the hand of Wallace translating Tibetan Buddhism for a Western audience.

For the next four years after this period, Wallace served as an interpreter for the Dalai Lama in India, Sri Lanka, and the United States, while also conducting meditative retreats, sometimes for up to sixteen hours a day, under the guidance of Gen Lamrimpa (1934-2003), an experienced recluse. Later on (from 1987-1989), Wallace would interpret for Lamrimpa in the United States on several occasions, out of which he then translated and published three books of Lamrimpa's exposition of the Dzogchen ("Great Perfection") teaching (from the Tibetan Nyingma school), of the Kālacakra form of Vajrayāna practice, and of the work of major Buddhist figures like Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419) and Asanga (fourth century CE) (Lamrimpa 1992, Lamrimpa 1999a, Lamrimpa 1999b).

Throughout this period of time, however, Wallace's early fascination with science did not leave him. In 1984 he returned to the US and enrolled in Sanskrit, physics, and philosophy of science courses at Amherst College. He completed his undergraduate degree *summa cum laude* in 1987 with an honors thesis subsequently published in two volumes: *Choosing Reality: A Buddhist View of Physics and the Mind* (Wallace 1996, which we will discuss below) and *Transcendent Wisdom: A Commentary on the Ninth Chapter of Shantideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life* (Wallace 1988). 1987 also featured the first of the "Mind and Life" dialogues between the Dalai Lama and Western scientists and philosophers (see www.mindandlife.org). Wallace helped organize many of these dialogues. He has also participated in them, at first primarily as one of two main translators for the

Dalai Lama, but increasingly in more recent dialogues as one of the team members representing the Tibetan tradition (see Wallace and Houshmand 1999).

Also in 1987, with the blessing of the Dalai Lama, Wallace returned to lay life. Over the next two years he led two extended meditative retreats in the high desert of California and in the rural area of southwestern Washington. The latter, conducted with Gen Lamrimpa, produced a set of Wallace lectures published as *Tibetan Buddhism from the Ground Up* (Wallace and Wilhelm 1993). In 1989, Wallace married Vesna Acimovic. Both embarked on PhD studies in Asian religions, Wallace at Stanford University and his wife at the University of California at Berkeley, with a focus on South Asian traditions. Vesna began lecturing at the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1997 and assumed a tenure-track position there in 2001, where she remains to the present. Together, the Wallaces produced a full translation of Shantideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life* (Shantideva 1997). Vesna Wallace's own scholarship has focused on the Tibetan Kālacakrantra (V. Wallace 2001, V. Wallace 2004).

Wallace spent his time at Stanford focused on the interface between Buddhism and science. After passing his comprehensive examinations, he undertook a five month meditation retreat employing the Dzogchen approach as a kind of "lab" assessment of his work on consciousness theory. Wallace conducted much of his research for his book *The Taboo of Subjectivity* (on which more in the next section) during this period of study at Stanford, but focused his dissertation instead on *shamantha* meditation (a revised version was published as Wallace 1998, see also Wallace 1999). After completing the PhD in 1995, he worked as a visiting scholar in the religious studies and psychology departments at Stanford

University. He was then invited to a position with the faculty in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 1997, where over the next few years he taught courses in Tibetan language, culture, and religion, and on religion and science. Throughout much of the 1990s, Wallace also served intermittently as an interpreter for and translator of (four books or commentaries by) Ven. Gyatrul Rinpoche (1924-), a high ranking lama in the Nyingma Order who had been appointed as dharma teacher to the West by the Dalai Lama (Gyatrul 1993, Gyatrul 1998, Chagmé 1998, Chagmé 2000).

In 2001, Wallace left his university position and retreated (again) to the high desert of California for six months of solitary meditation. Returning with a renewed vision, he established the Santa Barbara Institute for Consciousness Studies (SBICS) in 2003, a non-profit institution devoted to exploring and synthesizing science, contemplative traditions and practices, and consciousness studies (see <http://www.sbinstitute.com/>). The central focus of the SBICS remains the "Shamantha Project," a one-year residential retreat involving the evaluation of the cognitive sciences. From his base in Santa Barbara, Wallace remains active as an academic and popular writer — both *Contemplative Science* and *Hidden Dimensions*, which will be reviewed below, were written in the last few years — and keeps a busy schedule as a lecturer and speaker on the international scene (see Wallace 2005 for an example of his gift for taking difficult ideas in the Tibetan tradition and translating them into a modern idiom accessible to laypeople in the West).

Before we shift to a more detailed examination of Wallace's work at the interface of Buddhism and science, a number of summary comments are *a propos* regarding this biographical overview. First, while the globalization

of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition cannot be understood apart from the political developments in Sino-Tibetan relations in the second half of the twentieth century, the other side of the story concerns Western fascination with the East opened after the relaxation of immigration laws in 1965. Wallace's initial visit to and stay in India and his globe-trotting ventures since then both have been enabled by globalization processes in the last generation and are representative of the treks of many Westerners seeking a deeper encounter with Asian religious traditions. In a sense, his experience is not unique; what is exceptionally noteworthy, however, have been the results of his journey.

This leads, second, to the observation of Wallace as a tireless interpreter and translator of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition to the modern West. The preceding account is a selective rather than exhaustive catalogue of his work in this area. Whatever else will finally be said of Wallace's legacy, his contribution of making available ancient Buddhist and Tibetan texts for scholarly and lay use will need to be acknowledged. Further, however, his work as interpreter cannot be overlooked. The Dalai Lama, Geshé Rabten, Gen Lamrimpa, and Gyatrul Rinpoche are only the most well known among the many Tibetan teachers that Wallace has served. In this unassuming way, then, Wallace has been a vehicle of the globalization of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Finally, I see that the globalization of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition has paralleled the intensification of the encounter between Buddhism and modern science (Yong 2007). In one sense, it might be thought that the attention paid to science by the Dalai Lama, Wallace, and other Tibetan scholars is motivated by apologetic purposes related to translating and validating ancient Buddhist teachings in the modern world. While this rationale

should not be minimized, I would suggest an alternative perspective which sees the global expansion of the Tibetan tradition as leading to its own distinctive engagement with the sciences. In this view, globalization produces less a Tibetan Buddhist apologetic than it does a creative and constructive Tibetan Buddhist encounter with science. Wallace's work provides a case study of this type of globalization dynamic. I suggest that his distinctive approach to science cannot be understood apart from his work as a retriever and translator of ancient Buddhist teachings and meditation practices.

II. Buddhism and Science: A Review of the Work of B. Alan Wallace

While the sciences have been of interest to Wallace since he was a teenager, he has been productive as a Buddhist philosopher of science especially in the last decade. Long convinced that the way of dialogue is best suited to chart a *via media* between scientific materialism on the one hand and postmodern relativism on the other, (Wallace 2003, p. 1-30; Yong 2005b), his published books on Buddhism and science have attempted to demonstrate the fruitfulness of such collaboration. In this section, I will briefly summarize four of his books on the topic. Our goal in this section is to achieve understanding rather than to provide critical assessment. Some comparative analysis will be presented in part three of this essay.

We begin with Wallace's Amherst College thesis, written under the guidance of Professors Arthur Zajonc (a physicist) and Robert Thurman (a scholar-practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism), and published as *Choosing Reality: A Buddhist View of Physics and the Mind* (Wallace 1996). Remember, however, that this BA thesis was written after extensive "on the ground" training and research on the Tibetan Buddhist tradition in India and around the world. Wallace's quest in this volume was to

seek out a "middle way" between realism and instrumentalism in science. Wallace asserts that neither realism nor instrumentalism remain as viable options given the emergence of quantum physics (where physics bleeds into metaphysics and religion, where objectivism breaks down on the wave/particle duality, where the role of the observer seems essential to the results of quantum experimentation, and where there is widespread agreement, following Heisenberg and others, that we observe not nature itself but nature which is open to our questioning, etc.); given the "conclusions" handed on by the history of science (for example, that Newton's *Principia* was more a mathematical predicting device than an explanatory tool regarding "reality"); given developments in mathematics (from Euclidean geometry to Gödelian conventionalism); and given a critical re-reading of the ancients (for example, the implausible legacies of Ptolemaic astronomy which saved the appearances of Platonic philosophy which idealized empirical reality). In the late twentieth century context, we can no longer think we have an "objective" view of reality in the sense that science provides us with the one true view of the world — Wallace's major contribution in *Choosing Reality* may be the sustained, almost 100-page, argument he provides in the first half of the book against the realist position — but neither can we depend only on an instrumentalist view of science since that requires an untenable agnosticism regarding the world and our engagements with it.

What then might be a way forward? Drawing from and applying a Madhyamaka Buddhist viewpoint, Wallace presents in the second half of the volume a participatory universe that avoids dichotomizing experience into objective or subjective, and that opens up to a contemplative and introspective approach to the mind, to embodiment, and to the world. A participatory and

nondualist approach rejects the Kantian bifurcation between noumena and phenomena, and hence allows for what Wallace calls a participatory centrism: our conceptions bring the world that we know into existence. Wallace reminds us that the word *conception* means not only "derived from cognition," but also suggests *origination*: "The anthropic principle...suggests that the world that we experience can be grasped by thought because it owes its very existence to our concepts. The two are mutually interdependent. The universe that we observe is then a human-oriented world, and it would not exist apart from our presence in it" (Wallace 1996, p. 109). Human interdependence with the world therefore opens up multiple interpretations of reality, which in turn endow human subjects with the responsibility to "choose" their realities in interdependence with others.

If *Choosing Reality* provides the basic metaphysic and epistemology for a Buddhist encounter with modern science, Wallace's next book on the topic, *The Taboo of Subjectivity: Toward a New Science of Consciousness*, (Wallace 2000) further expands on two topics: a critical assessment of the ideology of scientific materialism (part I), and a consciousness-based approach to science (parts II and III). The former must be explicitly undertaken because otherwise the stronghold of a positivistic approach to science — scientism, in the pejorative sense — will continue to block the emergence of any science of consciousness. Wallace's goal, informed by decades of meditation practice devoted to engaging, exploring, and transforming the mind, is to register consciousness on the scientific agenda.

What is consciousness? In brief, consciousness is, for Wallace, "the sheer events of sensory and mental awareness by which we perceive colors and shapes, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, and mental

events such as feelings, thoughts, and mental imagery" (Wallace 2000, p. 5-6). Wallace's argument for a new science of consciousness to replace the objectivism, monism, and reductionism of scientism unfolds in three steps. First, building on the basic thrust of *Choosing Reality*, after the quantum revolution in twentieth century science, consciousness can no longer be ignored in scientific endeavors. Second, we need to take another serious look at the work of William James (1842-1910), one of the founding fathers of the science of psychology, especially his proposals for a science of introspection. James's ideas were discarded by behaviorist approaches, and the materialist ontology of behaviorist psychology continues to dominate brain science even to the present day. While the cognitive neurosciences privilege the use of mechanical instruments in brain study (for example, those related to the new technologies that enable studies of brain states correlated with mental functions), these so-called "hard sciences" of the brain are nowhere close to resolving the Cartesian problem of the mind-brain relationship, or to understanding the intricate and complex workings of the mind. What they are attempting to do — a study *of* consciousness from the outside — will, Wallace argues, leave us seriously deficient in our understanding of the mind. Instead, the sciences of introspection may be our only hope of probing mental phenomena more deeply and directly.

Third, Wallace recommends the methods for refining attention that are essential for developing introspection as a viable scientific inquiry. Here he draws from the meditative practices of the wide range of Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions, especially the Tibetan traditions with which he is most familiar. These millennia-old approaches have been cultivated by contemplative adepts, and their usefulness for understanding the wide range of consciousness — including that of conceptually

unstructured awareness as taught by Padmasambhava, who was introduced to Wallace by Gyatrul Rinpoche (Wallace 2000, p. 109-112, 115-118) — has been repeatedly confirmed through repeated testimony. So yes, the new science of consciousness will involve personal introspection, but the results are not merely subjective when assessed against the findings of the long history of Buddhist praxis.

The title of the third volume under review, *Contemplative Science: Where Buddhism and Neuroscience Converge*, implies that Wallace seeks to carry the investigation forward via a more sustained interaction with the cognitive neurosciences (Wallace 2007a). Some of this does happen in the volume, but not in any way that substantially advances his previous discussions. The shift of language from "science of consciousness" to "contemplative science," however, signals the emergence of a more mature Wallace, one less concerned with appeasing scientists and more concerned with championing the cause of contemplation for both scientific inquiry and religious practice. Wallace's goal is still to argue for a more or less intersubjective account of consciousness, but the major developments in this volume have to do, I suggest, with his taking seriously the religious traditions that sustain the contemplative practices being proposed.

Hence *Contemplative Science* is just as much about religion as it is about science. Wallace is here attentive to the religious character of Buddhist meditation practice, as well as sensitive to the charge that religion just as often collides rather than cooperates with science. He hypothesizes that while the emergence of Western science was motivated (at least in part) by a theology of creation, this same set of theological convictions eventually hindered the flourishing of a science of

introspection (Wallace 2007a, chapter four, esp. p. 66-67). Yet these divergent trajectories between Buddhist traditions and Western monotheistic ones do not ultimately mean that no common ground is to be found. Instead, any honest survey of Buddhist traditions will reveal, according to Wallace, a wide range of attitudes, ranging from the quasi-agnosticism of most Theravādan traditions to the quasi-monotheism, even polytheism, of Mahāyāna traditions, and even a kind of robust monotheism in Vajrayāna sources (Wallace 2007a , chapter five). This discussion is directed toward making the case that contemplation not only funds the convergence between Buddhism and science, but also provides a possible bridge for dialogue between East and West.

A major thread running throughout *Contemplative Science* concerns the spiritual, moral, and transformative goals of contemplative practice. As Wallace learned from his teachers in the Tibetan tradition, contemplation is not an end in itself but serves the purpose of making possible a meaningful life, the essential features of which include clarifying the truth, nurturing health and wholeness, cultivating virtue, and bringing about psychological flourishing and happiness (Wallace 2007a , p. 2-6; Dhonden 2000). Buddhist meditation — *shamatha* practice in this instance — "begins with the premise that the mind is the primary source of human joy and misery and is central to understanding the natural world as a whole," and the "central goals of its cultivation are the development of attentional stability and acuity" (Wallace 2007a, p. 136, 137). Western science as traditionally understood, of course, could not and did not factor these teleological realities into its equations, as these lay in the domain of religion. Wallace therefore works hard to show that the highest religious aspirations of East and West — of monotheistic faiths and Buddhist traditions — not only

converge on these ideals but also could potentially agree about the value of contemplative practice for the purpose of attaining these objectives.(1) To be sure, meditative practices could lead to the idolization of the self, just as monotheistic faith may lead to the idolization of the deity (Wallace 2007a, p. 149-152). However, the best in both traditions — especially, in Wallace's view, the guidelines developed by Buddhist adepts to keep meditation focused — provide safeguards against the seductions that would otherwise hinder the goals of the practice from being achieved.

The most recent book (as of the time of this writing, and the last we will review), *Hidden Dimensions: The Unification of Physics and Consciousness*, (Wallace 2007b) in some ways brings us back full circle to the metaphysical explorations of *Choosing Reality*. Wallace, however, advances the discussion by presenting what he calls a special and a general theory of ontological relativity. The special theory advocates that our perceived realities, both physical and mental phenomena, "emerge from and exist only relative to a subtle dimension of existence of pure forms, or archetypal symbols" (Wallace 2007b, p.70). This is a metaphysical theory that expands on the participatory universe idea, but does so in dialogue with Spinoza's *causa sui*, Jung's archetypal domain, and Bohm's "implicate order," among other proposals regarding mind and matter as being in effect emergent from two sides of one underlying reality.

The general theory of ontological relativity is more an epistemological theory that, drawing from Einstein's theory of general relativity regarding the invariant speed of light vis-à-vis all frames of reference, states "there is no theory or mode of observation — no infallible method of inquiry, scientific or otherwise — that provides an absolute frame of reference within which to test all other

perceptions or ideas" (Wallace 2007b, p. 71); this is because although "there is one truth that is invariant across all cognitive frames of reference: *everything that we apprehend, whether perceptually or conceptually* [as opposed to Wallace's special theory of ontological relativity which concerns perceptual phenomena only], *is devoid of its own inherent nature, or identity, independent of the means by which it is known*. Perceived objects, or observable entities, exist relative to the sensory faculties or systems of measurement by which they are detected" (Wallace 2007b, p. 72, italics in original). Hence what we need is a science of intersubjectivity, albeit one that is not limited to individual claims but critically interacts with those which have withstood the test of time across a variety of contemplative traditions. This would be a science of introspection that is unabashedly anthropomorphic in recognizing the central role of the mind in our knowledge of the world, but that results neither in a Kantian dualism (because knowers participate, however perspectively, in and with reality) nor a nihilistic relativism (since there are norms for truth, goodness, and even beauty based on the community of knowers).

Combined, Wallace's special and general theories of ontological relativity suggest that at the ontological level of human consciousness, the extinction of our (human) consciousness will result also in the extinction of the world as we know it, although that does not mean that the world ceases to exist in relationship to other conscious beings or creatures.(2) At the same time, this also means that no one theory will suffice to explain or enable understanding of the richness of the world as we experience it. Thus we need both "top-down" (e.g., mathematical or Platonic) and "bottom-up" (e.g., empirical, introspective, and even physicalist) approaches that complement each other (Wallace 2007b, p. 56-57).

However, given the interdependent and participatory universe as articulated in the special theory, the introspective sciences of mind and of consciousness provide indispensable empirical modes of inquiry for illuminating all other fields of knowledge, including philosophy, mathematics, religion, and even the sciences. Entry into what Tibetan Buddhists call the "Great Perfection" — literally: "Dzogchen," which tradition Wallace had learned, at least in part, from Gen Lamrimpa — would confirm, both perceptually and conceptually, this "unification of physics and consciousness" (the subtitle of *Hidden Dimensions*, see Wallace 2007b, final chapter). But sustained interaction with the textual legacy of a cumulative contemplative tradition *and* extensive and substantive meditative practices refined over the course of thousands of hours of individual practice are both necessary for this task. Almost forty years after embarking on the study of science and religion, these two "topics" have fused in the translator, practitioner, and theorist B. Alan Wallace.

III. Tibetan Buddhism as a Global Presence: B. Alan Wallace in Global "Trilogue"

A subtext of this review essay concerns the globalization of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. I have presented a case study of B. Alan Wallace to suggest how his work illuminates the processes of globalization along at least three trajectories. First, in Wallace, we see the meeting of ancient texts and modern sciences. Not only are the reading, translating, and interpreting of Tibetan classics now a global activity, but the legacies of the tradition are being seen as pertinent to the scientific endeavor considered as a global enterprise. Second, ancient Buddhist convictions about the non-duality of beliefs and practices, of sitting and doing, of meditation and action, are all being brought into dialogue with the sciences. The

practices of the lamas are not only said to be convergent with the new (quantum mechanical) sciences, but also provide platforms from which to launch additional critiques against the objectivism, positivism, and materialism of modern scientism. This leads, finally, to the possibility of a convergence between a global Tibetan Buddhism and a postmodern science of consciousness. In other words, the dialogue between Tibetan Buddhist traditions and modern science may shape new discoveries in the physical, psychological, and cognitive sciences, as well as chart new paths of inquiry for the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of religion, even for theology. It is precisely the nature of global traditions to potentially have such wide-ranging impact. Others exploring these matters include Jeremy W. Hayward (Hayward 1987) and Francisco Varela and Jonathan Shear (Varela and Shear, 1999).

In conclusion, I want to raise two sets of questions related to the global conversation that Wallace's work invites us into. The first concerns matters at the intersection of science and the philosophy of mind. Wallace's new contemplative science views consciousness as arising interdependently with matter from the primordial (non-dual) archetypal domain (his special theory). This widely held Buddhist position could gain, however, from further precision, especially in dialogue with the physical and biological sciences. Two claims by Robin Cooper will help raise the issue more pointedly: a) that the evolutionary trail of life depends on "behavior-led" selection which is related to and informed by consciousness ("top-down" influences of how behaviors shape environments/niches which in turn revise selection pressures at the genetic level), and b) that, "In Buddhism, while body and mind mutually condition one another, it is consciousness that is said to be primary" (Cooper 1996, p. 69). Would Wallace say that Cooper is simply mistaken

about claim (b), the primacy of consciousness, in light of the interdependence thesis? Or would Wallace say that (b) explains (a) in light of his (Wallace's) general theory of ontological relativity? On the one hand, the Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination would seem to invite an agnosticism about (or, put positively, faith in) the primordial archetypal domain from which consciousness and matter arise; on the other hand, the energies which Buddhist traditions, and Wallace in these four books, have put into developing and cultivating the science of introspection suggest that consciousness is primary in more than just an epistemological sense. I suspect that Tibetan Buddhism as it continues to go global will continue to wrestle with these issues.

This leads to my second set of questions, which concern matters related to interreligious dialogue in general and to the Buddhist-Christian encounter more specifically (remember, my background and training is in Christian and comparative theology). Questions regarding the philosophy of mind, such as those just articulated, have long been the concern of Christian philosophers and theologians (e.g., MacDonald 2003). In contemporary discussions, there are at least four views of the mind-body relation: the traditional (Thomist and Cartesian) dualist account; an emergentist view which embraces an evolutionary explanation for the development of the mind but rejects a monistic or materialist ontology of mentality; a nonreductive physicalist view in which the soul or mind is constituted by the brain (and body) but is irreducible to its material parts; and a constitutive-materialism in which human persons are constituted by but not identical with their material bodies, that bodies are necessary although insufficient causes of human personhood, and that human beings possess unified consciousnesses that are nevertheless not immaterial souls (Green and Palmer 2005). In view of Wallace's convictions, both that

Buddhist traditions are not necessarily non- or a-theistic, and that there may be an underlying common ground discernible between Buddhist and monotheistic traditions especially when approached through the practices of their contemplative traditions, there are potentially fruitful lines of dialogue between Buddhists and Christians that can center around such discussions in the philosophy of mind. Even after rejecting the more obvious dualistic explanations of the mind-body relation, there is still much that Buddhists and Christians can learn from one another regarding the interdependence and mutuality of mind and body. In fact, wrestling with such issues in dialogue with Christian interlocutors may well help to sharpen Wallace's own response to the first set of questions regarding the nature of consciousness in light of the biological and evolutionary sciences. Perhaps in future work, Wallace will contribute to the Buddhist-science-Christianity tri-logue in ways that may also make it possible for him to re-engage the religious tradition of his childhood and upbringing.

In this case, the globalization of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition means neither just a dialogue between Tibetan and Western science, nor just a dialogue between Eastern Buddhists and Western Christians, but perhaps a "tri-logue" between Buddhists, Christians, and scientists — including scientists who are Buddhist and scientists who are Christian — East and West (Yong 2005a). For me as a Christian theologian, Wallace is a thought provoking ally against all forms of ontological materialism and distorted scientism. He is a partner in the search for a fully aesthetic, affective, embodied, and social spirituality that defines what it means to be human so that we are not just using scientifically developed drugs for temporary pacification but seeking the healing of our minds and hearts via reconnecting ourselves to our bodies, others, and the rest of the world. Tibetan

Buddhism going global means that there are now additional resources and alliances for Western Christians and others in monotheistic traditions who have been working to restore spirituality to our scientific endeavors, and perhaps also in the longer run, to our politics, education, and our lives (Wallace 2000, chapter 8). In the process, of course, both "us" and "them" will be transformed — and, hopefully, the processes of globalization will be rendered more humane.(3)

Notes

¹ Wallace briefly mentions the perennial philosophy as one possible explanation of this convergence, not necessarily endorsing it, but suggesting that deployment of the empirical science of introspection may help us further understand the issues (Wallace 2007a, p. 107-08).

² Wallace writes, "all possible worlds vanish simultaneously with the disappearance of the cognitive frames of reference within which they are apprehended. The worlds experienced by other conscious beings will continue to exist relative to them. In this sense, conscious observers cocreate the worlds in which they dwell" (Wallace 2007b, p. 80).

³ My thanks to Franz Metcalf for being open to my suggestion for this review essay on the work of Wallace, and for his editorial suggestions that have improved the first draft. Thanks also to my graduate assistant Bradford McCall for proofreading the earlier version of this essay. All other errors of fact or interpretation remain my responsibility.

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