

on with daily life. To make his case he interestingly compares the experiences of the modern mystic Bernadette Roberts, Hui Neng, himself and Meister Eckhart, discussing all in light of Sartre's theory of consciousness and the notion of *wu-nien* (non-thought) as found in the Hui Neng's *Platform Sutra*. As before, while the descriptions of the mystical experiences are deeply suggestive, the treatment of the philosophical ideas involved in explaining them proves far too cursory to provide intellectual satisfaction.

Nevertheless, *Mysticism, Mind, Consciousness* may well turn out to be a work of enduring importance. Of particular value are the author's arguments against constructivism and his two-fold typology of Pure Consciousness Events and Dualistic Mystical States. Like mystical experience itself, this book is in many ways an anomaly. It is sure to generate discussion.

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*Once and Future Myths: the Power of Ancient Stories in Modern Times*. By Phil Cousineau. Berkeley, CA: Conari Press, 2001. ISBN 1-5732-4146-6 Pp. xvi+342.

Phil Cousineau, long-time student of the famous mythologist Joseph Campbell, has written a book about the power mythology has in the modern world.

The book opens with a rather lovely introduction to the concept of myth and the place myth has always held in day to day lives. Cousineau magically interweaves stories from his own childhood with the novels of James Joyce and the music of Miles Davis. He brings the heroes of modern day culture to life as he passionately weaves their tales into a larger tapestry of an all-encompassing mythology. He makes mythology relevant, something for which Joseph Campbell was famous, and he points to how mythology is a constantly evolving experience. The mythology of ancient Greece need not be our only reference to great stories. Mythology is constantly being recreated, in our own times just as in times past. He is therefore not only arguing that ancient mythology continues to be relevant, but that mythology is not always ancient. The book therefore opens with a hopeful and exciting new look at the way we tell stories.

The problem however, is that beyond the introduction, there really is not much substance to the book. What could have developed into a fascinating comparison of modern myths with ancient ones, really turned into an excuse to write an autobiography. Most of the book consists of descriptions of important events in Cousineau's life, be it touching moments with his father, wise words from Joseph Campbell, or insights from his relationship with his son. Of course, there is nothing wrong with autobiographical writing, but if Cousineau's intention was to write his autobiography, he simply should have done so. Instead, what we are presented with is a book that does not really have the courage to be what it is, and thus is not really anything at all. It does

not present itself as an autobiography, and yet it is not a discussion of “ancient stories in modern times” as the title and introduction suggest. It is a collection of ramblings, in which both autobiography and discussions of mythology collapse without direction.

The book is broken down into six chapters. Each chapter is presented as a thematic discussion of mythology. The following themes provide the structure for the book: creative struggle, time, mentorship, travel, the city, and sports. Each theme is fascinating in and of itself. He certainly demonstrates that each of these themes is found throughout the world of mythology, and that these themes continue to be used in the mythology of today. He has therefore thought his subject through, and has come to some interesting conclusions about the power of mythology in the modern world. The problem is not the core idea behind the book, but the presentation of this idea. Instead of providing his readers with a thorough discussion of these themes, we find rather a haphazard collection of autobiographical details, with the odd reference to ancient mythology. What is even more frustrating is that whatever references he does make, he makes by paraphrasing rather than quoting. There is not one properly quoted and referenced line in the book!

There is no doubt that Cousineau has a genuine passion and love for myth. It is clear that mythology is important for him, and that he has given it much thought. The problem therefore, is one of presentation. He has some potentially important ideas about mythology, but he does not express them clearly nor thoroughly. This book should either have presented itself as an autobiography, or he should have given himself more time to think carefully through his ideas and discuss them with more depth. As it stands, the book may offer a glimpse into a love for mythology, but cannot offer much more than that.

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*Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School.* By James W. Heisig. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001. ISBN 0-8248-2481-4. Pp. xi + 380.

Thanks to James W. Heisig, there finally is a book that gives an overview of the three key thinkers of the Kyoto School Nishida Kitaro, Tanabe Hajime, and Nishitani Keiji. Heisig's book, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, will be of great interest to those who are already familiar with this significant school of Japanese philosophy, as well as to newcomers to this complex, but fascinating body of thought. *Philosophers of Nothingness* will be particularly useful in graduate seminars, as well as upper level undergraduate courses. It also is an excellent resource for those who wish to begin their own, independent exploration of the Kyoto School.