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Review of: Intentionality and the Problem of the Unconscious

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This book is meant to provide a philosophical analysis of the unconscious and of the disciplines traditionally concerned with the unconscious. The basis of the analysis is found in phenomenology and the philosophy of existence; the investigation is carried out in four parts.

The first section (pp. 16-49) lays out the major problems in psychology as they bear on the unconscious, and tries to point up the need for a "metascientific," that is, philosophical elucidation of psychological procedures. A focus for such an elucidation is seen in man's transcending capacity, his ability to reach beyond his immediate situation mentally and nonmentally.
The second section (pp. 50-76) gives a historical outline of views on the unconscious, including the Eastern tradition (pp. 50-59), extending from ancient Greece up to Freud and Jung in the West. The third section (pp. 77-121) analyzes Freud's and Jung's conceptions of the unconscious.

A systematic correlation of the problem of meaning and that of the unconscious is undertaken in section four (pp. 122-164). Meaning is taken in the flexible and complex sense of Rauhala's basic orientation, where meaning is not a given but an achievement (something constituted), and where the bodily and unconscious spheres have characteristic types of meaning.

The last section (pp. 165-212) summarizes and expounds the new insights derived from the foregoing analysis and suggests ways in which these insights can be further developed and made practically fruitful.

Rauhala's arguments for the need of philosophical analysis of the psychoanalytic concern with the unconscious refer in the main to the informal, intuitive, and occasionally inconsistent procedures of that discipline (pp. 28, 35-36). But such reference only shows that a better theory is needed, be it speculative or empirical. Moreover, the psychoanalyst's willingness to take each case as largely unique and hence as largely not susceptible to rule-governed solutions is elsewhere seen as an indication of the superiority of psychoanalysis over phenomenology and the philosophy of existence (pp. 151-153).

This concession can be generalized with regard to the entire analysis provided by Rauhala in the following sense. While the examination of psychoanalytic theory and its translation and correction into phenomenological and existential terms uncovers many inconsistencies in the former discipline and many apposite and needed distinctions in the latter, the explication covers up more persistently than the explicandum the necessity and difficulty of standards for treatment and rehabilitation. The normal and the abnormal cases become equally perspicuous and articulate in Rauhala's analysis, but the superiority of the one over the other remains a matter of labels.

This lack of incisiveness stems from Rauhala's approach, which is not so much investigative and speculative as it is historical and expository. Systematically it operates with comparatively few and simplified terms of phenomenological and existential provenience. Rauhala's distinctions between amorphous, paramorphous, quasimorphous, and morphous meaning functions are helpful, but do not open up a fundamental problem. But this methodological weakness is also the book's strength. It assembles a great amount of pertinent material in a painstaking and intelligible way. Further studies in this area will benefit from it.

The discussion of the Eastern tradition culminates in the contention: "The East has demonstrated the reality of a supra-intentional reality..." (p. 59). However, the question whether, or what kind of, demonstration is possible in this regard is not even raised, and the assertion quite consistently remains an episode apart from one incidental reference (p. 297).

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