

Article

Life in Parallel Worlds & Buddhist Psycho-Metaphysics (Part II)

Graham P. Smetham *

ABSTRACT

Michael B. Mensky's quantum spiritual psycho-metaphysics is an overarching paradigm for a post-materialist science and philosophy, and his work in this area is of immense significance for the modern world. His quantum-spiritual psycho-metaphysics is entirely consistent with 'mystical' insights, in particular it is coherent with Buddhist psycho-metaphysics. Mensky's quantum psycho-metaphysical paradigm succeeds dramatically by indicating that both Life and consciousness are fundamental internal aspects of quantum reality, Mensky's 'Alterverse'. Furthermore, according to Mensky's quantum psycho-metaphysical model of the process of reality Life and consciousness are unfolded from the quantum realm through the operation of an inner teleological 'pressure' which Mensky calls the 'Life-Principle'. This remarkable conceptual revolution, which shatters the materialist madness of many contemporary physicists and philosophers, is entirely consistent and coherent with the metaphysical insights of quantum theory and it corresponds closely with central Buddhist psycho-metaphysical doctrines such as karma and rebirth. Also, according to Mensky's quantum spiritual worldview, the endpoint of the long chain of rebirths is enlightenment.

Keywords: Michael Mensky, extended Everett concept, many worlds, quantum consciousness, life principle, alterverse, quantum spirituality, Buddhist psycho-metaphysics, inherent existence, emptiness, ground consciousness, pure being, karma, rebirth, enlightenment.

(Continued from Part I)

According to Mensky:

In all these cases the operation of postcorrection does correct the present state, making it to be in accord [with] the criterion existing in the future. This results in the immediate choice of the correct solution of the problem, although its correctness can be confirmed only in the future. Consciousness, when [accessing] the regime of the unconscious, obtains the ability to look into the future, and makes use of the obtained information in the present.¹

In his conclusion to his '*Postcorrection*' paper Mensky says that "the postulate of postcorrection broadens quantum mechanics, in the consideration [of] the law [of the] evolution of living matter."² In fact Mensky's new paradigm is capable of bringing dramatic insights into many crucial aspects of the process of reality. It accounts for the origin of life and the evolution of sentient beings.

* Correspondence: Graham Smetham <http://www.quantumbuddhism.com> E-mail:graham@quantumbuddhsim.com

According to Mensky the evolution of life involves goals as well as causes. For Mensky “the notion of goal (the basic goal is survival) is inherent in [the] living world.”³ And “for more sophisticated forms of life ... goals may include other criteria [such as] the quality of life.”⁴ Furthermore Mensky considers that spiritual goals are inherent within the process of life. As he points out:

The phenomenon of consciousness demonstrates mystical features that are experienced by some people. All religions and spiritual schools that [have existed] for thousands of years include the mystical component as a necessary part of their message ...⁵

And Mensky considers such spiritual and mystical phenomena of consciousness to be actual, crucial and central. Because of this, the elucidation of the mystical features of consciousness within the domain of science is an important task. Furthermore, Mensky says that his paradigm, involving quantum consciousness, is a “bridge between the natural sciences and humanities, between matter and spirit.”⁶ His approach “unifies natural sciences with the sphere of spiritual knowledge including religion.”⁷ Within Mensky’s Quantum Concept of Consciousness (QCC) “science, philosophy and religion meet together,”⁸ and the QCC explains “numerous strange phenomena, which are described in ... mystical teachings, including religion and oriental philosophies.”⁹ Furthermore the QCC shows that:

...mystical aspects characteristic of any religion not only are compatible with natural sciences, natural sciences (first of all their central part, quantum mechanics) is logically defective without the inclusion of the concept of consciousness with its mystical features.¹⁰

And:

QCC makes it possible to understand that there is no contradiction between science and mysticism. This makes it possible for [people] to believe in God, or in Truth, in ... Buddhism, and so on, and offers ... enormous possibilities, hidden in human beings, ... possibilities which make one truly free, without which he/she is only a slave of ... external circumstances.¹¹

The QCC, then, elucidates and indicates the rational nature of the spiritual quest for enlightenment. Furthermore, Mensky concludes that “the picture of life after death given in Buddhism - the long series of earthly embodiments leading to ... enlightenment and ... nirvana” - is nearer the truth than that which Christianity gives.”¹²

Mensky implicitly suggests a notion of a quantum ‘soul’. We can interpret the concept of a ‘soul’, which is connected with the idea that there is some kind of life after death, with subtle quantum potentialities which continue after the apparently ‘material’ body disintegrates. The explicit focused individuated consciousness which is associated with separation of the alternatives disappears, but the quantum ‘soul’, which “in the period of death and immediately after ... is partially freed from the connections that she had with the life of the body,”¹³ inhabits, so to speak, the ‘unconscious’ realm of the parallel worlds of quantum reality.

Furthermore, the way in which the parallel worlds are experienced depends upon the state of the soul, which also means it is dependent upon the activities carried out during the life just finished (and the one before that, etc.). Mensky suggests that:

We shall argue that this set of scenarios looks (for the soul of the dead man) as the paradise if the [dead] man was righteous, looks like hell for the sinner, and looks [like] purgatory in the general case. ... Estimation is thus given to his life (or to his person-ality) and [his actions during his] stay in the world...¹⁴

The notion of ‘purgatory’ within the Catholic Church, or Russian Orthodox Church, is of an after-death sphere of purification. Mensky is suggesting that such a process can be understood as a process occurring naturally within the ‘unconscious’ quantum realms of ‘parallel worlds’ as they are experienced according to the activities carried on during embodied life. This “turns out actually to be the judgement on the spent life.”¹⁵ In other words, the ‘judgement’ is not meted out by an external agency but is a result of the trace-potentialities within the quantum ‘soul’ naturally ‘selecting’ aspects of the ‘parallel worlds’. In Buddhism this is karma and karmic consequences. In fact in Mensky’s account, the way that afterlife is experienced is analogous, although on a more subtle level, to the way that apparent ‘material’ life functions. Mensky also tells us that:

...within the sphere of life [the] soul can select the niche in which she desires to exist. In order to make the selection, [the] soul investigates various scenarios. In this study, [the] soul can make use of her experience during the life of the body...¹⁶

The ‘soul’, then, which is a subtle quantum structure, navigates its way through the ‘parallel worlds’ of quantum reality, experiencing “bliss or sufferings”¹⁷, through periods of embodiments and after-death states, towards more favorable states of existence:

The soul tests various life criteria to find [the most favorable] set of them, which make her eternal existence comfortable. Testing any given set of life criteria is a stay in such [a] world, in which people are guided by precisely this set of criteria.¹⁸

And through this process the soul navigates towards the criteria of existence which produce the most ‘blissful’ state:

Improving this criteria on the basis of this experience, the soul finally remains in that subset of the scenarios, which is determined by universal ... criteria. She understands after the experience of purgatory, what criteria led to the bliss, and she remains in the sphere, determined by these criteria. She finally settles into paradise and [experiences] eternal bliss.¹⁹

The quantum soul is in a quest for enlightenment and, as Mensky points out, this quantum perspective (EEC and QCC) leads to the psycho-metaphysical worldview of Buddhism:

...the soul experiences new earthly embodiment, reincarnation ... in which she is personified, its quality, depends on what *criteria of life quality* the possessor of this soul developed in the previous life ... This exactly corresponds to the Buddhist concept of *karma*. From what is the karma of the man in his past life, it depends, to what extent favorable will be the conditions for his next life. And from the fact whether he will improve his karma in the new life, his existence in the next embodiment will depend. Experiencing [a] long series of reincarnations, the man can be completely purged of sin, achieve enlightenment and taste nirvana i.e. infinite bliss. Then his soul will not experience the need for [a] new terrestrial embodiment and he will remain in “the other world” (in our terminology, he will be permanently existing in the quantum world, i.e. will always have an access to the entire set of parallel worlds).²⁰

Mensky's EEC and QCC psycho-metaphysical account of the process of reality maps in dramatic and spectacular fashion into the spiritual psycho-metaphysics of the Buddhist worldview. What in Mensky's terminology is the 'quantum world', the "entire set of parallel worlds," is in Buddhist terminology the *Dharmadhātu*, the sphere of all phenomena, and the *Dharmakaya*, the absolute 'truth body' of the process of reality. The mind of an enlightened being becomes co-extensive with the nondual domain of universal consciousness-awareness (*jnana*).

In his discussion of his quantum psycho-metaphysics in relation to religion and spirituality Mensky writes:

Thinking of extraordinary phenomena that are in one way or another related to human consciousness, we have to mention those forms of cognition, or even controlling [forms of cognition], that are not scientific. First and foremost, these are different religious beliefs and oriental philosophies. Scientists are fully tempted to exclude this area of human thought as being unscientific, i.e. unreliable. However, one can hardly wave away doctrines that [have] existed for millennia [that] may be the most stable phenomenon in the sphere of spiritual life. This stability is most probably an indication that all these unscientific notions rely on something actual, even though their actual basis is frequently put in a fantastic form to strengthen its emotional action. Of interest from this standpoint are oriental philosophies, which directly encourage their adepts to work on their own consciousness. We believe that Buddhism, Daoism and similar beliefs are most interesting in this respect....²¹

Here Mensky makes some very important points. Science, and physics in particular, started out in the seventeenth century by addressing itself to only those phenomena that could be observed experimentally and also described and analysed mathematically. Because of this methodology, qualitative aspects of the process of reality, such as consciousness and awareness, were left out of the scientific picture and only the material world was investigated. This approach quickly led to the view that only material aspects of the process of reality were 'real'.

However, as we have seen, the quantum revolution has shown us that the notion that the material world is primary, and that consciousness and awareness are odd productions of material processes, is entirely incorrect. It turns out that, in fact, it is the immaterial quantum realm, which has an internal nature of consciousness/awareness, which is primary and, as Planck and others have pointed out, the material world is a derived world. Furthermore, as Mensky implicitly indicates, it is a derived world which comes into being in order that consciousness can become aware, so to speak, of its own internal nature of nondual blissful awareness-luminosity. The term 'luminosity' is used in Buddhist psycho-metaphysics (*Dharma*) to indicate the experiential inner quality of the 'empty' ground of the process of reality, which is the "true nature" of reality. This level of the process of reality can be directly experienced in vivid meditation states of "the union of mind's luminosity and emptiness:"

The term "union" refers to the nonduality of luminosity and emptiness. Though the true nature is undifferentiable, it is designated as these two through dharma terminology. Its lack of entity when examined through reasoning refers to its being empty, while its being experienced as equality refers to its being luminous. Its being luminous is nothing

other than its being empty, and its being empty is nothing other than its being luminous.

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...

This empty luminosity of the pure mind, free from obsessive conceptuality, can be directly experienced by committed meditation practice.

Mensky suggests that, as indicated in spiritual traditions, the intensification of consciousness-awareness is a primary metaphysical function and goal of the process of reality. Once this new understanding of the process of reality is accepted, then the significance and importance of various ‘mystical’ religious traditions, traditions which have as their core aim the exploration and deepening of states of consciousness, becomes apparent. It is an extraordinary fact that physics, which began its exploration of the process of reality by positing the primacy of the material world and then subjecting it to a rigorous examination, has reached a point where its conclusions now indicate the necessity of exploring the internal world of consciousness. In a very real sense physics has now indicated that spiritual practice is essential for a full understanding of the process of reality.

Of course, as Mensky points out, many, perhaps most, scientists might consider such a notion to be misguided and ‘unscientific’. This is generally because it is assumed that any direct subjective investigation of internal states of consciousness are bound to be hopelessly subjective and therefore “unreliable.” However, such a dogmatic and blinkered view, as Mensky indicates, is confronted with the evidence of the “stability” of certain doctrines, a stability which should point towards the fact that such doctrines may rest on “something actual,” even though such doctrines may sometimes be couched in flamboyant terms.

Mensky highlights Buddhism and Daoism as being particularly relevant from the point of view of quantum insights. Quantum physics now indicates the primacy of consciousness, and Mensky’s analysis suggests that the individuated consciousness of sentient beings has its source in a deeper non-individuated consciousness-awareness that resides within, or beneath, the multiple potential worlds of quantum reality. In this situation a tradition like Buddhism, which “encourage[s] ... adepts to work on their own consciousness,” is continuing the scientific investigation of the process of reality by uncovering the states, levels and structures of consciousness. The *Yogācāra*, or Buddhist school of yogic practitioners (which is closely related to the *viññānavāda* – consciousness-way - and *viññāptimātra* – consciousness-only - and *Chittamatra* – Mind-Only schools) has developed a detailed psycho-metaphysics which corresponds in a very precise way with Mensky’s quantum psycho-metaphysics. Before exploring the *Yogācāra* (which I will treat as embracing the others mentioned), however, we shall look at Buddhist psycho-metaphysics in general in the context of Mensky’s quantum psycho-metaphysics.

Mensky is adamant that his quantum metaphysical view is entirely in accord with the psycho-metaphysical perspectives found within Hinduism and Buddhism, but he seems to find Buddhism more conducive:

The previous reasoning followed a certain logic, but the only concept from ... spiritual practice which was used in this consideration, was the concept of soul and [the] life of a

soul after death of the body. Now we will see, that the conclusion achieved in a purely logical way can be interpreted as describing the ideas of Hinduism and *Buddhism*, about karma and reincarnations.²³

The italics are Mensky's. He points out that each life which a 'soul' selects depends upon the actions carried out in the life before, and each of the successive lives are an exploration of one classical 'parallel' reality which is *subjectively* selected and perceived. It is important to note that Mensky's notion of 'soul' does not imply a fixed entity in the style of some Christian teachings but is in accord with the Buddhist notion of a subtle (quantum) stream of mental energy which carries traces of karmic potentiality derived from intentional actions carried out during a lifetime.

According to Mensky, such a subtle quantum 'soul' passes through a succession of lives of reincarnation, or rebirth. Mensky uses the term 'reincarnation', which implies a material body, Buddhism generally uses the term 'rebirth' because it asserts the existence of immaterial 'rebirth' realms. The terms 'reincarnation' and 'rebirth' are importantly different. The term 're-in-carn-ation' means "taking on 'meat' again" so is not appropriate for 'rebirth' in immaterial form and formless realms. So in a Buddhist context the term 'rebirth' is more precise because 'rebirth' can be in immaterial realms. Mensky, however, does not address the issue of immaterial realms, although their 'existence' is implied by his account.

Mensky's account is completely consistent with that of the theoretical quantum physicist and "quantum activist" Amit Goswami who:

...is a revolutionary amongst a growing body of renegade scientists who, in recent years, has ventured into the domain of the spiritual in an attempt both to interpret the seemingly inexplicable findings of curious experiments and to validate intuitions about the existence of a spiritual dimension of life.²⁴

According to Goswami:

The physical body dies with all its classical memories. But the subtle body, the monad ... with its quantum memory, with its conditioned vital and mental components, remains available as a conglomerate of conditioned vital and mental possibilities. This monad with quantum memory, let's call it a quantum monad, is a viable model of what the Tibetan Book of the Dead and other spiritual traditions identify as the surviving soul. If someone else in some future time and place [i.e. a future rebirth] uses a conditioned quantum monad from the past, then ... the vital and mental patterns with which he or she will respond will be ... the learned pattern of the quantum monad ... The past mental and vital propensities that one inherits in this way is called *karma* ...²⁵

And, in order for a "quantum monad" to progress towards the final goal of enlightenment it is necessary to create karmic conditionings, patterns and predispositions which are conducive for progress in the direction of enlightenment.

In Mensky's depiction, a 'soul' develops a set of "criteria of life quality" which depend upon the actions carried out, and attitudes developed, during the various lifetimes. These criteria make up a subtle personality and attitudinal structure, which is etched into the quantum 'soul' which moves from rebirth to rebirth. On Mensky's view, it is the quantum structure which makes up a 'soul' that determines the way in which the 'soul' will subjectively 'select' a new classical

incarnation (a ‘classical’ rebirth is necessarily a ‘reincarnation’) within the ‘parallel worlds’ available to it. Mensky does not discuss immaterial realms of existence, he only conceives of sentient beings taking on ‘classical’ ‘reincarnations’.

As Mensky points out, this perspective corresponds exactly with the Buddhist teachings on *karma*, the universal mechanism of cause and effect which operates on all levels of the process of reality. Mensky also indicates that over a long sequence of incarnations a ‘soul’ can be purged of ‘sin’ (although the Buddhist terms are ‘stain’, ‘affliction’ or ‘obscuriation’ - not ‘sin’) and thus end this process of reincarnation (rebirth), eventually becoming co-extensive with the entire quantum reality, occupying the entire set of ‘parallel worlds’ without having a ‘classical’ presence in any of them. This is dramatically isomorphic with Buddhist teachings concerning the attainment of enlightenment. The mind of a buddha, or fully enlightened being (also called a *tathagata* – one who has ‘gone to thusness’), does not ‘collapse’ the quantum wavefunction of the process of reality to select a classical reincarnation (rebirth). This is because all intentionality which is derived from attachment to samsaric life (the cycle of dualistic dissatisfaction and suffering) has been eliminated. Buddhahood contains an awareness of all possibilities; therefore it embraces ‘all phenomena’, this is exactly the same assertion as Mensky saying that an enlightened being occupies the entire quantum reality, the illusions of ‘classical’ worlds have dissolved.

In this context a paper entitled *Nothing Happens in the Universe of the Everett Interpretation* by Jan-Markus Schwindt is of interest. In quantum theory the potentialities which reside within the overall universal quantum sphere of potentiality (Mensky’s ‘Alterverse’, the Buddhist *Dharmadhatu*) can be divided up in different ways according to different ‘bases’. Schwindt points out that, in particular there are two very significant ways corresponding to two equations:

I will call a frame like that of [the first equation] a Nirvana frame: a frame in which it is obvious that nothing happens. A frame like that of [the second equation] will be called Samsara frame: a frame in which it looks like something happens, although in fact nothing happens. My argument will be that in the EI [Everett Interpretation], bases which show a branching are just Samsara frames. We can always find a Nirvana frame which shows that in fact nothing happened at all.²⁶

Schwindt refers to the “Nirvana frame” as a “peaceful” frame wherein “nothing happens.” In such a frame there are no internal interactions and entangling, or measuring and observing, subsystems operating:

I have shown that it is always possible to factorize the global ... space into subsystems in such a way, that the story told by this factorization is that of a world in which nothing happens. A factorization into interacting and entangling subsystems is also possible, in infinitely many arbitrary ways. ... The Many World Interpretation is therefore rather a No World Interpretation (according to the simple factorization), or a Many Many Worlds Interpretation (because each of the arbitrary more complicated factorizations tells a different story about Many Worlds.²⁷

In other words the mathematical formalism of quantum theory allows the universal quantum space of potentiality to be divided up in two modes. The first is the “peaceful” nirvanic mode wherein there is no entanglement and separations, and therefore no experiential ‘classical’

worlds come into being. The second mode is the samsaric mode wherein ‘classical’ observers come into being.

Schwindt indicates that he is using this terminology metaphorically and he is “not trying to suggest a real connection between physics and such a philosophy,” in fact it is unlikely that he would have enough knowledge of Buddhist metaphysics in order to come to a conclusion on this issue. In the context of Mensky’s and Buddhist psycho-metaphysics, however, this insight is very intriguing. As a Buddhist sutra says:

With regard to the stainless expanse of dharmas,
The explanation of the profound characteristics
The state and the activity of the Buddhas
Is nothing but sketching a colorful painting onto the sky.²⁸

The “stainless expanse of dharmas” refers to the Mahayana (Great Vehicle) Buddhist concept of the *Dharmadhatu*, the sphere of all phenomena (*‘dharma’* = phenomenon), which is a concept which corresponds to Mensky’s notion of the entire infinite set of all ‘parallel worlds’ which are potential within ‘quantum reality’. Roughly speaking we may say that an enlightened being’s - a buddha’s - ‘mind’ embraces all ‘parallel worlds’ without being confined to any of them. In fact we should say that a buddha (a small ‘b’ is used to distinguish enlightened beings in general, who are ‘buddhas’, from the historical Buddha who lived and taught in the sixth century BCE) does not have an individual ‘mind’, which is a classical level mentality, but is ‘Mind’, coextensive with the ground awareness embracing all phenomena. This is also the *‘Dharmakaya’*, the ultimate experiential nondual sphere of the process of reality. This state of enlightenment in which nothing really happens, although there are illusions of happenings, is, of course, entirely peaceful.

Mensky tells us that there are “at least two important features” of the Buddhist worldview that make it especially appropriate for his perspective:

First, Buddhism does not require blind faith in the [teachings] it proclaims. Disciples are urged to believe only when they assure themselves in the course of the work on their own consciousness that the doctrine is correct. Second, Buddhists consider their task to learn to perceive a special state which is impossible to exactly express by words and which may be characterized approximately as ‘the root of consciousness’, ‘the origin of consciousness’, or ‘the preconsciousness’. This is an elusive state that precedes the emergence of consciousness. Learners are urged to work on their consciousness until they catch the sensation of ‘being between consciousness and the absence of consciousness’. It is easily seen that the state of consciousness which is the goal of Buddhists bears much resemblance to the deepest or most primitive layer of consciousness (being “at the edge of consciousness”) which is identified with the separation of alternatives in our Extended Everett’s Concept.²⁹

Here Mensky locates a crucial feature of the theory and practice of Buddhist meditation in the context of his quantum psycho-metaphysics. According to Mensky fully manifested focused consciousness is a result of the “separation of alternatives.” On the other hand, the realm of the entire set of ‘parallel worlds’ of potentiality which makes up ‘quantum reality’ is the primordial level of nondual, i.e. non-separated, awareness, which embraces the entirety of quantum

potentiality. Mensky explicitly identifies this with the non-separated realm. In the above quote he implicitly identifies “the most primitive layer of consciousness” with the origins of the “separation of alternatives in our Extended Everett’s Concept”. Furthermore, his analysis suggests that there must be a deeper nondual, non-separated, layer of primordial awareness prior to “the most primitive layer of consciousness” that arises as the alternatives separate.

This ontological structure of consciousness is precisely delineated within Buddhist traditions, in various formulations. In the Theravada tradition, the tradition of the Elders, which is derived from the earliest Buddhist teachings contained in the Pali Suttas, the deeper levels of consciousness, ‘beneath’ or ‘above’ – depending on point of view, starting from the most gross towards the most subtle, are enumerated as the four lower *jhanas* (meditative states of focused awareness), each succeeding one being more subtle and accompanied with blissful experience, until the last which is just focused awareness, these are followed by the four immaterial states of awareness which are the ‘base of boundless space’, the ‘base of boundless consciousness’, the ‘base of nothingness’, and the ‘base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception’. This final *jhana* is the state that Mensky means by his description “between consciousness and the absence of consciousness.” The ‘base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception’ is an extremely rarefied and subtle state wherein just about all mental activity and factors are absent, there is a mere glimmer of the perceptive faculty which is not actually active. This state corresponds to the level of consciousness just prior to dissolution into the nondual quantum ground-awareness. This is the point at which the first separation within the quantum ground occurs, which Mensky describes as:

...the most primitive, or the most deep, level of consciousness, differing perceiving from not perceiving.³⁰

The following passage, which outlines a similar perspective, is taken from the writings of the eighteenth century Tibetan Yogi Jigma Lingpa (1730-98). It describes how the *alayavijnana*, the ground-consciousness which underlies the arising of dualistic phenomena, itself arises from the deeper level of completely nondual, undifferentiated wisdom-awareness, the *alaya*:

When the *alaya*’s own dynamic manifestation moves out from it, and awareness begins to enter its object, the *alayavijnana* rises up. It is as if the sensory elements of the *alaya* are awakening from a deep sleep. The objects that are grasped, the five sense objects, do not yet arise as substantial things, but a very subtle awareness that grasps them does rise up.³¹

One remarkable feature of such descriptions by accomplished Yogis is that they are descriptions based upon direct experience of these subtle levels of consciousness. The *alaya* is the completely non-differentiated ground of potentiality and awareness. The *alayavijnana*, the ground-consciousness, arises from the *alaya* as the separation towards individuated consciousness arises. The ground-consciousness hovers between nonduality and duality and carries the seeds of duality within it, it teeters on the edge of what Mensky calls “the separation of alternatives.”

Another basic Buddhist formulation that between ‘ultimate reality’, the ultimate nondual nature of consciousness/awareness, and ‘conventional’ or ‘seeming’ reality, which is the dualistic

manifestation of ‘separated’ consciousness. With regard to the ultimate reality of nondual Mind, the Thai meditation master Ajahn Chah spoke of this:

Whatever we experience, it all arises within this knowing. If this mind did not exist, the knowing would not exist either. All this is phenomena of the mind. ... the mind is merely the mind. It’s not a being, a person, a self, or yourself. Its neither us nor them. ... The natural process is not oneself. It does not belong to us or to anyone else. It’s not any thing.³²

And:

This mind is free, brilliantly radiant, and unentangled with any problems or issues... In the beginning what was there? There is truly nothing there. It doesn’t arise with conditioned things, and it doesn’t die with them.³³

As the Ch’an master Huang Po pointed out:

This pure Mind, the source of everything, shines forever and on all with the brilliance of its own perfection. But the people of the world do not awake to it, regarding only that which sees, hears, feels and knows as mind. Blinded by their own sight, hearing, feeling and knowing, they do not perceive the spiritual brilliance of the source substance. If they would only eliminate all conceptual thought in a flash, that source substance would manifest itself like the sun ascending through the void and illuminating the whole universe without hindrance or bounds.³⁴

The basic field of the nondual Mind is the vibrant, luminous, ‘empty’ capacity for the fundamental act of knowing; and it provides the ground from which all the phenomena of the experiential dualistic world emerge. It is this fundamental mind-energy, the ground of knowingness, so to speak, that provides the basis of both the coordinated appearances of the apparently external material world and the apparently ‘internal’ conceptual structures of ‘knowingness’ by which the functioning of appearances are comprehended. The entire vast array of appearances, experiences, reflective conceptual systems, and so on arise from primordial flickering, knowing movements of consciousness/awareness that disturbs its quint-essential unity:

Please clearly understand that when the mind is still it’s in its natural, unadulterated state. As soon as the mind moves, it be-comes conditioned. ... The desire to move here and there arises from conditioning. If our awareness doesn’t keep pace with these mental proliferations as they occur, the mind will chase after them and be conditioned by them. Whenever the mind moves, at that moment, it becomes a conventional reality.³⁵

Here Ajahn Chah draws the distinction between the ‘ultimate’ nature of the non-moving Mind and the derived nature of the ‘separated’, moving mind that gives rise to ‘conventional’ reality.

This division between the ultimate non-moving mind and the ‘conventional’ or ‘classical’ everyday moving mind is reflected within Mahayana Buddhist philosophy in the doctrine of the two realities (often called the ‘two truths’):

The seeming and the ultimate-
These are asserted as the two realities.

The ultimate is not the sphere of cognition.
It is said that cognition is the seeming.³⁶

The assertion that the “ultimate is not the sphere of cognition” whilst “cognition is the seeming” corresponds to the fact that the ultimate nature of the primordial mind is unmoving, or non-separated, whilst individuated consciousness or dualistic ‘separated’ awareness, moves and divides itself in the act of cognition:

There are three different kinds of awareness...: pervading awareness; consciousness or moving-mind awareness; and primordial awareness. Pervading awareness ... is inseparable from the *kunzhi* base and is omnipresent in all material existence. Moving-mind awareness is ... found only in the mind of sentient beings...³⁷

Primordial mind (*kunzhi*) does not directly cognize in a dualistic manner but it has a cognizant nature that gives rise to dualistic cognition. It can be thought of as fundamental quantum knowing-stuff. However, in the realm of the ‘seeming’, or ‘conventional’ reality, wherein the primordial Mind is ‘separated’, the energy-awareness of the ground of reality cognizes in a dualistic manner to create a world of dualistic experience.

The Buddhist philosopher and meditation teacher B. Alan Wallace, who has a degree in physics and philosophy of science, has researched and written extensively in the field of the relationships and commonalities between Eastern, especially Buddhist, contemplative modes of inquiry and Western scientific and philosophical fields of enquiry. In his meditation manual *Minding Closely: The Four Applications of Mindfulness*, he describes the *alayavijnana*, the ground or substrate consciousness, which corresponds to Mensky’s more global layer of consciousness. He describes how, by using *shamatha* or focused meditation leading to a state of calm awareness, a practitioner can experience the nature of this deep level of awareness which lies beneath the everyday moving mind:

Everyone’s individual psyche is unique, like a snowflake. Your psyche is built from the experiences of this lifetime and is influenced by previous lifetimes, genetic dispositions, parenting, cultural values, and language, which make your psyche and everyone else’s absolutely unique. But if we melt any snow-flake, its fundamental ingredient is simply water. Similarly, when you or anyone “melts” the psyche by using shamatha, and it settles back into the substrate consciousness from which it arose, then the three traits that you or anyone will find, regardless of genetic and cultural background, are that the substrate consciousness is blissful, luminous, and nonconceptual.³⁸

Wallace also indicates the quantum source of this level of consciousness. Consciousness arises from the same ‘emptiness’ of space as do apparently ‘material’ particles:

Quantum field theory includes very elegant theoretical systems and experimental methods to probe and characterize the nature of space. My undergraduate work in physics was focused on the energy that is implicit in the essence of space itself, called the “zero-point energy.” When Paul Dirac (1902-1984) mathematically integrated special relativity and quantum mechanics into quantum field theory, the concept of space was altered radically. In classical physics, space is inert - simply a location in which things can happen. In general relativity, space becomes far more interesting because it can be warped by massive objects. In quantum field theory, the very nature of empty space is characterized by the zero-point energy. Besides containing ordinary

matter, space can contain energy in thermal, gravitational, electromagnetic, and other forms. When all such matter and energy is removed, what remains is the zero-point energy: the energy of empty space. The very nature of space can be thought of as an equilibrium, symmetry, or homogeneity - the same in every direction. But circumstances can break this symmetry, causing virtual particles to emerge spontaneously from “empty” space. A virtual electron or another elementary particle might be detected, but it will rapidly vanish with little effect. Other more durable phenomena also emerge from empty space, and we call them particles and fields. According to quantum field theory, all particles of matter and fields of energy, virtual and real, are simply configurations of empty space. From galaxies to wristwatches to dark matter and energy, everything emerges from and consists exclusively of configured space. Everything eventually dissolves back into space. Whether phenomena are ephemeral or durable, quantum field theory describes their common ground as the nature of space.³⁹

The same must be true of the immaterial qualities of consciousness; there is nowhere else for this experiential qualitative continuum of awareness to arise from. In fact, given that all quantum fields are immaterial, it would seem to be quite reasonable to suppose that the fundamental nature of the realm of quantum fields is energetic potentiality and mind-awareness-energy, or Primordial Mind.

Stapp has pointed out that the underlying quantum level of the process of reality functions like a primordial cosmic mind:

The quantum state represents a collection of objective tendencies for various physically possible psychophysical events to actually happen. This notion of “an objective tendency”, as best I can conceive it in this quantum context, is something like a contemplated possibility coupled to an urge to raise this possibility into an actuality. So it would appear that something like a primordial consciousness was present already at the birth of the quantum mechanically conceived universe. Recognition or acceptance of this notion leads ... to the ancient idea of a cosmic mind and to the conception of the universe as more like a conscious organism than like a robotic machine. Mentality becomes primordial, not in the individual atoms, but rather at the level of an “over-mind.”⁴⁰

Thus we see that quantum insights really do approach a Buddhist Mind-Only perspective.

Two luminaries of twentieth century astrophysics were Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington. Like Mensky and Stapp, both considered that there is more to reality than the merely physical universe and more to consciousness than simply brain activity. In his *Science and the Unseen World* (1929) Eddington speculated about a spiritual world and that “consciousness is not wholly, nor even primarily a device for receiving sense impressions.”⁴¹ In his *The Nature of the Physical World* (1928) he indicated that he considered the ultimate nature of the process of reality must be “mind-stuff.” Jeans also speculated on the existence of a universal mind and a non-mechanical reality. In his *The Mysterious Universe* (1932) he wrote:

... the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the creator and governor of the

realm of matter.... The possibility that we are immersed in a virtual reality simulation shows how it would be possible for a consciousness as real and primary, physical as illusion and secondary, view to be the right one.⁴²

This is an impressive prefiguration of Planck's later insight that "Mind is the matrix of all matter," not to mention the film *The Matrix*. So Eddington and Jeans, along with Mensky, Stapp, Planck, Goswami and others are clearly in the arena of Buddhist Mind/Consciousness-Only psycho-metaphysics.

The *Chittamatra*, or Mind-Only school asserts that all phenomena are, as the title suggests, Mind-Only, or of the nature of Mind. On this view, external objects do not exist as entities external to the mind, phenomena are appearances to mind. The Tibetan *Chittamatra* school is derived from the fourth century CE Indian *Yogācāra* (Yoga Practitioners, 'yoga' referring to meditation not physical postures) or *Vijnanavada* (Consciousness-Way), also the *viññaptimātra* or 'Consciousness-Only' perspective. These perspectives asserted the primacy of consciousness:

..all these various appearances,
Do not exist as sensory objects which are other than consciousness.
Their arising is like the experience of self-knowledge.
All appearances, from indivisible particles to vast forms, are mind.⁴³

Thus, according to the *Yogācāra-Vijnanavada-viññaptimātra* schools of psycho-metaphysics, which I shall henceforth refer to as *Yogācāra*, the 'particles' which comprise the apparently material world arise from ultimate Mind-potentiality-energy. Some Tibetan presentations of the *Chittamatra* Mind-Only view differ from *Yogācāra* in that they assert that the *Chittamatra* concept of Mind is a substantialist one. This is to say that, according to this particular version of *Chittamatra*⁴⁴, the Universal Mind is a kind of inherently or really existent 'stuff' underlying the process of reality, whereas, in fact, the *Yogācāra* asserts the ultimate nature of the process of reality to be insubstantial experiential nondual "wisdom" (*jnana*). These descriptions involve what in the West we would consider objective and subjective aspects of the process of reality. For *Yogācāra* practitioners the experience of deep non-conceptual nondual states within meditation is direct experience of reality, a direct experience more 'real' than conceptual descriptions. Thus the deepest 'subjective' states are considered to be experience of an 'objective' reality, but it is an 'objective' reality which embraces what is considered in the West to be 'objective' and 'subjective'.

Another important Mahayana school of metaphysics is the *Madhyamaka* or 'Middle Way' metaphysical analysis. Buddhist *Madhyamaka* metaphysics asserts that, firstly, no phenomenon has a fixed enduring core of substantial reality and, secondly, all phenomena are interdependent upon all other phenomena. These two aspects of *shunyata*, or 'emptiness', are themselves interdependent. As the second century CE Buddhist scholar-practitioner Nagarjuna states in his central exposition of *Madhyamaka* philosophy:

Whatever is dependently co-arisen That is explained to be emptiness. That, being a dependent designation is itself the middle way. Something that is not dependently arisen, such a thing does not exist. Therefore a non-empty thing does not exist.⁴⁵

The way in which sentient beings perceive the world imputes to all phenomena a kind of internal 'essence' which makes them appear to be self-enclosed and independent of all other phenomena.

The *Madhyamaka* uses the technical term *svabhava*, ‘own-being’ or ‘inherent-existence’ to indicate this. Phenomena are perceived as having their own internal core of self-existence which makes them independent of all other phenomena, but this appearance is incorrect. All phenomena are ‘empty’ of such a core of internal reality precisely because they are interdependent with and upon all other phenomena. The *Madhyamaka* school explicitly indicates that the ultimate existential configuration of the process of reality hovers between the extremes of existence and non-existence. As the Madhyamika (practitioner of *Madhyamaka*) Bhavaviveka (1st-2nd century CE) indicated, the character of reality is:

Neither existent, nor nonexistent
Nor both existent and nonexistent, nor neither.
...true reality
...is free from these four possibilities.⁴⁶

This paradoxical existential configuration is precisely that of the quantum realm.

The ‘founding father’ of quantum mechanics Niels Bohr once said that:

Everything we call real is made up of things that cannot be regarded as real. If quantum mechanics hasn’t profoundly shocked you, you haven’t understood it yet.⁴⁷

Here Bohr indicates one of the central and crucial issues raised by quantum physics. Most people (although not advanced Buddhist practitioners) consider their everyday world to be ‘real’. And by ‘real’ the implication is that entities have an independent internal essence and solidity. The early quantum physicists would have had this conditioned attitude to their experience of apparently material reality, at some level they expected to discover a ‘real’ and substantial level of the process of reality. In fact, according to physicist Jim Al-Khalili, Max Planck at the outset of his scientific career did not even believe in atoms, he thought that the material world was internally solid and continuous.⁴⁸

Quantum discoveries changed this situation in a manner that was most unsettling for early quantum physicists, because the apparently material world dematerialized at the quantum level into a realm of immaterial potentiality. This led Bohr to make his statement about the ‘real’ world being founded on a level “that cannot be regarded as real.” Bohr considered this situation to be shocking. However, it is only shocking for someone who has become accustomed to conceive of the apparently material world as being exactly as it appears to be, i.e. at some level ‘classically’ ‘real’. This notion, so prevalent in the West at the time of the quantum discoveries, and in many respects still operative, was always put in question by Buddhist metaphysics:

Everything is real and not real,
Both real and not real,
Neither real nor not real.
This is the Lord Buddha’s teaching.⁴⁹

Buddhist metaphysics has always been entirely aware that the very notion of ‘reality’ itself is problematic in a manner not guessed at in the West until the development of quantum theory. The ultimate level of the process is not ‘real’ in the way that most people regard their everyday world to be ‘real’.

There are various styles of *Madhyamaka*. The two fundamental styles are *Svatantrika* and

Prasangika. *Svatantrika-Madhyamaka* presents its case by using assertions about the nature of reality whereas *Prasangika-Madhyamaka* avoids any assertions, it only uses reductio-ad-absurdum techniques to make the point that all phenomena, including its own metaphysical analysis, lack essence and substantiality. *Svatantrika-Madhyamaka* involves the implication that the relative/conventional-/seeming external reality does have a subtle existence, although ultimately all phenomena are empty of any substantial essence. *Prasangika-Madhyamaka* does not make a commitment beyond reducing all assertions regarding existence to paradox. *Yogācāra-Madhyamaka* asserts that on the conventional level no external reality exists independently of mind or minds, ultimate reality is ‘empty’ of essence and substantiality.

The *Dharmadharmatavibhanga*, which is translated as *Distinguishing Phenomena from their Intrinsic Nature*⁵⁰ or *Distinguishing Phenomena and Pure Being*⁵¹ is a central text of Buddhist psycho-metaphysics. The particular Buddhist school of psycho-metaphysics that this text represents is a matter of some debate. However, it is undeniable that this text does contain a significant measure of *Yogācāra* psycho-metaphysics. The present day practitioner and teacher Thrangu Rinpoche asserts that the *Dharmadharmatavibhanga* was composed from the point of view of *Shentong Madhyamaka*, which is a division of Tibetan psycho-metaphysics largely unknown to Western Buddhists. This viewpoint asserts that from an unenlightened perspective all phenomena seem to be inherently existent, but in reality all phenomena are empty of their own essence (*Rangtong* – ‘self/intrinsic emptiness’). However, from the enlightened point of view the ultimate nature has an immaterial, experiential, subtle essence, the *sugatagarbha*, or ‘buddha-nature’, or ‘buddha-heart’. This ultimate subtle essence is ‘empty’ of the ‘other’ dualistic appearances. Thus the *Shentong* viewpoint is called ‘other-emptiness’, and sometimes ‘extrinsic emptiness’. Appearances are the ‘empty’ entities of the conventional world. These ‘other’ phenomena are merely insubstantial appearances, they appear to be non-empty, i.e. substantial, but are actually empty, i.e. insubstantial. Once this ‘empty’ nature is realized then the subtle non-empty nature of the *sugatagarbha* is comprehended and experienced as nondual bliss, emptiness and luminosity.

The word ‘Rangtong’ derives from ‘rang’ which means ‘self’, and ‘tong’ which means ‘empty’. The *Rangtong* view of ‘self-emptiness’ is the version of emptiness which practitioners generally come across first, in fact many Buddhists have never heard of *Shentong* ‘other-emptiness’. *Rangtong*, or ‘self-emptiness’ indicates that all phenomena are ‘empty’ or devoid of their own nature, they have no inner core of independent substantial self-nature, or *svabhava*. Relative, conventional, or seeming phenomena have no true reality; they have no established nature of their own. This is the teaching of emptiness taught by the *Rangtong* School. The problem with this approach, however, is that it can veer towards nihilism and someone who views reality purely from a *Rangtong* point of view is in danger of thinking that ultimately nothing exists at all. The *Shentong* viewpoint counterbalances this by asserting that when the process of reality has been emptied of all relative, conventional or seeming phenomena, there remains the nondual substrate of ‘empty’, luminous awareness-potentiality. It is this substrate which modern physics identifies as insubstantial quantum fields of potentiality, which must have qualities of nondual awareness.

Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche says of the *Dharmadharmatavibhanga* that it:

...accords with the Chittamatra in the form its assertions take with respect to the

phenomenal world, which constitutes apparent reality and it accords with the Madhyamaka in its interpretation of pure being...⁵²

This means that from the point of view of the phenomena we experience in everyday life we should view them as productions from a deeper Mind-like realm of potentiality, ultimately however, this Mind-potentiality is ‘empty’ of substantiality. In the *Shentong* view advocated by Thrangu Rinpoche, the ultimate Mind-energy of the process of reality can be considered to have a subtle nondual essence. These two formulations are closely related, but the latter seems to be closer to the viewpoint of the *Dharmadharmatavibhanga*, which indicates a substrate underlying the phenomenal world called ‘*dharmata*’, which is ‘the nature of phenomena’ or ‘Pure Being’. This can be identified with the quantum realm of nondual or undifferentiated mind-awareness-consciousness and potentiality. This corresponds to the quantum ground nature of Mensky’s Alterverse.

The introduction to *Distinguishing Phenomena and Intrinsic Nature* explains the purpose of the treatise:

...to clearly delineate the phenomena that comprise our ordinary, unenlightened experience (i.e., *samsara*) and the intrinsic nature, or *dharmata*, of these very same phenomena (i.e., *nirvana*) ... the treatise shows how the mind enters into a state of confusion and how this process can be reversed through a fundamental transformation of the mind. At the root of our confusion ... is a deeply ingrained tendency to believe that the “external” objects that populate our experience exist independent of our consciousness.⁵³

This remarkable observation projects us directly into quantum psycho-metaphysics. The phenomena of the apparently external material world do appear to be entirely independent of our consciousness, but quantum physics has now shown us that this is not the case. The above quote, derived from *Yogācāra* psycho-metaphysics, is resonant with the following from quantum physicist and philosopher Bernard d’Espagnat:

The doctrine that the world is made up of objects whose existence is independent of human consciousness turns out to be in conflict with quantum mechanics and with facts established by experiment.⁵⁴

It is extraordinary that the *Yogācāra* and *Vijñānavāda* (consciousness-way) school of Buddhist psycho-metaphysics proclaimed the dependency of apparently external entities upon the consciousnesses of observers almost two thousand years before quantum discoveries.

But the mind/consciousness-only school did not just assert this dependency, it also gave an account of the mechanisms involved. The following description of the *Yogācāra* perspective is from the contemporary Buddhist scholar-practitioner Karl Brunnhölzl’s translation and elucidation of the *Dharmadharmatavibhanga* which he has titled *Mining for Wisdom within Delusion*:

...the Yogachara system holds that what appears in a being’s mind as the world is not a representation of an external world, but it *is* the world of this being as projected by the mind of this being. In the minds of beings of the same type (such as humans), similar but still individual images of the world arise due to similar latent tendencies, which are then misconceived as being an actual common world out there.⁵⁵

It is impossible not to compare this to John Wheeler's pronouncement that:

The universe does not 'exist, out there,' independent of all acts of observation. Instead, it is in some strange sense a participatory universe.⁵⁶

The salient points of the *Yogācāra* psycho-metaphysical account are as follows:

- 1) There is no external material world, each sentient being projects from their mind the illusion of an external world.
- 2) The details of the illusion that an individual sentient being projects as an external world are derived from latent tendencies which are themselves derived from previous projections in both the current life and previous lives.
- 3) All the sentient beings within a universe will project coordinated intersubjective projections, thus appearing to inhabit a shared environment. This is because they have shared coordinated intersubjectively created environments in previous lifetimes.
- 4) The source of these projections is a common fundamental ground-consciousness (*alayavijnana*). The ground-consciousness, or store-consciousness, receives the details of projections and actions of all sentient beings. These stored karmic 'seeds' determine future projections. The *alayavijnana* is described:

The deepest, finest and subtlest layer of ... consciousness. It contains all the traces and impressions of past actions and all ... future potentialities.⁵⁷

Thus what appears to be an external reality which contains a multitude of fellow sentient beings is actually a vast intersubjective illusion created by the thoughts, intentions and actions on the part of all sentient beings.

- 5) *Yogācāra* psycho-metaphysics is clearly a form of idealism, although the term idea-ism is perhaps better. This is in line with Stapp's quantum perspective that the process of reality is 'idealike'.⁵⁸

The *Lankavatara Sutra* is an exposition of the Mind-Only perspective which describes the manner in which the operations of the dualistic world, involving the *appearance* of matter and the play of dualistic consciousness (*vijnana*) comes into being. Both the material world and dualistic consciousness are considered to be unreal and illusory (because of not ultimately existing) productions carved out of an infinite field of potential energy-awareness through the internal operation of 'habit-energy'. The nature of the fundamental Mind-stuff is pristine nondual energy-awareness, and the operations of habit-energy within it produces the 'illusions' of the dualistic world:

... there are some Brahmans and Sramanas who recognising that the external world which is of Mind itself is seen as [a material world] owing to the discrimination and false intellection practiced since beginningless time, know that the world has no self-nature and has never been born, it is like a cloud, a ring produced by a firebrand, the castle of the Gandharvas, a vision, a mirage, the moon as reflected in the ocean, and a dream; that Mind in itself has nothing to do with discrimination and causation, discourses of imagination, and terms of qualification; that body, property, and abode are objectifications of the *Alayavijnana*, which is in itself above the dualism of subject and

object; that the state of imagelessness which is in compliance with the awakening itself, is not affected by such changes as arising, abiding, and destruction.⁵⁹

It is difficult for us to really appreciate the fact that the vast universe, with its impressive and overwhelming appearance of materiality is actually like “a cloud, a ring produced by a firebrand, the castle of the Gandharvas (illusory beings), a vision, a mirage, the moon as reflected in the ocean, and a dream” etched out of the quantum ‘dream stuff’ of the *alayavijnana* by the powerful forces of ‘habit-energies’ echoing across vast time scales. But if we take quantum theory seriously then such is the truth of things.

The images of the *Lankavatara Sutra* resonate with physicist David Bohm’s description of what he calls the quantum holomovement, which is another quantum concept which mirrors the *Yogācāra* concept of the *alayavijnana*:

I propose something like this: Imagine an infinite sea of energy filling empty space, with waves moving around in there, occasionally coming together and producing an intense pulse. Let’s say one particular pulse comes together and expands, creating our universe of space-time and matter. But there could well be other such pulses. To us, that pulse looks like a big bang; in a greater context, it’s a little ripple. Everything emerges by unfolding from the holomovement, then enfolds back into the implicate order. I call the enfolding process “implicating,” and the unfolding “explicating.” The implicate and explicate together are a flowing, undivided wholeness. Every part of the universe is related to every other part but in different degrees.⁶⁰

Bohm's notion of the quantum ‘implicate order’, which stores traces of ‘explicate order’ activity and activates them at future points in time as explicate order events is clearly isomorphic to the Mind-Only ground-store-consciousness.

The above elucidations add depth to Mensky's quantum psycho-metaphysics. We can treat the *alayavijnana* as an internal aspect of Mensky’s Alterverse. It is the mechanism through which sentient beings ‘thread’ their way through the infinitude of potentialities within the ‘Alterverse’. Furthermore, as described above, it is not the case that sentient beings ‘choose’ the pathways independently of each other. The vast majority of such ‘choices’ are collective and unconscious from the point of view of individuated consciousness. It is only when someone reaches an advanced state of spiritual practice that significant free-willed spiritual choices become available. Mensky indicates that prior to enlightenment sentient beings take particular paths through the Alterverse, the path being dependent upon actions and the qualitative nature of the mental continuums of the various beings. As Buddhism teaches, the more virtuous a mental continuum becomes, through the cultivation of virtuous states of mind and the performance of virtuous actions, the more advantageous rebirths are obtained, advantageous for further spiritual practice. Thus sentient beings traverse the various paths of the Alterverse, taking more advantageous, or less advantageous paths depending upon their minds and actions, which determine their karmic constitution, until, that is, they eventually achieve enlightenment, *nirvana*. The term ‘*nirvana*’ indicates an ‘extinguishing’, it is the extinguishing of dualistic modes of perception and experience. Up until this point the process has been that of various states of *samsara*, dualistic cyclic conditioned existence.

When enlightenment occurs the particular being who becomes a buddha no longer has a

personality which takes rebirth, a buddha's mind-energy dissolves into infinite bliss of the empty nondual ground *dharmadhatu*. According to Mensky he or she will become co-extensive with the Alterverse. In Buddhist terminology the Alterverse in its enlightened form is called the *Dharmakaya*, the ultimate 'truth body' which is "the space-like intrinsic awareness unstained by samsara." Furthermore, "Essense, nature and compassion are the characteristics of the Dharmakaya."⁶¹ The Dharmakaya is also characterised by "Primordial Wisdom," which is "the luminous intrinsic awareness" and the "Buddha-essense."⁶² The technical term for Buddha-essence is *Tathagatagarbha*. A *Tthagata* is a person who has "gone thus" or "gone-to-thusness" into the realm of buddhahood and left the dualistic samsaric world. The term '*garbha*' means womb. So the term '*Tthagatagarbha*' means the womb of buddhahood. According to Buddhist psycho-metaphysics the Alterverse is nothing other than a womb of buddhahood, or enlightenment, and all sentient beings cycle through it for incomprehensible periods of time until they achieve enlightenment. In the following passage the term "Kun-gZhi" is the Tibetan for the *alayavijnana*:

As the universal ground (*Kun-gZhi*) is the root of *samsara*, it is the foundation of all the traces, like a pond. As the *Dharmakaya* (ultimate body) is the root of *nirvana*, it is the freedom from all the traces, and it is the exhaustion of all contaminations... In the state of clear ocean-like *Dharmakaya*, which is dwelling at the basis, the boat-like universal ground filled with a mass of passengers – mind and consciousness and much cargo, karmas and traces – sets out on the path of enlightenment through the state of intrinsic awareness, *Dharmakaya*.⁶³

Thus we see that the *alayavijnana* is likened to a boat, filled with a mass of sentient beings, which is coursing through the uncontaminated and clear "intrinsic awareness" of the ultimate *Dharmakaya*. But whilst the *alayavijnana* is in operation sentient beings are unaware that ultimately the nature of the process of reality is that of the ultimate Dharmakaya, all else is actually an illusion. Up until the point when buddhahood is achieved and the Dharmakaya is realised the Alterverse operates through the *alayavijnana*, which determines the paths taken by sentient beings according to their karmic traces. When buddhahood occurs the *alayavijnana* disappears and no longer operates to activate samsara. This is why Brunnhölzl gave his translation and exposition of the *Dharmadharmatavibhanga* the title *Mining for Wisdom within Delusion*, this describes the Buddhist path of transformation of the mind. The term '*vijnana*' means individuated, divided, separated consciousness (*vi-jnana*), and such a consciousness is confused and deluded as to the true nature of reality. When this division and separation is eradicated, then the individuated and separated consciousness transforms into *jnana*, the ultimate wisdom of the universal undifferentiated intrinsic awareness of the *Dharmakaya*.

It is remarkable how closely the Buddhist Mind-Only perspective is captured by Mensky's quantum psycho-metaphysics. As Terentyev says:

The basic philosophical outcome of Everett based interpretations of the measurement problem consists in recognizing the fact that actually we live in a quantum world which is a superposition of macroscopically distinct states of different 'Everett Worlds' or 'classical alternatives' as Mensky would call it. ... Mensky identifies these classical alternatives with ... 'acts of consciousness' and this approach ... presupposes the

existence of some kind of *super*-consciousness in the state of *super*-position while the classical consciousnesses of the observers in the ‘classical alternatives’ are illusory – as much as the ‘classical’ worlds themselves – because they mistakenly perceive their worlds as the ‘whole’ or ‘real’.⁶⁴

Terentyev then quotes Mensky and indicates parallels with Buddhist psycho-metaphysics:

Everett’s concept deals with two aspects of consciousness. The consciousness as a whole (we could compare this ‘consciousness as a whole’ or *superconsciousness* with Buddha’s mind or *jnana*) splits between alternatives, and a component of consciousness (Buddhist *viñāna*) lives within one classical alternative.⁶⁵

This distinction between the nondual, non-separated realm of *jnana*, nondual wisdom, and the divided and separated mode of individuated consciousness *viñāna* (vi-jnana = divided *jnana*) is fundamental for *Yogācāra* psycho-metaphysics.

In his teachings on the Ninth Karmapa’s (Wangchuk Dorje) text *Pointing Out The Dharmakaya* the modern Kagyu teacher Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche explains various aspects of this view:

The appearances of the world and the maintenance of these appearances both come from various types of habit. There are varieties of what we call habitual patterns or habitual imprints ... All of these various types of habit patterns are imprinted on the alaya consciousness ... having been placed there, they are subsequently projected outwards as experience, or they arise or appear as experience. Those that are stable will arise as stable or relatively unchanging appearances. Those that are unstable will change. Generally speaking, one type of karma is what are called shared appearances resulting from shared actions, which means that beings that have accumulated either an identical action or very similar actions will reap the result of experiencing the world in identical or similar ways, and will thereby be able to communicate and agree upon what they experience. Our projection of these appearances is entirely unintentional ... it’s beyond our control ... All of the things that happen in the world, such as the physical elements of fire or of water and of earth in the case of earthquakes and floods and so on, are karmic projections that happen beyond our control. ... Any of these experiences, even though they affect many different people, are experienced individually by each person who experiences them. And the individual experiences that you have is the result of your own previous actions. The connection between these individual experiences, the commonly shared appearance, which is nevertheless experienced individually by individual perspectives, is the result of the type of conceptuality that has been generated by all the beings who will experience it.⁶⁶

According to *Yogācāra* psycho-metaphysics, whatever is perceived is nothing other than appearances in individual mindstreams. This account does not fall into the problem of solipsism because it asserts the projective activities of a multitude of mindstreams. The task of Buddhist practice is, simply put, to dissolve the energy of the individual mindstream which maintains the appearance of duality. When the solidity of the duality of apprehender and apprehended, perceiver and perceived, is eliminated, the nondual luminous ground awareness can manifest. As the *Uttaratantra (The Sublime Continuum)*, a companion text to the *Dharmadharmatavibhanga*, says of the fundamental field of the process of reality:

There is nothing to be removed from it
And not the slightest to be added.
Actual reality is to be seen as it really is -
Whoever sees actual reality is liberated.
The basic element is empty of what is adventitious,
Which has the characteristic of being separable.
It is not empty of the unsurpassable dharmas,
Which has the characteristic of being inseparable.

Here the “basic element” is *dharmata*, the intrinsic nature of phenomena. As long as the “adventitious” samsaric modifications of the intrinsic nature, which are “separable,” are not removed, the “unsurpassable dharmas” of bliss, luminosity and nonconceptuality, which are “inseparable” from the “basic element,” will not manifest. Once the ‘divided consciousness’ which produces separation into classical realities is relinquished, however, the fundamental nature of the “basic element” will manifest as enlightenment. According to Mensky, at this point the practitioner’s mind, which is now the nondual mind-wisdom of a buddha (*jnana*), is coextensive with the Alterverse. This would seem to be confirmed in Ju Mipham’s commentary to the *Dharmadharmatavibhanga*:

...all phenomena are directly perceptible to the buddhas ... Since this wakefulness of complete transformation accords with the intrinsic nature of things, it is impossible to make delineations ... Unborn and unceasing, the intrinsic nature is the same as nirvana.⁶⁷

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