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*The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi, 1130-1200* by Yung Sik Kim  
Benjamin A. Elman

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an open question. Whatever the extent or depth of any enumeration of those sources, it is the moment of creation that astonishes.

WILLIAM EGGINTON

**Yung Sik Kim.** *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi, 1130–1200.* (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, 235.) xii + 380 pp., figs., tables, app., bibl., index. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2000. \$30.

Yung Sik Kim's new book is a welcome addition to the large number of studies of the thought of Chu Hsi, arguably the most important literati thinker (i.e., *Ru*, often translated as "Confucian") in China since the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1280). Chu's ideas became orthodox empire-wide during the early Ming dynasty (1368–1644), and during the Ming and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties millions of candidates for the imperial civil service examinations mastered the "Learning of the Way" (*Daoxue*, often translated as "Neo-Confucianism") associated with Chu and his followers. With the exception of the pioneering study by Yamada Keiji in 1978, nearly all previous accounts of Chu's ideas written by students of Chinese philosophy have emphasized the metaphysical, moral, and epistemological concerns in Chu's writings. Those more concerned with imperial dogma and state power in China since 1400 have tended to paint Chu Hsi's "Learning of the Way" as a monolithic, authoritarian ideology that legitimated the Ming and Qing dynasty rulers politically, socially, and culturally among gentry elites.

Kim acknowledges that the core of Chu Hsi's grand intellectual synthesis was focused on moral and social philosophy, but in this book Kim provides compelling information that Chu was also concerned with natural knowledge about the three levels of reality: heaven and earth, the myriad things in the world, and the human realm. Humans thus formed a triad with heaven and earth as the most numinous living thing because they were endowed with the psycho-physical stuff of *ch'i* that was most clear and complete. Recognizing no boundary between the physical and the spiritual, Chu Hsi equated human nature with the universe. The basic concepts that informed Chu's natural world were yin-yang, the five evolutive phases, and the dualism of *li* (universal and individuated rules) and *ch'i* (embodied and concrete materiality).

Chu Hsi advocated a scholarly agenda that would explain why things and events were as they were. Through the "investigation of things," the heavenly principle that inscribed the *ch'i* of

each object and event could be discovered. Normally historians of Chinese philosophy stress the place of universal heavenly *li* in Chu's thought, but Kim makes a concerted effort not to overlook the important place of *ch'i* as the aggregated collection of stuff in the universe, some dense and falling like the earth, some airy and rising like heaven. Indeed, as important as *li* was for Chu Hsi's moral philosophy, *ch'i* was the most important concept he employed to explain natural phenomena, material changes, and earthly events. With no discontinuity between matter and life, or between materiality and mind, Chu's philosophy made no allowance for the Western distinctions between the material and spiritual spheres or between the physical and mental realms.

It was precisely such views that troubled the Jesuits such as Matteo Ricci who came to China in the late sixteenth century. Ricci and his European cohort would be condemned in the early eighteenth century by French Jansenists and Spanish Franciscans for their overly accommodational compromises with traditional Chinese religious practices such as ancestor worship, which Ricci interpreted as a civil rite. Nonetheless, when Ricci studied Chu Hsi's moral philosophy and natural thought, he was appalled at its materialism and atheism, which he considered the fault of Buddhism ("sect of idols") and its impact on Song literati such as Chu Hsi.

The "noninertness" of *ch'i* carried over from the dynamic materiality of all things, including the human mind, to the formless and unfathomable spirits and ghosts that existed in a border area outside the natural realm between heaven and human beings. The dispersion of *ch'i* upon death could take many forms but, according to Chu Hsi, in the end all such *ch'i* disaggregated, leaving no ongoing or abiding spiritual form for humans, plants, or animals. The *ch'i* of the ancestors could be prayed to because the materiality of their descendants was the same *ch'i*, but even this continuity could not survive more than a few generations. Again, the Jesuits were shocked at this atheistic view of the human soul and its eventual demise materially with no possible eternal life after death.

Accordingly, Kim's careful study of what Chu Hsi thought about the natural world makes it evident that most modern studies have elided an essential aspect of traditional Chinese thought, particularly the centrality of *ch'i* in the dynamic processes of collection and dispersion that produce all things, whether living or inanimate. Students of Chinese philosophy have tended to prioritize those aspects of Chu Hsi's views on

universal *li* and its instantiated forms that are more amenable to a Western, Judeo-Christian-Islamic reading drawn ultimately from the debate between Plato and Aristotle over the universal forms of particular things.

Modern presentations, in other words, have failed to grasp why a generation of Jesuit scholars who spent their adulthood in China during the seventeenth century found Chu Hsi's views alien and dangerous. Kim deserves credit for going against the tide of twentieth-century scholarly interpretation and restoring to Chu Hsi those aspects of his natural philosophy that have been conveniently repressed to make his views more palatable. Rather than just the builder of the orthodox brick wall of traditional Chinese moralism, we can see that Chu Hsi's natural philosophy challenged any view of the world that assumed theological differences between life and death, mind and body, or the spiritual and physical.

BENJAMIN A. ELMAN

**Steven P. Marrone.** *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century. Volume 1: A Doctrine of Divine Illumination; Volume 2: God at the Core of Cognition.* (Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 98.) [xii + vi] + 250 + 611 pp., bibl., indexes. Leiden/Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001.

Abbot Suger spoke for a long-standing imaginal tradition when, in 1140, he engraved on the portal of Saint Denis: "The blind soul surges towards truth by means of what is material and, seeing light, resurrects from its earlier submersion." Steven Marrone's new book follows eleven medieval authors as they struggle to adapt such metaphors of divine illumination, inherited largely from Augustine, to an emerging ideal of apodictic science inspired by Aristotle. Some of Marrone's protagonists are well known to historians of science (Grosseteste, Pecham) while others are more obscure (Gilbert of Tournai, William of Ware), some are major philosophical figures (Bonaventure, John Duns Scotus) while others are in every sense *minores* (Matthew of Aquasparta, Vital du Four). The narrative Marrone weaves out of this uneven array of theology masters is rich, dynamic, and rewarding. Taken together, their careers span the period from the early thirteenth century to the early fourteenth, during which a neo-Augustinian school came, saw, and (basically) yielded—forced to adapt to expanding new criteria of scientificity. As Marrone demonstrates, however, core elements of Augustinian illumination are transformed and

preserved. An authentic "Augustinian fire," as he puts it, survives intact through the long journey from Abbot Suger's stone portal to Duns Scotus's ethereal edifice of syllogisms, which in Marrone's view marks the culmination of four stages of progressive intellectual metamorphosis.

The first volume, subtitled *A Doctrine of Divine Illumination*, shows how an initially exploratory map of questions and affinities in the early thirteenth century solidified into a self-conscious Augustinian theory of knowledge under institutional and professional pressures. Marrone in this volume breaks new ground in the historiography of late medieval "schools" by emphasizing the importance of underlying discursive demands. Marrone shows how two opposing attractions—to logic and naturalist explanations on the one hand, to the (dialogic) intimacy between human mind and God on the other—drove the advance toward doctrinal clarity and coherence, thus culminating in a "classic" Augustinian formulation.

Volume 2, subtitled *God at the Core of Cognition*, turns to the fortunes of this newly minted Augustinianism as it transforms in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries under the impact of a new critical temper. The detailed discussions of Henry of Ghent's disciple Vital du Four (nicely introduced on p. 268 as "an inveterate plagiarizer") and of Scotus's immediate predecessor William of Ware give special value to this second volume, as they greatly flesh out the context in which Scotus's *subtilitates* will count as meaningful solutions. Overall, I have just one major reservation: the important move, especially among Franciscans, to substitute divine *infinity* for divine *light* is overlooked. The key, here, lies in the notion of intensity, which belongs simultaneously to measuring light and measuring "perfection." Since this exciting move will bear epistemic fruit well beyond medieval scholasticism—think of Descartes—it might indeed have been cited, even briefly discussed.

Marrone's great contribution, however, is to show convincingly that God remains "at the core of cognition" in Duns Scotus's prodigious balancing act, which thus retains and even enshrines key Augustinian features (Ockham scholars should pay special heed). By exploiting John Murdoch's seminal idea that analytical languages more than doctrine *per se* shaped the epistemic landscape of the scholastic age, Marrone succeeds in stirring up new questions about the medieval roots of modern science. What matters, Marrone argues, is to understand better diachronic evidence of how knowledge is defended