TRANSFORMATIONS OF MIND

Transformations of Mind deals with issues that cut across the disciplines of philosophy, theology, religious studies, and Buddhist studies, and moves between moral philosophy, philosophy of religion, and aesthetics. Written by a philosopher, it is also a work of self-inquiry. The fragments of autobiography it contains reflect the kinds of perplexity that have traditionally led people towards philosophy as a way of making sense of their lives. Unfortunately, many of those who have approached contemporary philosophy in this spirit have been alienated, not by its difficulty, but by its disconnection from life and its suffocating refusal of subjectivity.

The autobiography also charts a progress from an ancestral version of Christianity towards non-theistic, Buddhist forms of spiritual exploration.

The book offers, then, a conception of philosophy as an activity that begins already before reflection, in silence and meditation, which are conceived as conditions for the emergence and cessation of contending states of mind that influence perception and action. The philosopher thus becomes a kind of cartographer of a shifting interior landscape.

Michael McGhee draws on both the Greek and Buddhist traditions, recognising that it is time for Western thinkers to acknowledge and respond to an intercultural canon. His aim is to integrate ethics and a non-theistic philosophy of religion through the medium of aesthetics, mapping Buddhist ‘mindfulness’ and the Greek virtues and vices of temperance and licentiousness, continence and incontinence, onto an account of the development of the moral sentiments and their relation to practical judgment in the context of oppressive political and social realities.

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TRANSFORMATIONS OF MIND

Philosophy as Spiritual Practice

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Phoebus is dead, ephobe. But Phoebus was
A name for something that never could be named.
Contents

Acknowledgements viii

Introduction 1
1 ‘A philosophy that is not a philosophy’ 8
2 Contrary states 26
3 ‘. . . you hear the grating roar’ 39
4 The energy for war 63
5 The division of the soul 72
6 ‘Wandering between two worlds . . .’ 92
7 Kant’s aesthetic ideas 101
8 . . . And his rational ones 116
9 Arnold’s recast religion 132
10 Theism, non-theism and Haldane’s Fork 149
11 Erotic reformations 171
12 A language of grasping and non-grasping 200
13 ‘. . . sinne/ like clouds ecclips’d my mind’ 230
14 Concentration, continence and arousal 256
15 Uneasily, he retraces his steps . . . 271

References 287
Index 290
Acknowledgements