

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

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## **Essay in Epistemology: Philosophy, Science and Sense Perception**

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*Philippine Studies* vol. 12, no. 4 (1964): 757–760

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Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

sities in the United States sponsoring Asian Studies programs. There are 154 entries written between 1907 and 1963. The total number of titles is a modest one, if compared to 630 included in the *University of Chicago Doctoral Dissertations and Masters' Theses on Asia, 1894-1962* (Chicago, 1962). Nevertheless, it is encouraging to note that at Syracuse University, there has been an increasing interest in Asia among graduate students (as indicated by the larger number of theses and dissertations on Asia undertaken after World War II) and a widening of the number of University academic units concerned with Asia. Take, for instance, the dissertations and theses written on the Philippines. Between 1907 and 1944, a total of only five M.A. theses covering the Islands were written under three of the University units: the History and Political Science departments and the State University College of Forestry. After the war (1945-1963), in addition to the aforementioned three units, the following departments of the University contributed a total of six masters' theses and five Ph.D. dissertations on the Philippines: Business Administration, Education, Anthropology, Public Administration and Geography.

It is perhaps because of the small number of entries covering Asia that Dr. Hart preferred to list the titles alphabetically by the author's surnames rather than to classify them under subject headings as in the University of Chicago bibliography. The index, however, includes not only the names of the authors and subjects of the dissertations and theses but it also includes the geographical areas covered by the graduate research studies on Asia. The Syracuse University bibliography also has a table listing the departments which sponsored the studies, and the areas they concern; it also indicates whether the work is a masters' thesis or a doctoral dissertation.

Of great aid to the researcher on Asia are the annotations in the Syracuse University bibliography which are based on the abstracts of the Masters' theses and doctoral dissertations not found in the University of Chicago bibliography. The latter, however, includes the call numbers of the theses and dissertations on Asia. It is hoped that more universities involved in the study of Asia will publish similar bibliographies in the near future and that those already published will be periodically updated.

JOSEFA M. SANIEL

## ESSAYS IN EPISTEMOLOGY

PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE AND SENSE PERCEPTION: Historical and Critical Studies. By Maurice Mandelbaum. Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1964. ix, 262 pp.

*Philosophy, Science and Perception* is really a collection of four essays which are loosely centered on a problem currently alive in the epistemology of the sciences, namely, the relationship between the macroscopic and microscopic understanding of the physical world. The first half of the book is devoted to some historical studies of XVII century empiricism. It begins with an essay on John Locke, the central theme of which is a new interpretation of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. The author claims that Locke was badly read by Berkeley and that even in his exposition of the meaning of this distinction, Locke was quite aware of an important qualification, namely that the ideas of primary qualities are not univocally identical with the qualities as they are in the object. What is grasped is in the object but not in the same exact identical fashion. Hence Locke already saw a line of continuity between our ordinary (macroscopic) knowledge and the more refined (microscopic) analysis of these objects. The ultimate context in John Locke's mind, the author claims, is his acceptance of atomism or corpuscular philosophy which dominated scientific thinking in the XVIIth century.

The essay on John Locke is followed by a comparative study of the thought of Boyle and Newton and especially focussed on what the author terms as the problem of *transdiction*. The intent of the chapter is clear. It is intended to give clearer direction to this line of continuity which flows from ordinary knowledge to the refined analysis demanded by science. The bridge which spans both types of knowledge is *transdiction*, that is, "...the conditions under which one can predict or retrodict from data given at a certain time to what will happen or to what has happened at another time" (p.61). *Transdiction* is thus studied in Newton and in Boyle.

There is a difference in the two thinkers regarding the use of *transdiction*. Newton jumped from whatever characteristics which were consistently found in some material objects to the affirmation of these same characteristics to all material objects. Newton anchored his use of *transdiction* on an undemonstrated and presumed premise, Rule III of his '*Rules of Reasoning in Philosophy*' which is contained in Bk III of the *Principia*. Boyle, on the other hand, made a more careful and realistic use of *transdiction*. *Transdictions* or inferences should not be based on tacit and unproven premises but were to be confirmed one by one, by rational inferences drawn from comparative observations and experiments" (p. 114).

The chapter or essay on Scepticism seems to be motivated by methodological necessity, that is, it excludes the position which denies the possibility of ever determining this continuous line of unity extending from ordinary knowledge to refined analytic knowledge. This chapter disposes of Hume's scepticism with a double argument. All arguments for pure subjectivism do in fact presuppose the acceptance

of some form of realism once they are subjected to the test of a rational justification. This is the conclusion arrived at by the author after his critique of Hume's distinction between ideas and perceptions. Hume's alleged distinction is based on the diversity of origins of ideas and perception but Hume unexplainably prefers to study the origin of ideas and disavows any interest in pursuing the origin of the other. Thus Hume is accused of accepting the difference between actually seeing something and thinking about it in theory and about it as a fact, but then removing such a difference in theory when he opts for subjective ideas as the only valid ones in preference over the other.

The last chapter contains the author's epistemological position which he himself calls a *Critical Realism*. If one admits some causal interaction between object known and knower, then the only acceptable position is that of a critical realist. It is for this reason that he rejects the stand of Gilbert Ryle and of G. E. Moore which to the author appears too close to naive realism.

The Critical Realism that Prof. Mandelbaum holds can be summed up as follows. There is a causal relationship which is implied by the distinction between object and percept. This causal relationship is not yet grasped as such in ordinary experience because ordinary experience is a concrete experienced complexity, involving not only one sense but many sense organs, objects and conditions for such interaction. Hence only by a return to such concrete experienced complexity and by a comparison of such diverse elements can the pattern of *trans-diction* of science be discerned. Science then is but "...an extension and refinement of methods of enquiry which we constantly see in everyday life as a means of corroborating, amending or discounting the testimony of sense experience" (p. 220).

Thus in the words of the author himself "...the form of critical realism to which I would subscribe and which I designate as a *radical critical realism* would contend that we do not have the right to identify any of the qualities of the objects as they are directly experienced by us with the properties of objects as they exist in the physical world independently of us" ...in short, a radical critical realism might be said to maintain a strict disjunction between the directly experienced and the independently existing" (p. 221). And perhaps, this is also the shortcoming of the book. It leaves one right there in the disjunction between the directly experienced and the independently existing, with a promise of a structure of this line of continuity which exists between both as knowledge progresses from the sphere of ordinary experience and enters into the sphere of scientific explanation. That there is a continuity is hardly the problem at all. What the epistemologist asks is how is this continuity structured? How validate each step as the scientist leaves macroscopic knowledge and begins to probe into the microscopic sphere? What is this complex process? The great value of this present work lies in the three historical essays

in XVIIth century empiricism. The author reveals fresh insights into the 'denkform' of Locke, Hume, Newton and Boyle.

JOSE A. CRUZ

## SPIRITUAL READING IN PILIPINO

MAIKLING BANAL NA PAGSASANAY. Salin at batay sa aklat  
A *Week-end Retreat* ni Charles Dominic Plater, S.J. Manila:  
Bookmark, 1964. viii, 92 pp.

If one, trying to cope with the complex problems of modern individual life, were to look through a catalogue of available readings in the national language for spiritual guidance and enlightenment, he would easily find quite a list of unpretentious religious works mostly written by missionaries during the late Spanish period and the early part of the American occupation. But even if he should be lucky enough actually to get hold of some of them, he would most probably discover that they are either catechisms or prayerbooks or brochures intended to popularize one form or other of devotional practices.

If we keep in mind that in the first place, the ordinary tagalog-speaking catholic today finds himself in a situation incomparably more complicated than the one to which his parents have been accustomed and that in the second place, he almost invariably believes that he has tried the catholic religion and found it, if not wanting, at least somewhat impracticable except through apparently blind and heroic efforts, we can readily see that his needs for books presenting catholic dogmas, morals and even asceticism call for something as dynamic as life itself while retaining the simplicity and the doctrinal orthodoxy of the good old catechisms. The appearance of the small book *Maikling Banal na Pagsasanay* can truly be considered a happy answer to that need.

*Maikling Banal na Pagsasanay*, as a retreat book, is not the first of its kind to appear in tagalog. Like every traditional Ignatian book on spiritual exercises, it treats of the most basic facts of existence in the light of the most fundamental principles or truths of supernatural faith. But the particular style the author uses to explain these truths, the subjective and reflective style carried on in the first person, renders the book conveniently adapted to the taste and psychology of the 'free and independent' man of today who, the smaller he suspects he might be, the more resentful and obstinate he becomes regarding anything that is directly told to him as something he has to do.

The fundamental truths mentioned are discussed in the following order: the meaning of life itself, God, one's self, everything one finds