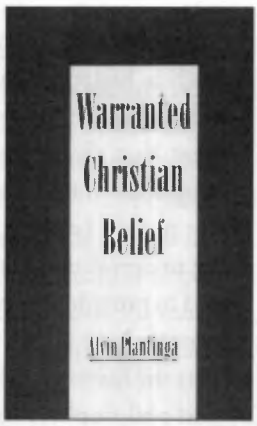
Reviews & Notices

Plantinga, Alvin. *Warranted Christian Belief*. New York - Oxford University Press, 2000. Pp. 508. ISBN 978-019-513-193-2.



Renowned philosopher and professor of Philosophy at the Univeristy of Notre Dame, Alvin Plantinga has already established himself as one of the world's leading philosophers of religion, especially in the question of 'warrant', by which knowledge is distinguished from true belief.

In the dense pages of this highly scholarly essay, the basic question of religious epistemology is raised. In this reviewer's view, philosophers of religion tend to be shy or timid of faith. Even to the point of avoiding it altogheter. Plantinga included.

However, within an analytical epistemological question, this avoidance could perhaps be excused, at least from the methodological viewpoint. Plantinga seeks to defend Christianity in terms of the demands of rationality. The rationalist tradition of modernity has imposed criteria that are somehow fearful of faith, that avoid fideism.

The author masterfully goes back to the gnoseological question of the functioning cognitive values, which then formulate one's Christian belief. This is the key issue on 'warrant'.

Warrant, as this reviewer understands, is the epistemological stand. Humans have natural cognitive faculties and abilities. These allow man to know. However, given the transcendence of God, He cannot be the proper object of said faculties. Hence, there is a need for beliefs, which go beyond perception. They are epistemological stands, called "beliefs" or doxa. Some would even call them opinions, especially in th elight of human fallibility.

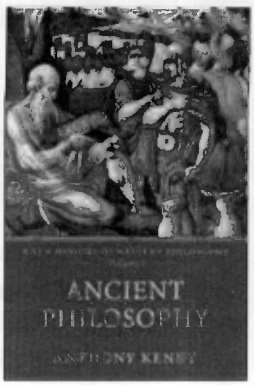
Despite Plantinga's avoidance of fideist statements, he makes a theological discourse by using the terms "Internal Instigation of the Holy Spirit" (Aquinas) and "Internal Testimony of the Holy Spirit" (Calvin). Combining these two traditions, Plantinga resorts to testimony and convincingly argues for its epsitemological value, which opens up more fideist problems

as he enters the realm of revelation, which is, strictly speaking, beyond the rational realm.

More than just an interesting read, this volume is a tour de force on behalf of belief. Our congratulations to Prof. Plantinga and our thanks for sending us this work for review.

MACARIO OFILADA

Kenny, Anthony. *Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. 1 of *A New History of Western Philosophy*. USA: Oxford University Press, 2004. Pp. 388. ISBN 978-019-875-273-8.



History of philosophy is a meeting of two disciplines. It is both a historical task and a philosophical undertaking. As a historical task, it demands a thorough understanding of the context that shapes the conceptual framework of philosophical assumptions. The historian, as he describes the cultural environment of the past, is far from engaging in a mere descriptive enterprise. As he undertakes the study of philosophical climate, he is likewise tasked to provide the reasons behind philosophical conclusions and evaluate the value these arguments have on the evolution of philosophical thought.[1] Kenny said that a historian who studies the history of ideas without getting involved in the philosophical problems exercised by past philosophers commits the sin of superficiality or what Ricoeur called as the 'absence of philosophical intention'. On the other hand, a philosopher who disregards the historical context that produced the text will most likely commit anachronism.

In the introductory part of his book, Anthony Kenny mentioned that central to any historiography of philosophy is exegesis. This exegesis forms two different historical endeavours: historical philosophy and history of ideas. Historical philosophy, he said, aims to reach philosophical truth or understanding about the issue or subject matter under discussion in the text. It pertains to the organic unity or the directive principles that make up the coherence of a philosophy. History of ideas aims to reach understanding of a person, an age, or a historical succession. It studies sources or influences which have not only been experienced but assumed and chosen. In this volume, Kenny attempts to be both a philosophical historian and a historical philosopher.

Kenny structured his work into two. The first part is a chronological survey of different philosophers from the Ionians to Augustine and the second part is a thematic or typological presentation of different philosophical topics and amplification of the discussion in the first part.

[1] Taylor, C.C. W., ed. *From the Beginning to Plato*, Vol. 1 *Routledge History of Philosophy*. Routledge. 1977. p. viii.

Anthony Kenny framed his discussion on the infancy stage of philosophy within Aristotle's notion of the four causes. Echoing Aristotle's discussion on the early Greek thinkers in *Metaphysics*, Kenny affirmed that these early thinkers concentrated only on the material cause when they searched for the fundamental and basic ingredient of the world. Thales, the first Ionian who speculated on the rational explanation of the origin of cosmos, posited that water is the basic stuff of the universe since water, as it undergoes a natural process, both becomes and accounts for everything that there is. Anaximander has also speculated that there are contrary forces that continuously act on each other thereby bringing things into existence. While the other elements dominate, the other pair regresses as they wait for the opportune time to encroach. He identified this process of domination/regression, of qualities of hot and cold, wet and dry as the process of injustice or separating out. From this process come fire and earth and our present cosmos. Thus, Anaximander did not only provide the material element of the cosmos but laid down the seminal understanding of efficient causality. Anaximenes believed that the origin of the cosmos warrants a natural process and not just a mere poetic description. He has chosen air as the material constituent of the universe. Through his process of rarefaction and condensation, Anaximenes explained that when air is moved and condensed, it will become wind, then water and finally when condensed will become mud and stone. Rarefied air could become fire thus completing the four elements. While these early thinkers veered away from the pure mythological explanation of cosmic origin, Kenny noted that they have not left myth behind. Despite the evident co-mingling of science, religion and philosophy in their ratiocination, these early thinkers presented that the natural world could be explained without going beyond nature itself.

While the Ionians were arguing about the constitution of the material element of the cosmos, in the southern part of Italy, the Pythagoreans thought that mathematics was the key in understanding the structure and order of the universe. They believed that there is harmony in the cosmos and this harmony is due to the right proportion of the elements of nature or the imposition of the principle of limit over the 'unlimit'. They supposed, as Aristotle said, that the elements of numbers are elements of things. Aristotle commented that when the Pythagoreans discovered the formal structure of nature, they supposed that they were also describing its material constituent.

Kenny identified Heraclitus as the most famous of the early Ionian philosophers, most likely because Hegel wrote highly of him. For Heraclitus, harmony is hidden and this is accounted for by the constant tension between opposites. The element of fire best manifests this constant conflict between opposites. Heraclitus viewed the cosmos as an ever-living fire, a continuous becoming and it is governed by Logos. Logos or reason refers to the cosmic principle that governs order and beauty. By way of the logos, Heraclitus was the first philosopher who had spoken about a prescriptive divine law.

A philosopher usually placed in opposition with Heraclitus is Parmenides of Elea. Kenny regarded Parmenides as the founder of ontology, the science of Being. While Heraclitus posited that everything is in constant flux, Parmenides took the opposite side:

everything is. Kenny claims that if one understands very well the meaning of 'whatever-is is and whatever-is-not is not', one will be forced to agree that motion is an illusion. Empedocles and Anaxagoras agreed with Parmenides but they wanted to justify motion. Empedocles appealed to the Ionians' notion of the four elements but he maintained that these four roots stood on equal terms. These four elements had always existed and mingle with each other in various proportions to produce the world through the influence of the principles of love and strife. Aristotle praised Empedocles for having realized that a cosmologic theory necessitates the assignment of causes for its development. Kenny added that what contributes to Empedocles' prominence is his remarkable theory of the origin of species which antedates Darwin's theory of evolution. Moreover, if Empedocles achieved importance as a precursor of Darwin, Anaxagoras anticipates the theory of the big bang. Anaxagoras held that in the beginning, all things were together, infinite in number and infinite in smallness. Then the *Nous* spinned off this 'primeval pebble' into an evolutionary process while remaining exterior to it.

Democritus, on the other hand, popularized the theory that matter is not infinitely divisible. For Democritus, divisibility comes to an end and the smallest possible fragment of matter which is indestructible is atom though they are too small to be perceived by the human eye. Atoms moved in a void, a thesis that sets him apart from the Eleatics who maintained the impossibility of a vacuum. These atoms move constantly, they differ in shapes and forms. Things are generated by their interaction as atoms move ceaselessly. Aristotle reserved one of his greatest critiques on Democritus as the latter's theory seems to imply that nature works by chance and not according to some finality. However, the atomic theory of Democritus will find its resurgence in Epicurus' ethical system.

The shift from speculative and scientific to axiological realm coincides with the appearance of the Sophists, the itinerant preachers who offer instructions for a fee. They are not philosophers in the strict sense of the term but they shared common subject matter with philosophers and adopt a sceptical attitude towards knowledge. The Sophists started the study of grammar and had made a systematic study on debate and rhetorics. Gorgias' work on grammar and its three sceptical conclusions will be examined in chapter six (6), and Protagoras, who was known for his famous saying that 'man is the measure of all things' thereby initiating a relativistic epistemology, will be examined in the second part of the book.

The discussion on Socrates is brief but brilliant. Kenny considered Socrates as a true philosopher as he inaugurated the great era of philosophical thinking. Kenny framed Socrates according to Xenophanes and Plato's works as Socrates himself left no writings. Xenophon and Plato differently portrayed Socrates in their works. Xenophon's Socrates questioned, argued and exhorted his students in a workmanlike manner whereas Plato's Socrates delivered deep metaphysical lectures in a literary fashion. Xenophon described Socrates as a pious man, observant of rituals, capable of giving shrewd but brilliant advice in practical and ethical matters, but seldom ventures on philosophical arguments and speculation.

Kenny presented the Socrates of Plato according to the plausible chronology of the Platonic texts. The author argued that this presentation indicates the extent to which Plato may be used as a source of information regarding the historical Socrates. Kenny readily agreed with the general consensus among scholars to divide the works of Plato into three: early, middle and late. Since the early group of dialogues can be identified by a set of common features such as these writings are short; Socrates appears as an inquirer; the theory of ideas was not presented; and stylo metrically, they are far removed from the late group; scholars believed that these group best represent the historical Socrates. This group includes Crito, Charmides, Laches, Lysis, Ion, Euthydemus and Hippias Minor. *Apology* and the first book of the *Republic* are also included in this group.

After establishing the historical Socrates from the gamut of Platonic writings, Kenny proceeded to introduce two important doctrines that are undoubtedly Platonic, the theory of ideas and the thesis of recollection, found in the *Meno* and the *Phaedo*. The *Phaedo* contains the last hours of Socrates and as noted by Kenny, it is perhaps not coincidental that in the same dialogue, Plato recorded the last hour of his master and introduced his theory of ideas. This is significant because it signals the emergence of the metaphysical and mythical form of Platonism and relegating to oblivion Socrates' personal philosophy.

The theory of ideas does not only address problems in epistemology, metaphysics and ethics. It also shows that as Plato abandoned the notion of philosopher-king, he also ceased to treat the theory of ideas as having political significance as well. Plato realized later that it is more important to regard the laws and institutions of government than the character of its ruler. Thus, in the tenth book of the *Laws*, Plato emphasized that the lawgiver must first establish the existence of the divine as a warrant since many Athenians denied the existence of gods or believed that gods exist but indifferent to human affairs. Hence, in the *Timaeus*, the production of which overlapped with the *Laws*, Plato returned to the cosmological topic and outlined the genesis of the cosmos through the agency of the divine craftsman. Kenny remarked that among the Platonic texts, the *Timaeus* was for centuries the most influential especially to the minds of medieval thinkers who found the cosmology of *Timeaus* congenial to Christianity's understanding of creation.

Kenny's discussion on Aristotle is structured according to Aristotle's classification of the sciences: productive, practical and theoretical sciences. In the realm of productive sciences, he mentioned the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*. He continued the tour in the realm of practical sciences and mentioned the three treatises of great importance in the field of moral philosophy: the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Eudemian Ethics* and *Magna Moralia*. He remarked that the contents of these treatises in general are very similar. The principal difference between the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics* is that in the latter, Aristotle finds the attainment of happiness in philosophical contemplation whereas in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, happiness is constituted by the harmonious exercise of virtues, intellectual and moral. The greater part of Kenny's exposition on Aristotle is on the theoretical treatises he wrote but he underscored that Aristotle's contributions to these sciences were less impressive compared to

the explanations in his *Physics* which were superannuated by the 6th century AD. The brevity of treatment on Aristotle in the first part of the book is balanced by Kenny's discussion in the entire second part which is centered on Aristotle's philosophical doctrines.

New schools of thought emerged several years after the death of Aristotle. But the best known philosophers during this time were neither from of the Lyceum nor from the Academy but from the Garden, a school established by Epicurus and from the Stoa under the tutorship of Zeno of Citium. Epicurus' philosophy is centered on the tenet that happiness is possible if only the fear of death is removed, which for Epicurus the greatest obstacle for tranquility. Epicurus believed that religion teaches men to fear death by peddling the idea of suffering after death. Epicurus found his solution from the atomism of Democritus since the theory of atoms explained the origin of the universe without the necessity of Divine warrant. Epicurus believed that since we are free agents, we are masters of our own fate and the gods could neither impose necessities nor interfere in human affairs. However, as Kenny verily noted, Epicurus was never a licentious man as he regarded worldly pleasures to be bound up with pain. Epicurus finds pleasure in the quiet of private friendship since only in a meaningful relationship that man could see death not as a punishment but joy.

The Stoics, in contrast, believed that the cosmic origin and material artifacts were products of cyclical conflagration. This constant renewal is in accordance with the system of laws called fate or providence because the laws were laid down by the gods. This divinely designed system is called Nature and tranquillity, and happiness is attained by man's agreement to this divinely inspired process. Despite the determinism inherent in the Stoics' ethical system, man can still be free and responsible for his actions. Man's willing acceptance of Nature's laws constitutes virtue which is necessary and sufficient for him to be happy. However, as expounded by Kenny in chapter 8, for the Stoics, there are no degrees of virtue. The happy man is perfectly virtuous, and since wisdom is perfect virtue, the wise man is the most happy because he alone is virtuous. This admission renders the whole idea of happiness seemingly an unattainable goal. Since the Stoics denied the possibility of degrees of virtue, no matter how much man tried to achieve it, he will never be able to obtain it. Hence, Kenny remarked that the critics complained that the Stoics could not make up their minds whether the end of life was an unattainable target itself or simply an ineffective assiduousness in target practice.

When Kenny discussed scepticism on the first part of the book, he focused on the personalities that shaped it. But, in Chapter 4, he tackled the doctrines related to scepticism. Kenny gave us the information regarding its birth in Athens by way of Arcesilaus and Timon both members of Plato's Academy. Timon denied the possibility of finding any self-evident principles to serve as the foundation of sciences, and Arcesilaus argued against the Stoics and said that there could be no mental impressions incapable of falsehood. Carneades likewise attacked the Stoics's theory of knowledge and taught that probability, not unattainable truth, should be the guide to life. Much of knowledge about philosophical scepticism came from Cicero who had been taught by Carneade's student, Philo, and from him we know that

the Academics presented a barrage of arguments proving the Stoic's epistemology wrong. The Academics argued that there is no perceptual belief that cannot be paired with non-inferential belief. But if two impressions are indistinguishable, it cannot be the case that one of them is cognitive and the other is not. Thus, no impression, even if true, is cognitive. Kenny concluded on citing the importance of studying ancient epistemology as it yields knowing the limits of scepticism and the nature of knowledge itself – a topic which at present is still raging in contemporary epistemology.

Many books on the history of ancient philosophy would not include the history of early Christian philosophy. Kenny's inclusion of the early history of Christian Philosophy aims to provide a historical trace of the emergence of early Christian philosophy as Greek philosophical schools reached its mortal limits. The last chapter of the book, which discusses natural theology, does not only include the ancient's understanding of the divine power manifested in their beliefs, but also demonstrates how early theological enterprise finds philosophy as a helpful ally. It was Plato who occupied a more prominent position in the infancy stage of Christianity as Plotinus, a contemporary of Origen, found Plato a reliable source in defending Christianity. He developed an almost complete Christian philosophical system inspired by Platonic ideas. When Justinian became emperor, he closed all pagan schools in 529 AD. This paved the way for Plotinus' ideas to spread in the whole Christendom by way of Augustine of Hippo. Kenny's succinct presentation of Augustine is forgivable since Augustine will be the first to grace Medieval Philosophy, the second volume of his work.

Ricouer said that a great philosopher is the one who receives the problematic and offers solution for it. In effect, he attempts to give the most coherent and comprehensive answers to the questions he raised.[2] Shifting through the contents of Anthony Kenny's book, we would find it relatively easy to identify Plato and Aristotle as embodiment of Ricouer's great philosopher. However, Plato and Aristotle owed much from the Presocratics as their problems and puzzlements instigated them to stretch the limit of what the human mind can possibly know. These problematics have been passed on to others, even to us. Hence our reading of the past will make us realize not only the long history of contemporary philosophical problems but also of how fortunate we are to be a part of that venerable intellectual heritage that commenced from Thales' prediction of an eclipse. This book invites us to have acquaintance with our intellectual forebears and as Kenny wrote in the introduction of his book "for history to be enjoyed by those who read it not for curricular purposes but for their own enlightenment and entertainment. "

HERMINIO V. DAGOHOY, O.P.

[2] Ricouer, Paul. *Philosophy and Unity of Truth. History and Truth,* translated by Charles Kelbley, Northwestern University Press, 1965. p.48.

Laporte, Joseph. *Natural Kinds and Conceptual Change. Cambridge Studies in Philosophy and Biology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. 221. ISBN 978-052-182-599-3.

This book tailwinds the author's 1998 doctoral dissertation, written at the University of Massachusetts, entitled "Natural-Kinds Term Reference and the Discovery of Essence."

What are natural kinds and natural-kind terms? Philosophers seldom offer any analysis of what they are, and some of these philosophers simply offer an example. The received tradition says that scientists indulge and thereby learn their trade by empirical investigation to determine what essences are. Hence, essences are discoveries from 'nature,' not products of imagination. So goes the Introduction of the book where the author explains the plan of this book's development.

The objective of the author is to examine the received tradition especially accepted in philosophical circles, analyze it, and after showing that it is mistaken, he presents its consequences.

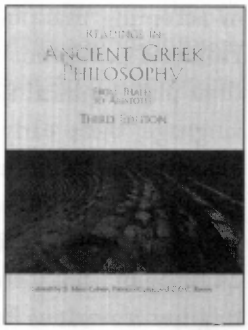
Natural kinds are kinds found in nature (p.18). Examples of this could be a tiger, an elm, or water. Not all natural kinds are produced in nature, but not all kinds in nature are natural kinds. Natural kinds are not distinguished by being found in nature (*Idem*).

Natural-kind terms are something else. They are those terms whose extensions are determined by experts. They are products of what is termed a division of linguistic labor. A term is a natural-kind term not in virtue of being coined to refer to a natural kind but in virtue of really referring to a natural kind (p.19). A natural kind is distinguished from a natural-kind term in the sense that the former is a kind with an explanatory value (the author provides the example of a polar bear as a natural kind). A vague case happens when a substance has the right observable properties but the wrong microstructure. It too is a vague case when a substance has the wrong observable properties but the right microstructure.

After the discovery of the chemical composition of charcoal, scientists hardly expected the composition of this humble substance to be shared by any impressive material. But the chemists were surprised by what they found after investigating diamond. Amazingly, diamond's chemical composition was found to be exactly the same as that of charcoal. Still, we do not say that diamonds are charcoal or vice-versa, or that these are two varieties of a single species. Rather, we say that something besides chemical structure matters to what counts as a member of the substance charcoal (p.101).

This book on *Natural Kinds and Conceptual Change* could be classified in the category of readings in Philosophy of Science, more particularly, within the limited scope of analytical philosophy - of logical empiricism or logical positivism.

NORBERTO M. CASTILLO, O.P.



Cohen, Marc, et. al. (ed.). *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy. From Thales to Aristotle*, 3rd ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 2005. Pp. 958. ISBN 978-087-220-769-1.

The book is an anthology of selected texts written about and by some of the greatest ancient Greek philosophers. Certainly, the work does not only aim at giving readers a quantum of information about these great men but also at discovering something central and vital to philosophy itself through our acquaintance with their texts. Hence, we approach these texts with historical hindsight. We would see how they tried to understand the basic structure of the cosmos, how they expounded the possibility of differentiating true knowledge from belief, how they explored the proper ethical values and ways of living with others and how they searched for the kind of society which best addressed human needs. In the questions they raised and the answers they formulated, we would see why some contributions remain minor while others have enduring importance. Many answers are no longer relevant while some are still appreciated because of its far and lasting influence to contemporary philosophical enterprise. Cohen remarked that in the process we will to some degree become what these philosophers thought as the best thing to be—fully rational human beings.

The anthology is divided into three sections. The first section contains texts on the Presocratics and the Sophists, while the writings of Plato constitute the midsection, and the last section is devoted to Aristotle's major treatises. Each section is given a short introduction and every work is provided with brief narrative which gives the text its proper historical context.

Our knowledge on the Presocratics is fragmentary. Though some of them wrote their own treatises, none of their writings survived. Hence we come to know them by way of other ancient authors. What is commendable in the Presocratic section is that the editor provided the readers with the list of sources. Other than Plato and Aristotle, the section supplies the quotations from Simplicius, an ancient commentator of Aristotle, and from Cicero, a first century Roman philosopher. Clement of Alexandria and Hippolytus, both Christian writers of the second century, wrote also extensively on Greek philosophy either by way of comparing it with Christian philosophy, as Clement of Alexandria did, or linking Greek philosophy to Christian heresies as Hypollitus wanted to establish.

Setting aside the peculiar intention of the writers on the Presocratics, we cannot deny the fact that the development of science and philosophy in the West started with Thales' prediction of an eclipse. Such prediction revolutionized the early Greek world's belief that natural phenomena are justified by divine warrant. The explanations of the Ionians on cosmic origin marked the separation of science and myth, as the Presocratics offered natural evidence instead of divine justification. Although care should be exercised

in accepting this observation since these early thinkers did not totally abandon the Homeric pantheon. W.K.C. Guthrie remarked that there are traces of mythology in their philosophical assumptions; and due to the poverty of the available philosophical language, these early thinkers found the language of Homer and Hesiod a legitimate articulation. The agreement and disagreement among them do not remove the fact that the early Presocratics worked in the same framework of argument and justification. And as more and more competing answers surfaced regarding the origin of the cosmos, the question of what sort of theory can be justified come to the fore. The Presocratics offered treatises in various fields other than philosophy. In adopting a critical attitude towards natural world, the Presocratics raised the question on the limits of what the human mind can possibly know.

In the latter part of the 5th century BC, when the socio-political landscape of Athens changed, there appeared a group of teachers called Sophists. With the political unrest and constant threat of war on one hand and the brewing scepticism due to conflicting philosophical theories on the other, the Sophists easily found hearers among the Athenian populace. The anthology includes the works of more known Sophists like Protagoras, Gorgias, Antiphon and Critias. Although Socrates made it his lifetime commitment to correct sophistical errors, these men contributed tremendously in the development of the philosophy of the mind, grammar and rhetorics.

The metaphysical, epistemological and ethical problems confronted by these early thinkers and their philosophical aporias will soon become part of Plato and Aristotle's philosophical enterprise. Plato occupies a very prominent place in the history of Western thought. Alfred Whitehead even remarked that modern philosophy is just a footnote of Plato. The anthology includes nine texts on Plato. However, the inclusion of his writings such as *Eutyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito* and the first book of the *Republic* is intended to establish the historical Socrates. Socrates is undoubtedly the most influential personality in the life of Plato. A Delphic oracle commonly attributed to Socrates seems to capture the essence of Socratic philosophy. Philosophy for Socrates consists almost entirely of examining one's concept of virtue. For Socrates, Virtue is knowledge and ignorance is a vice. He believed that if someone realized the value of knowledge, he will necessary pursue it. Socrates' method of examination is called *elenchus*. Aristotle described this method as a twofold exercise: inductive argumentation and deductive reasoning that form a definitional knowledge of the subject matter at hand. The goal of the Socratic dialogue is moral transformation and not simply an adequate definition of a thing. He believed that leading an examined life makes a person happier and more virtuous.

Plato wrote the last hours of his master in the *Phaedo*, where he also wrote his Theory of Ideas. This signifies the departure of Plato from the shadow of Socrates and his other writings. He fully explored his theory of Ideas in the *Republic* and in the *Meno*, where he explained the role of *anamnesis* as part of his epistemology. Later in his life, Plato abandoned the political significance of his theory of ideas and gave more importance on laws and institutions than

the character of the ruler. Unfortunately, the *Laws* is not included in the selection. Though the contents of the *Timeaus* can be appreciated on its own, the origin of the cosmos through the agency of the divine craftsman discussed in the *Timeaus* would be best appreciated in the light of the discussion in the *Laws*.

The last section of the work is devoted to Aristotle. Aristotle divided the sciences into three: productive, practical and theoretical. The anthology contained carefully selected writings of Aristotle that will represent this tripartition. The readings are texts rarely discussed or quoted in most history books. Particular attention should be given to the treatises on ethics since these three reflect the development of Aristotle's thought. Aristotle is both a scientist and a philosopher. He could make an easy transition from describing the minutest detail of an eel to the discussion of lofty ideals of the unmoved movers. He did this with superb mental acumen aided by his method of deductive logic, which he invented by detailed observation of natural phenomenon to understand the fundamental structure of reality. He is the first philosopher, followed by no other, who made a complete historiography of ideas.

Aristotle understands science as an axiomatic system in which necessary first principles lead, by inexorable deductive inferences, to all the truths about the subject matter of the science. It is therefore demonstrative since those which we can scientifically know can be directly or indirectly derived from the first principles which in themselves need no justification. First principles can be known but they are immediately grasped by the mind. The science of Aristotle is an *a priori* enterprise where logic is used to arrive at its truths. However, Aristotle never thought that this is the only way of acquiring knowledge. Rather, he starts from observation and opinions held about the subject matter, those that are more familiar to us, before he moves up towards the knowledge of the universals which are better known in themselves.

Each science studies a particular realm of being. Thus Physics deals with being qua mobile and Metaphysics (Aristotle used the term after physics) concerns the most general class of things, that is, everything that exists. Aristotle answered the question of existence in his *Metaphysics* and there he would tell us that the question of being redounds to the question of what is substance. In the *Categories*, he maintained that species like men and trees are secondary substances and he intimated in *Metaphysics* that the form or essence is the primary substance.

In *Physics*, he explained that to know a thing necessitates the knowledge of causes. The material and formal causes, although they constitute a thing, are not sufficient to address the question of existence. What further constitute a substance are the efficient and final causes. The whole philosophy of nature of Aristotle is teleological. Aristotle believed that there is always a reason for existence. The efficient and final causes often coincide but in the order of intention, the final cause is prior than the efficient cause and in the order of execution, the efficient cause takes the priority. Thus, the life of a living being is inevitably

bound up with its nature. What differentiates the life of an animate being from an inanimate thing is the soul. In the *De Anima*, he said that a vegetative soul is proper for plants, sensitive soul for animals and the highest kind of soul belongs to man—the rational soul. Aristotle understood the soul to be the form of a body. The soul is an operating principle. Hence, through it, man moves, desires and fulfil them, perceives and contemplates. Much of the discussion regarding the soul could be found in the *De Anima* where he would likewise discuss other topics concerning the soul particularly sense-perception. His account in the *De Anima* by its appearance could be mostly psychological but with epistemological implications.

Aristotle's answers to practical sciences are built from his understanding of the theoretical sciences. Central to the practical sciences is the question of the good life. Happiness is the end of man. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle said that to lead a good life is to choose the highest good which is chosen for its own sake. Since man is a rational being, he should strive to possess the good for his highest faculty. But in the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle expounds that happiness consists in the harmonious exercise of virtues both intellectual and moral. According to him, society aids man in his constant search for *eudaimonia*. In *Politics*, he asserted that man is a social animal. He said that he who cannot live in a community is either a god or a beast. The state is a natural entity and does not merely exist because of convention. The state exists for the sake of the good or happy life. Hence, the primary function of the state is to provide the means whereby its citizens will achieve their highest goal: the formation of their intellectual and moral virtues. After considering the different forms of government, Aristotle arrived at the conclusion that aristocracy is the best form of government. Many of Aristotle's political insights found in his political treatises are still relevant today though there are some which we might find repugnant and anachronistic.

Sir Anthony Kenny said that the most visible form of philosophical progress is progress in philosophical analysis. Philosophy progresses not because it offers information but because it provides understanding. These early thinkers bequeathed a patrimony that sets the future development of the western world, that is, critical understanding embodied in a tradition. While it is very important for a novice-reader to be familiar with the writings of the ancients, considerable guidance is required in order for him not to be overwhelmed by the wealth of their wisdom.

HERMINIO V. DAGOHOY, O.P.

Blanco Andrés, Roberto (ed.). *Eduardo Navarro. De Valladolid a Manila.* Valladolid: Ayuntamiento de Valladolid, 2006. Pp. 231.

At the shores of the Pisuerga River is the library of the Royal College of the Filipino Augustinians. In its rich Filipiniana collection, doubtless the best in Europe, is an important manuscript for Philippine historiography, now competently edited by Professor Roberto Blanco Andrés, a youthful and enthusiastic historian.

Blanco gifts us with a competent edition of a manuscript conserved in said library. 1864 was a fateful year for the Augustinian missions in the Orient. That "barcada" which sailed for its shores had among its passengers, Eduardo Navarro, OSA, native of Valladolid and chronicler of that voyage that departed from Cadiz on May 20, 1864.

The reader has in his hands a carefully edited publication which contains the narrative of that work reflecting experiences, emotions, joys and sufferings, not only of the author but also of those of the companions in the journey and of the entire Augustinian community in Valladolid.

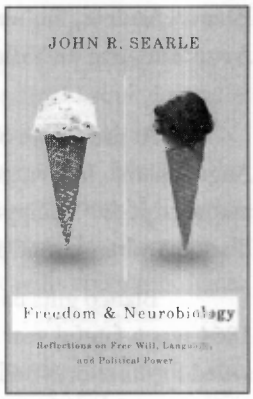
Indeed, this opus brings us back in time and makes us see the psychology, the chronology, the observations which accompanied the long journeys into far and relatively unknown lands, all in the name of Christianity. Some would even cynically say, in the name of Spanish Domination. One cannot forget how the Spanish missionaries were instruments of colonization in these islands, especially the Augustinians in Valladolid, toegether with the Dominicans in Avila and the Recollects in Navarra, whose illustruous college was allowed to operate during the horrible years of the implementation of the Mendizábal expulsion of the religious from their monasteries.

This excellent edition comes with a succinct introduction and study and the drawings that are present in the original manuscript. However, descriptive and linguistic (paleographic) notes are missing in the main text itself, which could have given the entire publication more heuristic material.

Nevertheless this interesting publication is worth keeping and reading for filipinophiles.

MACARIO OFILADA

Searle, John. *Freedom and Neurobiology: Reflections on Free Will, Language, and Political Power*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. Pp. 113. ISBN 978-0231137522.



Clarity, forceful argumentation, dexterity in slicing up scientific and philosophical materials into bite-size chunks make John Searle distinctly readable. All the more readable since the articles in the book were meant to be spoken. In the Spring of 2001, topics on language and political power were lectured to a large audience in French at Sorbonne, and topics ranging from 'freedom of the will' to the 'semiotics of wine tasting,' were given in English to much smaller audiences. What ended up as a book were selections from these series of lectures. Provided thus, Searle points it necessary to look up his previous works where some of the issues (in the articles) are discussed at greater length.

The referred body of works is composed of articles and books, some mentioned were: Minds, Brains and Science (1984), The Rediscovery of the Mind (1992), The Mystery of Consciousness (1997), Mind: A Brief Introduction (2004), Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind (1983), The 1960's Classic Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language (1969), Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech (1979) and Rationality in Action (2001).

Apparently we must situate these reflections on Free Will, Language, and Political Power under Searle's larger philosophical enterprise, mainly on the Philosophy of Mind and Language. Aware of and roused by the flux of scientific discoveries and their jolting effects on accepted paradigms, he takes serious accounts of such and such facts to address, or problematize, or discredit, or solder-sew-and-glue traditional philosophy with contemporary scientific findings. Putting it plainly, the world is seen in a very different way now. In effect we describe it differently. Contemporary ways of describing the basic structure of the universe as seen in modern atomic physics and chemistry; flora and fauna in the evolutionary theory of biology; specialized study of man in psychobiology (with the Nobel Prize winner Roger Wolcott Sperry as a big player), and an unimaginable mass of other discoveries, a whole lot of things get to be reconsidered.

Biology comes charging-in in the phenomena of consciousness and language; a heavy material in Searle's discussions. To see his point we have to see it against the background of an opposing idea: for example Descartes'. In page 22 Searle explicitly says that he offers a solution to the philosophical mind-body problem. And Descartes' dualism is just one of the models he rejects. For one, Descartes forwards the idea that the world is divided into two: mental and physical. The *res cogitans* and the *res extensa*. An implication would be that the mind could not be a proper object of scientific inquiry because it belongs to an entirely different realm. To speak of it in another way, the mind and the soul are the properties of

religion, and the world the property of scientists. Searle addresses this long held conception with: "We now have more than three centuries of scientific results that overwhelmingly support the idea that we live in exactly one world, not two or three (he calls 'trialism') or any other larger number" (p.22).

To solve the mind-body problem (the division of reality) Searle proposes a 'naturalistic' approach. Everything that we call rational, abstract, poetic, meaningful has its foundation in our biological makeup. Consciousness is not apart from the natural world but an outgrowth of it. It is not a floating phenomenon. It is rather biologically grounded. To think in these terms is also to consider that biology takes into account chemical processes and physical laws governing molecular and organic behavior. That is to say, one way of viewing biological phenomena is to consider 'strict' causal relations. Now problems arise when consciousness is seen as entirely biologically rooted. How can we reconcile our conception of the universe as that which consists of mindless, meaningless, unfree, nonrational, brute physical particles with our conception of ourselves as conscious, intentionalistic, rational, social, and free will possessing agents?

In order to address these issues Searle kicks off with a chapter dedicated to "Philosophy and the Basic Facts." Contained therein is a set of philosophical concepts defined in congruence with biological explanations. Or so it seems. This chapter serves as a prologue to key concepts covering the two essays namely: "Free Will as a Problem in Neurobiology" and "Social Ontology and Political Power." Here is a sketch of the said concepts. *Consciousness*: it is defined as subjective, qualitative states of sentience or feeling or awareness. Conscious states are entirely caused by neuronal processes in the brain and are realized in the brain. *Intentionality*: it refers not only to cases of intending, but to any form of directedness or aboutness. Beliefs, desires, hopes, fears, loves, hates and perceptions are all cases of intentional phenomena. Searle also mentions a special form of intentionality called 'collective intentionality'. It is a case where 'humans and other animals are capable of cooperating and thus sharing common forms of intentionality, where intentionality is not just in the first-person singular (I intend, I believe, I want, etc.), but would be expressed in the first-person plural (we intend, we believe, we want, etc.)' (p. 7). *Language*: it is to be thought of as a manifestation and extension of more biologically primitive forms of intentionality. Accordingly, Searle argues that it is a 'mistake to treat language as if it were not part of human biology'. (p. 8) He adds "We need to base our analysis of language on analyses of prelinguistic forms of intentionality" (p. 30). *Rationality*: it is not a separate faculty that is added to language and mind. 'It is an internal structural feature of intentionality and of language that intentional states and speech acts are subject to internal constraints of rationality' (p. 9). *Free will*: rationality presupposes free will. Experience tells us that we make decisions amidst various choices and we have to suppose our freedom in order to voluntarily choose. Unlike physical objects that act/move under causally sufficient conditions, rationality presupposes that not all of our actions have antecedent conditions that are causally sufficient to determine an action (p. 10). *Society and institutions*: here the question that Searle forwards is 'What exactly is the ontology of society?' We have to see our society

and institutions based on our capacity for 'collective intentionality.' Human institutional structures such as money, property, marriage, universities, income tax, etc. are extensions of our capacity for collective intentionality and capacity for language; to have language and social cooperation is to have the possibility of creating institutional reality such as money, schools, etc. (p. 12). *Politics*: here Searle simply states that politics and political philosophy can be dealt with naturalistically. This is in reaction against the view that if philosophy has nothing true to say about how we behave, or what sort of political society we ought to have then there is no such thing as political philosophy (p. 13). But then again, if consciousness, language, rationality and society are all expressions of a fundamental underlying biology then there can be a naturalistic approach to ethical and political philosophy (p. 12). *Ethics*: naturalistic ethics would be based on our basic biological needs and our biologically given capacity for rationality (p. 14).

Not quite given obviously are definitions in its strict sense but a mindset in dealing with such issues, naturalistically. Consciousness, language, intentionality, rationality, free will, human society, politics, ethics, etc. are now, Searle claims, satisfactorily backed up by science's basic facts and can be dealt with and explained thus as natural phenomena.

Searle posits that we cannot deny consciousness, rationality and free will. This is in contrast to determinism which ultimately negates our long held conception of ourselves, as free and rational beings. Often, scientists fall into the pit of determinism, of course, with good reasons. Consequently, problems arise when we begin to be deterministic about our descriptions of consciousness and rationality. We end up saying that decision-making is an illusion. We are simply made to think that we are free. To say that consciousness and rationality have been pre-determined at the neurobiological level is to say that our decisions have no real impact on the world. And that is apparently wrong.

Searle concedes however that he is not in hope of providing a solution on free will. What he promises to provide is to be able to state the problem in a precise form so that we can see possible solutions (p. 31). In the first chapter he forwards two hypotheses: First that the state of the brain is causally sufficient, and second, that it is not. At the psychological level, to say that the brain is causally sufficient is to say that all our decisions are determined and thus free will is denied. The second hypothesis, you guess, makes free will possible. And this is quite interesting with the notion of *gap*.

In the brain there are no *gaps*. Meaning it has a strict cause-effect relationship, there is no room for choice. *Gap* is possible only on the psychological level or the system level. It means that our decisions are not entirely determined by conditions that prompt us to decide. The example Searle gave was that of Paris choosing between three beautiful goddesses. In choosing he was not forced by lust, rage or obsession. But he had to undergo a period of deliberation wherein there was no further stimulus input. In short, there's a *gap*. To illustrate this, Searle labels where the period of Paris' reflection began as t1 and the choice of the goddess Aphrodite as t2. Now Searle says "If the total state of Paris' brain at t1 is causally

sufficient to determine the total state of his brain at t2... then he has no free will. If the state of his brain at t1 is not causally sufficient to determine the subsequent states of his brain up to t2, then he has free will" (p. 61).

Our experience of free will comes about from the feature of our consciousness as 'behaving' indeterminately (since there are *gaps*, we cannot calculate/predict a person's choice the way we do when we hit a billiard ball); such that antecedent conditions are not causally sufficient to determine our course of action or decision. For a better picture of this, it is worth looking up Searle's explanation on consciousness as a higher-level feature of the brain system.

Can there be an explanation of the *gap* from nature? *Gap* spells indeterminism. If consciousness exhibits some sort of indeterminism, then indeterminism can be explained as a natural phenomenon. *Gap* is a kind of indeterminism which is rational. Searle presents his argument this way: (Premise 1) All indeterminism in nature is quantum indeterminism; (Premise 2) Consciousness is a feature of nature that manifests indeterminism; (Conclusion) Consciousness manifests quantum indeterminism. Simply put quantum mechanics can be used to explain consciousness' indeterminism. Since quantum mechanics is about randomness, and rationality is not about randomness, the proper question in pursuit of this line of argument is "What is the relation between quantum indeterminacy and rationality?" Unfortunately, this is the tail of (and perhaps the tall order of) the chapter on *Free Will as a Problem in Neurobiology* wherein Searle ends with 'much more to be said'.

Indeed much is to be said. In 2008 Yoichiro Nambu, Makoto Kobayashi and Toshihide Maskawa won the Nobel Prize in Physics. Nambu was awarded for "the discovery of the mechanism of spontaneous broken symmetry in subatomic physics," and Kobayashi and Maskawa for "the discovery of the origin of the broken symmetry which predicts the existence of at least three families of quarks in nature." It would be impossible for me to explain what these exactly are, but according to the *Nobel Prize Guide in Physics 2008* newsletter (downloaded from Nobelprize.org), it simply means that asymmetry in the universe, at least at the subatomic level, had made our existence possible. For if the universe were purely symmetrical then the amount of matter produced during the Big Bang would be equal with anti-matter, thus annihilating each other and nothing would ever exist. It only took a slight imbalance on the subatomic level for everything that we call good and evil to exist. Slight, at the subatomic level, means massive.

There are discoveries in science that have no practical application, but they deepen our understanding of the world. We have of course quantum mechanics and particle physics. Once truths are unearthed, they change the way we imagine, articulate and deal with the world. Enter quantum mechanics in explaining consciousness and rationality and you have to recognize a whole range of nonliving basic facts, at least in relation with modern discoveries. Who knows asymmetry in the universe might be used to explain consciousness and free will as well.

Much said, Searle simply says consciousness *manifests* 'quantum randomness' in the form of 'rationality's indeterminism'; a possible line of attack in explaining the existence of the *gap* and free will, but with a stupendous scope.

On the organic level, there is also another layer of interpretation and problems.

Roger Wolcott Sperry who won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1981 had one (besides split-brain experiment which speaks of the duality of consciousness; each of the brain's hemisphere is fully conscious, although has different capabilities) particular contribution on our understanding of the brain. In an article by Norman H. Horowitz at the Nobel.org website, he describes Sperry's contribution as:

> Sperry's first major scientific work - one which occupied him for over a decade - was to disprove a widely accepted theory that had been advanced by his professor at the University of Chicago, Paul Weiss. According to this theory, the vast neural network that connects the sense organs and muscles to the brain originates as an undifferentiated and unspecified mesh of randomly connected nerve fibers which is later transformed, under the influence of experience and learning, into the highly coordinated, purposeful system that is actually seen in animals. Plasticity and interchangeability of function were the key ideas. This theory did not come out of the blue, of course, but was based on careful experimental work that Weiss had performed, but misinterpreted.

In a series of experiments that have become famous, Sperry showed that the actual state of affairs is precisely the opposite of that imagined in Weiss' theory. Instead of being composed of interchangeable parts, the circuits of the brain are largely hardwired in the sense that each nerve cell is tagged with its own chemical individuality early in embryonic development; once this happens, the function of the cell is fixed and is not modifiable thereafter.

If Sperry is right about the fixed identity of nerve cells at the embryonic stage, then the brain's function has been determined at the beginning. It means that it is already a 'system', with a capacity for consciousness, rationality, emotion, abstract thinking and so on, that we call characteristically human (an anti-abortion statement?). Now what does this have to do not only with Searle but also with the naturalistic account of the mind is that there seems to be no room for 'why.' Naturalistic approach deals only with the 'how', the 'what', 'this' and 'that'. Philosophical enterprise in this realm becomes an arduous wait for the time when everything can be explained scientifically – something Searle humbly admits.

Furthermore, Searle points to two of his earlier works, *The Construction of Social Reality* (1995) and *Rationality in Action* (2001), when he tackles the issues and theories on society and politics. Given such limitations *Social Ontology and Political Power* remains an exciting read nonetheless.

A set of questions important to contemporary philosophy is laid down: "How, and to what extent, can we reconcile a certain conception that we have of ourselves as conscious, mindful, free, social and political agents with a world that consists entirely of mindless, meaningless particles in fields of force? How, and to what extent, can we get a coherent account of the totality of the world that will reconcile what we believe about ourselves with what we know for a fact from physics, chemistry and biology?"(p. 81)

One does this by admitting some features of reality. These are features that would erase the division between *self* and *society* and its *institutions*. There is a continuous flow. One such feature of reality is the existence of things we call observer-independent; a list would be mass, gravity, electricity, radiation and some such things. The other feature of reality needs a conscious intentional agent for existence; a list would be money, marriage, schools, language and some such things. The existence of gravitational force is not dependent on a conscious agent, but there would be no money without such a conscious agent. Because of this, we can have both an objective and subjective knowledge of reality. We can know objectively that we have in our possession a piece of metal we call one peso coin. Its being a one peso coin is an objective reality in itself, but at the same time, it is also an observer-dependent feature in which we assign a value on the piece of metal which makes it money.

Along with this is the distinction between *epistemic* objectivity and subjectivity, which are features of claims, and *ontological* subjectivity and objectivity as features of reality. *Epistemic* objectivity refers to the truth or falsity of a claim, which is independent of a person's attitude, feelings, bias and so on: an example would be that Ninoy Aquino is the father of Kris Aquino. While the claim that Ninoy is the best father in the whole world is *epistemically* subjective since it is influenced by one's attitude, feelings and bias. *Ontological* subjectivity speaks of realities which are experienced by human or animal subject: examples are pains, tickles, hunger and so on. While things that we call ontologically objective are trees, atoms, stones whose 'existence is not dependent on subjective experiences'.

By these distinctions, Searle argues that political reality is observer relative. Presidency for example is an *ontologically* subjective phenomenon, and 'Gloria Arroyo is president' is an *epistemically* objective fact. To say that presidency is an *ontologically* subjective fact is to say that its existence is dependent on our belief on it.

Among ancient minds, man was seen as a social animal. But together with it, there is also the old concept of *'zoon politikon'* which may be understood as man who is as a political animal. Searle's essay's interest however rests on what makes man a political animal. Searle says that the political man is possible because 'human beings have the capacity to impose status functions on objects' (p. 90). We are, so to say, able to assign status function on an entity regardless of its shape or size or physical capabilities. Extending it on human relations, this capability also helps explain the nature of other human institutions we call religion and economics; where we find ministers, sacraments, church, stock markets, money, trade among other things.

The powers that are constitutive of institutional facts like rights, duties, obligations, commitments, authorizations, requirements and the rest are called *deontic powers.* Congressmen, mayors and the like are entities with recognized status functions, and these status functions assign *deontic powers.* In regard with this, a political power, though exercised from above, is actually coming from below. Political power rests upon the recognition of the many. Ideals collapse when the masses withdraw their recognition of it.

Politics is possible because of language. Primarily, political power is not brute power but *deontic power* and such power is symbolized linguistically; thus political powers are largely linguistically constituted (which is true too to church life and economic life).

Searle then reflects on the nature of political conflicts. Searle says in essence that political conflict refers to social goods, and most of these social goods include *deontic powers.* So, a political system, though linguistically constituted, needs to be supported by a threat of armed violence: military, police, *kagawad* and so on.

Perhaps, most of what have been sketched above are familiar. But an appreciation of a system of explanation, naturalistic among many others, is invaluable and indispensable for any sensible critique, should one venture into it.

What obviously is rippling in the book involves the discussions on consciousness and free will. A thoroughly naturalistic approach to the mind clashes against our traditional concept of a person. Of course, Searle's voice is worth respecting, but anyhow further discussions of his ideas are proper to professional philosophers. However, as one progresses over the book, Searle makes quite a distinct assumption: that given the incomplete account of how lifeless matter forms into a living organism, and how living organisms organize themselves and arrive at such a complex system as to form a consciousness being, much more a rational being, and the many gaps in-between these processes, he is asking us to be convinced at the onset that consciousness is arrived at by natural complexity. We are just waiting for the time when science would fill in the gaps. Thus, a supposed inductive understanding of consciousness is subsumed under the general theory that is supposed to be unquestioned in order to proceed in a naturalistic line of argument, that everything about consciousness is biological.

Despite the attempt at the demystification of consciousness and free will, more mysterious questions abound. Questions asked at the higher-neuronal-system-level or on the first-person-ontological-level or on the rational-level might appear like this: "Why should a system of neurons, each with specialized functions, arrive at consciousness and be purposeful?"; "Why is there a drive for meaning?"; "Why is the direction of evolution towards consciousness?" and many others.

J. R. Searle's *Freedom and Neurobiology* is a brief sketch in the attempt of linking objective reality with the subjective first-person reality. But how far can we truly arrive at being objective? Scientific discoveries too are served in a sandwich-bag of interpretation.

CHRISTOPHER P. GARINGANAO, O.P.

Alvarez Barredo, Miguel. *Habacuc: Un Profeta Inconformista. Perfiles Literarios y Rasgos Teológicos del Libro*. Murcia: Instituto Teológico Franciscano, 2007. Pp. 252. ISBN 978-84-86042-66-0.

Miguel Alvarez Barredo, professor of Sacred Scriptures in the Pontifical University of St. Antoninus of Rome and Theological Institute of Murcia, Spain, has authored this study on prophet Habakkuk entitled *Habakkuk: An Uncompromising Prophet. Literary Profiles and Theological Strokes of his Book*. This work is part of a series of publications by the Franciscan Theological Institute of Murcia, Spain.

Barredo has divided the study into three parts. First, he situates the prophet Habakkuk in his historical context, which is the reign of Joachim in 605-598 B.C., after the Egyptian forces, which had earlier gone to the aid of the last Assyrian King, were routed by the Babylonians under Nabopolosar and Nebuchadnezzar, who pursued them as far as the Egyptian border. Habakkuk had even probably lived to see the initial fulfillment of his prophecy when Jerusalem was attacked by the Babylonians in 587 B.C.

Then secondly, the author discusses the literary forms of the first two chapters of this small prophetic book. It consists of a dialogue between the prophet and God on God's apparent lack of control on events. This part ends in a series of "waw" or judicial condemnation.

Lastly, Barredo focuses on the literary analysis and the theological intention of the book's third chapter, which is a confession of God's action in human history that is marked by violent cycles, whereby it seems that individuals are taken for granted and thousands upon thousands are brought to slaughter without knowing the purpose of their lives. Their lives have become mere instruments in the hands of the powerful who merely wish to achieve their selfish ambitions. Prophet Habakkuk reflects on this state of things and questions his and his people's faith in a just divinity. Habakkuk does not find the answers in traditional faith. Faced with the wickedness of the great powers, together with the corruption of the small kingdoms, the prophet feels puzzled and directly confronts God. He asks the following questions: Is God absent from history? Is God insensitive to human suffering? How long will this situation last?

God makes it clear, however, that eventually the corrupt destroyer will himself be destroyed. Through a beautiful hymn in Chapter III, Habakkuk responds to the questions raised in the first and second chapters. In a mythological language, he expresses his trust in God's providence. He declares that even if God should send suffering and loss, the prophet would still rejoice in God his Savior.

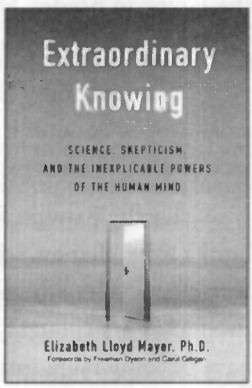
Chapters 1 and 2 of Habakkuk, says the author, describe the extent to which human beings can be degraded in the service of some ideologies. The prophet, the man of God, cannot remain silent. He must denounce the things that are contrary to God. The prophet represents innumerable people, and the answers enumerated in the third chapter of Habakkuk should reach them too.

The author concludes that the message of prophet Habakkuk should not be relegated to the past, for it sheds light on multiple modern situations that defy human logic and the laws of causality. The man of faith will find light in his opening to God. Barredo echoes the conviction of Habakkuk that God is the only warrantor of salvation and the prosecutor in any human situation that impairs human dignity.

The book is written in Spanish. Though its subtitle, *Un Profeta Inconformista (An Uncompromising Prophet)*, may sound redundant for it is quite obvious that true prophets are uncompromising, one finds no serious fault in this study on one of the so-called Twelve Prophets.

ANGEL APARICIO, O.P.

Mayer, Elizabeth Lloyd. *Extraordinary Knowing: Science, Skepticism and The Inexplicable Powers of the Human Mind.* New York: Bantam Books, 2008. Pp 320. ISBN 978-055-338-223-5.



The history of Western philosophy coincides with the beginning of the early Greeks' fascination with and desire for knowing. In his book *The Discovery of the Mind* (1982), Bruno Snell charted how the Greeks grappled with this phenomenon from the poetry of Homer and Pindar to the plays of the likes of Aeschylus and Aristophanes. The Pre-Socratics' search for the ultimate stuff also reveals an aspect of this passion for knowing, a tradition which will be greatly explored by Plato and Aristotle in subsequent years. For a long time, the Western intellectual tradition was dominated by Plato with his guarantee of certainty in the idea of forms. But, with the rediscovery of Aristotle in the last centuries of the Middle Ages, a new vista to knowledge that is more partial to science and logic was opened. This latter development will be bannered both by the Dominicans Albert of Cologne and Thomas Aquinas. Aristotle dwelt on both the philosophy *(Metaphysics, Posterior Analytics, Prior Analytics)* as well as the psychology *(De Anima)* of human knowing. However, even his near universal genius would prove insufficient with the new demands and challenges posed by modernity. Modern period rejected Aristotle wholesale together with anything reminiscent of the middle ages' metaphysical dream. In its place, Descartes sought recourse to mathematics, Locke banked on human experience and Hume wondered whether human knowledge can really be possible at all. By 19th century, philosophy would be completely dislodged by psychology

as arbiter of human knowing and instead of the traditional epistemological issues, psychology turned to the question of mental states and external behavior. But despite psychology's new found confidence in the use of clinical experiments, quantitative parameters and state-of-the-art laboratory tools, it too was forced to come to terms with its incapacity to exhaust the richness of the human knowing. In less than a century, psychology has splintered into various schools of thought each of them vying for the privilege to be the last word on the human mind. The book on review, *Extraordinary Knowing: Science, Skepticism and The Inexplicable Powers of the Human Mind* by Dr. Elizabeth Lloyd Mayer, explains why the efforts of philosophy and science, that is psychology, would always remain wanting when it comes to determining the reach and richness of human knowing: it is beyond reason, it is beyond the senses, it is beyond what we think of its normal capacities. It was Sigmund Freud who forced us to recognize the different possibilities of the human mind and Dr. Mayer, who was an avowed clinician before her awakening, was trying to lean back to him and the whole tradition that he represents in order to assure her readers that her claims, as bold as they were, was not something that sprang her head overnight. This extraordinary knowing has been called invariably with different names: extrasensory perception, paranormal psychology, gut feel, thought transference. The book chronicles the author's personal and intellectual odyssey from being an avowed skeptic to a leading convert of the human mind's extraordinary power which until today continues to baffle philosophers and scientists alike. Philosophers like Pascal, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche have long conceded the insufficiency of reason when confronted with the breadth of human knowing. For their part, scientists like Freud, Jung and James have likewise owned the shortcomings of science when it comes to the same question. Apparently, the human mind and its capacity to know will always be a perennial question, an inexhaustible source of wonder. Like Socrates, our knowledge of it depends on our readiness to admit that we hardly know at all.

JOVITO CARIÑO

Pope Benedict XVI. *The Fathers*. Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 2008. Pp. 201. ISBN 978-159-276-440-2.

There is a resurgence of attention in many Catholic theological circles for the past decades or so on a deeper study and appreciation of the Fathers of the Church and the Patristic contribution to the Christian faith. This is brought about by a neo-ecumenical stimulus. The motivation comes from two fronts. One consists of the great advances made by

more than two decades of Catholic-Orthodox theological dialogue which is already showing substantial signs of an even closer possibility of ending a millennial schism. The theological foundation of the dialogue, its themes and consensus draw heavily from the experience of the Church of the first millennium specifically from the patristic input. The other front is the growing interest among Evangelicals and the discovery by traditional Protestants of the patristic insight to the common faith and the profound scriptural integrity of the Fathers of the Church.

Nonetheless, this significance for Catholics is slow to permeate the level of the ordinary believer and even among those in seminary formation or the local pastor. There are two major stumbling blocks to the reception of the Fathers in ordinary Catholic Christian formation. First is a suspicious attitude by some quarters from among the Catholic clergy, modern theologians and religion teachers toward anything that is pre-Vatican II. Furthermore, there is the lack of an easy-to-read material on the Fathers of the Church. Available resources in English are often found in specialized bookstores. Thus, they are kept away from the eyes of interested Catholics who frequent the religion section of a regular or even a Catholic bookstore. Moreover, available materials are unfortunately mere reprints of translations written in English from yesteryears. The Orthodox has been publishing for years a *Popular Patristic Series* but these too are hard to come by in an average bookstore. Furthermore, there is simply a lingering mistrust of devout and traditional Catholics for reading materials from non-approved or non-Catholic sources.

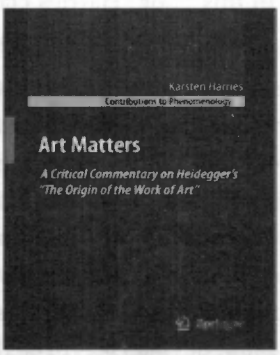
It is a delight, therefore, to see the current Roman Pontiff, Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger), breaking grounds with the book on *The Fathers* for ordinary readership. The materials for the book were from a series of catechesis given by the Pope during his weekly audiences from March 7, 2007 to February 27, 2008. When this work was finally made available in plain English for the first time by *Our Sunday Visitor Publications*, the readership coverage now grew wider. The intention of the book is unadorned and unpretentious, that is, to introduce the Fathers, especially the common ones, to the masses. There are twenty-six of these personages in the book. Each chapter is devoted to a particular Father beginning with the significant ones of the Sub-Apostolic Era like Ireneaus of Lyons, down to the Apologists of the Second Century including Tertullian and Origen, the principle Fathers of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Periods including Athanasius, the great Cappadocians like Basil, the Latin Giants Ambrose, Jerome, Hilary, and finally Augustine. The book in fact ends with the treatise on Augustine. The presentation of Tertullian and Origen is also something worth noting because there is now recognition of their contribution to the great patristic synthesis and positive development of the Christian faith. The reading on each Father is more of a commentary on their life and gift to the Church rather than excerpts from some specific writing. If one prefers the latter, the expanded version of Mike Aquilina's *The Fathers of the Church* published by OSV in 2006 is a better option.

On a personal note, I have made this book of Pope Benedict XVI the basic text for my first year Theology students in the diocesan major seminary of the Immaculate Conception

in Guiginto, Bulacan for academic year 2009 to 2010. My strategy is to introduce the Fathers in a manner that gives them the pleasure of easy reading while at the same time stimulating their palates to seek and learn more. So far, the intention of Pope Benedict XVI is working with my young and inquisitive students. Early Church History is no longer the dreaded memorization of names, dates, events, and significances, but rather an encounter with real people that have profoundly shaped the value of what it means to be Christian and Catholic. "The true teaching, therefore, is not that invented by intellectuals, which goes beyond the Church's simple faith. The true Gospel is the one imparted by the Bishops who received it in an uninterrupted line from the Apostles."

WINSTON FERNANDEZ CABADING, OP

Harries, Karsten. *Art Matters: A Critical Commentary on Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art"*. USA: Springer, 2009. Pp. 201. ISBN 978-4020-9988-5.



The incisive and brilliant Karsten Harries makes a contribution to the persistent attempt to answer some questions posited by Hegel. In 1820's, Hegel pronounced that "art is, and remains for us, on the side of its highest destiny, a thing of the past." This stance, for Heidegger, does not simply speak of mere art and more than just the future of art. Is art really a passé? If it is a passé, then, what are we admiring nowadays in the forms of paintings, dancing, poetry, music, crafts, and the like? Was Hegel correct when he declared the end of art on the side of its highest destiny? Does art still matter? These are just some of the questions that every art enthusiast and lover would utter as one reads and hears Hegel's pronouncement and the implications that it brings. Harries obviously still believes that art still matters when he titled his book *Art Matters*.

This book is a commentary on Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art*. Its objective is to explicate and elucidate the ideas that Heidegger would want to say as answer to the question posited by Hegel. This latest commentary on *The Origin of the Work of Art* is the most organized and the best reference so far on the thought of Heidegger about art and truth. It is not easy to organize the thoughts of Heidegger since he has a different and unique style in writing and organization of ideas. There are times by which he moves in circle, which he considers to be a hermeneutic or virtuous circle. Harries extracted the Heideggerian key themes from his original work and organized them in sequence to ensure that the flow of ideas become spontaneous and easily followed by readers, so that they shall later shed more light on the thoughts of Heidegger. The whole body of the book is divided into thirteen parts. Each part discusses the crucial themes found in Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art*. He starts with an introduction by citing the Hegelian stance

and the possible stance of Heidegger. In order to make the reading easy, he presented well the aesthetic approach that is seen in the work. Given the fact that the term 'aesthetics' comes from Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, Harries furthers the definition of aesthetics by quoting a passage from Kant's *First Introduction* to the *Critique of Judgment*, where two different meanings of aesthetics are presented. First, aesthetic is understood as belonging to the object as phenomenon. For instance, the smell of a flower and the color of the grass are its aesthetic qualities. Second, by means of the aesthetic mode of representation, the represented is not related to the faculty of knowledge, but to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure (p. 6). For instance, the feeling of delight as one experiences when he smells the flower. In this sense, the aesthetic judgment involves a reflective movement which looks back from the object to the kind of experience it provokes. The philosophy of art as aesthetics is understood, thus, having a foundation on a more subjective approach to art. In this book, Harries clarified that what Hegel preached about the death of art is in the sense of aesthetic and not in its ontological sense.

Harries proceeds to examination of the concepts of Art and Truth in the light of Heidegger but with a particular emphasis on the process of truth as happening in artworks. He ends with his recollection of a Chinese Tale told by *Chuang Tzu* which he first encountered and heard in Werner Heisenberg's *Das Naturbild der heutigen Physik*. It is fortunate that almost every student of philosophy who has a background of Heidegger can have an access to his thoughts concerning the themes being discussed in this commentary. Investing time and effort in reading this book will not be put into waste. Harries has captured well the mind of Heidegger. The thoughts of Heidegger, through his reading, become accessible and understandable for a student's mind. One could really find Heidegger's themes to be very interesting, fascinating, and the vista of learning how art can be a locus by which truth happens might provide new light in understanding what most people are fascinated nowadays – art. The only fear that I feel now is that only few students or individuals are able or will be able to read this book, not even all students of philosophy. Reading this book could give more weight on the reasoning and purpose that most people give whenever asked about why one is very much fascinated with artworks. Art is not dead. Art is everywhere. It speaks to you and me. It unfolds truth and teaches us of different worlds. Art is crucial. Art matters.

RICKY JOE M. NOBLE

Mercado, Leonardo N., *Dialogue and Faith: A Philippine View*. Manila: Logos Publications, 2009. Pp. 260.

Fr. Leonardo Mercado, SVD has been a pioneer in dealing with theology in the Philippine context. His *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* had become the handmaid of *Elements*

in Filipino Theology branching out to *Christ in the Philippines* and *Inculturation and Filipino Theology*. It would not be surprising therefore that eventually the author would venture into his book, *Dialogue and Faith: The Philippine View.*

The book focuses on two forms of dialogue[3] in the Philippine context, namely, dialogue with culture and dialogue with non-Christian religions. However, dialogue with the poor is not excluded because the poor are included in topics regarding dialogue with marginalized Filipinos like those who practice traditional religion and those who practice popular religiosity.

According to the rules of interfaith dialogue, one partner does not stand superior to the other partner. The author then claims that a Christian assumes a position of equality with the dialogue partner, a position of giving and receiving from each other. The book is a concretization of such from a Philippine viewpoint.

Part I of the book has been devoted to studies on dialogue with other religions especially with traditional religions and Islam. In terms of models, the author prefers the immanent over transcendent model of theology because the former is more suited for inculturation and inter-religious dialogue. It also gives an overview on doing Filipino theology as performed by those who have the spirit and background of Philippine traditional religion, which non-enlightened thinkers have branded as animism. How traditional healers have combined traditional religion with Christian practices has also been discussed by the author. There are examples given in the book concerning attempts at dialogue: the Filipino priests in the Archdiocese of Toronto involved in Filipino-Canadian culture dialogue; the life of Fr. Constante Floresca in relation to the indigenized clergy during the Spanish period.

Part II starts with some general principles. The human person is the best place to start inter-religious dialogue. One area of interfaith dialogue is with traditional religion concerning spirituality. In the Philippine context, two key pan-Malayan concepts, namely the holy as immanent and collective social philosophy, play an important role in Filipino Christianity and bring spirituality to the level of interfaith dialogue. The last chapters of Par II are devoted to dialogue with Islam on shared moral values, violence and peace, and the theologian's role in fostering religious freedom.

The book is a compilation of papers and articles that have been presented by the author to different audiences and have been edited to minimize repetitions. Some have been printed in various journals while others have not been printed but may await future publications. Thus, one who has been familiar with Fr. Mercado's former works may find this book as a sequel or a reiteration. One does not see an end as this book may be a prelude to his future endeavors in dialogue and faith.

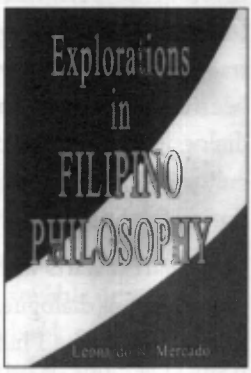
[3] The Federation of Asian Bishop's Conference (FABC) said that the task of dialogue today rests on three forms of dialogue: dialogue with the poor, dialogue with Asian cultures, and dialogue with Asian religions.

Since many Filipino theologians and missiologists have lamented the failure of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines to undertake authentic renewal and inculturation of the Philippine Church, so much is wanting in terms of doing theology in Asia. True, PCP II has initiated the ground works, but it has left it untilled for more than a decade now. There is an open field for theologizing in the Philippine context. Thus, theologians like Fr. Mercado should be commended for seeking the less-travelled road to Asian theology. His work may not be perfect, inasmuch as doing theology in Asia is in its formative stage, yet trail blazing is a noble risk. One difficulty that a Filipino theologian might encounter would lie in the plurality of regional cultures and sub-cultures in the Philippines. Add to this, the level and the degree of contact with the West and other Asian cultures. Generalizations may not be valid on certain points.

One has to admit, however, that it takes time and painstaking effort in research to unravel the Asian face of Christianity through dialogue.

RODEL E. ALIGAN, O.P.

Mercado, Leonardo N. *Explorations in Filipino Philosophy*. Manila: Logos Publications. Inc., 2009. Pp. 166. ISBN 978-971-510-219-3.



It begins as an attempt to innovate philosophy instruction, especially in the seminaries where the author has taught, from the usual traditional Scholastic philosophy. The search for Filipino philosophy has become a now known byword in the philosophical arena of the country. This has been an answer to the desire to speak from the point of view of our culture rather than to simply mimic the systems handed down to us from the West. In fact, Mercado argues that the recognition of Filipino philosophy is a natural consequence of postmodernism's recognition of little narratives as alternatives to the grandnarratives.

The book is both a synthesis of the past lessons which the author has offered for his classes in Filipino philosophy, and at the same time, a further attempt to articulate more ideas. The book discusses the foundational topics in Filipino philosophy. It says, for example, that philosophy is always related to a particular culture; it further claims that language shapes and reveals a particular worldview. It claims that if the Philippines has its particular culture and language, distinct from the culture and language of the West, then there is a Filipino philosophy that still presently awaits for more articulations.

The author further affirms that the Filipino communal mind is distinguished from the individualistic mind of the West. This should explain the behavior of Filipinos, like for

example, the Filipinos' propensity to prioritize the family and the immediate society over himself/herself as an individual. Mercado believes that the *sakop* mentality of the Filipino is basically Oriental, which runs opposite to the orientation of the people of the West. He claims that areas like the *sakop* mentality of the East can serve as a good datum for reflection in furthering the search for a Filipino philosophy.

Mercado also enumerates several methodologies for an exploration in Filipino philosophy, namely, metalynguistic analysis, phenomenology of behavior, comparative oriental philosophy and value ranking. 'Metalynguistic analysis' makes use of words, phrases, popular lines, proverbs, etc., that are commonly used in Filipino communities. The analysis will endeavor to look into the background and the lifeworld of the words. The method on the 'phenomenology of behavior' will look into the attitude patterns of Filipino communities and articulate the worldviews that govern them. These articulations, Mercado stresses, will necessarily be philosophical in nature. 'Comparative oriental philosophy' will look into the similarities of the Filipino mind with that of the other oriental cultures and their respective worldviews. Then lastly, 'value ranking' is said to be operative in important decisions made within Filipino communities.

Mercado makes a reading of several Filipino practices and terms, and he employs the mentioned methodologies in drawing out the Filipino mind from them. He spends several chapters to deal with specific issues in Filipino philosophy, namely, on the philosophy of nothingness (*kawalaan*), philosophy of person (*pagkatao*), philosophy of the Filipino values and common good, and on the role of religions in the Philippines.

While it is commendable to explore our local expressions of the universal philosophical concepts, there are also certain controversial issues that need to be clarified in any talk about indigenous philosophies, like Filipino philosophy. First, there is undeniably a plurality within Filipino communities. We vary in our dialects, in our lifestyles, and even in our religion. The reference for a culture in the Philippines becomes problematic when confronted with these diversities present in the country.

Furthermore, the onset of postmodernism and globalization challenges the presupposition for a unique Filipino culture. If Filipino philosophers would simply claim that it is possible to define a Filipino philosophy as something unique from Western and other Eastern philosophies, then they take upon themselves the responsibility of proving to the readers that there are ways whereby we can truly emancipate a "pure" Filipino brand of thought from the stains of foreign influences. If we however recognize the difficulty of this emancipation, then the claim for a "unique" Filipino philosophy becomes problematic.

Lastly, it seems that most of the sayings, proverbs, and even mentalities of the past Filipino communities no longer influence the contemporary people of the country. Most of these proverbs and sayings have already become mere artifacts of our past and they are rarely quoted by our young people who hardly identify themselves with the practices of the old. With the availability of the internet and the cable channels that daily introduce to the young

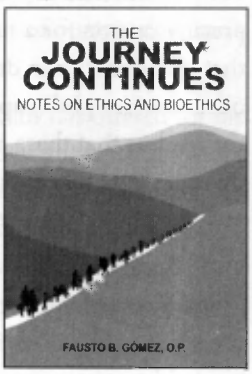
the lifestyle of the West, our young people and the future generations will mostly identify with western lifestyle rather than those which we treat to be traditionally Filipino.

These are the recent concerns that demand attention in our contemporary times. The pioneering generations in the explorations on Filipino philosophy, including the many works of Fr. Mercado, have successfully carried out their task. The next chapters of the search may however need fresh approaches that are no longer based on puritan conceptions of the Filipino culture. With the inevitability of foreign influences and the still undeniable fact of our divisions in terms of our language, worldviews, lifestyles and territories, Filipino philosophizing may require the necessity to have more and more Filipinos who will courageously express their thoughts and aggressively publish their works in order to contribute to the growing number of Filipino literatures either in our native or in foreign languages. This is with the confidence that whatever is indigenous among Filipinos will necessarily unfold in the thoughts of the Filipino authors. Hence, the more publications from Filipinos, regardless of the topics, issues and fields of interest, the greater will be the data for the future generations to work on. The task of the present generation is then to produce more and more literatures. It will be the eventual mission of the future generation to evaluate our contribution and possibly articulate a Filipino philosophy.

The present book is a maturation of the lifelong work of Fr. Mercado in the area of Filipino philosophy. It rightly asserts the author's legacy. Despite the minor deficiencies, like typographical errors, the book is a welcome reading for Filipino students in philosophy. However, the readers must realize that the book also poses unsaid challenges, especially the demand to dedicate ourselves in the work of reflective-meditative thinking. There is a need to inculcate this intellectual discipline among the people so that more and more of those who say that they are Filipinos would produce greater and better reflections that would influence the future of the nation and the world. Hopefully, in our desire to contribute to the positive growth of the world in general, we will leave our marks as Filipinos.

JOEL C. SAGUT

Gómez, Fausto B. *The Journey Continues. Notes on Ethics and Bioethics*. Manila: University of Santo Tomás Publishing House, 2009. Pp. 376. ISBN 978-971-506-526-9.



The volume under review is Fausto Gomez's latest book of essays, compiled in one volume with the coordinates of Ethics and Bioethics. The title is in itself revealing. It somehow centers the reader's attention to the main lamposts along the author's long and fruitful theological career, primarily in the University of Santo Tomas. As he publishes this volume, Gomez has left Manila for Macau for another venue for his mission, where we hope he will continue making rich harvests with his prolific pen.

Always documented and with a somewhat meditative tone, Gomez's essays have always been ethical or moral. He has provided generations of Thomasian students in the Faculty of Theology the best of a Thomist synthesis on morals in dialogue with the best Christian traditions and contemporary trends.

The first part of this volume is a return to the author's favorite topics: Morals in General, Vatican II, Natural Law, Hope, Justice, Social Doctrine. Gomez returns to these areas and penetrates them with new reflections, ever more dialogical with the Philippine situation. This is especially true in his essay on the Church's Social Doctrine and Cardinal Rosales's *Pondo ng Pinoy*. We see here a marked evolution in the author who had always seen the late Cardinal Sin as the paradigm of the Filipino pastor.

Perhaps of greater interest are the essays in the second part. Gomez has played a maieutic role in Southeast Asian Bioethics, especially from the standpoint of theology. His pioneering efforts have brought about a renewed synthesis of theological glimpses on life issues, all combining his years as professor of theology, administrator (Regent) of the UST Faculty of Medicine and advocate. His discourse is full of theoretical explorations and practical experiences, gained from dealing with administrative and personnel issues concerning Health Care in the country's primary Catholic institution, with its Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, and its Hospital.

All in all, this latest volume of Fausto Gomez, containing his essays from 2005 to 2009, is a worthwhile read, especially for those interested in the issues of morals and bioethics. The publication of this work is a milestone in the history of bioethics in this country. It is a showcase of the thinking of one of its devoted and authoritative figures, whose fervor has not mellowed through these years, after having explored other related or corollary issues such as Libertation Theology and Christian Spirituality, especially in the schools of Saints Thomas Aquinas, Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross.

What the present, as well as the previous, volumes of Fausto Gomez has not accomplished is a systematization of his reflections. Perhaps the distance of Macau, with its new challenges, may provide the incentive. Nevertheless, with this crowning tome, many Filipinos would all the more have reasons to be grateful for Gomez's long toils in our shores which have made Christian bioethics not just a novelty from distant shores, but a tradition, with a strong intellectual strain worth cultivating in the future. This is especially true for the Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas. As an institution, it has the honor and burden to showcase ethics and bioethics in a society that limits these two to mere lip service. The university has to unroot this from its own system, within its own confines, as it is the breeding ground for the leaders of today, who risk being unversed in ethics and bioethics, especially in the realm of orthopraxis.

MACARIO OFILADA

Simmons, I. G. *Global Environmental History.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. Pp. 271. ISBN 978-022-675-810-7.

The modest upsurge of books on the subject of environmental history, a relatively recent academic specialization, is bringing about beneficial effects in the study of both human history and the natural environment. Historical analysis of human civilization is substantially enhanced by environmental awareness while, on the other hand, concern for the environment becomes fully appreciated not as a passing trend but as an essential historical factor in human existence. A worthy addition to the growing number of books with this kind of orientation is *Global Environmental History* by I. G. Simmons.

The author specifically identifies the last 12,000 years up to A.D. 2000 as the tremendous range of the focus of his research. For such an extensive period of combined human and environmental history, the book relies on the commonly used but effective division of chapters based on the major stages of human technological progress which correspond to radical changes in human interaction with the environment. With this approach, its coverage of 12,000 years can be conveniently divided into four chronological epochs (chapters 2 – 5) of human interaction with the environment: *The Gatherer-Hunters and their World; Pre-Industrial Agriculture; An Industrious World; A Post Industrial Era.* Simmons prepares his readers by providing a very instructive opening chapter which not only describes his methodology but attempts also to encapsulate some basic principles and observations in the rapidly evolving hybrid study of human history and the history of the environment.

Simmons is a professor of Geography at the University of Durham but his perspective is evidently multi-disciplinary with references to works of philosophers and artists side by side with relevant scientific findings. The author's desire is "to move the writing of environmental history in the direction of inclusiveness" without claiming that there is a definitive way of doing it. Simmons' expertise in this regard is honed by a track record of several other notable environmental history books under his name with the first one published as early as 1993. Among these titles are: *Interpreting Nature, Environmental History: A Concise Introduction, Humanity and Environment: A Cultural Ecology, Changing the Face of the Earth.*

Global Environmental History, Simmons' latest book, treats a very extensive subject and can only present a very limited discussion on the role of religion in the unfolding of environmental history. It is a testimony to the book's historical accuracy and to its author's intellectual honesty that there is none of the sweeping indictment of Christian tenets being an instrumental cause of the present ecological crisis. There is also no false reference to human population as a sort of ecological cancer on the face of planet Earth.

The concluding chapter of the book reflects careful balance and guarded optimism regarding human interaction with the natural environment. Simmons is very selective with

the few charts and tables in his book especially so because according to him (see preface), these quickly become obsolete and updated data can be easily accessed through the internet. Simmons' decision to include in his conclusion the schema about *Shifts in attitude in recent decades* (Table 6.2, p. 242) bespeaks volumes about the lessons he wants to impart with his book. This schema together with the rest of the chapter on *Emerging Themes* in environmental history is indicative of a good number of fertile points throughout the book that are an invitation to philosophical and theological analysis and reflection.

PABLO T. TIONG, O.P.

Soo Meng, Jude Chua. A Philosophy of Education: Learning and Teaching Meaningfully and Responsibly. Singapore: Prentice Hall, 2006. Pp. 112. ISBN 978-981-067-718-3.

Jude Chua Soo Meng is an assistant Professor of Policy and Leadership Studies at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University of Singapore. He held a visiting graduate fellowship at the Centre for Philosophy of Religion at the University of Notre Dame, and studied with John Finnis. He was awarded the prestigious Novak Award in 2002 by Acton Institute and was elected Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, London in 2006.

This book is aimed to be an introductory textbook in philosophy of education. Its philosophy is grounded in the new classical natural law theory put forward by John Finnis, Germain Grisez and Joseph Boyle. It invites the readers, especially the educators, to engage in a pedagogical commitment to design the lessons and the classroom into something that is meaningful. "For we know that when something is deemed meaningful and worth doing, we struggle with joy and determination to fulfil it even if the very struggle is a trial and pain." (p.27) A classroom is designed to be meaningful only when the lessons are delivered in such a way that they serve as means to the realization of choice–worthy ends or goods, that is, when the content of the lesson is related to the interesting objects of meaningfulness which (Aristotle's) practical reasoning directs us to seek and do. Although the author acknowledges that external pressures might sometimes help people, especially the young, to go to the direction where they should go, he also believes that the "carrot and stick" pedagogical strategies cannot suffice. The student needs to understand that there are meaningful goods worth seeking, and grasp that these instructions given them in the classroom are ways to achieve these meaningful goods.

Against the Kantian and Humean objections, he defended and developed his pedagogical theses and insights by proposing Aristotle's attentiveness to practical reasoning. His meaningful education is basically concerned with human rights and in the service of

it. However, he warns the readers to stick to the right order: that the teachers are first and foremost contractually bound to teach the subject matter and should not act as human rights volunteers or activists. In other words, all teachers should serve the end of teaching Science, Math, English or any other specific subject successfully, and the discussion of human rights is merely a useful means and not vice versa. Thus, a teacher is not only an educator for human rights but he also serves the global community for promoting universal peace and justice.

The book is not loaded with technical or philosophical jargons, and is easy to read especially for undergraduate students of both philosophy and education. It will be useful not only to them but also for other students interested in political theory, ethics and cultural studies. It also invites them to think with the author and argue with him for or against his theses, and think critically about them. It invites the readers, thus, to be philosophers of education.

JOHN JEROME VELARDE

Co, Alfredo P. *The Blooming of A Hundred Flowers: Philosophy of Ancient China*, Vol. 1 of *Across the Philosophical Silk Road: A Festschrift in Honor of Alfredo P. Co.* Manila: UST Publishing House, 2009. Pp. 438. ISBN 978-971-506-533-7.

Co, Alfredo P. *Under the Bo Tree... On the Lotus Flower: Philosophy of the Compassionate Buddha*, Vol. 2 of *Across the Philosophical Silk Road: A Festschrift in Honor of Alfredo P. Co.* Manila: UST Publishing House, 2009. Pp. 150. ISBN 978-971-506-535-1.

Co, Alfredo P. *La Philosophie Comparée: Sur la Politique, l'Humour, et la* Transcendance, Vol. 3 of *Across the Philosophical Silk Road: A Festschrift in Honor of Alfredo P. Co.* Manila: UST Publishing House, 2009. Pp. 132. ISBN 978-971-506-537-5.

Co, Alfredo P. *Ethics and Philosophy of the Human Person*, Vol. 4 of *Across the Philosophical Silk Road: A Festschrift in Honor of Alfredo P. Co.* Manila: UST Publishing House, 2009. Pp. 180. ISBN 978-971-506-543-6.

Co, Alfredo P. *Comparative Philosophy and Postmodern Thoughts*, Vol. 5 of *Across the Philosophical Silk Road: A Festschrift in Honor of Alfredo P. Co.* Manila: UST Publishing House, 2009. Pp. 130. ISBN 978-971-506-539-9.

Co, Alfredo P. *Doing Philosophy in the Philippines and other Essays*, Vol. 6 of *Across the Philosophical Silk Road: A Festschrift in Honor of Alfredo P. Co.* Manila: UST Publishing House, 2009. Pp. 82. ISBN 978-971-506-541-2.

Co, Alfredo P. *Issues in Eastern Philosophy, Arts, and Culture*, Vol. 7 of *Across the*

***Philosophical Silk Road: A Festschrift in Honor of Alfredo P. Co.* Manila: UST Publishing House, 2009. Pp. 178. ISBN 978-971-506-545-0.**

At the threshold of her Quadricentennial come 2011, the University of Santo Tomas honors one of her distinguished academician with the publication of a *festschrift. Across the Philosophical Silk Road: A Festschrift in Honor of ALFREDO P. CO* published on the occasion of the honoree's sixtieth birthday is a collection of Co's landmark works and major articles that appeared in different distinguished publications here and abroad. Many were delivered in various intellectual symposia while some were even translated to different languages. The books comprising the collected works are as follows: *The Blooming of a Hundred Flowers: Philosophy of Ancient China* (Volume 1); *Under the Bo Tree... On the Lotus Flower: The Philosophy of the Compassionate Buddha* (Volume 2); *La Philosophie Comparée: Sur la Politique, l'Humour, et la Transcendance* (Volume 3); *Ethics and Philosophy of the Human Person* (Volume 4); *Comparative Philosophy and Postmodern Thoughts* (Volume 5); *Doing Philosophy in the Philippines and Other Essays* (Volume 6) and *Issues in Eastern Philosophy Arts and Culture* (Volume 7). Despite the strong and obvious eastern perspective, there is a danger in compartmentalizing the opus to oriental categories for it covers a wide spectrum of ideas that transcend and escape even the accidental brandings of time and space. At the very heart of the collection is the desire for dialogue. As the general theme itself proffers, the *Silk Road* alludes to the relationship and exchange between the east and the west. Even with the tendency of being an *apologia* for the orient, the work reclaims the glory that was and is Asia. Rightly so, for in the article *Beyond Ricci and Longobardi : Exploring a Dialogue of East-West Transcendence* (Volume 5) delivered before the *Conférence Mondial des Institutions Universitaires Catholiques Philosophie* (COMIUCAP), Co expressed the depressing experience of seeing the orient being portrayed as a *l'homme malade* incapable of offering anything to the rest of the civilized world, that while, on the one hand, the superior West was "inherently blessed with unique virtues—rational, hard-working, productive, inventive, parsimonious, liberal, honest, mature, paternal, advanced, ingenious, independent, progressive and dynamic," the East, on the other hand, was "irrational, arbitrary, docile, unproductive, lazy, indulgent, exotic, promiscuous, despotic, corrupt, backward, passive, dependent—everything opposite the West." As a retort, Co remarks that China was a formidable civilization, culturally and intellectually sovereign even before the Westerners came. There is, ingrained in the collection, a subtle invitation to abandon Western parochial baggage so that one may appreciate Eastern philosophy in a different light.

At the very aperture of the collection is the resurgence of the *Blooming of a Hundred Flowers: Philosophy of Ancient China.* Appearing in a revised edition, it brings us back in time to the golden era of Chinese classical philosophy. The choice of title is auspicious as it symbolizes the period where a "hundred schools" blossomed amid China's most tumultuous past. Co disentangles the epoch of indigenous philosophy from the cobwebs of time and presents it in contemporary tone. The book interestingly commences by setting the tune

of the discussion. Co takes his cue from the three great civilizations—Greek, Indian, and Chinese—identifying the individual peculiarity of each in order to properly answer the question "What is to Philosophize?" The Greeks developed a cosmo-centric perspective on account of their perennial interest in the spatio-temporal aspects of nature. Meanwhile, the Indians have a predilection for the ethereal notion of the universal Self, making them psycho-centric thinkers. The Chinese, according to Co, are anthropo-centric thinkers because they are predisposed to questions related to the social and political life of man. (This provides an important insight into the Chinese mind). Indeed, Co, following the Chinese sages of old, writes: "philosophy started with man and any discussion should focus on this phenomenon." It, therefore, makes sense to talk about the blossoming of a hundred schools during the Warring States period for at the middle of social and political difficulties are man and his fellowmen.

The second volume, *Under the Bo Tree... On the Lotus Flower: The Philosophy of the Compassionate Buddha,* prides itself as regards to depth, spiritual and intellectual. The book is one if not the most comprehensive texts written by a Filipino Scholar on Buddhism. More than an exploration on the various intricacies of Buddhism as a philosophy and as a religion, it extends the discourse on the many implications and influences of Buddhism. Co fittingly begins with the life of Siddhartha Gautama Buddha as he skillfully toes the line between reality and myth - the historical versus the legendary. This provides a fertile groundwork for a discussion of the various sects that spread Buddhism and the teachings it continues to hold. One of the special features of the book is a chapter dedicated to the explanation of the variegated symbols and iconographies of Buddhism. Interestingly though, the book culminates with a section of Buddhist-Christian dialogue. This strongly cautions the reader from any form of fundamentalism. As such, Co proposes that the vibrance of dialogue will only find its meaning when one begins to abandon prejudices in an atmosphere of mutual respect and toleration.

Moving on to the third volume is a bundle of comparative study, seen in Eastern perspective and written in a western language. Having with it three articles written in French, the *La Philosophie Comparée: Sur la Politique, l'Humour, et la Transcendance* boasts succinct elucidation on the themes of law and liberty, transcendence, and humor using oriental and occidental categories. The *La Notion de Yi chez Kong Zi et la Conception de Liberté chez Jean-Jacques Rousseau: La Politique du Devoir et la Politique du Droit* is a thesis Co wrote as a French Government scholar. The paper discusses the pivotal notions of life duty and right and boldly argues on the relationship of individual autonomy with the organization of the state and eventually, of common good. Two other articles seen on this volume also appears in the fifth volume in their English translations.

With *Ethics and Philosophy of the Human Person,* the fourth volume, Co takes us closer to ourselves as he sets the tenor for an oriental understanding of the phenomenon that is man. In traversing this issue, Co turns his attention to multifarious facets that beset human existence: from ethics to mysticism, Hindu to Islam, oscillating between what has been and

what will be, even themes as corporate as business ethics to as scientifically abreast as human cloning. Co, following the Chinese sages of old, writes: "philosophy started with man and any discussion should focus on this phenomenon." It, therefore, makes sense to talk about ethics and moral normativity within the vast universe of the human person and the relations between persons in a society.

In *Comparative Philosophy and Postmodern Thoughts,* Co properly acknowledges that Nietzsche is the rightful father of postmodernity as he shatters monolithic structures toiled upon building by modern philosophy thinkers preceding him. Yet, what is interesting is Co's bold attempt to argue that Postmodernity may in fact the fruit of the west's encounter with the east. The implications of this are as crucial as the claim. For in holding this, we may have in fact, serendipitously perhaps, unraveled a key element in initiating dialogue with the western philosophical giants. Wherever the effects may lead us, it has certainly, in no small proportions, manage to "re-carve" the postmodern and western intellectual landscape.

Volume 6, *Doing Philosophy in the Philippines and other Essays* may be seen as the shortest of the collection. Perhaps, on the given theme (and this country's circumstances!) there is not much to write for indeed, the quest for a truly authentic Filipino philosophy remains elusive. Inasmuch as there is still much to be done, Co manages to propose an original framework distinguishable from the works of other Filipino philosophers in the persons of Timbreza, Ferriols and Mercado. Standing from a historical point of view and grounded on the socio-political and ethical acumen of Confucianism, Co uniquely contributes a compelling personal account of the emergence of a truly Filipino Philosophical consciousness.

The last volume, *Issues in Eastern Philosophy, Arts and Culture* is a conglomeration of various topics ranging from the sublimely philosophical to the immanently existential and phenomenological. With historical and cultural tones, Co dispels all qualms that philosophy is just a theoretical enterprise reserved for the leisure-loving few. In one of the essays found in this volume, Co exposes the importance of art such as that it can communicate the spirit of a given society. It would be dangerous to call this volume an excursus because it is not. As it promotes the humanities, one can see that this is philosophy at its finest, applied and yet palatable to the very core of the senses!

The collection speaks of the fertile ground of philosophizing the University of Santo Tomas has wrought all these years and yet it is just the beginning of many other endeavors that through the masterful skillful thought-smiths the institution is proud of.

JUN ARVIE BELLO