

## Editor's Introduction

by Deji Adesoye

Readers, you are welcome to Issue 216 of *Philosophy Pathways*. This issue of *Philosophy Pathways* features four critical essays by practitioners, each from one of the fields of epistemology, philosophy of mind, history and philosophy of science, and political philosophy. These are works that share the value of opening up usefully new interpretations of some core philosophical issues they address.

In **Elaborating Aquinas' Epistemology: from Being to Knowledge**, Nicholas Anakwue, against the backdrop of the question of which is properly due for the position of 'First Philosophy' between metaphysics and epistemology, attempts to explore how Thomas Aquinas developed his theory of Knowledge out of the materials that his theory of being and his psychology provide. Though Aquinas doesn't address the question of primacy between metaphysics and epistemology, grants Anakwue, Aquinas did not develop his philosophy around a theory of knowledge but instead developed his epistemology on the basis of his metaphysics and psychology.

Anakwue presents Aquinas' epistemology as a unique form: unlike the sceptics, certain knowledge can be attained; but certain knowledge, unlike and against Plato, does not consist in innate ideas but is furnished through the senses; and even knowledge of immaterial beings, for instance God, is furnished through sensible perception of nature. Aquinas, according to Anakwue's presentation, develops the cognitive process of deriving certain and true knowledge from material objects through the senses upon the concepts of sense perception, cognition, *scientia* and the foundationalist agenda.

Anakwue does not rule out the possibility that Aquinas' thesis may be implausible in the light of Descartes and Hume's distrust for sense perception as it often lands us in illusions, delusions and hallucinations etc. But he posits that Aquinas' epistemological contribution is a landmark in the development of British Empiricism.

In his essay, **On Minds in a Physical World: Frank Jackson's Mary-Argument and Mental Causation**, Jani Koskela takes on the idea that mental states are epiphenomenal. Philosophy of mind is replete with theories on the relation of the mind to the body, among which is epiphenomenalism. Epiphenomenalism's distinctive position is that the body is causally related to mental states while mental states are not causally related to matter. Most specifically in respect of the subjective qualities of experienced mental states, e.g. *qualia*, Koskela takes a critical opposition to Frank Jackson's famous Mary Argument which, for him, suggests that qualitative experiences of mental states are causally inefficacious, lying outside the length and breadth of physical causality. Koskela would argue that subjective mental states are not only

immediate but also, importantly, causally efficacious. Koskela argues further that even and irrespective of when physical determinism is true, the mind can still be causally efficacious in the physical world, and where no effects are seen to be traceable to a mental state as a cause, the existence of such a mental state is not *ipso facto* denied.

Hossien Hossieni et al. trace the evolution of spiritual entities in the history of thought about the physical world from Aristotle to Hawking. For them, apart from having supernatural ideas as part of their faith, (most of) the great physicists feature supernatural concepts and entities in very key corners of their physical explanations of the universe. The essay, **From Quintessence to Spookiness: Evolution of Supernatural in Physicist Mind**, therefore is a study of the role such ideas play in physics and how it has evolved through time.

Thus, from the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle through Newton to Einstein's 'God and dice' remark in the face of Einstein's suspicion of the incompleteness of quantum mechanics, the authors lead the way to Stephen Hawking for whom the universe and its operations do not stand in need of anything supernatural.

And lastly, Deji Adesoye in **African Socialism in Nkrumah and Nyerere**, takes a critical look at the philosophy and ideology of African Socialism as developed by Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere. Situating African socialism within its historical context of culture dislocation and the challenge of continental development, Adesoye considers and compares the theoretical efforts of two great post-independent African leaders who, though divergent in many details, are united on the concept of 'the African' being naturally a communalist. Adesoye thinks that though communalism may not be distinctively an African preserve, it has a potential of being developed as a scientific theory useful for the analysis and development and evaluation of political systems in Africa and elsewhere.

These efforts, we hope, take the philosophical enterprise further and add to existing understanding and perspectives on critical puzzles.

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Email: [adesodeji@yahoo.com](mailto:adesodeji@yahoo.com)