

Book Reviews

In all, this is an important addition to the history of eighteenth-century medicine and must be consulted by all those working in the area. It is a pity that Professor Hintzsche did not survive to see the scholarly and elegant end-result of his extensive labours.

DEREK L. PHILLIPS, *Wittgenstein and scientific knowledge. A sociological perspective*, London, Macmillan, 1977, 8vo, pp. xiv, 248, £10.00

Ludwig Wittgenstein has had a large influence on philosophical thought during the past half-century. His impact on the traditional questions debated by philosophers of science is much more difficult to perceive. Professor Phillips believes that Wittgenstein's work has great relevance for philosophy of science. Accordingly, he uses certain key ideas of Wittgenstein as the basis of his own attempt to elaborate a philosophy of discovery applicable to both the natural and social sciences.

Philosophers have historically viewed natural science from what Phillips calls the positive stance. Following Comte, philosophers of our own day such as Nagel, Hempel, and Lakatos have assumed that science is objective and cumulative, and that scientists discover laws which exist independently of the discoverer. This view of science has recently been challenged with what Phillips calls the relativism of men such as Kuhn, Feyerabend, and Toulmin. These philosophers have stressed the human and social aspects of science; they believe that the implicit as well as explicit assumptions and values held by scientists have a significant influence on the questions scientists ask and the answers they come up with.

Although more sympathetic to the relativistic than the positivistic position, Phillips attempts to steer a middle course. Using Wittgenstein's discussions of the relationship between language, thought, and reality, Phillips develops a view of science which, while treating it as language-bound (and since language systems differ, it follows that science can never be completely objective), recognizes ways in which science can be evaluated and tested.

This is a stimulating book, written without jargon or needless obscurity. It contains an excellent exposition of Wittgenstein's thought, and sensitive and informed critiques of Kuhn, Lakatos, Feyerabend, and other contemporary philosophers of science.

JOSÉ DE ACOSTA, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Sevilla, Juan de León, 1590), with introduction, appendix, and anthology by Barbara G. Beddall, Valencia, Albatros Ediciones (Hispaniae Scientia), 1977, 8vo, pp. 129, 1–536, 18 ll., [no price stated].

Father José de Acosta (1539 or 1540–1600) was a renowned Jesuit missionary in Peru (1572 to 1586), who is famous for the book here reprinted in facsimile. There is also a biographical introduction, an analysis of the book, a list of plants and animals mentioned in it, and a selection of extracts from it, all in both English and Spanish. In his seven "books" or chapters, Acosta presents, in the first four, a complete survey of natural history, and, in the last three, a moral history dealing with the religious and social activities of the inhabitants, their writing and calendars, and a historical background. This book is most welcome, and it is to be hoped that further Spanish classical writings will be made available in this same excellent format.