

Chapter 1 : Maurice Cornforth | Revolvly

The Theory of Knowledge Paperback - by Maurice Cornforth Author) Be the first to review this item. See all 5 formats and editions Hide other formats and.

He is the author of *Science and Idealism: An Examination of Pure Empiricism and Modern Logic*, and of several articles and papers on philosophy, and is now at work on a continuation of *Science and Idealism*, dealing with pragmatism and recent theories of semantics and semiotic, and also on a larger book on logic and the theory of knowledge. How Logicians Announced a Great New Advance in Philosophy In Bertrand Russell, having completed the *Principia Mathematica*, announced that a new way of thinking had "gradually crept into philosophy through the critical scrutiny of mathematics. Philosophy, said Russell, should not attempt to compete with natural science in working out a theory of the universe, or theories about particular parts of the universe. The task of philosophy was then to subject the propositions established through ordinary perception and by science to a logical analysis. Such an analysis could not establish any new truths. But by making clear the meaning of truths already known it would remove difficulties and confusions and impart a new clarity to our knowledge. This idea that the task of philosophy is rather to make an analysis of the meaning or reference of empirical knowledge than to establish transcendental truths by a priori reasoning was not in itself anything very new. Russell, therefore, was only restating something which had been common ground amongst empiricists for over two centuries. What he claimed as specifically new was the discovery of a logical technique for restating and refining the traditional method of empiricist philosophy. It is thus able, in regard to certain problems, to achieve definite answers, which have the quality of science rather than of philosophy. Its methods, in this respect, resemble those of science. He had in mind that the methods which had proved successful in mathematical logic and in mathematical analysis could be applied in philosophy. Mathematicians of the nineteenth century had been able to overcome difficulties in the differential calculus by the definition of infinitesimal quantities in terms of the limit of a series of real numbers. Science and the Crisis of Philosophical Systems The use of the method of logical analysis was a reflection of the general state of crisis into which the whole activity of philosophical system building had fallen as a result of the rapid development of natural science. Already in the nineteenth century the futility of philosophical system building was becoming evident. In terms of eighteenth century science, philosophy could still seem to such thinkers as Leibnitz to have a separate function in interpreting the world, which science by itself could not fulfill. But as Frederick Engels was to point out, the great unifying discoveries of nineteenth century science made such systems once for all unnecessary. The last "great" philosophical system was that of Hegel. More and more has it become obvious that system building and the controversy of systems is barren of results. The systems can no longer satisfy the demands which men put upon them. The tasks of philosophy must be different from the tasks formulated by the builders of systems. It is worth noting that this issue was already quite squarely put by Marxists some time before it was formulated by anybody else. As soon as each separate science is required to get clarity as to its position in the great totality of things and of our knowledge of things, a special science dealing with this totality is superfluous. Everything else is merged in the positive science of nature and history. The official philosophers, the professionals, continued to build their systems. The past hundred years, indeed, have seen the production of many systems, the latest being that of A. Others, like the English and American "absolute idealists" of fifty years ago, cheerfully ignored science altogether, saying it was concerned merely with "appearances. It had been challenged by dialectical materialism, and it was again challenged by the representatives of philosophical empiricism. He realized clearly enough that their system building could not stand up to scientific criticism, that it was based on confusions and logical fallacies, and that it was wholly useless and undesirable from the point of view of extending scientific knowledge and the application of scientific methods to theoretical problems. For Russell and those who thought on similar lines, logical analysis, which should in their opinion become the sole concern of philosophy, did not aim at building up its own system of the world, but at interpreting and clarifying the results of science. Still, such an interpretation of science needed to have some definite content. The theories of formal logic, to which Russell himself made

such a great contribution, provided only the bare logical form in which propositions should be stated. It is a noteworthy fact that in seeking the ideas in terms of which the content of science could be clarified Russell and his fellow work looked backwards, to the results of previous empirical philosophy. The "powerful logical technique" was, in fact, nothing but a technique for saying in a new and rather more difficult language what had often been said before. Thus the renunciation of system building and the path of a Galilean advance in philosophy led, in the hands of the first exponents of the method of logical analysis, to nothing better than a restatement of the old philosophy of subjective idealism. How to formulate an empirical philosophy which would not be bound by the traditional empiricist ruling that the known world must be constructed out of sense data? These were the problems that faced all those philosophers who followed in the footsteps of Russell. The development of the contemporary school known as logical positivism, or logical or logistic empiricism the examination of which is the business of the present essay has been conditioned by precisely these problems. What was the starting point of this development? Thus, in *Our Knowledge of the External World* Russell speaks of the task of "discovering what sort of world can be constructed" [7] exclusively out of elements concerning whose existence there can be no possible manner of doubt, i. He explains that people ordinarily suppose that the world is constructed out of "permanent things. For Russell, then, logical analysis was a way of revealing the essential nature of the world, i. In accordance with this, the analytic philosopher J. What is the State? The philosopher is asking for a certain kind of definition of the Self, of the State. Now it is easy to see that such a conception of the aims of the analytic method can well be criticized from the point of view of a strict empiricism. And it is this criticism which the logical positivists, or logical empiricists, provided. They claimed that those who professed to be empiricists and to use a logical method should definitely renounce all attempts at metaphysical construction. Their contention was that, while Russell and his associates had begun the criticism of traditional metaphysics, they had not carried it through with nearly sufficient rigor. A still greater transformation of philosophy was required in order to make it truly empirical, scientific, and free from metaphysics. This principle said that "the meaning of a proposition is its method of verification. A great many of the propositions of traditional philosophy are in this way to be criticized as nonsensical. And it is asserted that no proposition contains any other element of meaning over and above what is given in its method of empirical verification. Yet what is the method of verification of this statement? You can say whichever you like, it makes no essential difference. One mode of expression may be better for one purpose, the other for other purposes. They are merely two different forms of words, two alternative languages for expressing the same facts, and not rival statements of the nature of reality. But he was now criticized on the ground that, instead of carrying forward a thorough logical critique of language, he had allowed himself to be diverted into what were essentially metaphysical speculations, whose meaninglessness was revealed in the light of the principle of verifiability. The logical questions, on the other hand, do not refer directly to the objects, but to sentences, terms, theories, and so on, which themselves refer to objects. They cannot be answered by extrascientific philosophical means. Philosophy, as distinct from science, must be exclusively concerned with logical questions, i. Philosophers must not inquire into the nature of objects, must not try to analyze the nature of Reality; they must leave that to science. They must confine their inquiries to the study of the logic of language. This means that critically the aim is to destroy "metaphysics. In the light of these common principles, the logical empiricists, in the period preceding the recent war, set about organizing international congresses of scientific philosophy and launched the project of an International Encyclopedia of Unified Science. Their aim was to establish a scientific activity of philosophizing on an international scale, which would be comparable with the natural sciences and mathematics in the steady building up of accepted and certifiable theoretical results. Having now briefly examined the historical background of logical empiricism and its general program, I propose in what follows to discuss the actual content of its critical rejection of metaphysics and of its attempt at an analysis of science, and then its general tendency as a philosophy and whether it serves the interests of the advance of scientific knowledge and of social progress. Metaphysics and the Theory of Knowledge In his *Philosophy and Logical Syntax* Carnap says that the function of logical analysis is to analyze all assertions in order to make clear the sense of each and the connections between them. The principal task in this connection is to find out the "method of verification. Since to be able to find no

method of verification is the same as to be able to find no meaning, the metaphysical theories are therefore meaningless, nonsensical. They appear to have a sense only because they arouse emotions. Is there really an External World? All such questions, and the theories purporting to answer them, are senseless. But with regard to science, philosophy must not ask such questions as: What kind of objects does science deal with? Does science refer to objective external realities, or is it on the contrary a technique for predicting the order of sensations? In this connection, Carnap writes: But we make no such denial. It is true we reject the thesis of the Reality of the physical world: We neither assert nor deny these theses, we reject the whole question. The view which asserts the existence of the material world independently of its being perceived or thought about, which is generally counterposed to subjective idealism, is not denied, but is rejected. Subjective idealism, too, is rejected, but not denied. The position is a delicate one for the logicians who have thus distinguished rejection from denial. Just what it is that they claim to be rejecting, and where such rejection leads, is worth inquiring into. What is at stake in this controversy? What is at stake is our whole point of view with regard to human knowledge. Both the upholders and the detractors of the existence of the material world, together with those who say the question is nonsense, may be at one in recognizing that all knowledge is based on experience. The differences arise over the question of the source of our experience itself. The materialists who affirm the existence of the material world are saying that our perceptions have their source in the interaction between ourselves and our material environment; that this interaction is such that our perceptions reflect or mirror the external reality well enough to serve generally as a trustworthy guide in practice; and that, by the use of scientific methods and logical modes of thinking, our thoughts and theories can likewise be made fairly adequately to reflect various aspects of the material world in which we live. These were the kind of considerations which Lenin evidently had in mind when, explaining and defending materialism, he wrote: But the question arises, does objective reality belong to perception, i. If you answer yes, you are a materialist. If you answer no. It is possible to argue about "the meaning of meaning. When logical empiricists "reject the thesis of the Reality of the physical world" they thereby reject the objective reference of science, the objectivity of knowledge, the material basis of experience. In this way they place themselves in the same camp as the older empiricists, the subjective idealists, although they protest that they reject subjective idealism as well. The materialist considers that this "thesis" is "verified," not indeed by any particular crucial experiment, but by the whole development of science and technique. And the "thesis" has its basis in the entire structure of a materialist theory of knowledge, which regards knowledge as a social product whose foundations lie in the interactions of men with one another and with their material environment.

Chapter 2 : Selected Writings: Materialism and the Dialectical Method - Maurice Cornforth

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Many of the attributes we as Christians ascribe to God—eternality, infinitude, an uncreated being, indestructibility, the Lawgiver, the Life, and the Mind—Marxists-Leninists ascribe to dialectical matter. Marxist philosophy affirms matter as ultimately real, rather than God. Thus it is a godless philosophy. This materialistic interpretation of the world is an essential ingredient of Marxist thought. Sensation, thought, consciousness are the highest products of matter organized in a certain way. This is the doctrine of materialism, in general, and Marx and Engels, in particular. Marxist Philosophy — Epistemology When it comes to Marxist philosophy, science plays a crucial role in the Marxist theory of knowledge. Putting their faith in science as the infallible source of all knowledge logically follows from Marxist beliefs about reality. We directly know objects themselves. Thus, Marxists deny the supernatural. They distinguish between knowledge of the material world and what they term true belief in an attempt to allow for scientific speculation while ignoring speculation about God. But at the same time we certainly, as yet, know nothing of the matter. True belief only becomes knowledge when backed by some kind of investigation and evidence. Some of our beliefs may be true and others false, but we only start getting to know which are true and which are false when we undertake forms of systematic investigation. We can determine as true beliefs only our speculations about the material world because only these can undergo systematic investigation. Thus, knowledge can apply only to the material world. Marxists believe that practice—testing knowledge throughout history—is also a valuable tool for gaining knowledge. We can test knowledge by applying it to our lives and society, and this application will eventually determine its truth or falsity. By examining history, we can determine which beliefs are true and which are not. Marxist epistemology is inextricably tied to Marxist dialectics. In fact, it is virtually impossible to separate Marxist materialism, dialectics, and epistemology. This is true largely because Marxists claim that dialectics operates in the place of metaphysics in their philosophy. Marxist Philosophy — Conclusion Dialectical materialism, the philosophy of Marxism, contains an epistemology, a cosmology, an ontology, and an answer to the mind-body problem. For the Marxist, science and practice refine knowledge; the universe is infinite and all that will ever exist; matter is eternal and the ultimate substance; life is a product of this non-living matter; and the mind is a reflection of this material reality. But the Marxist philosophy embraces an even broader view of the world than is generally meant by the term philosophy. In truth, dialectical materialism is an entire method for viewing the world—it colors the Marxist perception of everything from ethics to history. Marxist philosophy as a worldview must be understood by anyone who claims to support the Marxist cause. This is what Lenin taught. Because, according to Marxism, the dialectic can explain every process and change that occurs. Marxist philosophy is process philosophy. This process is written not only within the metaphysical make-up of our matter, but also in the evolution of humanity and the evolving social and historical context of our existence. This materialist belief affects the Marxist view of history, causing Marxists to view the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as thesis and antithesis, clashing to form a synthesis. This clash is in essence an evolutionary struggle. While evolutionists believe that animals evolved certain physical characteristics to aid in their survival, Marxists believe their philosophy of dialectical materialism evolved to meet the needs of the proletariat. Every knowledgeable Marxist recognizes this and is prepared to act in accordance with dialectical materialism. While many philosophies are chiefly theoretical, Marxism is concerned with theory and practice. Dialectical materialism is a worldview and a philosophy of evolution and revolution—the call to action is implicit in its makeup. Every good Marxist understands his philosophy and is prepared to act upon it, because Marx himself requires it: Even the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat will be but a brief moment in evolutionary history. Communist dialectics decrees that communism itself is transitory. The synthesis of communism today will become the new thesis of tomorrow, and new struggles will evolve according to the laws of dialectical materialism. Rendered with permission from the book, *Understanding the Times: All rights reserved in the original.* International Publishers, , Progress Publishers, , International Publishers, , 5: God , the Father, sent

His only Son to satisfy that judgment for those who believe in Him. Jesus , the creator and eternal Son of God, who lived a sinless life, loves us so much that He died for our sins, taking the punishment that we deserve, was buried , and rose from the dead according to the Bible. If you truly believe and trust this in your heart, receiving Jesus alone as your Savior , declaring, " Jesus is Lord ," you will be saved from judgment and spend eternity with God in heaven. What is your response?

Chapter 3 : From the Dusty Book Shelf: The Theory of Knowledge by Maurice Cornforth

Maurice Campbell Cornforth (28 October - 31 December) was a British Marxist philosopher.

Danto The Journal of Philosophy, Vol. Journal of Philosophy, Inc. JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. Packe has succeeded admirably in rescuing Mill from "the legend left by Victorian misunderstanding, sedulously tinted by Carlyle, impressed by decades of schoolmasters and divines. Above all, as dry as dust" p. Some critics may object that Mill has been "humanized" at too great a cost to his reputation as cool practitioner of the rationalism which he preached to others. But many more will rejoice to discover in Mill a truly sympathetic person, capable of warm feelings and errors of the heart, who overcame a loveless childhood and intellectual superiority to his fellows to pioneer in many good causes, and whose ideals, as Mr. Packe permits himself to declare, "were never more required than at the present time. With this work, the third and final volume of his Introduction to Dialectical Materialism, Maurice Cornforth has completed what was intended as a systematic "survey of the fundamental ideas of Marxist philosophy. In the present installment, the author seeks to discuss "how ideas actually arise, develop, and are tested in the concrete conditions of real human life, in the material life of society," and "to apply the fundamental ideas of dialectical and historical materialism to show how human consciousness actually arises and develops. Moreover, though it is perhaps a violation of the ethics of philosophical criticism to discuss a work ad hominem, Cornforth is not a dispassionate expositor of Marxist theory, but a militant exponent of it; and, since by no extension of charity can his book be regarded as a contribution to the theory of knowledge, the reviewer is forced to judge it in terms of whether it at least contributes either to the clarification or the elaboration of the ideas for which the author pleads in so partisan a fashion. Far from achieving either of these goals, this book shares in that type of schematism, prematureness, and crudity so characteristic of productions in the Marxist idiom, and exhibits the attitude, brilliantly described by Milosz in *The Captive Mind*, that all phenomena must conform in essentials to laws already known. At best this work is programmatic, at worst it is propaganda; and the most basic epistemological problem for Marxists, of how material forces crystallize finally as ideas in human minds -a problem raised by Marx in a moment of genius, but which neither he nor his followers have carried much beyond the level of aperçu,-remains vague and unresolved. It is this single point, upon which a Marxist ought to be especially clear and careful, that Cornforth treats with a cavaliness which can only result from that confidence to which Milosz refers. For how else is one to explain the uncritical reliance, at every crucial point, upon the concept of "reflection" -the very thing that demands analysis? All these pronouncements, set down as gospel and unembellished with a single argument pro or con, not merely overwork an unclear concept, but manage to beg most of the questions which epistemologists moot. This content downloaded from Throughout, materialism is opposed to an idealism which no serious philosopher has ever maintained. Ideology counts as a set of "false" ideas which do not further production, but merely further the interests of the vested class, while science, though it may be used to class-advantage, nonetheless discovers certain truths which are classless, and which constitute a "common heritage of mankind, destined to be used for the emancipation of all the people. As evidence, Stalin pointed to the fact that, though Russia had undergone the socialist revolution, her language in no way changed, as it ought to and would have done, had it been superstructural. Cornforth not merely extracts science from the superstructure, but more significantly makes the same distinction for logic: But there is some irony in the fact that, at the very moment when the necessity of the Laws of Thought has been severely questioned by our master logicians of the pragmatist camp, the same Laws and especially the Principle of Contradiction!

Chapter 4 : Marxist Philosophy

The theory of knowledge. by Maurice Campbell Cornforth (Author) Be the first to review this item. See all 5 formats and

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Chapter 5 : The Theory of Knowledge: Maurice Cornforth: calendrierdelascience.com: Books

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Chapter 6 : Maurice Cornforth - Infogalactic: the planetary knowledge core

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Cornforth was probably the biggest name among English Marxist philosophers in the ss and this book is the third volume in a series of writings on dialectical materialism meant for the beginning reader.

Chapter 9 : Maurice Cornforth - Wikipedia

Maurice Campbell Cornforth (28 October - 31 December) was a British Marxist philosopher. When he began his career in philosophy in the early s, he was a follower of Wittgenstein, writing in the then current style of analytic philosophy.