# Summaries

## High Art and Mass Art in the Age of Antinomies

Tibor Bárány

One of the main tenet of György Márkus' meta-theory of philosophy (or of history of philosophy) can be summarized as a strict methodological rule: philosophy should fulfil two tasks which are partly interconnected. As Márkus put it: "Philosophy can contribute to such an endeavour [viz. offering plausible interpretation about the historical present] insofar as it attempts, partly though conceptual analysis, partly through the reconstruction of the decisive constituents of our tradition, to shed light on the normative and factual preconditions of the now dominant set of practices […]." In this paper I fully adhere to this methodological rule: in order to supplement Márkus' *historical* analysis ("reconstruction of the decisive constituents of our tradition") I will carry out an in-depth *conceptual analysis* of 'mass art'. I argue that from the very concept of mass art (defined by Noël Carroll in the late 1990s) the claim that the genuine (metaphysical) difference which does exist between high artworks and mass artworks necessarily creates some difference in their respective aesthetic/artistic value simply does not follow. So the philosophical debate on the aesthetic/artistic nature of high artworks and mass artworks is *over*—nevertheless the alleged difference in aesthetic/artistic value of these two types of artworks occurs frequently in contemporary public discourses about art. This is partly because this value-based conceptual distinction is functioning as a special device for solving the 'antinomies' for the concept of "culture" (as Márkus' historical analysis has revealed it); and partly because it can be used as a useful conceptual tool for any theory of art in resolving the contradiction between normative implications stemming from the theory and empirical facts.

## On the Significance of György Márkus' Writings on the Philosophy of Scientific Knowledge

Vera Békés

In the first part I present some personal recollections of Márkus, then, in the second part I try to outline the context of the sociologically oriented studies in the history of scientific knowledge in the nineteen-eighties in general and in Hungary in particular; an important event in this story being the reception of Márkus' important paper – Why There is no Hermeneutics of Natural Sciences? –which inspired new perspectives.
The third part of the paper concentrates on his other important study in the philosophy of science: "Changing Images of Science". I try to reveal how fruitfully we can apply some concepts Márkus elaborated here in a new way; beginning with the category of *"supreme cognitive authority" and that's epoch-making multidisciplinary effect in culture.* Through two

examples from the 18th century I demonstrate the explanatory power of the category of supreme cognitive authority and the changing image of science (as Markus introduced). The first example is an attempt only to sketch what natural and spiritual earthquakes produced the so called "Neptunism-Volcanism" debate as the first scientific discussion in the history of earth-sciences that totally left out of consideration the old Diluvian-doctrine. The second case is an outline of the way the young Herder had to go through to disclaim the Babel-doctrine viz. the divine origin of human languages.
This radical turn in the worldview was not a gradual development but a radical shift, a realignment in the system of the supreme cognitive authorities. A natural disaster catalyzed this change: the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 was a huge catastrophe which had very deep and cathartic effects on contemporary thinkers such as Voltaire, Rousseau and Kant, and the same time, paradoxically, opened completely new empirical perspectives for thinkers and researchers for making observation of the "abandoned" and "left to its own" Nature.

**George Markus**
Ágnes Erdélyi

George Markus found important to mention an autobiographical detail in the first paragraph of the Introduction to his last book, *Culture, Science, Society* (2011): when he wrote the chronologically first paper in the collection in the nineteen hundred seventies, he was—together with others—a member "of the so-called Budapest school." Was this fact significant in the formation of his final views? The present article explores this question.

**Márkus, Diogenes, Gadamer**
Conceptual Circles Around the "Correct" Interpretation of Hermeneutics or Is It the Case that "the Hangman Is Being Hanged"?
István M. Fehér

The starting assumption of the paper is that György Márkus' access to, and his distinctive attention to, hermeneutics was mediated by his lasting interest for the history of philosophy inclusive of its theoretical fundaments. Márkus' understanding of hermeneutics was of methodological character which did not enable him to appreciate hermeneutics with an ontological dimension, of the sort Heidegger and Gadamer committed themselves to. The main thesis as well as the conclusion of the paper is that as long as philosophers are free to re-intepret everything inclusive of interpretation itself there cannot be one single correct interpretation of Hermeneutics, but there are several plausible ways of understanding it. Methodological and ontological hermeneutics do not exclude one another. their relation is not one of "either/or" but one of mutual integration.

## Labour, Instrumental Action and the Ways of Subsistence; Towards an 'Ecological' Reconstruction of Historical Materialism

**György Márkus**

The paper is an hitherto unpublished work of György Márkus, an important document marking Markus' transition from Marxism to post-Marxism. It was originally written in English, and now translated by Ágnes Erdélyi. The exact date of its creation is not known, however it is likely that it was written just before Márkus' emigration or perhaps during its first stage in West-Berlin. It presents Markus' "transitory views", among them an extended criticism of Habermas, on the way from *Is Critical Economic Theory Possible* (1972; with György Bence and János Kis), to *Langage et production* (1982).

## High Culture and Mass Culture in Márkus' Thought

Csaba Olay

The paper examines the distinction between high culture and mass culture in György Márkus' thought. It will be argued that one of Márkus' central problems is the modern differenciation of art into high art and popular culture, a subquestion of his analysis of modernity which is defined by him as the age of culture including science and art. Special attention will be paid to the reasons on the basis of which high art and popular culture are opposed in Márkus' argumentation. In this framework, he defends the thesis that high art and popular, commercial art belong together as two extremes of the same continuum. As opposed to this claim, the paper will show that the difference of high art and popular art should be conceived of as a categorical distinction between art and entertainment products. Although there might be disputed borderline cases, they only seemingly belong into the same category, in fact they are different in genus. Interestingly, the thesis can be defended against Márkus with the help of Márkus' own arguments.