

# Summaries

JÁNOS KRISTÓF BODNÁR

## **No Truth, only Peace**

This paper seeks to explore, on the one hand, whether Rorty's and Wittgenstein's insights on anti-foundationalism, pluralism and 'relativism' entails any kind of normative, let alone political conclusions. This examination concerns the question whether one's philosophical commitments to the 'plural nature of justice' or to the 'ungroundedness of our believing' could or should bear any relevance to her ideological or ethical commitments. If so, what is this relation? Are those commentators right who accuse Rorty or Wittgenstein as paving the way through their philosophical thoughts – labelled by these commentators as 'relativists' – for an unchained ethical relativism, or, on the contrary, as Nyíri or Marcuse is prone to state, for a conservative world-view? On the other hand, the paper's purpose is to examine whether such anti-foundationalist and pluralist philosophical stances are able to detect or demarcate the 'enemies' of an open, liberal society, whether we are able to draw a justified and philosophically sound distinction between – as Rorty puts it – a pragmatically justified tolerance and an irresponsible relativism.

GYÖRGY CZÉTÁNY

## **Proclus' Disjunctive Synthesis**

The present paper analyzes Proclus' philosophical system. The purpose of the analysis is to show that the system can be defined in a Kantian manner as a transcendent use of the disjunctive synthesis. The disjunctive synthesis is the unconditional idea of a coherent hierarchical system of the totality of separated, mutually exclusive determinations based on a single principle. Proclus' philosophy, the emanation of the One and the hierarchy of the three hypostases is the most consequent metaphysical realization of the disjunctive synthesis as unconditional idea, determining all beings.

ILDIKÓ ERDEI

## **Isaac Newton: *I feign no hypotheses***

„Hypotheses non fingo” is a phrase used by Isaac Newton in an essay, „General Scholium” which was appended to the second (1713) edition of the *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*. The sentence is unquestionably the most famous and the most controversial of Newton's dicta. The first question is whether the term *fingo* should be taken to mean 'frame' or 'make' or 'fashion' or 'feign'. In my study, I argue that *Hypotheses non fingo* means for Newton *I feign no hypotheses*. So, Newton maintained a clear demarcation between theories that were supported by experimental results and hypotheses that were

merely unsupported speculations. Despite his clear anti-hypothetical stance, a corpuscular hypothesis lies beneath Newton's theory of light and colours, as he writes several times about his ether hypothesis. What are we to make of this? In my view, Newton does not contradict himself, but consciously develops and changes the use of the hypothesis, when he begins to use the term in the context of experimental philosophy.

BALÁZS GIMES

### **The Rise of Physicalism: A Critical Examination of David Papineau's Thesis**

David Papineau has influentially argued that the reason for the rise of physicalism around 1960 was the widespread acceptance of thesis of the causal closure of the physical, which had not been sufficiently established earlier. According to Jaegwon Kim, the early physicalists mainly argued on the basis of theoretical simplicity and parsimony, and the idea of causal closure played no role in their views. My aim is to show that the main achievement of the early physicalists was that they successfully changed the prevailing negative attitude towards physicalism by answering all the known and almost universally accepted objections, and this move was more significant than either the empirical results or Ockham's razor.

PÉTER HARTL

### **Was Hume an Ironic Atheist?**

My paper criticises the ironic atheist Hume-interpretation according to which Hume's affirmative theistic statements should not be taken at face value. Firstly, I argue that Hume did not regard his criticism of natural theology as entirely devastating and allowed that design argument retains some force despite its problems. Secondly, I argue that ironic atheist interpretation overemphasises Hume's conformism and his possible fear of public stigmatization. Thirdly, I argue that the commentator should specify how we could identify irony or dishonesty in Hume's writings. Without doing so, the ironic reading has little evidential support, depending instead on a more or less arbitrary decision. Moreover, I argue that we should be aware of the fact that Hume's criticism of natural theology is typically presented in dialogue form. Given the complications of interpreting a fictional dialogue, it is problematic to take the insincere or ironic reading for granted. Finally, I present and criticise David Berman's atheist Hume-interpretation which relies on his analysis of early modern atheism to detect alleged theological lying in Hume. I argue that Hume's usage of sarcasm was different from early modern atheists. Hume's sarcastic appeal to faith does not convey any encrypted message. Berman's case for reading Hume as a theological liar and an atheist is either inconsistent with his methodological principles or begs the question against the straightforward reading of Hume's affirmative passages. I conclude that reading Hume as being ironic or insincere about God's existence cannot be the default response to the exegetical challenge of Hume's theistic remarks and, thus, interpreting Hume as an indeterminate or weak theist is defensible.

GÁBOR KOVÁCS

### **Nature, City, Technology and the Principle of Mutual Aid – the Ecological Cultural Criticism of Lewis Mumford**

The topic of this paper is the ecologically sensitive cultural criticism of Lewis Mumford. The key notions of his thoughts are: nature, city, technology. Mumford, as one of the forefathers of ecology, stands on the crossroads of different traditions of cultural criticism: the continental, mainly German tradition, Victorian thought (John Ruskin, William Morris and Samuel Butler) and the American tradition (American transcendentalism: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman and the 19<sup>th</sup> American literature, first of all Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry Thoreau). The paper outlines the contexts in which the term of holistic ecology emerged in the interwar decades. Special attention is given to the Scottish Geddes whose thought was one of the main important first imprints for Mumford. Mumford was not a professional philosopher: he stayed deliberately outside the circles of academic science and preferred the genre of essay. What he was mainly interested in was the relation of human societies and environment seen from a historical perspective.

GUSZTÁV KOVÁCS

### **The Value of Nature and Intuition**

The paper discusses The Last Man Thought Experiment which was originally formulated by Richard Routley (Sylvan) in his essay 'Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic?' published in 1973. As the title indicates, Routley was criticizing prevailing traditions of Western ethics to show that there was a need for a new ethical approach to environmental questions. Although the original text contains four separate thought experiments, it was the first one, i.e., the Last Man Argument, which has become a fundamental part of environmental discourse. The paper aims to provide a general analysis of the different versions of the thought experiment. It focusses on the question whether intuitive proposals to justify the intrinsic value of nature are sufficient.

LÁSZLÓ NEMES – GERGELY KERTÉSZ

### **The Organism in Bioethics: Philosophical and Scientific Considerations**

This paper analyzes some bioethical problems within which the very concept of organism plays a central role. The organism, as we use this term, is a rather difficult theoretical concept, very hard to define precisely. Organism is basically a philosophical concept, as its origins go back to the philosophical tradition, mainly to Immanuel Kant's works. In the modern evolutionary theory, the role of the organism was downplayed for decades, but recently it reappeared in the forefront of theoretical disputes again. In this paper we expose four bioethical issues, where a concept of organism seems to be of pivotal interest: the Gaia hypothesis, i. e. if the planet Earth could be seen as an organism; the biological and moral status of synthetic or semi-living beings; the problems of the developmental beginning of the human organism; the dilemmas raised by those conceptions which define human death as the end of the organismic life functions (e. g. brain death).

TAMÁS PAÁR

**Role, Authority, Obligation, and the Vanishing *Telos*: After MacIntyre from Medical Ethics to the Ethics of Dependence and Beyond**

In the second half of the 1970s, Alasdair MacIntyre published a series of papers on medical ethics. The significance of this series comes partly from the fact that much of the themes and theses articulated in it are also present in his seminal book from 1981, *After Virtue*. I trace the development of these ideas in his later work, focusing on three problems: the relationship between individuals and their roles, between authority and autonomy, and between obligations and the human *telos*. I argue that he has revised many of the claims from his earlier period, and I also employ his later ideas to show why he was wrong initially to suggest three things: (1) that individuals are reducible to their social roles, (2) that autonomy conceived as an ability to stand back from any social tradition, setting and role is inimical to a certain kind of authority that is necessary for our rationality and communal life, and that (3) obligations should be grounded in history. Furthermore, I show how MacIntyre grounds our obligations in teleology, and how his later texts could be interpreted as grounding the *telos* itself in a biological understanding of flourishing, or in our indebtedness to each other. Finally, I show that the correct understanding of his most recent position, as well as the correct account of teleology grounds the human *telos* in learning. This conception implies that the *telos* is constantly moving away from us.

TAMÁS VALASTYÁN

**“What is a Cat’s Tail?”**

**Dilemmas on the Relationship between Human and Non-human Species in the Context of Martin Heidegger’s “Debate” with Peter Sloterdijk**

Martin Heidegger’s strong assertion in his *Letter on “Humanism”* that the animal has no world, only an environment, has provoked a number of reactions from thinkers and is in fact still a source of lively debate today. According to Heidegger, human existence conceived in terms of animality is the disposition of *animal rationale*, which, although it sheds light on the primacy of reason in man, does not explain the most essential feature of the present being, namely its relation to being. Peter Sloterdijk is sharply critical of Heidegger’s idea that man has failed as an animal and has started to go his own way. We cannot understand either man or animal, or the relationship between them, if we are not willing to take into account certain historical, hominisation and neoteny processes. Focusing on the “debate” between the two thinkers, I try to sketch the context of the relationship between human and non-human species, drawing on the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche and Peter Singer, and also bringing into play the concept of the “Open” in Rainer Maria Rilke’s *The Eighth Elegy*.