

ABSTRACTS

Tamás Demeter

■ *David Hume's Importance for the History of Science*

Keywords: *David Hume, history of science, Scottish Enlightenment, philosophy*

David Hume is a towering figure of the Scottish Enlightenment, of the history of philosophy in general, and his contributions are significant in the history of the human sciences too. Here I focus specifically on the significance of his philosophy for the history of science. If looked at from this angle, Hume's contributions can be summarized in at least two possible ways: they can be read as contributions to the early history of modern human sciences from cognitive psychology to sociology, and as contributions to the metaphysical and epistemological discourse on then-contemporary knowledge-making practices. Here I propose to read his opus magnum, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739/1740) primarily in the first context (along with his *Four Dissertations*), and the neat philosophical expositions of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748) primarily in the second. *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751) adopts a third perspective of natural history and offers a moral phenomenology that is distinct from both.

Katalin Farkas

■ *Descartes and the Nature of the Human Mind*

Keywords: *Descartes, Aristotle, mind, psychological phenomena*

The Cartesian conception of the mind replaced the Aristotelian conception of the soul. On Aristotle's view, there are two natural ways to demarcate the realm of psychological phenomena: either we consider all functions of the soul, and include not only reason, perception and emotion, but also digestion and locomotion; or we restrict ourselves to what is distinctively human, namely reason, and leave out perception, emotions and appetites. In contrast, Descartes offers a list of mental phenomena which is the same as our list. This is important, because it is more or less this list of mental features that we expect someone to have

if we are to enter into an interpersonal relationship with them.

Ferenc Hörcher

■ *Edmund Burke and the Hungarian Political Transition in 1990*

Keywords: *Burke, conservatism, Hungarian political transition, prescription, conservative revolution*

"Habent sua fata libelli." This essay takes as its task to introduce to Hungarian readers the conservative thought of Edmund Burke via the political history of Hungary and the history of Hungarian conservative political thought in the last 30 years. Its starting point is Burke's *Reflections*, originally published in 1790, only translated into Hungarian in 1990. Why could this work find its translator and publisher in that year, 200 years after its original publication? According to the hypothesis of the essay, the generation of young humanities scholars found conceptual tools to interpret the outgoing Communist regime in Burke's text. The essay focuses on the notion of prescription in Burke, and shows with the help of it the problems Burke had with the French revolutionaries. He confronted the customary law of the ancient constitution with the brutal voluntarism of the French. The shocking vision presented by Burke of the radical social changes taking place was interpreted as an excellent introduction to the nature of totalitarian power, no matter when and where. But late 18th century imperial Britain was unlike late 20th century colonized Hungary. Therefore the essay needs to discuss revolutionary conservatism, as a solution of the conservative paradox, which in the second phase of the two stages process of political transition in Hungary (1989/90, 2010/2012) could push to the back of the stage the figure and conclusions of Burke. Finally, the essay calls attention to another important Burkean teaching hidden into the text of the 2012 Basic Law's National Avowal.

László Kontler

■ *Locke's Treatise of Civil Government: a Level-Headed Subverter*

Keywords: *John Locke, state of nature, natural liberty, political liberty, civil society,*

consent, trust, property, dissolution of government

Locke is often characterised as an emblematic figure of the moderate or “magisterial” Enlightenment. Not contesting the general thrust of this interpretation, this essay still reminds that all of Locke’s mature political thought, chiefly recorded in the *Two Treatises of Government*, was formulated from the vantage point of a political dissident, which involved taking a considerable amount of personal risk. After outlining the polemical context in which the work was written, an analytical overview of its argument is presented. Special emphasis is laid on Locke’s distinctive contribution to the understanding of natural and political liberty; his analysis of property as not merely crucial to his theory of political legitimacy but to a discourse of civilization and progress; the multi-layered significance of “trust”; and his peculiar account of the “dissolution of government”. Revolution for the sake of maintaining order is not a contradiction of terms in his thought.

Ferenc L. Lendvai

■ **Fichte**

Keywords: *Fichte, Theory of Science, philosophy, idealism, self, freedom*

For Fichte, philosophy must be scientific and its organisation must resemble science too: it must be the Theory of Science (*Wissenschaftslehre*). Hence, first and foremost, it should be a system, and as a scientific system it should develop from one or a few doctrines (from presumed axioms that cannot be proven). The first, starting theorem of the Theory of Science sounds like this: “The I begins by an absolute positing of its own existence.” The I for Fichte, just as for Kant, is in a dual relationship with reality: not only in a theoretical (cognitive) but also in a practical (active) relationship. In its activity, through perception, representation and understanding (*Verstand*) it reaches reason (*Vernunft*), that is, real self-consciousness which captures the self according to its true essence. Its true essence is freedom, and the moral instinct requires the realisation of freedom. History, in

Fichte’s conception, is the progress of human communities, of humanity towards freedom; however, this process has a tortuous and contradictory nature, it appears as a process that goes through pitfalls and even alienation from its original goal.

Krisztián Pete

■ **George Berkeley: with Immaterialism for Common Sense**

Keywords: *George Berkeley, John Locke, René Descartes, modern science, material substance, naive realism, representational realism, idealism, immaterialism, common sense, atheism, scepticism*

George Berkeley is often thought to be the leading proponent of subjective idealism and is commonly held to have endorsed scepticism about the existence of an external world. I am trying to exhibit that neither of the claims is correct: Berkeley was not a subjective idealist and certainly not a sceptic. Contrary to Locke and Descartes, who were interested in providing a philosophical groundwork for modern science, Berkeley’s main concern was to reconcile the modern scientific findings with common-sense knowledge. He conceived common sense as the field of knowledge which lies farthest from scepticism and is composed of the most unquestionable convictions (like the existence of the external world and of God). The idea was that any philosophy that reasons towards these commonsensical judgements can be used effectively against sceptics and atheists. So, he retained from Locke and Descartes that the direct objects of our perceptions are ideas and combined it with his empiricism to come up with his infamous principle: “Esse est percipi.” Since we believe in the existence of the external world, and the common objects are nothing but collections of ideas, we have no other choice but to conclude to the existence of a Christian God. His immaterialist and idealist theses provide the best explanation for the truth of our common-sense beliefs, which are furthermore compatible with the scientific findings, hence providing us with the best way to answer scepticism and atheism.

Erzsébet Rózsa

■ **Hegel on Europe**

Keywords: *philosophy of history and history, Europe and the “modern world”, contacts and communication between nations and cultures, integration of the “foreign” and “other”, strong Europe*

Hegel's conception of Europe is one of the lesser-known aspects of his philology. However, one of the main pillars of the Hegelian theory of history consists in his views regarding the special place and role of Europe, with a strong interconnection between modernity and Europe as one of the basic ideas of his theory. According to Hegel's methodological starting point, the philosophy of history views history from the perspective of the *Weltgeist* (“world spirit”), which is different from the viewpoint of history. An important criterion for distinguishing between nations and historical periods lies in their way of communicating with other cultures. Hegel distinguishes between four types of this contact: the “liberal principle”, the “principle of exclusion”, “unity” as the principle of acceptance and integration, and finally “exclusion”; arguing that the basis of modernity is to be found not in economy or politics, but in the “European spirit”, i.e. in the cultural community of European nations, which consists of both normative and historical components. His conception of a strong Europe and European consciousness provides relevant inspiration for our current times.

Iván Szelényi

■ **Marx's Intellectual Development from Critical Criticism to Scientific Marxism**

Keywords: *Karl Marx, philosophy, criticism, Marxism, intellectual development*
This paper gives an overview of Marx's intellectual development from his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* to his opus magnum, *The Capital*. This is a fascinating scholarly journey starting

from a bourgeois liberal position, joining the young Hegelians “critical criticism” and eventually rejecting both Hegel and the young Hegelians and culminating in his effort to offer a scientific “proof” that capitalism is destined to fall and the proletariat will be “compelled” to carry out the anti-capitalist revolution and implement the “universal human emancipation”. Already in 1844 (*The Paris Manuscripts*) Marx made a fascinating attempt to turn Hegel's theory of alienation from an “idealist” one into a “naturalist” one (later called “materialist”), but his fully developed “historical materialism” takes only shape in the work co-authored with Engels, *The German Ideology* (1846). Some ten years later, in an astonishing unpublished manuscript (*Grundrisse*, 1857-58), Marx offers his most sophisticated theory of the historical evolution of societies. Finally, ten more years later, in Volume I of *The Capital* he is ready to offer a scientific analysis of the capitalist system. Much to his own disappointment, it explains more convincingly why capitalism keeps reproducing itself rather than why it will inevitably fall. While it did not achieve the political goals of Marx and Marxists, it is an impressive demonstration of the dedicated scholarship of Karl Marx.

Gábor Zemplén

■ **The Divine Newton**

Keywords: *Newton, history of science, physics, philosophy*

The paper overviews Newton's legacy, major themes in the history of the reception of the *Principia*, and the *Opticks*. It describes the idiosyncratic ways Newton used mathematical modelling and literary strategies to present the content of his research in a form well-butressed against criticism. Some strands of the historiography of Newton's reception are also discussed, including the Newtonian style (I.B. Cohen) and the alleged metaphysical barbarism (Burt).



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ISSN 1222 8338



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