

# Summaries

## State of Nature and the Nature of Man. Criticism of Rousseau according to Fichte's Early Writings

TAMÁS HANKOVSKY

Rousseau influenced Fichte significantly from the beginning of his career. Fichte relied not only on Rousseau's social contract theory (in connection with his considerations on the French revolution), but he also used some Rousseauian concepts in the *Foundations of Natural Right*, e.g. the concept of the 'general will' of the society. When Fichte defined the freedom of the members of the society in terms of their acts which agree with the general will, he also echoed Rousseau. Nevertheless Fichte's *Some Lectures concerning the Scholar's Vocation* ends with a long critique of Rousseau. This critique relies on some fundamental differences between the two philosophers' views. The paper investigates some of these differences.

The contrary views of Rousseau and Fichte, according to the latter, originate from their different views on human development. Fichte described human beings as a product of their own free acts, unlike Rousseau, whose Emil developed 'by himself' and whose development is not a result of the fight against nature. This difference in the views concerning human development also reveals some other aspects of their opposition. For Fichte nature is an enemy of humanity – since he links it with the Not-I – moreover nature is responsible for the inequalities among men which only culture could remedy. Therefore the state of nature could not be the ideal state at all. Moreover, Rousseau's view on the state of nature has a crucial element which could not be reconciled with Fichte's concept of human nature. According to Rousseau, mankind got corrupted and men became evil when they assembled into societies. Fichte thinks, in contrast, that it is constitutive of humans that they freely interact with each other, hence the concept of man as isolated from others is inconsistent. Thus, according to Fichte, the social contract is a result of an organic development which is rooted in human nature.

## Against Reductionist Theories of Causation

SZILÁRD KOCKA

It is widely held that a reductive analysis of causation has to meet the following two criteria: (a) the theory must be compatible with the scientific practice, and at the same time (b) it must be in accordance with our common sense intuitions.

In the first part of the paper I argue that Humean accounts of causation should be rejected, for they cannot account for the concept of instantaneous velocity in accordance with these criteria. Proponents of the dispositionalist approach, an alternative to Humeanism, often claim that this problem poses difficulties only for the Humeans, and that it can be avoided by treating instantaneous velocity as a dispositional property of the physical system. However, the metaphysics behind the dispositionalist account, because of its inherent problems, does not seem to be promising either.

In the second part I will argue that reductionist views in general, regardless of their ontological commitments, cannot be satisfactory. In conclusion, I will show that reductionist views of science – together with some widely accepted naturalist assumptions – lead to Russell-style eliminativism about causation. Thus, in order to elaborate a sound metaphysical theory of causal relation that is compatible with (methodological) naturalism, one should abandon the reductionist agenda.

### **The Immediate Mediator – Going beyond Representationalism in Hegel’s Logic**

NORBERT MAKK

Hegel’s notion of sign originates from logical notions of Hegel’s Science of Logic. In this paper I analyze these notions and the underlying logical setup, mainly focusing on the notion of ground (*Grund*). The ground shows the same structure as the sign, which mediates between appearance (*Schein*) and essence (*Wesen*) and its components (the signifier being the appearance, the signified being the essence of the sign). As the notion of the ground provides the underpinnings of substance in Hegel’s encyclopaedian system as a whole, this analysis reveals the essence of Hegel’s philosophy as the analysis of the sign as an immediate mediator.

### **Rousseau and Postmodern Politics**

TAMÁS NYIRKOS

Rousseau has been regarded as an advocate of the Enlightenment just as often as its enemy. Since Benjamin Constant’s *The Liberty of the Ancients Compared to that of the Moderns*, he also gained fame as an advocate of premodern political principles. More recently he was also conceived as a forerunner of postmodernism. Hence, it was only a question of time when someone would establish the connection between premodern and postmodern political thought with Rousseau as the missing link. This is what Stephen Hicks did in an ardent defense of modernity in *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*. However, this highly successful book (with its ten printings since 2004, and the enlarged edition in 2010) shows ironically almost every symptom it criticizes in postmodernism – dependence on the rejected narrative, irrationality, identitarian bias, pseudo-scientific historiography – which supports the paper’s conclusion that postmodernism should be understood as a way of thinking from the influence of which even defenders of modernity cannot free themselves.

### **The Bolyais’ *Absurdum*-Guided Substitutional Attempts to Solve the *Parallel Problem***

JÁNOS TANÁCS

In this paper I am going to analyse the mathematical practice of the two Bolyais around 1821. This is the early period of János Bolyai which attracted less attention in the expert literature, so far. First I am going to give a survey of how the indirect proofs were evaluated

in the history of the parallel problem. After that an historical reconstruction is provided in order to see the roots of the claim, according to which János Bolyai's early attempt was a *reductio ad absurdum*-based indirect proof, similar to his father, Farkas' earlier attacks. This view will then be confronted with the mathematical practice that can be reconstructed by means of a thorough investigation and analysis of the sources. After that I will present my thesis, according to which the actual practice of the two Bolyais was *not a reductio ad absurdum*-type of indirect proof, since their concept of *absurdum* was completely different from that of the logical contradiction. This *absurdum*-guided but not contradiction-directed mathematical practice of the Bolyais allows me to raise some questions concerning the role of intuition in mathematical inquiry as well as concerning the problem of identifying the mathematical practices by means of their conceptual tools.

### **Did Heidegger Influence Husserl? Towards a Critique of an Established View of the History of Philosophy**

PÉTER ANDRÁS VARGA

It is compelling to perceive the relationship between Husserl and Heidegger as a prominent example of the relationship between a philosophical master and his rebellious disciple, and Heidegger did undoubtedly see himself as being influenced by Husserl. However, less attention is paid to the reverse side of this question, i.e. whether Husserl was influenced by Heidegger (in other words, whether their exchange was mutual as the philological-historical notion of *Auseinandersetzung* would imply). Based on advances in Husserl scholarship and recently published documents about Heidegger, I examine the evidences that would allow for such a conclusion, including Heidegger's early encounter with Husserl, their joint work on the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article and the proofs of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, also taking into account an essay that Husserl allegedly intended to write against Heidegger. I conclude that the historical evidences speak against Heidegger's influence on Husserl, which, at the same time, could help clarify the notion of influence in the history of philosophy. Finally, I relate my investigation to a current debate in Hungarian Continental Philosophy concerning the nature of historical understanding in philosophy, and argue that phenomenology is haunted by a certain historical naivety.

### **Contractarianism, Conceptions of a Golden Age, and Social Science**

IMRE ORTHMAYR

Classical social contract theories developed different layers of argumentation, some rigorous and systematic, others fairly naive, inconsistent or self-contradictory. This paper discusses certain aspects of the contractarian approach. Interestingly, early modern contract theories are formulated in an argumentative structure which, at a basic level, is similar to that of the conceptions of a mythical Golden Age – although they are diametrically opposed in their substance. The main proponents of social contract theory often misconceived the relationship between these two, even their excellent critic, David Hume mixed up some crucial issues. Both theoretical constructs fell into disrepute in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to be revived again in the latter half of last century. Contract theory, in particular, has moved into the centre of recent political philosophy, ethics, and social theory.