

Summaries

BÉLA BACSÓ

After “*schweigendes Denken*”

It turned out after the World War I that the late philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey became very important for a really new start of the thematic priority of life. As we can see Husserl, Heidegger and “his children” (Misch, Landgrebe, F. Kaufmann) gave a fundamental interpretation of Dilthey’s philosophy of life. I examined this hidden influence on the existential thinking in my text. Dilthey set free an eminently important approach to hermeneutical understanding as a presentation of a possibility which is never fully realized: *thinking in silence*. It is always *more* than we can comprehend from it and always makes attendances of the thing we try to understand.

ISTVÁN M. FEHÉR

Gadamer’s Conception of *Sensus Communis*

with Regard to the Tradition of the History of Philosophy and to the German Philosophical Tradition

The paper proposes to reconstruct Gadamer’s conception of *sensus communis* from a number of different perspectives. First, the systematic position of this concept is explored within the context and the conceptual framework of Gadamer’s *Truth and Method*. Thereby the fact is emphasized that *sensus communis* is one of the guiding concepts of the humanist tradition. Gadamer attempts here to philosophically justify and to lay the grounds for the humanities or the *Geisteswissenschaften*. It is Gadamer’s thesis that the *Geisteswissenschaften* require a “humanistic” rather than a logical grounding. They should thereby stop imitating the natural sciences and their methodologies. This has been and still is a self-misunderstanding of the human sciences. The role and the significance of the humanities and their philosophical justification lie in the formation of men rather than in logically perfect knowledge. *Sensus communis* plays an important role in constituting, maintaining and keeping a community of people together. The aim of the humanities is thus not so much scientific (increase of our knowledge of the universe) as social (keeping a community together). The origins of this distinction are present in Kant’s concept of philosophy *in sensu scholastico* and philosophy *in sensu cosmopolitico*.

In a second step follows a short conceptual history of the term *sensus communis* whereby the idea of “conceptual history” is also explained. *Sensus communis* has had and still has a number of different or even contrasting meanings. The thesis is here that the understanding of *sensus communis* is intrinsically related to the way philosophy is interpreted either for or against common sense and the ordinary man. The sort of philosophy conceived of in terms of social criticism, inherited religious or political ideas tends to abandon its links to *sensus communis* and to assume elitistic positions, supporting the view that a society or system should be led by an elite. Followers of this conception go back to Plato’s notion of a philosopher king; the idea is that for an ideal community to ever come into being, “philosophers [must] become kings [...] or those now called kings [must] genuinely and adequately philosophize” (Plato *The Republic* 473d). On the other hand, philosophies confirming the perspective of common sense may tend to be uncritical in regard to their own age and community. This discussion is followed by a comparison between *sensus communis* and *common sense* the idea being that the latter has a much narrower range of meaning than the former. The community-constituting sense of *sensus communis* fell in early modern philosophy more or less into oblivion, and it was Gadamer who revived this aspect of the term. This rehabilitation contributed to a great extent to the rise of communitarian ethics, going back to Aristoteles’ concept of *phronesis*. In its turn communitarianism, together with Gadamer’s hermeneutics, led to a re-examination and rehabilitation of rhetoric. The paper ends with a discussion of the extent to which Gadamer’s re-evaluation of *sensus communis* may be claimed to contain critical elements of the German philosophical tradition – especially in view of what Gadamer calls the process of neutralization and, indeed, de-politicization of *sensus communis* – as well as of the development of German social history leading up to the rise of National Socialism. What Gadamer provides may be dubbed as a self-criticism of the German philosophical tradition, similar to how Lukács and Plessner saw in Germany’s “backwardness” or rather “belatedness” one of the main reasons of the rise of a totalitarian regime.

GERGELY FÓRIZS

Methodology in Johann Ludwig Schiedius’ *Principia philocaliae*

Johann Ludwig Schiedius (1768–1847) became the professor of aesthetics at the University of Pest (Hungary) in 1792. He taught aesthetics and ancient Greek until his retirement in 1843. In 1828, he had published a Latin monograph entitled *Principia philocaliae seu doctrinae pulchri* (Principles of Philocalia or the Science of Beauty), which was used as a university course-book.

My thesis is that in his book, Schiedius adopted the eclectic method of compilation and production of knowledge widespread among Central European scholars during the 18th and even in the early 19th century. The two basic pillars of philosophical eclecticism are the rejection of elitist, authority-based knowledge and the support of scholarly co-operation instead. The eclectic methodology consists in a selection of scientific views that prevents it from entirely subjecting itself to one complete system. According to this, the virtue of the individual scholar lies in the proper selection from the various elements, and in the ability to augment or expand the tradition through the compilation. Thus, the

particular eclectic systems are always intended to be individual engagements with the history of science, the common achievement of the scientific community. In this paper, I will show how Schedius made his *philocalia* arise from the age-old history of the “science of beauty”, while I will also discuss his eclectic treatment of Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*.

DEZSŐ GURKA

Hungarian Aspects of the “Jena Constellations” in the 18–19th Century

The article describes three phenomenon groups of the Hungarian peregrination and knowledge transfer relating to the universities of Jena: Hungarian peregrines’ role in the constellation of Jena, lectures of the Hungarian Schelling-followers on the sessions of the Mineralogical Society in Jena (Societät für die gesammte Mineralogie zu Jena) and impacts of Jakab József Winterl’s dualistic chemistry. Jena was the birthplace of the German idealism – namely, the philosophy of Fichte and Schelling – and simultaneously, a field of scientific discourses, and they developed in a close interaction with each other. The common features of this Kantian and post-Kantian fields of reception are that they became visible primarily from the viewpoint of (mainly foreign) researches in history of science. The examination of the activities of the Hungarian Schelling-followers in the Mineralogical Society may make some contributions to the interpretation of conceptual overlapping, which were often present in the genesis of the German idealism, the more so, since these simultaneities of the scientific reception of Kant’s, Reinhold’s, Fichte’s and Schelling’s effects have never been investigated by the ‘constellation research’ (Konstellationsforschung). Involvement of this aspects certainly does not modify in its fundamental features the consensus-based overall view taking shape recently in the literature about the basic tendencies of Hungarian philosophy, nevertheless it may highlight the fact to what remarkable degree the philosophy of the 18–19th century extended its basis of argumentation from the area of special sciences, thus in several cases from the circle of the contemporary Hungarian scientists’ results.

FERENC HÖRCHER

The Voice of Common Sense in Conservative Thought

A Philosophical Essay

This paper is both an exercise in the history of political thought and a specific claim about conservatism in political philosophy. According to its starting assumption conservatism is characterised by a healthy scepticism about the role of theory, and in particular, of ideology in politics. The paper argues that this is the voice of common sense in political thought, and this common sense scepticism of the use of ideology is a distinguishing mark of conservatism. In particular, it claims that this critique of ideology is present in British conservative thought from Burke’s attack on the *philosophes* of the French revolution to Oakeshott’s criticism about rationalism in politics and even further.

The paper focuses on the philosophical backbone of this traditional conservative criticism. It tries to trace the development of the concept of *sensus communis*, as it developed

in different political discourses, first in Greek and Roman antiquity (by Aristotle and Cicero, in particular) and later in the early modern context (by Vico and Burke). Yet beside this conceptual genealogy, the paper makes a second claim as well. It wants to show that far from being simply a sign of relativism, the discourse of and around *sensus communis* helped to establish a standard, which works in the political context like taste did in aesthetics in the early modern context up to Kant. In order to substantiate this claim, the conceptual connection between the virtue of prudence and *sensus communis* is analysed.

ATTILA NÉMETH

Epicurean Universals

This paper investigates the role of perception in the context of Epicurus' atomism. How we come to know things was a main strand in Epicurus' epistemology and this paper explains how perceptual knowledge is to be obtained in a world of atoms in a three-stage process, where *prolépsis* plays a unifying role in the epistemological process, such as the one postulated by Epicurus. As a result, it appears how Epicurus managed to provide a case for knowledge in an atomistic world, overcoming the scepticism that appears to be inherent to Democritus' atomism.

ZOLTÁN PAPP

A Matter of Taste

The Epistemological Function of Kant's Common Sense

Kant's third *Critique* inherits a less than evident yet serious problem from the first: the transcendental idealist theory of experience, based on the tenet that things are not accessible in themselves, cannot avert the danger of a kind of solipsism, by which I mean the possibility that different subjects form different objects out of their respective perceptions. On my reading, Kant's doctrine of taste is an attempt to cope with this problem. Judgments of taste require common sense as a principle that facilitates the universal agreement of subjects, but, aesthetic judging being a "cognition in general", the reliance on common sense also means that you cannot make a judgment of taste without necessarily assuming the uniformity of the human constitution that is at work in all cognition.

LÁSZLÓ SZÉKELY

Relativity Theory, Quantum Mechanics and Common Sense

The paper analyses the relationship between the phenomenal physical world and the two basic theories of modern physics, relativity theory and quantum mechanics from the points of view of classical physics, everyday thinking and common sense. On the one hand, we argue that the physical phenomena investigated by the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics do not necessarily implicate the abandonment of the traditional physical concepts and a break with the common sense view of the world. There is a gap

between mathematical physics and its physical interpretations, and it is only the Einsteinian interpretation of the mathematical formalism of relativity theory and the indeterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics, which are incompatible with the concepts of classical physics and common sense. The Lorentzian interpretation of the mathematics of relativity theory and the deterministic view of quantum mechanics preserve the classical concepts of space, time and determinism, but even the indeterministic Copenhagen interpretation can be reconciled with a deterministic ontology. On the other hand, we also argue that in the cases of Einstein's relativity theory and the ontologically interpreted quantum mechanical indeterminism the break with the traditional physical concepts and common sense substantially differs from the Copernican transformation of the geocentric worldview into the heliocentric one, since whereas the latter concerned only the traditionally accepted world order, the former affects our basic notions of space, time and the determined character of the world. Therefore, the conflict, for example, between Einstein's relativity theory and common sense cannot be undervalued or trivialised in such a way as Herman Bondi does it in his book *Relativity and common sense*. We conclude that despite the possible interpretations in accordance with classical concepts, modern physics fundamentally differs from the classical one. Namely, in the present state of physics and in contrast to classical physics relativity theory and quantum mechanics can be reconciled with common sense only if we introduce a non-phenomenal, theoretically unobservable underlying level of physical reality, which is unacceptable for positivist and/or empiricist epistemologies.

MÁTÉ VERES

Stoicism or Common Sense?

Common Conceptions in the Philosophy of Chrysippus

In this paper, I discuss the evidence concerning preconceptions and common conceptions in early Stoicism, especially in the philosophy of Chrysippus. I argue for three claims. (1) The notions of 'preconception' and 'common conception' are embedded in a Socratically inspired theory of ideal human cognitive development which involves the philosophical articulation of the former into the latter. (2) Common conceptions are invoked in the polemical defence of central notions of Stoic physics and theology against rival atomist theories. (3) Despite the emphasis in extant sources for later Stoicism on the natural origin of ethical preconceptions, one should attribute to mainstream Stoic thinkers neither a theory of innatism proper nor an exclusive concern with the ethical part of philosophy.

