

Cyprian Mielczarski

Nihilism and the Law of the Stronger vs. Law-Abidingness in the Sophists' Teachings

Summary

The opposition between Socrates' views and the sophists' teachings reflects the conflict of ethics and politics and of philosophy and democracy, the form of state regarded by Plato as an outcome of sophistical relativism. Socrates saw the task of a politician in betterment of his own soul and of the citizens' characters while the sophists taught their disciples utilitarian efficacy in politics and everyday life, essential to achieve success in the system of direct democracy. Cognitive nihilism was created by Gorgias who pointed out the difference between logos, that is, thought and word, and the reality, and, using his dialectical method, criticised the whole previous Greek cultural tradition. The proper ability needed in life was, according to him, rhetorical skill, which however should be used only to achieve just goals. A product of sophists' education is Callicles, the fictitious personage created by Plato. As an opponent of education based on self-restraint and as an adherent of the theory that according to the laws of nature stronger individuals should rule over weaker ones, he symbolises the negative moral and political consequences of relativism. Moreover, he criticises philosophy as an activity contrary to his pragmatic notion of excellence in public and private life. The law of the stronger was also upheld by Thrasymachus of Chalcedon who claimed that justice is always in agreement with the interest of the mighty. Another disciple of the sophists, Critias, famous for his ruthlessness as an oligarch, was convinced that people obey the laws thanks to their faith in the gods. That faith, according to him, was invented by eminent lawgivers. A negation of immoralism can be found in a treatise by an anonymous sophist, quoted by Iamblichus (3rd/4th century A.D.). Its author glorifies law-abidingness of great men and their devotion in the service of the state and the laws. That text should be regarded as a synthesis of the sophists' pedagogical views, based on the cult of the society as a community.

Tomasz Pawlikowski

The Principles of Psychology According to Saint Thomas Aquinas

Summary

Saint Thomas Aquinas' exposition of the principles of psychology given in his Commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima* concerns three questions: a) the subjective and objective purpose of a psychological analysis; b) the methods (demonstration of fact, causal demonstration, composition or synthesis of informations to prepare a definition); c) the subject of this science, which the soul is.

The subjective purpose is a benefit to a philosopher's intellect, because understanding is an intellectual good. The objective purpose is a benefit to the whole system of sciences, because the science concerning the soul at its consequence makes a metaphysical, ethical and physical cognition develop.

The result of his consideration on a subject and methods of psychology (principally consideration on the definition of feeling which is an operation done by soul and body together) is that Aquinas concludes the science about soul is a part of physics. This conclusion allow us to say now a rational psychology is a fundamental part of philosophical anthropology which concerns a human being and specific human operations.

Wojciech Starzyński

Theologic Implications of Descartes' Theory of Object in the Philosophical Turn of The Middle Ages and Modernity

Summary

The article begins with a comparison of Descartes' theory of object with its scholastic predecessors. In Descartes' thought the object is restricted to its human figure, while Augustine, Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus describe this concept primarily in the horizon of the divine thought. Even if Descartes leaves out the theological meaning of object, its new epistemic subject becomes the ground of the new relation named absolute whose certain features resemble the theological one. However the danger of the ontic univocity which thus appears, is eliminated by Cartesian theory of the eternal truths formulated in 1630 in letters to Mersenne.

***Tractatus de Successivis* Attributed to William Ockham**

Part I – Treatise on Motion

Summary

Tractatus de Successivis attributed to William Ockham divides in three parts: on motion, on place and on time. Considerations given there plays important role in conceptualistic metaphysical theory of motion, place and time. Study on Ockham prepares important conclusions concerning critical Aristotelianism in XIV century. Our translation gives also an example of the late scholastic logic and epistemology.

Mikołaj Domaradzki

Skeptical and Nietzschean Critique of Cognition

Summary

The article aims to confront the skeptical critique of cognition with Nietzsche's refutation of classical epistemology. Irrespective of some striking analogies, it does not purport that skepticism exerted direct impact on Nietzsche's philosophy. Nevertheless, both critiques reject such a type of philosophy that endeavors to discover the very nature of things and both repudiate the dogmatic dichotomy of the 'apparent' and the 'true' world that since Plato has become an integral part of nearly every metaphysical project. The ancient skeptics and Nietzsche demonstrate that every cognition is determined by various physiological, social and cultural contexts and, consequently, the Greek thinkers seem to agree with the German philosopher that concepts such as 'reality' or 'world' are but interpretations conditioned by the very structure of the human sense organs and basic human needs. In the light of the contingent and situational character of our knowledge, the skeptics and Nietzsche dethrone the discourse of science and philosophy by showing not only the genesis of our propositions but also the possibility of opposite, yet equally justified, propositions. Thus, 'world' transpires to be a necessary illusion and every attempt at explaining it is relegated to the position of just one of the manifold perspectives attainable. In the final analysis, the article offers a reevaluation of the skeptical project, as it advances a thesis that the ancient and Nietzschean skepticisms show the insurmountable limitations of every cognition, protest against any endeavor to establish an absolute account of reality and, thereby, opt for a continuous striving for new interpretations and perspectives.

Maciej Soin

The Question of Truth in Wittgenstein's *Nachlass* (1930–1933)

Summary

The article shows an evolution of the concept of truth in Wittgenstein's *Nachlass* (1930–1933). In this period Wittgenstein passes from the view on the possibility of truth as an internal relation to the explanation acknowledging the harmony between thought and reality as an accomplishment of grammar. An analysis of the reasons of this change explains the standpoint of the *Investigations* on truth.

Dariusz Adamski

„Here – between (Heart and Reason)”. The Parade of Jan Potocki’s Texts

Summary

The Parade is a selection of excerpts from political, historical, linguistic works, and oriental apologues by Count Jan Potocki. The fragments of Potocki’s writings were especially translated from French into Polish. Abundant notes, accompanying the translation, present particular words and concepts, biographical details, socio-cultural context and half-forgotten links between Europe and oriental cultures. The form of these notes vaguely reminds of the Arabic, classical, literary adab.

The Parade is a reading exercise which permits to conceptually notice the almost evanescent spot between enlightenment and romanticism, where Potocki’s irony celebrates the Spirit of European culture and the principle of apparently free associations, the key to all Poetry.

Krzysztof Wołodźko

Henry Kamiński’s Question about Russia: between Philosophy of History and Social Philosophy

Summary

The aim of this article is to present the thought of Henry Kamiński (1813–1865), the author of „Russia and Europe. Poland. The Introduction to the Research into Russia and Russians”; the work is regarded as the most important and original analysis of Russian Empire, that was written in the 19th century by a Pole. Kamiński, the philosopher, the sociologist and economist tried to inform compatriots and international opinion about the complexity of Polish-Russian relationship, described in the wide social, economic and geopolitical background. As a participant of November Uprising (1830), the theorist of democratic movement and the Siberian exile, he regarded Russian issues as important not only from Polish point of view but also the European one. He pointed to civilization threats, that could result from the lack of understanding of Empire of Tsars. Russian Empire, the state without history, institutions, law and without freedom, that indicated the course of history of Western Europe, can become the reason of the decline of civilization. What is more, the submission of West Europe to Moscow, an underestimating of its power and the lack of cultural initiative and ethic elements in international politics result in the fact that Europe continuously loses its significance with Moscow profiting from it. Therefore, if Poland does not find support in the West, it can be forced to make an alliance with Russia, thus marking the beginning of the Slavic Empire, the seed of new Europe.

Two Civilisational Doctrines. Koneczny and Majewski

Summary

Two civilizational doctrines developed by Polish scholars are discussed and analytically compared: the one by Feliks Koneczny (1862–1949) and the other by Erazm Majewski (1858–1922). Some logical aspects of both are worked out. The doctrines in question have some points in common. The main are: a strong conviction that a solution of the problem of civilisation is crucial to understanding of history and society, and the basic definition of civilisation formulated as „form of social life” (Majewski) „the method of social life” (Koneczny). Moreover, Majewski directly influenced Koneczny by his four-volume *Science of civilisation* (published 1908–1923, French translation of vol. I appeared in 1908). The best known book of Koneczny is *On the Plurality of Civilisations* (1935, English translation 1962). Koneczny’s doctrine is purely structural, emphasising the fundamental split between nature and spirit. It contains a sophisticated system of cultural taxonomy called „comparative science of civilisations”. Civilisations are effectively defined as systems of highest values and norms. At the same time they can be viewed as abstract equivalence classes between cultures. Majewski attempted at an evolutionary schema, and viewed civilisation as the highest stage of the universal progress. Civilisations are viewed as relatively closed systems of social interactions, being primarily connected by common language. Both doctrines lead to fundamental questions concerning relations between biology, sociology and history, and still seem interesting.

Ewa Czerwińska-Schupp

The Reception of Ludwik Gumplowicz’s Ideas in Poland

Summary

The objective of the paper is to show the manner in which Ludwik Gumplowicz’s thoughts have been received in Poland. Pointed out are its delayed reception as well as factors affecting its form. An attitude commonly held by Polish researchers (Jan Karol Kochanowski, Aleksander Kraushar, Stanisław Posner, Mieczysław Szerer, Jan Stanisław Bystróż, and Franciszek Mirek), as to the native origins of L. Gumplowicz’s system and the scope of its influence in Poland, is pointed out. The discussion focuses on two layers of the evaluation of the Graz sociologist which prevail in current Polish papers: positive and negative ones. Against the background of the assumed attitudes, J. K. Kochanowski’s individual view is particularly worth noticing owing it to his creative and original qualities. A discussion of the validity of the two objections raised by Polish recipients of L. Gumplowicz’s works, namely Gumplowicz’s yielding to social Darwinism and his gradual acceptance of the Marxist views, rounds off the paper.

Grażyna Szumera

Jan Karol Kochanowski's Theory of Nation

Summary

The present article discusses the theory of nation as founded by J.K. Kochanowski. In Polish philosophy his views have virtually become forgotten. Yet, his thinking seems to have much in common with the foundations of psychologism and sociologism, although it is the former which appears closer to his own views. In his philosophical oeuvre we can find threads inspired by his reflection on a crowd. As historical facts he interprets as strongly connected with the psyche of nations. Kochanowski was interested in psychic differences that varied from nation to nation. He posited that a nation, likewise a man, is determined by the psyche, which is an illustration of this nation's or man's most fundamental features. Studying history of a nation demonstrates, according to Kochanowski, that despite many similarities, there appear many significant differences in psychic predispositions that lead to a creation of separate national characters. Peoples' psyche is unchangeable and it is the source of the given groups' deeds and their psychic type. In his characteristics of a nation Kochanowski drew from romantic tradition. The philosopher joined in the stream of thought on the differences and similarities between Poles and other nations, existing in the period between the wars, which stressed such Polish characteristics as: individualism, love for freedom, tolerance. This line of thinking also underlined the unchangeability of a national character.

Stanisław Borzym

The Worldview of Feliks Młynarski

Summary

Feliks Młynarski (1884–1972) holds a specific position in the history of Polish Thought. He had philosophical ambitions, not only restricting to historiography and the theory of society. His metaphysical ideas are the least known. As the philosopher of history he pointed to three stages of emancipation: equality to God, equality to law and equal rights to social income. In his theory of the nation he undoubtedly referred to the tradition of the Polish Romanticism and not to the conceptions inspired by social Darwinism. He linked nationalism with liberalism. He praised the dualism of the nation and the state and saw the totalitarian threat in state ideologies, not in the national idea.

Tomasz Mróz

Metaphysics – An Unknown Book by Wincenty Lutosławski

Summary

The article presents the last work of the well-known Polish neo-messianist philosopher, Wincenty Lutosławski (1863-1954), who was also famous as a researcher into Platonic chronology. The typescript of the *Metaphysics* was preserved in The Archive of Science of Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAU) in Cracow, and also by philosopher's daughter – Janina Lutosławska (1922–2006). It was recently edited and published. Lutosławski worked on *Metaphysics* till the last years of his life. *Metaphysics* is divided into three parts: (1) Knowledge of Reality, (2) Theory of Personality, (3) Discovery of God. Part (1) is a historical and logical reconstruction of the development of philosophy. Part (2) deals with classification of characteristics of personalities. The third part presents four paths towards discovering the existence of God. The *Metaphysics* proves philosophical development of Lutosławski, who consciously tended towards personalism; his personalism, however, was rooted in 19th century's Polish messianism. Moreover, in the light of *Metaphysics* all the objections stating Lutosławski anti-semitism must fall.

Janusz Goćkowski

**The Polish Political Elite under Examination and in Depiction
by Stanisław Wyspiański**

Summary

The article presents radical and consistent critique of the Polish political elite by Stanisław Wyspiański – the examples are his eight dramas, interpreted as black political comedies. Stanisław Wyspiański accuses the elite of lack of factual knowledge and efforts to fulfil Polish national interests and aspirations. He brings as well an accusation of lack of socio-political imagination, ingenuity and resourcefulness in social engineering, lack of the ability to think in terms of strategy and lack of boldness in thinking, which is a duty of public life leaders.