

NEW BOOKS

Teodor Münz. *Listy filozofom.* (Letters to Philosophers). Bratislava: Kalligram, 2002, 205 p. (In Slovak).

In his epistolary book the Slovak philosopher tries to pursue an imaginary dialogue with several well-known philosophers from past and present. In his letters to them he tries to come to terms with problems, which, as he says, were a constant challenge for him and which, regardless of his prolific philosophical work, often remained unsolved. Although the philosophers concerned range from Plato to K. R. Popper and the Slovak philosopher and aesthetician Marian Vároš, who died in 1988, and the problems approached vary strongly, the core of the book is to be seen in the problem of religion and religious experience. It appears in five of his ten letters (to Voltaire, to L. Feueurbach, to F. Nietzsche—two letters—and to T. de Chardin) as the main subject and is implicit in almost all the remaining ones (to Plato, to A. Schweitzer, to K. R. Popper—two letters—and to M. Vároš). Among other problems (the standards of social justice, human moral dilemmas, the human predicament, the nature and status of our knowledge and truth), for T. Münz the following question seems to be the most relevant: How and to what extent can traditional religious belief (as well as its modern interpretations) help us in our search for the meaning of life and to what extent is this belief a presupposition of a truly moral life?

The book as a whole betrays much of the personal involvement and sincerity of the philosopher, for whom philosophy is not a purely academic discipline, but rather a matter of personal experience.

George Kampis, Ladislav Kvasz, Michael Stöltzner (Eds.). *Appraising Lakatos Mathematics, Methodology, and the Man.* Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, XIV + 382 p. (In English).

Imre Lakatos (1922–1974) was one of the protagonists in shaping the “new philosophy of science”. His main theme of locating rationality within the scientific process appears even more compelling today, after many historical case studies have revealed the cultural and societal elements within scientific practices. The book emerged from two workshops, which were held in Vienna, on 12–14 September 1997, and Budapest, on 30–31 October 1997. Its first section, *In Defence of Scientific Rationality*, includes papers discussing Lakatos’ criticism of Popper, Kuhn and Feyerabend, as well as his Hegelian background. The second section, *Underway to a Philosophy of Contemporary Mathematics*, is devoted to the discussion of topics in contemporary mathematics (topology, mathematical physics), philosophy of mathematics, mathematics education and mathematical heuristics from the Lakatosian point of view. In the third section, *Life and Politics*, Lakatos’ life in Hungary, his relationship to G. Lukács, and his political reawakening are discussed (including shocking facts about his political involvement during and immediately after World War II). The fourth section presents the reconstruction of Lakatos’ lost Hungarian doctoral dissertation and the list of his Hungarian papers published between 1946 and 1956.

Eubica Hábová

HUMAN AFFAIRS

A Postdisciplinary Journal for Humanities & Social Sciences

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HUMAN AFFAIRS
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