Recenzió

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Kertész, András:
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In his previous books (see. e.g. Kertész 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2004) the author outlined a comprehensive research programme for the philosophy of linguistics. The present book is both the synthesis and the continuation of this programme.

The volume consists of 6 parts each of which is subdivided into a series of chapters. The first part puts forward the epistemological background of the project which the author calls "reflexive-heuristic naturalism". In a brief survey of the state of the art he shows that current debates in the philosophy of linguistics turned out to be fruitless, because they seem to be restricted to the antagonism of the analytic philosophy of science and hermeneutics. However, the last decades have seen new developments in the general philosophy of science which, unfortunately, linguists did not notice. One of these new developments was motivated by Quine's (1969) suggestion to naturalize epistemology and the philosophy of science. Quine contrasts the justificationism of "traditional epistemology" with the empiricalness of "naturalized epistemology". Quine's main idea says that as long as epistemology aims at the justification of scientific knowledge on the basis of the a priori criteria of rationality, it must give way to scepticism. Therefore, epistemology must not be a justificatory enterprise, but rather, an empirical one. That is, epistemology should be transformed into an empirical discipline and proceed like the natural sciences. Rather than justifying scientific knowledge, epistemology should strive to describe and explain it.

Nevertheless, instead of accepting Quine's suggestion and applying it to linguistics more or less mechanically, Kertész shows that naturalized epistemology is exposed to serious difficulties, and thus crucial aspects of Quine's original idea have to be revised. First, the analysis of the state of the art reveals that the methods of naturalized epistemology have been extended. Whereas Quine insisted on the metascientific application of behaviourist psychology, today cognitive science, sociology and further empirical disciplines are also allowed as possible sources of metatheories; in this way, the term "naturalized" includes the social sciences as well. Second, at present there is wide agreement on the fact that, in contrast to Quine's original suggestion, traditional epistemology must not be replaced by naturalized epistemology completely, but their relationship should be based on their coexistence governed by a kind of division of labour. Finally, apart from these tendencies, the main difficulty is rooted in the fact that Quine's reasoning is of exactly the same philosophical nature which characterizes both scepticism and traditional epistemology. This means that

Quine argues for the replacement of traditional epistemology by the empirical sciences in the same way in which traditional epistemology is used to argue. Consequently, his conclusion that traditional epistemology should be discarded is valid exactly as long as the latter exists. As Kertész convincingly shows, this boils down to a fundamental problem that he calls the "paradox of naturalized epistemology": Traditional epistemology can be replaced by natural science if and only if the former cannot be replaced by the latter. In a long and complicated line of argumentation which analyses the techniques by the use of which classical paradoxes like Russell's or Tarski's have been resolved, Kertész shows that the paradox of naturalized epistemology will prevail if one intends to develop a particular meta*theory* in order to capture scientific knowledge, because either an infinite regress or circularity emerges. Therefore, something totally different is needed.

His highly ingenious idea is that it is a specific kind of heuristics that may yield the resolution of the paradox. Basically, heuristics are sets of very simple rules of thumb which are used to find the solution to problems, but which cannot guarantee that the solution is found. Kertész' claim is that if we aim at the development of a metascientific heuristic instead of looking for a particular metascientific theory, then no infinite regress emerges and the paradox of naturalized epistemology can be avoided, too. This claim is motivated by the fact that heuristics, as just mentioned, consist of rules. Rule following is, however, a practice. This means that rules, unlike theories or sets of statements, work even if we are not in a position to describe and/or explain them on the metalevel. This property of rules is known from the way language works: one can use the rules of a language perfectly well without being able to describe these rules. Therefore, if we identify naturalized epistemology not with a particular meta*theory* but handle it as heuristics, then we are not forced to multiply the levels of description. In particular, Kertész suggests the "heuristics of reflexive naturalism" which consists of the following three rules:

(a) Rule 1 (naturalization): An object-scientific theory O1 is projected onto the metascientific level, the result of which is a naturalized metascientific theory MO1.

(b) Rule 2 (application): As a result of rule 1, the properties of an object-scientific theory On may be described and/or explained by using MO1.

(c) Rule 3 (constructivity): The results of rule 2 i.e. descriptions/explanations of the particular object-scientific theory investigated may be used for the improvement of object-scientific research.

Kertész supplements this solution of the paradox by another interesting suggestion. In particular, heuristics – since they are rules – cannot exist *per se*, because they are always coupled with some kind of manifestation. By analogy, we may say that just as rules of language are manifested in utterances, the heuristics of reflexive naturalism must be realized somehow as well. Since scientific heuristics normally manifest themselves in scientific theories, it is straightforward to assume that metascientific theories are manifestations of the heuristics of reflexive naturalism. From this finding the task of the later parts of the book follows immediately: different alternative metatheories of linguistics may be constructed that are, on the one hand, compatible with the heuristics of reflexive naturalism, but which may, on the other hand, be incompatible with each other.

Parts 2-5 are structured along the same pattern. The first chapter summarizes the background which the reader is expected to be familiar with in order to understand the subsequent argumentation. The second outlines the main tenets of the particular meta-linguistic theory to be examined. The next chapters consist of case studies intended to

exemplify the workability of the metatheory at issue. Finally, the last chapter of each part evaluates the results of the case studies.

Part 2 is devoted to the sociology of knowledge. The author shows first of all that David Bloor's "strong programme for the sociology of knowledge" (Bloor 1976) is compatible with the heuristics of reflexive naturalism and can, therefore, be regarded as one of its possible realisations. Thus, Kertész obtains a sociological approach to metalinguistics and exemplifies its workability in three case studies. The first case study compares different phases of the development of generative linguistics with the structure of the community of generative linguists. On the one hand, he demonstrates that there are certain clearly identifiable correlations between theory structure and social structure; on the other hand, he also shows that Bloor's assumption according to which society causally determines scientific knowledge is untenable. The second case study analyzes Jef Verschueren's "empirical-conceptual approach to pragmatics" (Verschueren 1985) which was intended to be pre-theoretical. Contrary to what might be expected, Kertész' sociological considerations yield the result that the pre-theoretical approach advocated by Verschueren has explanatory power. The third case study puts forward a sociological interpretation of Wittgenstein's coherentism and proves that the latter is neither inconsistent nor – as R.C.S. Walker claimed – "stupid" (Walker 1985).

Part 3 deals with the cognitive science of science which is one of the most effective manifestations of naturalized epistemology (for an overview see Giere 2001). Kertész outlines two antagonistic approaches, namely, a modular and a holistic approach to metalinguistics. The first is based on the metatheoretical application of Bierwisch and Lang's two-level-semantics (Bierwisch and Lang 1989) and the second on Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive theory of metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999). The first case study contrasts the two metascientific approaches by applying them to scientific concept formation. Whereas modularism claims that theoretical terms are semantically underdetermined in Bierwisch and Lang's sense, the cognitive theory of metaphor assumes the metaphorical structure of theoretical terms. The second case study considers a possible sociological extension of modularism based on Bloor's strong programme, and the third a sociological extension of holism rooted in ethnomethodology.

For the lack of space, part 4 contains less detailed exemplifications of further alternative approaches to metalinguistics. The first case study is devoted to a possible pragmatic account of scientific explanation. The second is an application of catastrophe theory. Finally, Eckardt's (1993) research frameworks are applied to German linguistics.

As already mentioned, Kertész' reflexive-heuristic naturalism pleads for the division of labour between traditional and naturalized approaches to the philosophy of science. Therefore, the question arises as to what tasks traditional epistemology can retain within this division of labour. Part 5 is devoted to answering this question. In a series of case studies Kertész shows that the traditional method of rational reconstruction should be extended so that it can capture both plausible and paraconsistent reasoning. Taking a particular approach to the phonology of German as an example, he proves that in linguistic theory formation it is not deductive, but rather, plausible reasoning which plays a crucial role, and that irresolvable contradictions also arise which can be reconstructed only by paraconsistent logic (see e.g. Rescher and Brandom 1979 as an example of paraconsistent logic). Since no naturalized metatheory can capture these highly important facts, the traditional method of rational reconstruction supplemented by paraconsistent logic and plausibility theory seems to be still an indispensable metatheoretical tool.

Finally, chapter 6 summarizes the central findings of the book and touches on open questions which the author is well aware of but which he could not deal with within the scope of the monograph.

The idea of transcending the limits of theorizing about science by constructing a heuristics that allows the development of several alternative metatheories from object-scientific ones is both highly original and effective. The author not only outlines his reflexive heuristic naturalism, but he also tests it carefully in two different respects. On the one hand, he raises several of the central problems of epistemology that current discussions centre on, and shows in what way reflexive-heuristic naturalism can or cannot solve them. He argues in an unusually neutral and self-critical way in so far as throughout the book he points out both the advantages and the limits of his approach. On the other hand, the book is much more than the presentation of an abstract epistemological framework, because it includes the application of the latter as well in the form of case studies on different aspects of theory formation in linguistics. Kertész' reflexive-heuristic naturalism is one of the most remarkable contributions to current epistemological though. The author's deep understanding of epistemological problems and the ingenious solutions he suggests are of the highest intellectual quality.

Unfortunately, however, the book will not have the impact it deserves. One reason is that it has been written in German, and therefore it will not reach the English speaking audience. Another reason is that it exemplifies the workability of reflexive-heuristic naturalism by case studies on linguistic theories. This is, of course, in principle no shortcoming, but certainly most philosophers of science are not as familiar with linguistics as the readers of this book are expected to be. (The extremely rich material which the book includes would have allowed writing two monographs for two different audiences: one monograph focusing on the epistemological aspects of reflexive-heuristic naturalism to be read by philosophers and another centring on the linguistic case studies intended for linguists.)

This state of affairs is highly regrettable, because the case studies are very illuminating as well. They touch on a great diversity of important topics and witness the author's scholarly competence in many subfields of linguistics. What strikes the reader immediately is the overall clarity of the author's line of reasoning. In each case study he carefully introduces the background assumptions and infers his conclusions step by step from them. The case studies are paradigm examples of problem-oriented rational argumentation. Moreover, the case studies falsify generally accepted prejudices and show that linguistic theory formation works very differently from what linguists themselves assume. They reveal unexpected properties of linguistic theories and open new perspectives for the methodology of linguistics.

In sum, the book is a very important contribution both to naturalized epistemology and to theoretical linguistics. It ought to be translated into English as soon as possible.

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