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Teleology: Old Wine  
in New Skins

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# Teleology: Old Wine in New Skins

Teleology is rarely discussed in contemporary philosophy outside of a few highly specialized areas. One of those is the history of Aristotelian thought, where teleology is seen as a central feature of the biological and human world, indeed, of substances in general. Another is the philosophy of biology, where experts debate the viability and proper shape of a modern, naturalized conception of teleology, one that is compatible with Darwinism but still allows us to talk about functions and goals with respect to organisms. Both of those research programs can suggest that robust teleology has no theoretical relevance any more (it belongs in the philosophical museum) and that goal-directedness, to the extent that it exists, is best analyzed in a reductive naturalist framework.

The present collection tries to buck this trend by offering alternative views about the history, meaning, and contemporary relevance of teleology. The collection begins with *Darwin and Design* by Michael Ruse, one of the founders of modern philosophy of biology, who unravels the complicated history of real and imaginary tensions between Darwinism and theistic/organicist theories of nature. Gergely Kertész's *On the Status of Teleological Discourse* carries the topic forward to the present day and argues that teleology can be seen as a real and important phenomenon even in a mainstream naturalist framework. Erik Åk-erlund's *Models of Finality* takes us back to pre-Darwinian times into the thick of Aristotelian natural philosophy and it outlines three distinct models of final causation (exemplified by Aristotle, Buridan, and Averroes, respectively), demonstrating that 'the' pre-Darwinian teleological view of nature is not a monolith but a multifaceted philosophical movement. Capitalizing on insights from that movement, Gyula Klima argues in "Teleology, Intentionality, Naturalism" that a Thomistic conception of voluntary action continues to be much more persuasive than its modern physicalist counterparts.

The second half of the collection makes systematic use of teleology in the context of contemporary metaphysics, normative ethics, and action theory. In "The Metaphysics of Spooky Teleology", Daniel Kodaj seeks to construct a definition of robust teleology in the context of analytic metaphysics. Mohsen Moghri's paper, *An Axiological Ultimate Explanation for Existence*, discusses contemporary theories of cosmic teleology as a response to the question of why there is something rather than nothing. From metaphysics and cosmology, we move to normative ethics in *The Aporia of Categorical Obligations and an Augustinian Teleological Way Out of It* by László Bernáth, who defends categorical ob-

ligations against attacks from modern moral philosophy and offers a conception of categorical obligations that is both historical and novel. Finally, in *Intentional Actions and Final Causes*, Ferenc Huoranszki argues that mainstream action theory cannot explain the difference between an agent's actions and those events that merely happen to her; in contrast, a view that involves intrinsic goal-directedness is ideally suited for that purpose.

The reader will also find two papers that do not belong to the thematic collection but have been in the pipeline for a while, waiting for the next English issue of the Hungarian Philosophical Review. Attila Hangai's *What is Rational Reconstruction in the History of Philosophy?* is a reflection on the 2022 English issue of HPR, which was devoted to the historiography of early modern philosophy. Ayumu Tamura, in *The Role of Experience in Descartes' Metaphysics*, examines Descartes' conception of experience, with special attention to the claim that Descartes identified experience with intuition and understanding.

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