

## Preface

*Jesper Lundsfryd Rasmussen*

This special edition of *Res Cogitans* contains the contributions of the five participants in the session “Naturfilosofi” (Philosophy of Nature), which took place at University of Southern Denmark on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2013 as a part of the annual meeting of the *Danish Philosophical Society*. Ph.D. Peter Wolsing and I, Jesper Lundsfryd Rasmussen, organized the session with the intention to bring together historical and contemporary interests in the field of philosophy of nature. Thereby, the intention was not to limit ourselves to the German tradition of *Naturphilosophie* or the traditional *philosophia naturalis*, but to accept themes from a variety of traditions under the broader heading: *thoughts on nature*. Accordingly, the contributions consisted in themes and names from the classics of philosophy (e.g. Spinoza, Kant, Schelling, and Hegel) over 20<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary philosophy (e.g. Peirce, Jonas, and Meillassoux), and contemporary scientific pursuit (e.g. *biosemiotics* and the description of living systems). Soon after the end of the session, we discussed the possibility of collecting and publishing the papers. The present edition of *Res cogitans* is the result of this common effort.

All of the articles in the present volume are based on the 45 minutes presentations, the following discussions, and remarks from the session and the following evening dinner. Following the international format of the *Danish Philosophical Society*, talks were allowed to be and, consequently, delivered in English and German. Mirroring this format, we chose to retain the language of the presentation. In form as well as in content, the papers thus more or less reflect the freer approach of an oral presentation. The order of papers at the session under the moderation of Ph.D. Peter Wolsing was as follows: Dr. Steffen Dietzsch, Jesper L. Rasmussen, and Ph.D. Peter Wolsing delivered their talks with manuscripts; Martin Hauberg-Lund and Jesper Hoffmeyer with a disposition and slides respectively. For the current issue of *Res Cogitans* we chose to rearrange the papers.

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To further bring together the session with the current special issue of *Res Cogitans*, I will give an overview of the original papers from the session based on the abstracts and the presentations themselves.

Dr. Steffen Dietzsch is professor at the Kondylis-Institut, FernUniversität Hagen. The title of his presentation was „Was heißt, ‚Der freie Mensch allein weiß, dass eine Welt außer ihm ist?‘“, in which he presented the Schellingian philosophy of nature as the search for a connection between the transcendental principle of freedom and nature. Opposing the conception of Schelling’s philosophy as a dogmatism belonging to the era of pre-Kantian philosophizing, Dr. Dietzsch defended the thesis that the Naturphilosophie, grounding reason (Vernunft) in nature itself, is to be considered as a verification of idealism.

Martin Hauberg-Lund holds a MA degree in philosophy from University of Warwick and a master’s degree in philosophy from University of Aarhus. Currently, he is employed as a research assistant at the Danish Institute of Pedagogy and Education at the University of Aarhus. He spoke under the title “The Nature of Freedom – on Spinoza, Jacobi and Hegel”. By pointing to Spinoza’s and Hegel’s respective affirmations of immanence and their respective problematization of the subject-object divide, he defended Hegel and Spinoza against the claim of Quentin Meillassoux that neither Hegel nor Spinoza were able to avoid the *correlationist circle*.

Jesper Lundsryd Rasmussen holds a master’s degree in philosophy from University of Southern Denmark, and is currently a Ph.D.-fellow at the Department for the Study of Culture at the University of Southern Denmark. His presentation bore the title “Hans Jonas' und F.W.J. Schellings Naturphilosophie”. The main intention of the paper was to show how the *philosophical biology* of Hans Jonas bears affinities with Schelling’s *Naturphilosophie*. Thus, Schelling’s early philosophy finds another, albeit hitherto unknown, representation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy of Jonas. Consequently, Jonas’ thought could be said to make Schellingian themes pressing anew.

Ph.D. Peter Wolsing is associate professor at the Department for the Study of Culture at the University of Southern Denmark. His talk, entitled

“The free regularity of imagination and natural teleology. Kant on the cognition of organic nature”, pointed towards coherence between the aesthetical and teleological project in Kant’s *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. Arguing for a continuity from aesthetics to teleology, the talk pursued an understanding of Kants third critique as a coherent whole.

Jesper Hoffmeyer is professor emeritus at the University of Copenhagen and president of the International Society for Biosemiotic Studies. Under the title “The Great Chain of Semiosis”, Hoffmeyer pointed towards new challenges for science and phenomenology in the face of the biosemiotic view of life. Based on a series of examples, Hoffmeyer exemplified how biosemiotics enables a new understanding of life, in confrontation with which a scientific resistance against final causality as well as the phenomenological caution in explaining real life processes both are influenced and forced to revision symmetrically.

As a special edition on philosophy of nature, we happily accepted for this issue articles from authors, who did not participate in the original session, but which support and broaden the subject. This is the case with the article by Jon Auring Grimm. Grimm holds a magister artium degree in philosophy from University of Aarhus.

Concluding, I wish to thank the *Danish Philosophical Society* for the support and for hosting the session, professor Dr. Søren Harnow Klausen for the help with the collection and the publication of the contributions, *Res Cogitans* for publishing the papers, and the participants for their support and contribution to the session as well as this special edition.

Jesper Lundsryd Rasmussen, the 24<sup>th</sup> of July, 2015, Helnæs, Denmark