

Mahner, M., Bunge, M.: **Foundations of Biophilosophy**. - Springer, Berlin - Heidelberg - New York - Barcelona - Budapest - Hong Kong - London - Milan - Paris - Santa Clara - Singapore - Tokyo 1997. ISBN 3-540-61838-4. 423 pp., DM 84.00.

The two authors, both scientists (in zoology, M.M., and theoretical physics, B.M.) turning philosophers, published a voluminous book that "addresses the advanced reader, such as the philosopher with basic biological knowledge as well as the biologist with philosophical interests" (Preface).

The book is introduced by a Preface, followed by Acknowledgements, Contents, and Special Symbols. The text is divided into two parts, Philosophical Fundamentals, and Fundamental Issues in Biophilosophy. The book ends with comprehensive list of References and both detailed Name and Subject Indexes. The Part I consists of the following chapters: Ontological Fundamentals (1), Semantical and Logical Fundamentals (2), and Epistemological Fundamentals (3). The Part II is divided into Life (Chapter 4), Ecology (5), Psychobiology (6), Systematics (7), Developmental Biology (8), Evolutionary Theory (9), Teleology (10), and Concluding Remarks (11).

The book is by far not simple and easy to read. (But valuable things are not usually acquired without investment of time and energy.) For understanding the text, elementary knowledge of mathematical logic and set theory will be helpful. Furthermore, the chapters are supposed to be read systematically in the written sequence. The authors emphasize that their book should "be of service to those biologists who, though interested in philosophical questions, have been justifiably bewildered by the multiplicity of conflicting philosophical views and who therefore may have missed a unified science-oriented philosophical outlook" (from Concluding Remarks). The book cannot be considered directly useful for studies on photosynthesis. Nevertheless, some readers may be interested in the subject of this book because "Given that philosophy can be of service to biology, and vice versa, it is advisable to cultivate both disciplines together rather than in mutual isolation" (Concluding Remarks). There is no doubt that among readers of *Photosynthetica* many do attempt to combine facts on photosynthesis with some philosophical concepts. If you belong to such a group of scientists, be it beginners or well advanced, have a look at this *Foundations of Biophilosophy*.

L. NÁTR (*Praha*)