

ERIC R. SCERRI

EDITORIAL 17

The present issue is a somewhat unusual one in that it contains one full length article in addition to a review essay and a couple of extended book reviews. This format allows us to catch up with the growing number of reviews which have been solicited and shepherded by our book review editor John Bloor, who continues to forge contacts with leading authors in the history and philosophy of chemistry.

The article by Joseph Earley is an ambitious one in which the author draws on his extensive knowledge of philosophy and modern chemistry in order to suggest that chemical education is in need of redirecting. The author favors less emphasis on the all too prevalent mechanistic, particulate cosmology, which seems to make no room for human beings. Earley calls for more acknowledgement of the emerging evolutionary cosmology in many modern disciplines. He points out that such a change has already taken place in fields such as biology and geology and that chemistry education in particular can ill-afford not to follow suit. Moreover, Earley provides a detailed syllabus for an introductory chemistry course that is in harmony with his favored evolutionary cosmology and one that he has successfully followed with undergraduates at his home institution of Georgetown University.

Of the two book reviews published in this issue two of them concern books that examine early modern chemistry. Eddy's review essay is a close examination of Mi Gyung Kim's recent book on chemical affinity. Among the many topics discussed in the book, according to Eddy, is the distinction between chemical 'principles' and 'elements', an issue which incidentally has begun to interest analytical philosophers of chemistry who focus on natural kinds.¹

Pierre Laszlo, a frequent contributor to *Foundations of Chemistry*, comments in great detail on the recent book for Klaus Hentschel, another contributor to the journal. As Laszlo remarks, the book under review consists of a 'monumental' 562



pages. It is an interdisciplinary *tour de force* of the historical development of spectroscopy, including its relationship to the invention of photography, an analysis of the type of people who became spectroscopists, the theoretical ramifications of spectroscopy and much besides. All of these serve to exercise Pierre Laszlo's critical faculties and provide the readers of this journal with a welcome preview of the full contents of the book.

The issue closes with another review concerning early modern chemistry. José Ramon Bertomeu Sanchez, himself a distinguish early modern scholar, reviews Raffaella Seligardi's recent book on chemistry in Italy at the time of Lavoisier. Once again contemporary historians and philosophers of chemistry will find much to interest them in this book and the comments by Bertomeu Sanchez. Among the issues discussed are the revisionary view of the chemical revolution as first proposed by Perrin and Holmes, which Seligardi is able to extend to chemical work in Italy. In keeping with the modern view of the chemical revolution Seligardi likewise argues that chemistry was already an independent discipline before the revolution, that the revolution was gradual and that Lavoisier's work showed greater continuity with Stahl's program was previously supposed.

Let me close by mentioning an altogether different matter concerning the journal. I would like to bring to the attention of readers that the publisher is now offering a number of on-line services including the possibility of downloading any article that has ever appeared in the journal. Please take a moment to visit the journal web pages to also see an updated list of the most downloaded articles and many useful available links such as those for other Kluwer journals covering the history and philosophy of science and science education.² In these cases too the web pages offer ready access to past issues with complete tables of contents and an easy means of downloading articles.

NOTES

1. The first issue of volume 7 of *Foundations of Chemistry* will be a special issue on Natural Kinds edited by Rom Harré and containing papers given at the Tartu ISPC meeting in the summer of 2003.
2. <http://www.kluweronline.com/issn/1386-4238>