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Elements in the Philosophy of Biology

edited by

Grant Ramsey

KU Leuven

Michael Ruse

Florida State University

PHILOSOPHY OF IMMUNOLOGY

Thomas Pradeu

CNRS & University of Bordeaux



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Philosophy of Immunology

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Thomas Pradeu^{1,2}

Abstract: Immunology is central to contemporary biology and medicine, but it also provides novel philosophical insights. Its most significant contribution to philosophy concerns the understanding of biological individuality: what a biological individual is, what makes it unique, how its boundaries are established, and what ensures its identity through time. Immunology also offers answers to some of the most interesting philosophical questions. What is the definition of life? How are bodily systems delineated? How do the mind and the body interact? In this Element, Thomas Pradeu considers the ways in which immunology can shed light on these and other important philosophical issues. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

Keywords: immune system, self, individuality, cancer, neuroimmunology

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1. ImmunoConcept (UMR5164), CNRS and University of Bordeaux, France.
2. Institut d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences et des techniques (UMR8590), CNRS and Panthéon-Sorbonne University, France.

Contents

1 Introduction: The Centrality of Immunity in Biology and Medicine	1
2 Immunity: A Matter of Defense?	3
3 The Unity of the Individual: Self–Nonself, Autoimmunity, Tolerance, and Symbiosis	13
4 Cancer as a Deunification of the Individual	29
5 Neuroimmunology: The Intimate Dialogue between the Nervous System and the Immune System	43
References	64