

**The Institute of Philosophy and Psychology  
“Constantin Rădulescu-Motru” – Romanian Academy**

**Research Seminar**

**International Workshop**

**Philosophical Psychology in the 19th Century**

**Friday, 24 May 2024, 10:00–14:00**

**– Council Room of the Psychology Section of I.F.P.A.R.  
(Left Wing, 3rd floor) –**

**Session I** Chair: Ion TĂNĂSESCU

**10:00 – 11:30** Invited lecture: Eric S. NELSON (The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology), *Wilhelm Dilthey’s Early Structural Psychology*

**11:30 – 12:10** Rodica Croitoru, (IFPAR) *The Critique of Rational Psychology and the Psychological Paralogism*

**12:10 – 12:30** Coffee Break

**Session II** Chair: Eric S. NELSON

**12:30 – 13:10** Tinca Prunea (IFPAR), *Kant’s Lectures on Psychology from a Mystical Point of View. A Decisive Controversy at the End of the Nineteenth Century*

**13:10 – 13:50** Claudiu Baciú (IFPAR), *Images and Consciousness in Ludwig Klages*

**13:50 – 14:30** Ion Tănăsescu (IFPAR), *Consciousness as Part and Whole: The Program of Brentanian Descriptive Psychology and of His Philosophy in General. A Deductive Approach*

## Abstracts

### **Eric S Nelson (invited speaker, HKUST) *Wilhelm Dilthey's Early Structural Psychology***

Dilthey's innovative structural psychology has remained controversial since its early reception and remains frequently misunderstood. While naturalistic readers interpret it as aligned with an idealistic or dualist denial of nature, philosophers of spirit (and their phenomenological and hermeneutical heirs) interpret it as overly naturalistic and positivistic. By returning to Dilthey's early psychological program, this paper reconstructs it as part of his transformation of Kant's critical philosophy and develops an alternative interpretation that better accounts for the complexity of his psychology that structurally links and differentiates the human individual as both a natural bodily organism and as a first-person autobiographical participant in its own life. Dilthey's analysis begins with the naturalistic self-interpretation of psychology and the sciences. Its immanent and skeptical critique discloses how naturalistic explanatory strategies lead to aporias and fail to adequately explain the relational self-reflexive awareness and sociality of consciousness. His analysis of the emergent structural psychological and social conditions of the first-person participant perspective and its interactive sociality entails that such structures cannot be adequately explained by reducing them to their pre-structural naturalistic elements. Dilthey's psychology adopted a modified Kantian model that reinterpreted transcendental conditions as immanent structural conditions and rejected the bifurcation of form and content, sensibility and consciousness, and the transcendental and the empirical for the sake of a gradation and developmental model that could clarify the continuity and differentiation of nature and spirit.

### **Rodica Croitoru, (IFPAR) *The Critique of Rational Psychology and the Psychological Paralogism***

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant contributes to the critique of rational psychology by highlighting the intensive size of the soul and arguing that it is responsible for the degree of reality of the faculties of the soul and for existence in general. This degree may progressively decrease to nothingness. This way, a substance can be transformed into nothing, not by decomposition, but through a gradual loss of forces. This observation proved to be consonant with further clinical and empirical observations about the human being and about its vital capacities. At the same time it contributed to the decline of psychology as a general science of the human soul, especially focussing to different aspects of the I/soul/psyche in relationship with human life.

### **Tinca Prunea (IFPAR), *Kant's Lectures on Psychology from a Mystical Point of View. A Decisive Controversy at the End of the Nineteenth Century***

In his *Lectures on Metaphysics* edited by Pölitz, Kant seems to contradict the views he defended in the *Dreams of a Spirit Seer* and to hold that Swedenborg's theses on the autonomy of the intelligible world and on its difference from the sensible world are "quite sublime" (*sehr erhaben*). He also acknowledges that Swedenborg was right to argue for the existence of a spiritual relationship between the human soul and a spiritual community ("spiritual natures") that remains undisclosed to our senses only owing to the limits of our intuition, which prevents us from becoming aware of it during our earthly life. Moreover, he insists that death is indeed the end of the union between the soul and the body, but not the end of the human being as such. In this talk, I will examine an audacious and seemingly outrageous interpretation put forward

by Carl Du Prel, who at the end of the nineteenth century brought to light these Kantian statements and argued not only for Kant's affinity with Swedenborg's standpoint but also for Kant's mysticism. Du Prel's interpretation of Kant's *Lectures on Psychology* would initiate one of the most important controversies of the time, a controversy that proved crucial for Kantian studies due to its influence on the edition and reception of Kant's manuscripts (*Nachlass*) and to its emphasis on Kant's strong – if not mystical – decidedly metaphysical convictions.

**Claudiu Baci** (IFPAR), *Images and Consciousness in Ludwig Klages*

One of the thinkers who, in the wake of Nietzsche, criticized reason in the name of life, soul, and emotions, Ludwig Klages is not only a very analytical thinker able to approach critically, in a systematic manner, topics of phenomenology, ontology, or even science but also a creative thinker who proposes a metaphysical view that endeavors to overcome the post-Kantian bracketing of the world. A representative himself of *Lebensphilosophie*, Klages considers that the static structure of consciousness - which he calls 'spirit,' and which corresponds to what we usually call 'concept' - is what has created the worldview that has led the Western human being into the present profound rift with reality, and with himself too. Our presentation will first show some of Klages' arguments concerning the misconceptions that made possible such an overvaluation of concepts as fundamental instruments of the human mind. Secondly, we will present his response to this rationalist bias and prejudice, namely his theory about the 'reality of images.' The latter are not conceived of as mirror-like reflections of external reality but as highly significant 'expressions' of this reality, allowing us a specific metaphysical knowledge of it. What is more, as such 'expressions,' images do not inform us - this is the role of the concept - but rather, they 'build' us (somewhat in the classical sense of the German *Bildung* and also *Bildungsroman*) and are the real profound source of our (changing) truths. On this point, Klages abandons the classical view of truth as correspondence that we inherited from Aristotle, proposing a theory in which, although the human being is receptive towards the external world, he is not conceived of as immutable or endowed with an intellectual grid that passes unchanged through the ages.

**Ion Tănăsescu** (IFPAR), *Consciousness as Part and Whole: The Program of Brentanian Descriptive Psychology and of His Philosophy in General. A Deductive Approach*

The presentation will highlight the main differences between Franz Brentano's empirical and descriptive psychologies. For this purpose, I will start from the characterization of Brentano's descriptive psychology as an analytical approach which aims at resolving consciousness into its real parts, the mental acts, and which further aims to apply the analytic, distinction-making process to these parts until it reaches the ultimate parts, called by Brentano "elements." As far as these parts are concerned, no further distinction can be made. There are parts obtained by determinative enriching distinctions: the logical parts, the mutually pervading parts, the parts of the intentional pair of correlates, and what Brentano calls parts obtained by a modifying distinction, e.g., "colour" as the modifying part of the seen colour. Also presented will be the main methodical moments by which these parts are obtained, on the one hand and, on the other hand, are combined within his descriptive psychology.