

**The Institute of Philosophy and Psychology “Constantin RădulescuMotru” – Romanian  
Academy  
Department of History of Western Philosophy**

## **International Conference**

### **The Idea of Philosophy as Science within 19th Century Thinking**

**16 – 17 September 2021  
Online via Google Meets**

#### **Thursday 16 September 2021**

**11:45 – 12:00** Joining the meeting via conference link  
Opening words

**Session I** (Chair: Alexandru Bejinariu)

**12:00 – 12:50** Plenary lecture: Michel BOURDEAU (*CNSR, Paris*) — What Do We Need:  
A More Scientific Philosophy or a More Philosophical Science?

**12:50 – 13:30** Marius Augustin DRĂGHICI (*Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian  
Academy*) — On Kant’s Metaphysics as Science

**13:30 – 14:10** Marian PANAIT (*Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy*) — Mill  
and Newman on Science

**14:10 – 14:30 Coffee Break**

**Session II** (Chair: Michel Bourdeau)

**14:30 – 15:20** Plenary lecture: Nicholas CAPALDI (*Loyola University, New Orleans*) —  
Who Needs Modern Philosophy?

**15:20 – 16:00** Arnaud DEWALQUE (*University of Liège*) — Bentham’s Analytic Method:  
Toward a Refined Empiricism

**16:00 – 16:40** Constantin STOENESCU (*University of Bucharest*) — The law of inseparable  
association by Mill and its role in the edification of his science of human nature

**16:40 – 17:10 Coffee Break**

**Session III** (Chair: Nicholas Capaldi)

- 17:10 – 18:00** Plenary lecture: Susan KRANZ GABRIEL (*St. Anselm College, New Hampshire*) — Could Philosophy be an Empirical Science? Brentano vs. Wittgenstein
- 18:00 – 18:40** Ion TĂNĂSESCU (*Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy*) — Experience and Induction – Reconstructing Brentano’s Psychology in the Light of his Fourth Habilitation Thesis
- 18:40 – 19:20** Carlo IERNA (*Radboud University*) — Philosophy as Science as a Core Feature of the School of Brentano

**Friday 17 September 2021**

**10:45 – 11:00** Joining the meeting via conference link

**Session IV** (Chair: Ion Tănăsescu)

- 11:00 – 11:50** Plenary lecture: Riccardo MARTINELLI (*University of Trieste*) — Carl Stumpf on Philosophy and the Sciences
- 11:50 – 12:30** Alexandru BEJINARIU (*Romanian Society for Phenomenology*) — How (not) to Establish Phenomenology as a Science. Husserl’s Concept of Descriptive Psychology in the *Logical Investigations*
- 12:30 – 13:10** Mircea DUMITRU (*Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy*) — The Sense-Meaning Distinction in Frege and Its Role in Founding a Scientific Conception of Philosophy

**13:10 – 13:30 Coffee Break**

**Session V** (Chair: Riccardo Martinelli)

- 13:30 – 14:20** Plenary lecture: Eric S. NELSON (*The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology*) — Philosophy as Science, Worldview, and Self-Reflection in Dilthey
- 14:20 – 15:00** Alina NOVEANU (*Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj*) — The Science and the Double Knowledge: Schopenhauer’s Key to “Philosophical Truth”
- 15:00 – 15:40** Cyril MCDONNELL (*Maynooth University*) — Kierkegaard’s Existential Approach to Ontology and His Objections to St Thomas, Hegel, Natural Theology and Natural Science
- 15:40 – 16:20** Claudiu BACIU (*Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy*) — From Kantian Philosophy as *Wissenschaft* to Nietzschean Philosophy as *Gaya Scienza*

## Abstracts

### **What Do We Need: A More Scientific Philosophy or a More Philosophical Science?**

Michel BOURDEAU (CNRS, Paris)

What sets Comte apart from all those who wanted to make philosophy more scientific is that he also wanted to make science more philosophical. He studied at the Ecole Polytechnique, and his starting point was not philosophy, but science: he found the state of science in his time unsatisfactory.

To understand his position, we must consider the way in which the contrast between natural philosophy and moral philosophy develops according to the law of three states. The split between natural and moral philosophy coincides with the transition from the theological to the metaphysical state, operated by the Greeks; and it is abolished with the advent of positive philosophy. Then, science becomes philosophy and philosophy becomes scientific.

In this restoration of the unity destroyed by the Greeks, sociology plays an essential role; Comte sees its creation as a capital event in the history of humanity. Sociology is the final science. With it, human, i.e., social, phenomena, which had remained the domain of philosophy, become the object of science. In other words, sociology has a twofold status: it is a science like any other one, the science of social phenomena just as biology is the science of vital phenomena; but as the final science, sociology presupposes and recapitulate all the others. With it, there is only one science, human science. In this respect, the distinction between science and philosophy does not apply anymore. Social science is at the same time social philosophy.

Comte's position is thus inseparable from a concern for the unity of science. What characterises philosophy is not only attention to mankind but also the concern for unity, the search for generality and synoptic views; and if science must become more philosophical, it is to fight against the undesirable effects due to the increasing division of labour and specialisation that continues to prevail in the scientific world.

### **On Kant's Metaphysics as Science**

Marius Augustin DRĂGHICI (*Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy*)

Imm. Kant considered that his transcendental philosophy came, somehow, too early for the thought of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as evidenced by the misunderstandings of his contemporaries after the publication of the first edition of the *Critique* (1781). Thus, the Kantian maxim according to which the only chance of metaphysics requires its transformation into science could not but influence the 19<sup>th</sup> century—we think not only of Comte and Husserl, but of neo-Kantian schools in general.

Kant's constant interest in the contemporary sciences (Newton's natural science and Euclidian geometry) becomes obvious particularly starting with the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), especially with the attention paid to method in sciences. For in Kant's

view metaphysics may become a science solely if it passes the test of the *Critique*'s exam, there are some essential questions of interest for the 19<sup>th</sup> century that can be formulated starting from the achievements of the *Critique* itself: Does the path of metaphysics to science start only from our subjectivity, or is the reverse path also relevant? How much did the Kantian *a priori* perspective influence the relationship of metaphysics to contemporary sciences? What is the relationship of Kant's "general metaphysics" with the sciences of his time in the context of the problem of "apriorism – empiricism"?

If we understand the structure and content of the B *Critique* in the shape of the "experiment of pure reason," as Kant set forth his idea of philosophy as science in the Preface of the B edition, we can see that in the B *Critique* he managed to work on metaphysics what he had seen in the sciences.

### **Mill and Newman on Science**

Marian PANAIT (*Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy*)

I deal with the main uses of the terms *science*, *philosophy* and *theology* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries so as to outline a frame of reference for the analysis of the situation in the nineteenth century.

I distinguish two fundamental lines of evolution for the re-signification of the mentioned terms. The first one is the development of science as a study of nature from Newton's *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* to Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. The second one is philosophical reflection on this scientific development; the main contributor is Comte with his *Cours de philosophie positive*. As a result of these evolutions, science is fully defined as an experimental science of nature capable of quantitatively formulating the knowledge of natural laws.

In Britain—inspired by Comte's positivism and in critical dialogue with it—Mill is developing an inductive method to explain the success of science in discovering the laws of nature from observation. I'm analyzing Mill's relevant positions.

The analyzed evolutions eliminated the traditional paradigm about science, philosophy and theology and established the one in which we work today. The reaction of the Catholic Church must be understood in the broader context of its historical positioning towards science as an experimental knowledge of nature. I sketch this context.

Concerning the new understanding of science Cardinal Newman positions himself on two main lines. The first one is his attitude towards the evolution of natural science; matter in which—supported by the exegesis of the Alexandrian Fathers—he sees no contradiction between the results of science and the biblical account. The second is his effort to construct a rational theology as an objective science, a path opened by Thomas and embraced among others in the nineteenth century by Lacordaire or Brentano.

## **Who Needs Modern Philosophy?**

Nicholas CAPALDI (*Loyola University, New Orleans*)

The unravelling of modern philosophy first became visible in the eighteenth century when we saw the introduction of the distinction between natural philosophy and moral philosophy. The nineteenth century becomes a watershed when Kant's transcendental idealism would be seen by Hegel as bequeathing to posterity the challenge to overcome the dualisms of reason and world, subject and object, freedom and necessity. In the nineteenth century, we witnessed the surrender of natural philosophy to the physical sciences, the replacement of moral philosophy by the social sciences, and the evolution of metaphysics into new forms of religion, social activism, or some form of aesthetic experience. What appears, subsequently, to be the great aim of the entire intellectual world is to construct and implement a social technology to rival the success of our physical technology.

What is the role, if any, of the discipline of philosophy in the present intellectual universe? Whatever happened to the discipline that wondered if we were asking the right questions? Or is the latter activity some form of intellectual pathology that needs to be diagnosed and explained away?

The aim of my paper is to review both how and why thinking in the nineteenth century got off on the wrong track and, at the same time, to suggest how it might find its way back.

## **Bentham's Analytic Method: Toward a Refined Empiricism**

Arnaud DEWALQUE (*University of Liège*)

Whereas Bentham's method of paraphrasis is known to have anticipated the later use of transformative analyses and contextual definitions in analytic philosophy (Wisdom 1931; Quine 1969; Beaney 2007; Bronzo 2014), little is known about its relation to J.S. Mill's empiricist research program. In this paper I submit that Bentham's method is a crucial link between classical empiricism and the more refined variety of empiricism developed in the Mill-Brentano tradition. According to classical empiricists, all complex ideas (e.g., "centaur") are to be analyzed/resolved into their constituent ideas (e.g., "man," "horse") and all constituent ideas ultimately derive from outer or inner experience. These claims convey a certain conception of *analysandum*, analysis and *analysans*: it is typically assumed that (i) *analysanda* are complex ideas, (ii) "analysis" means "decomposition" and (iii) admissible *analysans* ultimately involve a limited set of experiential ingredients. Drawing on Mill and Brentano, I argue that Bentham introduced a richer, more liberal view of *analysandum* and analysis while sticking to a fairly narrow, conservative view of *analysans*. To illustrate this point, I refer to Mill's 1838 critical appraisal of Bentham, according to which the latter rightly applied the analytic method to *abstracta* such as moral and legal notions (e.g., "obligation") and conceived of the relevant analysis in terms of *paraphrasing* of entire sentences, but failed to offer satisfying paraphrases due to an overly narrow view of the experiential ingredients involved (in his view: pain and pleasure). The paper closes with the suggestion that Mill and Brentano went one step further by allowing a greater variety of experiential ingredients into the *analysans*.

## **The law of inseparable association by Mill and its role in the edification of his science of human nature**

Constantin STOENESCU (*University of Bucharest*)

In his book about Hamilton, John St Mill focused his research in Chapter XIV on the way in which Hamilton and Mansel dispose the Law of Inseparable Association. Hamilton has written a Dissertation on the Laws of Association where he distinguishes between two theories of perception, one which claims that perception gives us a general knowledge of the wholes, another one which asserts that we obtain firstly a particular knowledge of the parts. The first theory is supported by Hamilton himself, the second by Stewart and James Mill. Mansel developed some of Hamilton's ideas. John St. Mill tried to find some weak points in Hamilton's single associationist principle and to save the traditional associationism. The questions are if Mill's approach is clear, without ambiguities, and robust, namely, able to offer a good explanation. I will propose in this lecture some critical assessments regarding his attempt. Moreover, is this approach in accordance with his sketch of the science of human nature from the Sixth Book of his Logic?

## **Could Philosophy be an Empirical Science? Brentano vs. Wittgenstein**

Susan KRANZ GABRIEL (*St. Anselm College, New Hampshire*)

As is well known, Franz Brentano claimed that, "the true method of philosophy is none other than that of the science of nature." There is more than one way to construe this claim; for instance, Oskar Kraus's German version has a modern tone, pointing to the method of the "natural sciences," but based on Brentano's Latin one could think more in terms of the Thomistic sense of a "science of nature," in the spirit of Aristotle's *Physics*. Either way, however, the claim is striking for a number of reasons. For one, philosophy has traditionally dealt with questions that science tends to avoid, such as the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the problem of evil. Brentano himself insisted both that philosophy's method should be scientific in the sense of empirical science, *and* that philosophy should pursue those questions that empirical science typically shuns. Thus he agreed with Auguste Comte in pressing for positive science but disagreed when Comte evicted metaphysics and theology from the positive realm. Among philosophers inspired by work done in the 19<sup>th</sup> century taking a scientific approach to philosophy there are to be included not only some of Brentano's students, such as Husserl, but also the Bertrand Russell of logical atomism, and his student/colleague, Ludwig Wittgenstein. Setting aside the members and the work of the Vienna Circle, who also fit this mold in one way or another, I propose to examine the question, whether philosophy can be an empirical science, by contrasting Brentano's view with Wittgenstein's. The Viennese engineer-turned-philosopher devised a way of thinking about philosophical questions which retained the precision of a science but limited the scope of such questions to the examination of certain grammatical puzzles. By contrast, although he shunned the system-building of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel, Brentano remained mindful of the big picture in a way that Wittgenstein seems to rule out. In this paper, I first present Brentano's view, that philosophy is a science,

as it is contained in his early lecture, “Auguste Comte and Positive Philosophy.” Then I present a reply in the spirit of Wittgenstein. In conclusion I attempt to sort out the truth of the matter.

### **Experience and Induction – Reconstructing Brentano’s Psychology in the Light of his Fourth Habilitation Thesis**

Ion TĂNĂSESCU (*Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy*)

Brentano’s fourth Habilitation thesis holds: “The true method of philosophy is none other than that of the natural sciences.” In the later lectures Brentano gives at the University of Vienna, he continues to maintain this thesis and further argues that the natural sciences and the humanities have the same method. However, this methodological monism fits well with the central idea of his methodological particularism: The scientist has to elaborate his methods according to the specificity of the phenomena under investigation and to the difficulties that need to be overcome when approaching them.

In my presentation I focus on Brentano’s psychology and try to highlight what the fourth habilitation thesis and methodological particularism mean in his empirical and descriptive psychology. Both psychologies are based on inner experience. The former takes as its starting point the datum of inner perception, finds the main features and classes of psychic phenomena, and then follows the model of natural science by trying to inductively discover the laws of succession and coexistence of mental phenomena. The latter starts too from the inner perception but puts aside the idea of discovering the laws of succession of phenomena. Instead, it pursues the goal to clarify the date of inner perception using what Brentano calls “noticing.” Besides, the descriptive psychologist or psychognost also explores the laws of the way in which the elements of consciousness are connected. In both cases, the starting point is inner experience, and the psychologist works with inductive procedures without abandoning methodological monism and methodological particularism.

### **Philosophy as Science as a Core Feature of the School of Brentano**

Carlo IERNA (*Radboud University*)

On July 14, 1866 Brentano stepped up to the pulpit to defend his thesis that the true method of philosophy is none other than that of the natural sciences. This became the north star of his school and rallied the first students to his flag. However, it is equally well known that few of his students remained orthodox followers of his position and many founded their own schools and movements, to the point that they would eventually overshadow their common teacher. It is unclear what remains of Brentano’s original ideal among the diverse approaches of phenomenology or Gestalt psychology.

In my contribution I will provide two perspectives on this problem: one that unifies the School of Brentano with respect to the foundational issue of the scientific method itself and one that identifies the School of Brentano among other attempts to do “scientific philosophy.” In both perspectives, the role of Brentano himself will be shown to be ultimately determining.

For the first perspective I will zoom in on their common approach in the philosophy of mathematics and the role of mathematics in the scientific method. For the second perspective I will zoom out on the larger Aristotelian Renaissance in 19th century Germanophone philosophy and point out the specific distinguishing characteristic of Brentano's approach against that background. In both cases the status of psychology is pivotal and the result will show that despite their differences, Brentano's students have an underlying commonality in their scientific approach to philosophical problems.

### **Carl Stumpf on Philosophy and the Sciences**

Riccardo MARTINELLI (*University of Trieste*)

The long list of Stumpf's writings comprises essays in philosophy and phenomenology along with experimental investigations in the field of psychology (especially psychology of music, child and animal psychology, psychology of genius). Capitalizing his scientific training with the physicist Wilhelm Weber and the mathematician Felix Klein, he also wrote about statistics, physical acoustics, phonetics and ethnomusicology. Coherently with this commitment, Stumpf explicitly theorizes that philosophy should benefit from a close relation with the natural sciences. In his view, philosophy is a post-science (*Nachwissenschaft*), methodologically independent of both natural sciences and the *Geisteswissenschaften*—two main groups respectively founded on the analysis of appearances and of mental functions. Accordingly, Stumpf defends a methodological dualism, in which psychology (not philosophy) has a somehow mediating position: it belongs to the *Geisteswissenschaften*, but it also applies some of the typical methodologies of the natural sciences, including experimentation.

### **How (not) to Establish Phenomenology as a Science. Husserl's Concept of Descriptive Psychology in the *Logical Investigations***

Alexandru BEJINARIU (*Romanian Society for Phenomenology*)

Phenomenology is in its original design one of the major actualizations of the idea of philosophy as a science, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Established in Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (LI) of 1900-01, phenomenology had the general epistemological task of clarifying the fundamental concepts of logic, in order to pave the way for the discipline of pure logic (*reine Logik*) and settle the endless discords and controversies raging in the field of logic. Despite Husserl's already growing divergence from Brentanian orthodoxy, at the time of his first edition of LI he still famously determines phenomenology as *descriptive psychology*, only to decisively contest this designation in the next years to come. In my paper, I deal with this notorious fluctuation at the heart of Husserl's effort to establish phenomenology as a science. More exactly, by considering along with the LI other Husserlian textual sources of that period, I endeavour to better circumscribe Husserl's notion of "descriptive psychology" and its connection with what Brentano called "psychognosy" in his Viennese lectures (to some of which Husserl attended). Does Husserl refer precisely to Brentano's fundamental science of descriptive psychology or does he rather employ a wider understanding of the term? If the latter

is the case, then which are the main points of departure from Brentano's method and what is further the relation of the actual Brentanian descriptive psychology to Husserl's phenomenology of the first edition of *LI*? Concerning this last question, I finally advance a hypothesis regarding a somewhat still unclear connection between Husserlian phenomenology and Brentanian descriptive psychology from the standpoint of the latter's key methodological, non-inductive moment of intuitive grasping general laws, and I briefly explore its significance for the status of the *a priori* in Husserl's development of phenomenology as a science.

### **The Sense-Meaning Distinction in Frege and Its Role in Founding a Scientific Conception of Philosophy**

Mircea DUMITRU (*Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy*)

### **Philosophy as Science, Worldview, and Self-Reflection in Dilthey**

Eric S. NELSON (*The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology*)

Wilhelm Dilthey is often inadequately portrayed as rejecting the idea of philosophy as a rigorous science for the sake of advocating a philosophy of affectively formed worldviews. In this paper, I trace how Dilthey advocates within limits and critiques the overextension of both definitions in his writings on the "philosophy of philosophy," and proposes a third alternative that encompasses science and worldview. First, Dilthey contends against rationalism and idealism that the idea of philosophy as a rigorous systematic science has a reflective orientational validity that any given system of philosophy aspires to while necessarily failing to realize. Pure systematic knowledge is the goal of scientific discourses guiding and legitimating the criticism of its various finite incomplete historical forms. Second, philosophy is born from and in turn informs the feeling of life (*Lebensgefühl*) and life- and worldview. Although a bare feeling of life, an elemental mood, and an unreflective worldview can be expressed in a variety of aesthetic and cultural formations, they are not yet by themselves philosophical. The opinions of individuals and the common beliefs of peoples are expressions that only begin to take on philosophical form through life's critical self-reflection (*Selbstbesinnung*). Implicit self-reflexive relations and understandings are made explicit and transformed in self-reflection and interpretation. Third, it is in life's critical self-reflection about itself and its issues that ancient Greek philosophy arose in the exemplary figure of Socrates and through which philosophy is renewed. Dilthey accordingly proposes interpreting the ideas of philosophy as science and worldview through this third modality of philosophy as philosophy that analyzes the reflexive and reflective contexts, conditions, and limits of science, worldview, and self-reflection itself.

## **The Science and the Double Knowledge: Schopenhauer's Key to "Philosophical Truth"**

Alina NOVEANU (*Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj*)

"As all proofs are syllogisms, we must first seek for a new truth not a proof, but direct evidence, and only so long as this is wanting is the proof to be furnished for the time being. No science can be capable of demonstration throughout any more than a building can stand in the air. All its proofs must refer to something perceived, and hence no longer capable of proof, for the whole world of reflection rests on, and is rooted in, the world of perception. All ultimate, i.e., original, *evidence* is one of *intuitive perception*, as the word already discloses [...]."

(*The World as Will and Representation*, WWR, Transl. E.F.J Payne, 65)

Schopenhauer finds the key to the epistemological problem of the tension between intuitive perception/evidence and the scientific capability of demonstration in the "double knowledge" (*doppelte Erkenntnis*) offered by the own body. On one hand, the body can be studied as object between objects and be scientifically represented, on the other, it is a direct experience of what he calls (as *denominatio a potiori*) the will, as the body actually *is* identified as its *objectivity* (*Objektivität des Willens*). The identity of the body and the instance of will is neither proofed logically nor is it deduced transcendently. Schopenhauer describes his approach as an attempt to build his demonstrations "organic and not like a chain" (cf. WWR, xii, xiii), i.e., letting the parts of a thought construction relate to each other as those of an organism. In this sense, Schopenhauer's "organic" method, which is difficult to classify, can be understood as an anticipation of a hermeneutic-phenomenological description procedure.

"Therefore, in a certain sense, it can also be said that the will is knowledge *a priori* of the body, and that the body is knowledge *a posteriori* of the will." (WWR, 100)

## **Kierkegaard's Existential Approach to Ontology and His Objections to St Thomas, Hegel, Natural Theology and Natural Science**

Cyril MCDONNELL (*Maynooth University*)

Like St Thomas, Kant and Hegel, Kierkegaard, as a Christian, is a firm believer in the existence of the God of the old and new Testaments of the Bible. Unlike St Thomas and Hegel, however, for Kierkegaard the existence of this God is solely a matter of faith. God's non-existence is a real possibility. In this, Kierkegaard agrees with Kant and with Kant's philosophical arguments against any alleged proof of the existence of God in natural theology, whether such is arrived at through the old or new kind of science in metaphysics elaborated by St Thomas or Hegel. Yet Kierkegaard fervently rejects Kant's philosophical faith in any rational science of human existence and the idolizing of rationality in natural science in the study of human existence. Kierkegaard's philosophy of human existence, then, stands in direct confrontation with the dominant views on science during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This paper outlines Kierkegaard's philosophical reasons against proving the existence of anything, God included, and the "levelling of human existence" that unfolds in the rising natural-scientific spirit of the times. It argues that Kierkegaard's philosophy of the absurd and concrete individual human existence calls into question both the rationality and universality of the kind of science that he found in traditional Thomistic metaphysics, Hegelian absolute idealism and the positivism of natural

science. Kierkegaard, in other words, objects to all forms of natural and metaphysical science, before or after Kant, as appropriate in explaining the significance of the existence of anything, human or divine, but of the individual human being's existence.

From Kantian Philosophy as *Wissenschaft* to Nietzschean Philosophy as *Gaya Scienza*  
**Claudiu BACIU** (*Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy*)

Kant's endeavor to establish philosophy as science sowed the seeds for the destruction of the traditional view of philosophy, understood as the queen of sciences or the science of ultimate principles. Developing his concept of "phenomenon," the post-Kantian philosophy of the 19th century reached a new understanding of subjectivity, different from both the Kantian and the traditional one. This understanding could no longer be reconciled with the idea of philosophy as science. Nietzsche's portrayal of philosophy as the "gay science" is an attempt to cope with this new historical moment, in which, because age-old Truth had transformed into mere perspective, nihilism, as the immediate consequence, needed to be overcome.