

REVUE ROUMAINE DE PHILOSOPHIE

Tome 59

N° 1

Janvier – Juin 2015

SOMMAIRE

CAUSE ET VERITÉ CHEZ MALEBRANCHE (Editeur invité : Bruno Pinchard)

BRUNO PINCHARD (Université Lyon III, France), Aperçus sur un malebranchisme vivant	5
CRISTIAN MOISUC (Université Alexandru Ioan Cuza, Iași, Roumanie), La représentation et l'attention. La conduite de la cause occasionnelle de la grâce	17
RAFFAELE CARBONE (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, Italie), L'imagination et le système des facultés de l'âme chez Malebranche	37
CLAUDIU GAIU, La christianisation du Confucianisme : entre la métaphysique de l'oratoire et la pratique de la Compagnie de Jésus	51

KANT ET SA PHILOSOPHIE EN ROUMANIE

TITUS LATES (Institut de Philosophie et Psychologie «Constantin Rădulescu-Motru» de l'Académie Roumaine, București, Roumanie), Kant dans la philosophie roumaine. Les premières 150 années	63
MONA MAMULEA (Institut de Philosophie et Psychologie «Constantin Rădulescu-Motru» de l'Académie Roumaine, București, Roumanie), Un monisme neutre sur la base de Kant: Constantin Rădulescu-Motru	73
CLAUDIU BACIU (Institut de Philosophie et Psychologie «Constantin Rădulescu-Motru» de l'Académie Roumaine, București, Roumanie), L'être et fonction dans la philosophie d'Immanuel Kant et de Constantin Noica	85

ETHIQUE

HENRIETA ANIȘOARA ȘERBAN (Institut de Philosophie et Psychologie «Constantin Rădulescu-Motru» de l'Académie Roumaine, București, Roumanie), Le royaume de la peur. Sur l'état de la nature chez Hobbes	99
--	----

CECILIA TOHĂNEANU (Université de București, Roumaine), Est-ce que la déontologie pluraliste de Ross pourrait résoudre la question des devoirs incompatibles?	109
--	-----

NOTES PHILOSOPHIQUES

ALEXANDRU BOBOC (Académie Roumaine, București), Sémantique et Ontologie. Interprétation des «mondes possibles»	125
VIOREL VIZUREANU (Institut de Philosophie et Psychologie «Constantin Rădulescu-Motru» de l'Académie Roumaine, București, Roumanie), La position «théorique» de Foucault à l'égard de l'espace: remarques générales et quelques perspectives différentes	131
MARIUS DOBRE (Institut de Philosophie et Psychologie «Constantin Rădulescu-Motru» de l'Académie Roumaine, București, Roumanie), La pensée critique. Quelques remarques	145
ALEXANDRU ȘTEFĂNESCU (Université Chrétienne Dimitrie Cantemir, București, Roumanie), La philosophie de la rhétorique dans l'ancienne Grèce : de Homère à Platon	155
EUGENIU NISTOR (Université Petru Maior, Târgu-Mureș, Roumanie), Les débuts philosophiques de Lucian Blaga et les influences de la pensée occidentale	167
MIRCEA MARICA, En défendant la signification finale de l'évidence chez Husserl: l'apodicticité ne peut pas impliquer l'adéquation	175

COMPTE RENDU

Mircea Eliade between the History of Religions and the Fall into History, edited by Mihaela Gligor, Cluj Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2012, 204 pages (Romina Surugiu)	199
--	-----

IN MEMORIAM

Walter Biemel (1918 – 2015)	201
-----------------------------------	-----

REVUE ROUMAINE DE PHILOSOPHIE

Vol. 59

Issue 1

January – June 2015

CONTENTS

CAUSE AND TRUTH AT MALEBRANCHE

(Guest editor: Bruno Pinchard)

BRUNO PINCHARD (Lyon III University, France), Overview onto a Living Malebranchism	5
CRISTIAN MOISUC (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Iași, Romania), Representation and Attention. The Trajectory of the Occasional Cause of the Grace	17
RAFFAELE CARBONE (Federico II University, Naples, Italy), Malebranche on Imagination and the System of the Faculties of the Soul	37
CLAUDIU GAIU, The Christianization of Confucianism: between the Metaphysics of Oratory and the Practice of the Company of Jesus	51

KANT AND HIS PHILOSOPHY IN ROMANIA

TITUS LATES (Constantin Rădulescu-Motru Institute for Philosophy and Psychology, Romanian Academy, București, Romania), Kant in the Romanian Philosophy. The First 150 Years	63
MONA MAMULEA (Constantin Rădulescu-Motru Institute for Philosophy and Psychology, Romanian Academy, București, Romania), A Neutral Monism Based on Kant: Constantin Rădulescu-Motru	73
CLAUDIU BACIU (Constantin Rădulescu-Motru Institute for Philosophy and Psychology, Romanian Academy, București, Romania), Being and Function in the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant and Constantin Noica	85

ETHICS

HENRIETA ANIȘOARA ȘERBAN (Constantin Rădulescu-Motru Institute for Philosophy and Psychology, Romanian Academy, București, Romania), The Reign of Fear, on the State of Nature at Hobbes	99
--	----

CECILIA TOHĂNEANU (University of București, Romania), Could Ross’s Pluralist Deontology Solve the Conflicting Duties Problem?	109
---	-----

PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES

ALEXANDRU BOBOC (Romanian Academy, București), Semantic and Ontology. Interpretation and “Possible Worlds”	125
VIOREL VIZUREANU (Constantin Rădulescu-Motru Institute for Philosophy and Psychology, Romanian Academy, București, Romania), Presenting Foucault’s “Theoretical” Position Concerning Space: General Remarks and Some Different Perspectives	131
MARIUS DOBRE (Constantin Rădulescu-Motru Institute for Philosophy and Psychology, Romanian Academy, București, Romania), Critical Thinking. Some Landmarks	145
ALEXANDRU ȘTEFĂNESCU (Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University, Bucharest, Romania), Philosophy of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece: From Homer to Plato	155
EUGENIU NISTOR (Petru Maior University, Târgu-Mureș, Romania), Philosophical Beginnings of Lucian Błaga and the Influences of Western Thought	167
MIRCEA MARICA, In Defence of Husserl’s Late Account of Evidence: Apodicticity Need not Imply Adequacy	175

BOOK REVIEW

Mircea Eliade between the History of Religions and the Fall into History, edited by Mihaela Gligor, Cluj Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2012, 204 pages (Romina Surugiu)	199
--	-----

IN MEMORIAM

Walter Biemel (1918 – 2015)	201
-----------------------------------	-----

A NEUTRAL MONISM BASED ON KANT: CONSTANTIN RĂDULESCU-MOTRU

MONA MAMULEA

Abstract. The neutral monism suggested by Constantin Rădulescu-Motru was a theoretical frame intended to match the general idea of Kant's apriorism with the results reached by physics and psychology at the beginning of the 20th century. I will show that Motru's hypothesis, although he called it "realism", can be better described as a phenomenal scientific ontology based on an understanding of metaphysics as a science of everything.

Key words: transcendental aesthetic; consciousness in general; empirical consciousness; psychophysical parallelism; phenomenal ontology; scientific ontology.

1. A NEED OF RECONCILIATION

At the beginning of the 20th century, a Romanian philosopher trained at Wundt's laboratory in Leipzig attempted to provide an explanation of consciousness so as to integrate both Kant's apriorism and the concept of consciousness proposed by experimental psychology, i.e. a consciousness which does not occur apart from the mental processes, but is rather a general synthesis of them¹. There was a major discrepancy between the two concepts of consciousness employed by Kant and Wundt respectively. On the one hand, that which made the a priori synthetic judgments possible was the formal unity of transcendental apperception – the very source of the objectivity of knowledge. In Kant's view, the consciousness underlying the objectivity of knowledge was not the empiric, individual consciousness, but an abstract one, a "consciousness in general" (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*). On the other hand, the experimental psychology founded by Wundt employed a concrete, individual concept

Mona Mamulea ✉

Constantin Rădulescu-Motru Institute of Philosophy and Psychology,
Calea 13 Septembrie, nr. 13, sector 5, București, 05711, Romania;
e-mail: monam@institutuldefilosofie.ro

¹ Such an understanding of consciousness had been plainly stated by Wundt (Wilhelm Wundt, *Outlines of Psychology* [1897], Translated by Charles Hubbard Judd, Leipzig, Engelmann, 1897, p. 203).

of consciousness, a consciousness that was subjected to the same conditions as the physical phenomena in general². This concept of consciousness is totally different from Kant's strictly formal transcendental consciousness³ that cannot be an object of experience since it is precisely that which shapes any experience.

Is there a way to devise a philosophical theory of consciousness that preserves both Kant's apriorism and the concept of consciousness used by experimental psychology? This is exactly what Constantin Rădulescu-Motru pursued in 1912 by building a metaphysical explanation according to which physical and mental phenomena are seen as two aspects of one and the same reality which is neither physical, nor mental. One doesn't deal here with an ultimate *transcendent* reality – Motru's monism has nothing in common with objective idealism, for instance. The fundamental reality Motru was talking about is a form of energy subjected to determinism and evolution, and human consciousness (which Motru prefers to refer to as "personality") is the output product of that evolution. Not only that the term "energy" comes from natural science, but the energy itself appears to be the same energy that, in physics, is subject to the laws of transformation and conservation. Unlike the energetics of Ostwald (met by Motru in Leipzig), Motru's energetics conceived human consciousness as more than a simple form of energy amongst others. "Psychic energy" – or "mind energy" – was awarded a status of excellence; it was the superior outcome of the evolution of energy – an energy that is still evolving. Again, unlike Ostwald, whose energetics was seen by the historians of science as the most embarrassing aspect of his work⁴, Motru's energetics was a welcome guest among the local debated theories, even if it had no effect whatsoever and nobody undertook the task to upgrade it⁵.

One thing must be cleared up first. According to his intentions, Motru built his monism *on scientific grounds*. His idea of fundamental reality was not a desperate solution he felt compelled to resort to in order to answer the questions related to the mind–body issue. Motru was familiar with the state of the scientific research at the beginning of the 20th century. In addition to the philosophy and psychophysics lectures he attended in Munich in 1890–1891, he signed up for physics, optical and anthropology ones, being determined to explore in more detail the physical works of Wilhelm Eduard

² *Ibidem*, p. 204.

³ "The given intuition must be subsumed under a concept which determines the form of judging in general with respect to the intuition, connects the empirical consciousness of the latter in a consciousness in general, and thereby furnishes empirical judgments with universal validity; a concept of this kind is a pure *a priori* concept of the understanding, which does nothing but simply determine for an intuition the mode in general in which it can serve for judging" (Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, 4: 300, translated by Gary Hatfield).

⁴ See Bernadette Bensaude-Vincent, "Revisiting the controversy on energetics", in B. Görs, N. Psarros, P. Ziche (eds.), *Wilhelm Ostwald at the Crossroads between Chemistry, Philosophy and Media Culture*, Leipzig, Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2005, p. 14.

⁵ His colleague Ion Petrovici considered him as the first Romanian philosopher that created an original work under Kant's influence (See Ion Petrovici, "Kant și cugetarea românească", in I. Petrovici, *Studii istorico-filosofice*, second edition, Bucharest, Casa Școalelor Publishing House, 1929 [1925], pp. 236–237).

Weber and Gustav Theodor Fechner. Later, in Leipzig (1891–1893), upon Wundt's recommendation, he studied experimental physics, analytical mechanics and infinitesimal calculus⁶. The mere metaphysical speculation over an alleged fundamental reality couldn't be an acceptable option for a young man who was so eager to comprehend all the scientific outcomes of his time. The first edition of *Elemente de metafizică* [*Elements of Metaphysics*] was printed in 1912 (the second definitive edition, on which occasion he added to the title: “on the basis of Kantian philosophy”, was issued on 1928), but as early as 1891 Motru recorded his interest in the methods and principles of science. During his stay in Leipzig, he confided to his mentor in Bucharest, Titu Maiorescu, that his initiation in physics helped him to put aside the need of a “hypothetical substrate”⁷. This being the case, the very energy that started to be increasingly debated in physics became Motru's fundamental reality. While discussing his monist theory, he insisted on making clear that the fundamental reality which he was talking about was well inside “the known universe”; therefore, it was not a transcendent reality and had nothing to do with the traditional monist hypotheses which explained the unity of phenomena by establishing of a “something” (God or “Alpha body”) outside the realm of experience⁸.

Before examining the Kantian background of Motru's neutral monism, I will briefly outline the Kantian atmosphere that he had breathed during his university scholarship in Bucharest.

2. TITU MAIORESCU'S “SCHOOL” OF PHILOSOPHY

Kant's ideas were present in Romanian culture from the very beginning of the philosophical education in Romanian language but they entered the philosophical discourse proper (a great entrance celebrated by extended studies) – only with the philosophers⁹ gathered around Titu Maiorescu¹⁰, most of which considering themselves as Kantian in a broader sense.

In 1874¹¹, Maiorescu started to deliver free lectures at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy in Bucharest, one of his favourite topics being Kant's transcendental

⁶ For more information on Motru's scholarship, see C. Schifirneț, *Constantin Rădulescu-Motru: viața și faptele sale*, Bucharest, Albatros, 2003, Volume I, Chapter VI: “Studii în străinătate”.

⁷ Letter to Titu Maiorescu dated 1st November 1891, in C. Schifirneț, *op. cit.*

⁸ Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, *Elemente de metafizică pe baze kantiane* [1912], in *Personalismul energetic și alte scrieri*, edited by Gh. Al. Cazan, Bucharest, Eminescu Publishing House, 1984, p. 505.

⁹ Amongst them: Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Ion Petrovici, P.P. Negulescu, Mircea Florian.

¹⁰ Titu Maiorescu (1840–1917) was a politician, literary critic, pedagogue and philosopher. He is referred to as the founder of Romanian modern philosophy, but his founding role had less to do with his philosophical writings and more to do with his brilliant university lectures that attracted plenty of attention. His oratory skills undoubtedly contributed to the privileged place Kant had in Romanian culture in the first half of the 20th century.

¹¹ However, Maiorescu was not appointed professor of the Faculty until 1884. Before 1884, Ion Zalomit had been the only professor of philosophy at the newly founded (1864) Faculty of Letters and Philosophy in Bucharest. There are reasons to believe that Zalomit's lectures were familiar with Kant's ideas,

aesthetic. A constant admirer of *Critique of Pure Reason* (but not of Kant's practical philosophy), Maiorescu was held by his disciples as *the* one who brought Kant before a Romanian wide-ranging audience¹². The ideality of space and time became the favourite topic of apprentices, who watched, mesmerized, as the philosophical thinking in action ripped apart the most rooted illusions of common sense¹³. And one of these illusions was the "vulgar" idea, shattered by Kant, that human consciousness reflected reality. The young men around Maiorescu saw themselves as the privileged witnesses of a radical shift in knowledge. But besides being selective with the Kantian theses (even with those related to the much-revered transcendental aesthetic), Maiorescu had his own manner to read Kant, to whom he arrived apparently through Schopenhauer¹⁴. Kant's arguments on a priori forms of sensibility led him to an eccentric "realistic metaphysics of immobility"¹⁵ (Petrovici's term¹⁶) according to which he saw, for instance, in Swedenborg's "extrasensory perceptions" an evidence that supported the idea that time and space had no objective existence – moreover, that they could be "suspended" at certain "moments" and for certain individuals¹⁷. The questions concerning the limits of knowledge were taken by Maiorescu in a similar relaxed manner. Although he was strongly influenced by Kant's apriorism, to which he gave his "unreserved agreement", Maiorescu behaved "like a true philosopher" and approached in his lectures "the highest philosophical issues", so that his listeners and followers could have a look "into the depths of reality"¹⁸. The borders of knowledge – the memorialist seemed to say – were not an issue for a "true philosopher" in search for the underlying structures of reality. A true philosopher doesn't avoid metaphysics – in its traditional pre-Kantian sense as a science of ultimate principles.

The interest in Kant concurred with the early development of the Romanian modern philosophy proper. During the period between Dimitrie Cantemir¹⁹ and Titu

given the fact that the subject matter of the PhD thesis he defended in 1848 in Berlin had been *The principles and merit of Kant's philosophy (De Kantianae philosophiae principii ac dignitate, dissertatio inauguralis, Berlini, typi Gustavi Schade, 1848)*. However, Zalomit's PhD thesis was barely noticed and Titu Maiorescu remained the first Romanian philosopher who raised an enthusiastic audience for Kant's ideas.

¹² See, e.g., Ion Petrovici, "Kant și cugetarea românească", in I. Petrovici, *Studii istorico-filosofice*, ed. cit., p. 227.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 231.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 227–228, 230; Ion Petrovici, "Titu Maiorescu", in I. Petrovici, *Studii istorico-filosofice*, ed. cit., pp. 240, 243.

¹⁵ The "metaphysics" Maiorescu's pupil was speaking of in relation to his mentor is somehow close to the more recent block time theory. Leaning on Kant, Maiorescu thought that the so-called future is already there as the passage of time is nothing more than a subjective perception (see Petrovici, "Kant și cugetarea românească", in I. Petrovici, *Studii istorico-filosofice*, ed. cit., p. 230).

¹⁶ Ion Petrovici, "Kant și cugetarea românească", in I. Petrovici, *Studii istorico-filosofice*, ed. cit., p. 230.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 229.

¹⁸ Ion Petrovici, "Titu Maiorescu", in I. Petrovici, *Studii istorico-filosofice*, ed. cit., p. 263.

¹⁹ Dimitrie Cantemir (1673–1723), prince of Moldavia and philosopher, known especially for his *History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1734).

Maiorescu there was hardly any interest for a creative systematic philosophy, yet the spreading of metaphysical – usually mixed with religious – ideas was a common educational practice. In the Romanian culture, Kant’s theory of mind met a great propensity for metaphysics, mostly understood either as a science of everything, or as a knowledge that transcends experience and grants access to things as they really are. Basically, the early period of the modern Romanian philosophy is clearly indebted to metaphysics, and – there is no choice but to admit – the latter made an odd couple with Kant’s transcendental aesthetic.

In order to build metaphysics as a discipline which aims the “true” essence of reality²⁰, Petrovici, for instance, began with challenging the Kantian limits of knowledge²¹, which could have been a little more “flexible”. But in the process, he lost the very foundation of his belief that laws of nature and laws of thought are one and the same²². Kant’s criticism, however, was too important to be just ignored for the sake of a numinous reality, no matter how dear was such a thought to him. Accordingly, Petrovici built his idea of metaphysics *as he adjusted* Kant’s apriorism. *Introduction to Metaphysics* (Ion Petrovici, 1924) contained long errata to Kant – a Kant that must be both preserved and overcome.

Likewise, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru built his own structure as he continuously altered the Kantian one. He began with an almost Kantian question (how are the universal and necessary judgments possible?), but as he moved forward he slid imperceptibly from “*how* we know” to “*what* we know” – until the reader found himself in plain ontology. However, the metaphysics that underlies his ontology is different from Petrovici’s.

3. METAPHYSICS AS A SCIENCE OF EVERYTHING

The definition Petrovici gave to metaphysical knowledge emphasised *its object*, that is, the “substantial essence of reality”. He intended to restore the lost cognitive dignity of the traditional metaphysics, but without changing its object, which should remain the true and ultimate foundation of reality. Deprived of such an ultimate object, he believed, metaphysics doesn’t deserve neither its name, nor the effort. But one cannot target the reality in itself and remain a Kantian at the same time. Here’s how Petrovici went out of trouble. He removed the limits of knowledge from their epistemological context, and once they were reassembled in a substantial spatialized

²⁰ Ion Petrovici, *Introducere în metafizică* [1924], 2nd completed edition, Bucharest, Casa Școalelor Publishing House, 1929, p. 56.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

²² Ion Petrovici, *Teoria noțiunilor* [1910], 2nd edition, Bucharest, “Jockey-Club” Ion C. Văcărescu Publishing House, 1925, pp. 12, 25, 104 and passim. See also Mona Mamulea, “Cătă aparentă, tot atâta realitate: Petrovici și domnița la ananghie”, in *Studii de istorie a filosofiei românești, X: Existență, ființă realitate*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2014, pp. 155–163.

form, he undermined them²³. His argument wasn't possible without a previously ontologized Kant.

Motru resorted to another *modus operandi*. While defining the “science” of metaphysics²⁴, he focused not on its object, as Petrovici did, but on the type of knowledge it provided, i.e. “the most complete” and “the least relative” knowledge about the world. The belief was essential for both Motru’s philosophical career and his own view of a “metaphysics based on Kant”. Metaphysics had three main goals: (1) to put the outcomes of the different sciences in agreement with each other; (2) to discuss the concepts and basic principles of each particular science, and (3) to unify the different outcomes and offer a “complete” view of the object as a “hole”. The third purpose is complementary to the first one: metaphysics aims to overcome the dissimilarities between the outcomes of different sciences through their merging together into a unitary picture. The particular sciences can offer only partial viewpoints on their objects, and the goal of metaphysics, which is above them all, is to provide the full picture²⁵. Scientific knowledge, as seen by Motru, is far from being unified. Each science cuts out a part of nature and explores it without too much concern for the results of other sciences or for the integration of its own into a bigger picture. As a result, the reality became as scattered as a disjointed view of some jigsaw pieces that fail to fit together in a coherent picture. We need, therefore, in addition to the particular sciences, a general science which is able to handle the mess, to “polish” the pieces and finish the puzzle. In Motru’s opinion, metaphysics doesn’t approach reality directly, as special sciences do; metaphysics administers the scientific theories, put them in order, and – what’s more important – delivers the holistic explanation which is able to integrate them all. It is far from being an *ancilla scientiarum*, the “maid” who cleans up after everybody. Metaphysics was perceived by Motru as the supreme science, since it alone has the authority to inspect and explain the principles underlying each science, and, at the same time, the capacity to produce panoramic knowledge. Motru did not say that scientists were not capable to adequately explain their theoretical foundations. What he maintained was that, in doing so, they leave science and resort to metaphysics.

The understanding of metaphysics as a science of everything was practically the background of the ontology he proposed in *Elements of Metaphysic* and developed

²³ More details in Mona Mamulea, “‘Măcar câteva întrezăriri’. Petrovici și realitatea în sine”, in *Filosofie și viață. In Honorem Alexandru Boboc*, edited by Oana Vasilescu and Marius Augustin Drăghici, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2015, pp. 173–180.

²⁴ “Metaphysics is the science that aims to provide the most complete and less relative knowledge about the world” (Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, *Elemente de metafizică pe baza filosofiei kantiane* [printed for the first time under the title *Elemente de metafizică. Principalele probleme ale filosofiei contemporane pe înțelesul tuturor*, 1912; the final edition with the title *Elemente de metafizică pe baza filosofiei kantiane* [Elements of Metaphysics on the Basis of Kantian Philosophy] was printed in 1928], in *Personalismul energetic și alte scrieri*, edited by Gh. Al. Cazan, Bucharest, Eminescu Publishing House, 1984, p. 393). All references will follow the 1984 edition.

²⁵ Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, *Elemente de metafizică pe baza filosofiei kantiane*, ed. cit., pp. 394–396.

later. The reason why he believed that such a science was needed was the discrepancy he saw between the results of particular sciences, especially between those of physics and those of psychology. The sciences of nature and the sciences of soul, he believed, needed to be reconciled. His double education as philosopher and psychologist had an obvious impact on his later thought. After he became acquainted with Kant at the University of Bucharest, Rădulescu-Motru had another remarkable encounter, this time with the father of experimental psychology. Between 1889 and 1890, while in Paris, he attended psychology lectures at École pratique des hautes études (Jules Soury's conferences and Henri-Étienne Beaunis' laboratory classes). He also attended Theodule Ribot's lectures at Collège de France. Advised by Soury to continue his studies of psychology in Germany, he later moved to Leipzig (1891) to enrol in a doctoral program under Wilhelm Wundt, in whose laboratory of experimental psychology studied and worked until 1893²⁶. Back in Bucharest and appointed a lecturer at the University in 1897, one year later he published *The Problems of Psychology* (1898), in which he investigated the possibilities of this field – which had just gained autonomy in relation to philosophy – to become a scientific discipline. Motru was convinced that the fate of philosophy depended on the *foundation of psychology as a science*²⁷. Once that Kant revealed the part played by human mind in building the phenomenal reality, he thought, a philosophy unconcerned with the functioning of consciousness was no longer possible.

That being the case, the question was: can psychology explain its object – the totality of mental phenomena – using a precise empirical methodology comparable to that of the natural sciences? First of all, Motru had to show that mental phenomena could really be an object for a scientific research; in other words, he had to produce arguments that they aren't just some simple epiphenomena. To do so, Wundt's "psychophysical parallelism" was a convenient starting point:

"[...] it follows that there must be a necessary relation between all the facts that belong at the same time to both kinds of experience, to the mediate experience of the natural sciences and to the immediate experience of psychology, for they are nothing but components of a single experience which is merely regarded in the two cases from different points of view. Since these facts belong to both spheres, there must be an elementary process on the physical side, corresponding to every such process on the psychical side. This general principle is known as the principle of psycho-physical parallelism"²⁸.

Let us briefly notice that Wundt mentioned at the same time that he didn't suggest there were two distinct existential realms – physical and mental –, but rather two distinct viewpoints on the same phenomena. Although it was mistakenly

²⁶ C. Schifirneț, *op. cit.*

²⁷ C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Problemele psihologiei*, Bucharest, Socec Publishing House, 1898, p. 38.

²⁸ Wilhelm Wundt, *Outlines of Psychology* [1897], Translated by Charles Hubbard Judd, Leipzig, Engelmann, 1897, pp. 317–318.

understood as metaphysics²⁹, Wundt's hypothesis presented itself as empirical. Wundt made very clear the fact that his principle didn't have anything in common with the metaphysical postulate of a unique substance with two attributes, physical and psychical, and even less with the idea of two substances that mysteriously communicate with each other. His empirical principle started from the assumption that there was *a single experience*. As an object of research, this experience can be approached in two different ways³⁰. According to Wundt, physics and psychology don't deal with different contents of experience, but with one and the same content which can be considered from different points of view³¹. Therefore,

“[...] just as one and the same thing, e.g., a tree that I perceive before me, falls as external object within the scope of natural science, and as conscious contents within that of psychology, so there are many phenomena of the physical life that are uniformly connected with conscious processes, while these in turn are always bound up with processes in the living body”³².

Motru borrowed the principle of psychophysical parallelism from Wundt, adjusted and converted it in a useful part of his ontology.

4. UNDERSTANDING SCIENCE IS UNDERSTANDING CONSCIOUSNESS

How is knowledge possible? How can consciousness know the world and describe it by using universal necessary truths? Motru's main concern was to establish a crucial link between consciousness and the natural world. Wundt was undoubtedly helpful, but Motru wasn't searching for a perspectivist view of reality. Nature and consciousness may be two perspectives of the same experience, but they are also more than that. The connection between them, Motru thought, should be of such nature that it allows an answer to the question: what gives us the assurance that our mind/consciousness is able to make universally valid statements about nature? In other words: what entitles us to believe that the scientific knowledge about the world is a sum of necessary and not relative truths? The consciousness as a mirror of reality, a metaphor that accompanied the philosophical thinking since ancient times, was not a solution in this matter. The idea that human mind reflects the surrounding reality – an outside reality of a different nature – doesn't guaranty the universal and necessary character of knowledge. First, the mirroring consciousness can reflect only a part of the universe. For the mirror to reveal the entire universe, the latter must be given in its

²⁹ See Alan Kim, “Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/wilhelm-wundt/>>.

³⁰ Wilhelm Wundt, *Outlines of Psychology*, ed. cit., p. 318.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 322.

³² Wilhelm Wundt, *Principles of Physiological Psychology* [1874], vol. I, London, The Macmillan, 1904, p. 1.

wholeness. But the universe is given only partially to consciousness; hence the claims about it can only be fragmentary. The idea of mirroring consciousness is related to another equally wrong comparison, Motru believed, that is, the worm as a metaphor of man's lowest state, crushed by the greatness of a universe which he cannot see because the organ of his knowledge is way too poor.

The consciousness as a mirror opens a gap between the human mind and the world. Mirroring is a simple "mechanical process" which does nothing but separate the nature of the mirror from the nature of the mirrored. In order for the universe to be accurately described by means of universally valid accounts there must be an essential link between consciousness and its object. The mirror metaphor of consciousness can't be taken into account as a serious provider of such a bond. The consciousness as a mirror of reality is nothing but a philosophical myth, Motru believed. And this is where Kant enters the picture, as the one who debunked it for good. Before Kant, no philosopher – either materialist or idealist – seriously questioned the belief that senses and reason are some kind of mirrors which receive impressions from the outside so that they can rebuild a more or less accurate image of the real world³³. Arguing that space and time are not properties of the outside world and, as a priori intuitions, do not depend on experience, Kant exposed the mirror metaphor and opened a new way for philosophy³⁴.

This change of perspective was essential to Motru because it was a solution to the consciousness–world dualism. The gap between the mind and the world was finally filled, and not at the expenses of the mind.

"There is no world of atoms, forms and ideas that is different from the world of senses, but only one world, which is the result of the combination of a priori forms and determinations belonging to an active consciousness with the material brought by senses". The consciousness "rises from the passive role it had until now to a role that allows it to be the organizer of the world"³⁵.

Kant's paradigm shift that granted consciousness an active part in shaping the reality was particularly important to Motru. However, the reality he was talking about was nothing other than the phenomenal reality as object of science. *This* is the reality that Kant moved from the exterior to the interior of the consciousness. But with Motru, Kant's epistemological inquiry related to *how* we know became an inquiry related to *what is that something* that we know.

After Kant, the reality we record is seen no more as an autonomous material world that our consciousness mirrors in a poor way. But the link Kant established between the consciousness and the world, although Motru thought it to be remarkable, didn't satisfy him completely. What is the detailed explanation of the mechanisms that allow an *individual* consciousness to organize reality? Motru asked. There is no such thing as a "consciousness *in general*", he complained. But after Kant, he believed, the

³³ C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Elemente de metafizică pe baza filosofiei kantiane*, ed. cit., p. 417.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 419.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 418–419.

understanding of science became the *understanding of consciousness*. Therefore, the whole inquiry of reality must shift its focus from the outside to the inside world. Understanding consciousness, one also understands the reality it gives shape, i.e. *the nature as an object of science*. Considering that psychology was still nascent in Kant's time, Motru thought the time had come for the apriorism to be amended according to the new achievements of the science of consciousness.

According to Kant, the consciousness that shapes reality was not the individual empirical consciousness. Had it been otherwise, the scientific knowledge wouldn't have been possible. The fundamental truths of science can't rely on mere associations of data that come through the senses. Kant answered the problem of knowledge by providing the human mind with pure frames that are independent of experience but nonetheless make it possible. Since a priori knowledge is a *sine qua non*, it cannot be contradicted without contradicting the very fabric of human mind. What Motru disapproved was the fact that Kant built the entire knowledge on an abstract identity (the unity of transcendental apperception), and, as a consequence, the human mind was split into an empiric consciousness (which cannot produce universal and necessary truths) and a "consciousness in general" which makes experience and knowledge possible, but is strictly formal and has nothing to do with the *individual* human consciousness. According to Motru, there is no such thing as a "consciousness in general", as long as consciousness cannot be detached from its own content. The consciousness cannot be psychologically conceived as a pure witness of its conscious acts. He thought that Kant wrongly dissociated between a consciousness in general (seen as unchangeable) and the conscious acts – seen as subject to changes. As a result, the very problem raised by Kant – how are synthetic a priori judgments possible – remains without a satisfactory answer. Kant illegitimately derived the a priori forms and functions of consciousness from the idea of an abstract consciousness and therefore failed to provide a real foundation for science. The quest for the a priori forms and functions, Motru believed, is a crucially important task, but they must be sought elsewhere, i.e. in the *multiple* acts of the *real* consciousness³⁶.

Thus the question raised by Kant remained to be put in a new context: how are the universal and necessary truths of science possible, given the fact that all we have in our *individual* consciousness is sensual data that form connections according to the temporary interests of our subjectivity? How are the necessary and universal judgments possible provided that we possess an individual and subjective consciousness?³⁷ Motru's first step in solving the problem was to get rid of the duality of consciousness: "I believe that the Kantian standpoint can be carried on [...] without this dualism"³⁸. The second step was to remove randomness from the phenomena that occur at the mind level. "Sensory data" and abstract thinking must be viewed as being formed according to the same laws:

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 431.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 455–456.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 459.

“It cannot be empiricism and hazard on one side, and certitude and formal inflexibility on the other; otherwise, we wouldn’t have in front of us two parts of the same human soul, but two distinct souls that lack any means to know each other”³⁹.

The opposition between the functions of soul and the functions of intellect was thus removed as well. The third step was actually a leap: a jump in ontology. Kant replaced the unity of universe by the unity of human consciousness. The old rationalist metaphysics was substituted by a viewpoint according to which the knowledge of the *whole* Universe was grounded on the unity of only a *part* of it. What’s so special about the unity of consciousness, Motru asked, that allows one to take the statements derived from its building as necessary and universal truths of the entire Universe? At the point where the inquiry seemed to reach a dead end, he the science of everything was summoned. For the unity of consciousness to provide a real ground for science, it must be shown that the relationship between consciousness and universe *is not a part–whole kind of relationship*. There is no hope for science to find a solid ground in the unity of consciousness unless the mind and the Universe are shown to be of a same *nature*. Wundt’s idea of the two aspects of the same experience was insufficient for Motru. The reality inside the Universe must be proven *identical* with the reality inside the consciousness⁴⁰. Wundt’s psychophysical parallelism was thus replaced by a psychophysical identity. As two sides of an intelligible energy, what we differentiate as mind and matter *is one and the same reality*, furthermore, a reality *inside the boundaries of the knowable Universe*.

Motru’s ontology maintained within the limits of the phenomenal world. The world he was concerned with was precisely the empirical world of science. Even if Motru stepped away from Kant in what concerned the foundation of knowledge, he remained a Kantian with respect to the possibilities of knowledge. It is pointless to ask what is *outside* our Universe, since “there” nothing is defined and stable. “The whole Universe is the content of consciousness at the same time”⁴¹. He did not think – as neither did Kant – to completely suppress the idea of an external reality which is thought to be independent from human mind. But science can’t tell anything about it and neither can metaphysics, which is a theoretical science after all.

Motru termed his hypotheses a “monism”. The “neutral monism” had not yet been coined by the time he published his *Elements of Metaphysics*⁴². However, his hypothesis can be regarded as a neutral monism that was meant to address the mind–body problem. As I already showed, Motru’s neutral monism is a *phenomenal* ontology in a broad sense, inasmuch as he confined reality to the phenomenal observable world. It is also a *scientific* one: the fundamental reality is seen as a measureable energy (the same energy subjected to physical laws) that can be revealed and studied via scientific methods.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 463.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 475–477.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 506.

⁴² It was probably Russell that used the term for the first time and described it as a doctrine “according to which the material out of which the world is constructed is neither mind nor matter, but something anterior to both” (*Apud* Galen Strawson, *Mental Reality*, Cambridge, M Press, 1994 p. 97).