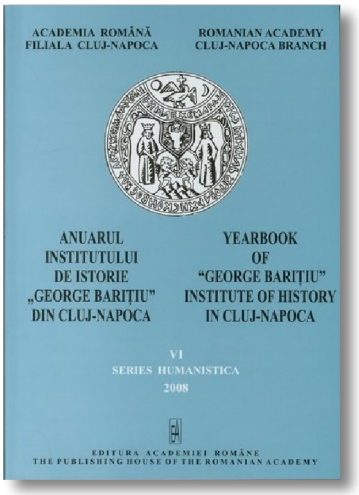

ISSN 1584-4404

Yearbook of the George Barițiu History Institute of Cluj-Napoca Series *Humanistica*

humanistica.ro

Review of: Angela Botez, Filosofia mentalului. Izvoare, teorii, autori

Horațiu Crișan

How to cite this article:
Crișan, Horațiu (2008) *Review of: Angela Botez, Filosofia mentalului. Izvoare, teorii, autori*, Yearbook of the George Barițiu History Institute of Cluj-Napoca, Series Humanistica, Vol. 6, pp. 472–472. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22965830

© 2008: The Publishing House of the Romanian Academy.
Humanistica Yearbook is published online since 2003.
Submit your article to Humanistica Yearbook: secretariat.dcsu@acad-cj.ro

Angela Botez, *Filosofia mentalului. Izvoare, teorii, autori,* Bucureşti, Edit. Floare Albastră, 2006.

In Romania, the philosophy of mind is a scientific domain which, due to its novelty, was not largely studied and debated. Even if, during communism, the closely related fields of epistemology and logic were not, to such a great extent, subjected to censorship, the total number of publications regarding the philosophy of mind remained very low. We should therefore mention that Angela Botez has already published in this field or research works such as *The Philosophy of Mind. Intentionality and Experiment*, published in 1996 and edited other three books entitled *Realism and Relativism in Contemporary Philosophy of Science* in 1992, *Philosophy of Conscience and Cognitive Sciences* in 2002 and *Construction and Deconstruction in Contemporary American Philosophy* in 2006.

The book entitled *The Philosophy of Mind. Sources, theories, authors,* is a collection of studies and interviews that were previously published in different journals. It is a book intended to be read also by non-professional philosophers, by the larger public interested in the latest developments of a field constituted at the intersection of science and philosophy. The author defines the philosophy of mind as an "ontological, epistemological and semantic approach of the human ego." Its aim would, then, be that of presenting the main concepts and the positions or viewpoints of the most important authors belonging to the different schools and trends in the domain of the philosophy of mind. Among those trends in the field of philosophy of mind one finds, on the one hand, eliminative materialism, anomalistic monism, naturalism, physicalism and functionalism, which all tend to see the mind as part of the natural world, on the other hand, one finds mentalism and emergentist holism for which the mental existence is different from the physical one. Other trends such as connectionism (the mental is made up of a neural structure without a centre and without memory), contextualism, cognitivism and constructivism are also analyzed.

Another question presented in this book concerns the relation between philosophy of mind and the cognitive sciences. Taking the cybernetic machine as a model for the human brain, cognitive science tends to eliminate classical epistemology and to falsify all psychological theories that referred to things that are allegedly inexistent (faith, wish, intention). The philosophy of mind is defined in the book as a methodological foundation for the cognitive sciences.

The problem of mental representation is also treated as it appears in the works of different authors and is connected with other fundamental concepts like mental causality and intentionality. All these lead to the question of the relation between mind and body. Within this framework, the relation between mind and brain is discussed, supposedly without a philosophical solution, till the emergence of the closely related fields to the philosophy of mind: cognitive science, information theory and artificial intelligence. Intentionality is also a concept that plays an important role in the philosophy of mind, being both contested by philosophers such as Quine and affirmed by others such as Davidson. The concept of supervenience is also presented, being important for the current debates in the philosophy of mind. It sustains the physicalist position by stating that mental changes cannot occur without physical changes and proposing a precedence of the physical to any other domain, including the mental, from which the latter supervenes.

The introduction makes us familiar with the central themes of the philosophy of mind, its main representatives and also discusses the meaning and history of the notion of consciousness.

The philosophy of mind has a history which follows that of the concept of conscience, starting with the Greek philosophy and reaching the present times, when conscience is discussed from a variety of perspectives, not all pertaining to the psychological, logical or epistemological components of the philosophy of mind.

The second chapter treats the history of the philosophy of mind through its British historical sources, i. e. William Occam, Francis Bacon, John Locke, David Hume, and Thomas Reid. The last two authors received a special treatment, because of their importance for the "psychological turn" toward the philosophy of mind. This chapter also treats the generally called philosophy of conscience through its most famous ancient representatives (Plato, Aristotle, Plotin), medieval representatives (Thomas d'Aquino), modern representatives (Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Spencer, Ribot, Herbart, Brentano, Rehmke) and contemporary representatives belonging to the philosophy of cognitive sciences field like Wittgenstein, Ryle, Sellars, Strawson, Davidson, Peacocke, Simons).