



Press Release

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Homepage, Culture

Helmuth Plessner Award 2023 goes to Prof. Dr Gérard Raulet

The Wiesbaden Helmuth Plessner Award, presented for the fourth time now, goes this year to the French philosopher and Germanist Gérard Raulet.

Helmuth Plessner, born in Wiesbaden in 1892, was a significant driving force for European philosophy, biology and sociology and is still considered one of the most important exponents of “philosophical anthropology”. The Helmuth Plessner Award is endowed with Euro 20,000 and is presented every three years by the state capital Wiesbaden in cooperation with the Helmuth Plessner Society to a renowned figure rendering outstanding services to aspects of Plessner’s work in the scientific or non-scientific community.

Prof. Dr. Carola Dietze, Prof. Dr. Marcus Düwell, Prof. Dr. Joachim Fischer, Prof. Dr. Volker Schürmann, the members nominated by the city, Prof. Dr. Tilman Allert, Jürgen Kaube, Prof. Dr. Eva Waller, as well as Lord Mayor Gert-Uwe Mende and Head of the Cultural Affairs Department Axel Imholz all took part in the meeting of the Awards Committee with equal voting rights on behalf of the Helmuth Plessner Society.

“It was an interesting meeting where all those involved were unanimous in their support for the prize-winner,” explains Axel Imholz, Head of the Department of Culture. “In view of the 60th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty, which also underlines the fostering of mutual cultural exchange, I am particularly pleased that the prize has been awarded to a

Frenchman with a passion for German philosophy.”

Reasons for the decision: Gérard Raulet, born in August 1949, studied at the École Normale Supérieure Lettres et Sciences Humaines in Saint-Cloud from 1969, is a trained German teacher (agrégé d'allemand 1973), received his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Paris I (Panthéon-Sorbonne) in 1981 and qualified as a lecturer at the University of Paris-Sorbonne in 1985, where he taught as a Professor of German History of Ideas until 2020. In 2006, he published the standard French work on 20th German philosophy “La philosophie allemande depuis 1945”.

Gérard Raulet has opened up and discussed the entire history of 20th century theory from the perspective of the productive drafts of the 1920s (Benjamin, Bloch, Marcuse, Scheler, Plessner) through the 1960s (Habermas, Gadamer, Blumenberg, Jonas) to the 21st century present day. In 2006, he published the standard French work on German philosophy in the 20th century, "La philosophie allemande depuis 1945" (Paris). DOPPELT What is remarkable about Raulet's intellectual career is that after initially working in close association with critical theory (Habermas, Honneth) he made a lasting turn towards philosophical anthropology in Paris at the end of the 1990s - in the wake of the German renaissance of Scheler and Plessner - without ever losing sight of his origins. In the aforementioned book “La philosophie allemande”, he dedicated a relevant chapter to “L'anthropologie philosophique et la psychoanalyse” and introduced Plessner to the French public for the first time.

Raulet acquainted the French public with Plessner still further by organising a trilateral (Franco-Italo-German) research project on L'anthropologie philosophique: ses origines et son avenir - Philosophical Anthropology: Its Origins and Future, which lasted several years from 2000 onwards. This project investigated both the few explicit and primarily the implicit life-philosophical and anthropological references between German and French philosophy.

All in all, the emerging Franco-German Plessner debate revealed relevant parallels not only with Bergson and Merleau-Ponty, but also with “French philosophical anthropology in the last third of the 20th century” (Raulet), which, for instance, in Canguilhem and Deleuze, considers “the connection between living bodies (and bodies) with their environments in a non-reductionist, non-idealist and non-mechanistic way” (Anderson/Ebke/Nigrelli/Pagan 2022) and also maintains this

approach to be a complex, critical notion of the nature of humankind. In parallel, Raulet initiated a book series on the themes and stances in philosophical anthropology: “Philosophische Anthropologie - Themen und Positionen”, in which he also published his studies “Das kritische Potential der Philosophischen Anthropologie” (2020) or The Critical Potential of Philosophical Anthropology - a title also indicative of his intention.

Of particular note here is the key role Gérard Raulet played in ensuring that philosophical anthropology, and for him especially Plessner’s contribution to it, was discussed in France. **Alongside Martin Heidegger’s writings** and their further reception history in this neighbouring country of ours, Raulet ultimately also contributed to a public awareness such as we could scarcely have hoped for in this regard. This led to a broad public understanding of the approaches and thoughts unfolding in the countries of Europe, above all those of the Romance languages.

On Monday, 4 September, the Award will be presented at a ceremony in the Town Hall. In addition to the award ceremony itself, a lecture by the award winner, a scientific conference on the work of the award winner, a city tour in Plessner’s footsteps and a discussion with students from Wiesbaden are all planned.

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