



Universität Zürich
Philosophisches Seminar

Consciousness, Brains and Persons

Masterclass with

Prof. P.M.S. Hacker (Oxford)

in collaboration with

Prof. H.J. Glock (UZH)

18.-19. November 2010

The seminar will fall into two parts. The first will involve a detailed scrutiny of the concept of consciousness. The analytic of consciousness will be concerned with a connective analysis of our common or garden concept of consciousness as it has evolved over the last three centuries. It will display the multiple centres of variation that characterize this specialized instrument in our toolkit of cognitive concepts. The dialectic of consciousness will examine the dominant philosophical conception of consciousness that was developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, as well as its more recent offspring: the conception of consciousness as the qualitative character of experience. We shall see that the philosophical conceptions of consciousness are incoherent, and we shall identify the sources of the incoherence.

The second half of the seminar will examine the four interrelated concepts of mind, self, body and person. The conception of the mind that we have inherited from Descartes, and its materialist heir that identifies the mind with the brain, are equally incoherent. We shall see that an Aristotelian conception of the rational psyche is a far superior conceptual instrument to characterize human nature. With that clarification in place, it will be relatively straightforward to dismiss philosophical conceptions of „the self“ as incoherent. We shall then examine the notion of a human body, and of the body of a human being. We shall see that it is helpful in this domain to distinguish between „the body I am“ and „the body I have“. Finally, we shall examine the concept of a person (which goes back to Roman times).

Philosophisches Seminar UZH, Zürichbergstrasse 43, Room: ZUP-8

Registration and contact: phd@philos.uzh.ch

No fees apply, but please note that participants are expected to have done the core reading (in bold).

Organization: Doctoral Programme «Philosophy – Language, Mind and Practice»

Program

Thursday, 18. 11. 2010

The Analytic of Consciousness (9:30 - 13:15)

Reading:

M.R. Bennett, P.M.S. Hacker, *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience* 2003, ch. 9

A.R. White, *Attention* 1964, ch. 4

The dialectic of consciousness (15:00 - 18:45)

Reading:

M.R. Bennett, P.M.S. Hacker, *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience*, ch. 10-11

T. Nagel „What it is like to be a bat“ in his *Mortal Questions* 1991

P.M.S. Hacker, „Is there anything it is like to be a bat?“ in *Philosophy* 77:2 2002, 157-174

Friday, 19. 11. 2010

Minds and Selves (9:30 - 13:15)

Reading:

P.M.S. Hacker, *Human Nature* 2007, ch. 8, 9.1 and 9.2

A. Kenny, „The geography of the mind“ in his *Essays on the Aristotelian Tradition* 2000

Bodies and Persons (15:00 - 18:45)

Reading:

P.M.S. Hacker, *Human Nature* 2007, ch. 9.3, 9.4 and 10

General introduction:

- **M.R. Bennett, P.M.S. Hacker, „Introduction to *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience*“ in: „*Neuroscience and Philosophy*“ 2009, p. 3-13**

- M.R. Bennett, P.M.S. Hacker, „An Excerpt from Chapter 3“, in: *Neuroscience and Philosophy* 2009, p. 15-33

- M.R. Bennett, P.M.S. Hacker, „An Excerpt from Chapter 14: The Concluding Remarks“, in: *Neuroscience and Philosophy* 2009, p. 45-48