

The University of Hertfordshire and The Czech Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy
cordially invite you to an online workshop in the philosophy of mind

Phenomenality and Self-Consciousness

July 23, 2020

Programme with abstracts:

10:00–11:20 (BST)

James Hill (Charles University): “Self-Awareness and the Will”

Abstract:

This paper is an appreciation and critical reflection of the deflationary account of self-awareness put forward by Sam Coleman as a part of his general theory of panqualityism. Firstly, it is argued that Coleman’s rejection of a phenomenology of awareness is an important and persuasive thesis, and that Coleman has shown us not only that the existence of such alleged phenomenology is highly dubious, but also that it is in principle unhelpful in explaining our capacity for self-awareness. Secondly, it is argued that the inferential account of self-awareness, which Coleman himself adopts in place of a direct phenomenological account, is itself open to serious question, at least on its most natural interpretation. Thirdly, the paper offers an alternative positive perspective on self-awareness, drawn from the writings of Berkeley and James, according to which the self is the active principle in our subjective experience, or will. As such, the self is self-intimating, and is not identified by a proprietary phenomenology.

Sam Coleman (Herts): commentary

11:30–12:30 (BST)

Hynek Janoušek (Czech Acad Sci, Inst Philosophy): “Phenomenality and Self-Consciousness, Husserl on Brentano, Brentano on Husserl”

Abstract:

In the first part of my talk I will shortly describe Husserl’s view of intentional consciousness, as given in his *Logical Investigations*, and his critique of Brentano’s concept of intentional experiences (psychical phenomena) from his *Appendix* to the *Logical Investigations*. Then I will point out main difficulties of Husserl’s view with respect to the possibility of reflecting-consciousness, and Brentano’s response to Husserl’s critique. Finally, I will address one peculiar point of difference concerning Brentano’s and Husserl’s view of the phenomenality of inner perception (Brentano) or inner consciousness (Husserl). Is there a consciousness of

duration of inner perception in time or not? Whereas Brentano denied this claim, Husserl embraced it.

Lunch break (90 minutes)

14:00–15:00 (BST)

Michelle Liu (Herts): “Revelation and the Intuition of Dualism”

Abstract:

In recent literature on the metaphysics of consciousness, and in particular on the prospects of physicalism, there are two interesting strands of discussion. One strand concerns the so-called ‘thesis of revelation’, the claim that the essences of phenomenal properties are revealed in experience. The other strand concerns the so-called ‘intuition of dualism’, the intuition that consciousness is nonphysical. With a particular focus on the former, this paper argues for two things. First, it argues that the thesis of revelation is intuitive; it is part of our ordinary, implicit conception of experience. Second, it brings the two strands of discussion together and puts forward a rational explanation of the intuition of dualism in terms of the intuitiveness of the thesis of revelation. Wider implications on the metaphysics of consciousness and the prospects of physicalism are also drawn.

15:10–16:10 (BST)

Jakub Mihálik (Herts; Czech Acad Sci, Inst Philosophy): “Awareness of Awareness and the Metaphysics of Consciousness”

Abstract:

According to a popular view, in having a conscious experience, we are – apart from being aware of worldly or bodily features – also constitutively aware of the experience itself. I will investigate the relations between this *awareness of awareness* and the metaphysics of Russellian monism and explain why the existence of conscious awareness of awareness would challenge otherwise promising reductive forms of Russellian panprotopsychism. Then I will examine M. Montague’s (2016) argument for awareness of awareness, which appeals to P. F. Strawson’s observation that in experience we naturally and unreflectively distinguish between our perceiving (hearing, seeing, etc.) of things, and the things we perceive. I will show that while the argument may cast doubt on views that rely on *transparency of experience*, it falls short of proving that there is awareness of awareness of the kind that would rule out reductive Russellian panprotopsychism.

16:20–17:20 (BST)

Sam Coleman (Herts): “Inverting Yablo on Mental Causation: Qualia as Super-Determinate Physical Properties”

Abstract:

Yablo explains the virtues of construing mental properties, including qualia, as determinables, with physical properties their determinates. For example, the physical property *c-fibres firing* might be the determinate way of being in *pain*, a mental determinable property, for humans. Analogously, being scarlet is a determinate way of being red, the determinable colour property. I use the literature on Yablo's ingenious proposal, focusing on Jessica Wilson's able elaboration of it, to raise some problems. Ultimately, I suggest, an even more fruitful way of construing the mental physical relationship inverts Yablo, and views mental properties, in particular qualia, as determinates of determinable physical properties. I explain the merits of this view and compare it to fashionable Russellian monist theories. Among other things, it can explain in a mundane way why Mary cannot work out what it's like to see red from physical information.

17:30–18:15 (BST) panel discussion: “Is there a constitutive relation between phenomenal consciousness and certain form(s) of self-awareness?”

The online workshop is open to all but spaces are limited. Attendees need to pre-register by July 22. Pre-registration e-mail: j.mihalik@herts.ac.uk

The workshop is an outcome of the *Consciousness and Matter Project* (www.conmat.org).



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