

INSTITUT FÜR PHILOSOPHIE HUMBOLDT-KOLLOQUIUM

PostDoc Job Talks



Alec Hinshelwood attended University College London (PhD, 2017) and the University of Oxford (BPhil, 2011). He is currently a Teaching Fellow at UCL, lecturing on Marxism.

His main interests are in the philosophy of mind and action, and in ethics—especially moral psychology.

His current research focuses on practical reason, and the knowledge of self and other our possession of it affords.

In general, his work is informed by Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Marx and psychoanalysis.

Alec HINSHELWOOD

Thought in motion

When acting intentionally, we represent the kind of action that we are doing—*walk across the street*, for example—as a goal: something which we aim to achieve. I label this sort of representation ‘practical thought’. But how does it relate to the actual, temporally-extended changes which our intentional actions are? In this paper I defend the Identity View, which says that our intentional actions are *identical with* the practical thoughts they require; and that, by the same token, those actions are identical with our first-personal knowledge of them. Whilst this is, I think, an ancient idea with many contemporary adherents, I present a simple albeit under-emphasized argument in support of it: I suggest that the Identity View is consequence of the fact that practical thought is a species of thought. If I am right, then by denying the Identity View, we jeopardize our grip on the very idea of a distinctively practical, or goal-oriented, form of thought. I consider a number of objections to this argument, but try to show that they fail.

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