

Seminar IRH-ICUB

Consciousness and Cognition: An Interdisciplinary Approach

<https://irhunibuc.wordpress.com/2016/04/05/new-seminar-consciousness-in-philosophy-and-neuroscience/>

convenor Dr. Diana Stanciu

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Date: Wednesday, 21 June 2017, 17h

Place: IRH-ICUB (1 D. Brandza Str.), conference room

Dr. David Mark Kovacs

Dr. Rina Tzinman

Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey

David Mark Kovacs is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Bilkent University specializing in metaphysics and the philosophy of mind. He received his PhD from Cornell University in 2016. His recent works include “Self-made people” (*Mind*) and “Grounding and the argument from explanatoriness” (forthcoming in *Philosophical Studies*). Although most of his recent work has been in metaphysics, lately his attention turned again to the philosophy of mind.

Rina Tzinman is an Instructor of Philosophy at Bilkent University also specializing in metaphysics and the philosophy of mind. She received her PhD from the University of Miami in 2016. Her recent works include “Against the brainstem view of the persistence of human animals” (published in “Animals”, edited by Andreas Blank) and “Is Romeo Dead? On the persistence of organisms” (forthcoming in *Synthese*). She is especially interested in how metaphysics can inform a number of issues concerning the self traditionally discussed in the philosophy of mind.

Extended emotions and the metaphysics of naturalness

In recent years, a growing number of philosophers have argued for the Extended Emotions Thesis (EET), the view that our emotional processes incorporate external goings-on. A number of arguments have been advanced for EET, most of which rely on phenomenological evidence, intuitions about particular cases, and experimental work. Yet this evidence remains controversial, and opponents of EET tend to argue that we can accommodate it by positing merely causal but no constitutive relations between external objects and emotions. Unfortunately, this debate is quickly approaching a stalemate. In fact, we will argue that the situation is even worse than that. Once the positions are carefully spelled out, the controversy threatens to collapse into a merely verbal dispute: there are things accurately described by EET theorists, there are also things accurately described by their opponents, and the only remaining question is which ones we should use the word ‘emotion’ for. Thankfully, not all is lost. We will offer a novel way of understanding the debate by appealing to the literature on the metaphysics of naturalness. The basic idea is that emotions are appropriate objects of scientific investigation and as such are supposed to be reasonably natural kinds of things. Although we cannot define the philosophically relevant notion of naturalness, we will use a few widely accepted and independently plausible diagnostics that will help us answer which concept of emotion satisfies them the best. While we won’t weigh in on the debate over EET itself, we hope to offer some tools for the disputing parties with which they can make progress on it.