

The Cogito – Yes or No?

workshop in Ligerz, 19th to 23rd of April, 2017

As part of its [Swiss Doctoral Programme in Philosophy](#), the Centre for the Philosophy and Theology of Being at the University of Lucerne: οὐσία, is organising a small and informal workshop in beautiful Ligerz.

For all questions and inquiries, please write to the workshop organiser, philipp.blum@philosophie.ch.

CfP. Descartes' Cogito is one of the most famous philosophical arguments, of central importance not just to the history of philosophy, but arguably to our modern self-understanding altogether. But is it an argument at all? If so, what are its premisses, what exactly its conclusion? Does it, or anything else Descartes said, shed light on our knowledge of our existence at all? This conference will bring together both defendants and critics of the Cogito, and evaluate its cogency, both within and independently of the Cartesian philosophical system. In particular, it will explore its connection to contemporary discussions of first-personalism and fragmentalist perspectivalism.

Participants. Participants should arrive by Wednesday evening and stay at least until Sunday noon. They should commit to have a first draft / extended abstract of their paper ready by 23th of April, read at least some of those of the others in advance and make an effort at reading some of the other material suggested by the other participants. They should commit to staying in Ligerz for the whole duration of the conference, except of course for the joint excursions to the regions' vineyards and the shores of the lake of Biel/Bienne.

Location. The conference takes place in the beautifully located bilingual village of Ligerz / Gléresse, on the shores of the lake of Biel/Bienne (also bilingual):



Talks and meals are at the Aarbergerhaus, where a beamer and facilities to print out handouts are available. Participants stay at the so-called “Louis Haus”, where there’s also a small bar for late-night drinks. When you get out of the train arriving either from Neuchâtel or from Biel/Bienne, and you face the mountain and the church (turning your back to the lake), the Aarbergerhaus is to your right (in the direction of Biel), about 150 m along the main road. You reach it after passing by the hotel “Kreuz” and by going through a garden door located at your left (facing Biel), just before there is a street for cars on your right going over a small bridge (in the direction of the lake). Please come there when you arrive. (The Louis-Haus, in contrast, is to your left, about 50m through the pedestrian street, on your right just before the fountain).

Programme details:

- Thurs, 9-10.30** Chris Peacocke, The Metaphysics of Subjects and the Nature of the First Person
- Thurs, 10.45-11.45** Philipp Blum, Analytic vs. Synthetic Methods in Metaphysics
- Thurs, 12-13** Philipp Blum, The Method of Doubt
- Thurs, 14-15.30** Luca Zanetti, The Problem of Certainty, the Sum, and the Role of Doubt
Paper. Cf. dropbox.
- Thurs, 15.45-16.45** Philipp Blum, The *Cogito* as Proof
- Thurs, 17-18** discussion on acquaintance and essence, animated by Alexandre Billon
Suggested reading: Billon, Alexandre, 2015. “Why Are We Certain that We Exist?” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 91(3): 723–759
Duncan, Matt, 2015. “We Are Acquainted With Ourselves”. *Philosophical Studies* 172(9): 2531–2549
- Fri, 9-10.30** Andrea Christofidou, The Cogito: its status and nature
- Fri, 10.45-12.15** Boris Hennig, Lichtenberg’s Point
Draft paper. Cf. dropbox.
- Fri, 13.15-14.15** discussion on Anscombe’s “The First Person”, animated by Giovanni Merlo
Suggested reading: Anscombe, Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret, 1975. “The First Person”. in Guttenplan, Samuel D. (editor) *Mind and Language. Wolfson College Lectures 1974*, pp. 45–65. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Reprinted in [Anscombe \(1981: 21–36\)](#) and in [Yourgrau \(1990\)](#)
- Fri, 14.30-16** Alexandre Billon, The empiricist cogito and its implications
Slides. Cf. dropbox.
- Sat, 9-10.30** Benj Hellie, ‘Mind’ or ‘world’
- Sat, 10.45-12.15** Giovanni Merlo, A Defense of Lichtenberg
Draft paper. Cf. dropbox.
Suggested reading: Peacocke, Christopher, 2012. “Descartes Defended”. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume* 86: 109–125.
Campbell, John A., 2012. “Lichtenberg and the *Cogito*”. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 112(3): 361–378.
- Sat, 13.30-15** Martin Lipman, Consciousness: subjective and objective, owned and unowned
Suggested reading: Paper on dropbox.
- Sat, 15.15-16.15** discussion on first-person justification, animated by Philipp Blum
Suggested reading: Hellie, Benj, 2011. “There It Is”. in Sosa, Ernest & Enrique Villanueva (editors) *Philosophical Issues 21: The Epistemology of Perception*, pp. 110–164. Oxford: Blackwell-Wiley
Hellie, Benj, 2013. “Against Egalitarianism [on [Chalmers \(2010\)](#)]”. *Analysis* 73(2): 304–320
- Sat, 16.30-17.30** discussion on first-personalism, animated by Martin Lipman
Suggested reading: Fine, Kit, 2005. “Tense and Reality”. in *Modality and Tense. Philosophical Papers*, pp. 261–320. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Sun, 9-10.30** Philipp Blum, Descartes on Contingent Modal Truths
- Sun, 10.45-11.45** discussion on TBA, ‘animated’ by Boris Hennig.
- Sun, 12-13** Wrapping-up.