

Course Outline

“Philosophical texts in English”, History of Philosophy Master’s Program, Fall 2017

William James, “Consciousness of Self”

Course description

This course will consist in the reading, translation and commentary of the chapter on “Consciousness of Self” in William James’ *Principles of Psychology*. This is an important and influential text both for Husserl’s phenomenology and 20th century philosophy of mind. It explores the difficulties and tries to clear up the ambiguities involved in being conscious of ourselves and understanding our relationship to our own consciousness. At each session, we will translate a passage from that week’s reading discuss points of translation and interpretation. We will consider both the place of the text in the philosophical tradition and its theses and arguments for themselves.

TEXT

JAMES, W., “Consciousness of Self”, chap. X in *Principles of Psychology*, Vol I., New York, Henry Holt, 1890 ; + extracts from chap. IX, in the reader distributed in class. L’intégralité du livre est également disponible sur le moodle avec quelques autres textes complémentaires.

Scheduled readings

22/09 – Présentation du cours et introduction

29/09 – “Stream of Thought”: p. 224-229 **Thought tends to personal form; 237-242 Within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous;**

06/10 – “Stream of Thought”: p. 271-275 **Human thought appears to deal with objects independent of itself; “Consciousness of Self”: p. 291-296 The Empirical Self or Me and its constituents (Material, Social)**

13/10 – p. 296-305 **The Empirical Self or Me and its constituents – The Spiritual Self**

20/10 – p. 305-317 **Emotions of Self; Self-Actions; Conflict between one’s selves**

27/10 – **VACANCES** de la TOUSSAINT, pas de cours

03/11 – p. 317-329 **What Self is Loved in ‘Self-Love’?**

10/11 – p. 329-342 **The Pure Ego ; The sense of personal identity ; The passing thought as thinker**

17/11 – p. 342-360 **Theories of the Ego/Self-Consciousness : 1) Of the Soul ; 2) Associationist**

24/11 – p. 360-373 **3) The Transcendentalist Theory**

01/12 – p. 373-393 **Mutations of the self; 1. Insane delusions; 2. Alternating Selves**

08/12 – p. 393-401 **3. ‘Mediumships’ or ‘possessions’ ; Summary**