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# Analytical Anthropology of Peter Hacker

Purpose. The article is an explication of the features of the anthropological teaching of Peter Hacker in the context of analytical philosophy with consideration to the context of European philosophy within the framework of the Oxford School of ordinary language philosophy. The theoretical basis of the research is determined by the latest research in the English-language analytical philosophical tradition, rethinking the place of anthropological problems in the system of philosophical knowledge. Originality. Referring to primary sources, we reconstructed the philosophical and anthropological teaching of Peter Hacker in the unity of its basic principles and theoretical and practical results. We determined philosophical origins of the key ideas of his philosophical anthropology and substantiated their originality, systematicity and logical argumentation. His philosophical position is defined as anthropological holism, synthesizing the reinterpreted ideas of Aristotle and Wittgenstein. Conclusions. Peter Hacker is the creator of the original version of Analytic Philosophical Anthropology. His anthropology is based on criticism of Cartesian dualism and physicalism, which underlie modern neurosciences and which he tries to overcome on the basis of Wittgenstein's philosophical "logotherapy". The conceptual framework of his holistic anthropology is a rethought conceptual scheme of the Ordinary language philosophy. Hacker considers consciousness not as a separate mental reality, but one of the powers of human nature – an intellectual ability, which, along with emotional (passionate) and moral, belongs to a person as an integral socio-biological being. Asserting the free will of man, the Oxford thinker criticizes various forms of determinism, especially its most common form in modern science - neurobiological determinism, which is built on false philosophical foundations. This criticism allows the modern British philosopher to build an original, systematic and logically consistent anthropological concept that asserts the immutability of the highest human values - goodness, love and

*Keywords:* Peter Hacker; Ludwig Wittgenstein; philosophical anthropology; ordinary language philosophy; neuroscience; human abilities; Cartesian dualism; neo-Aristotelism; holism

# Introduction

The philosophical concept of Peter Michael Stephan Hacker, regarded by the majority of Western researchers as one of the most consistent and at the same time quite original followers of Wittgenstein, has recently gained increasing popularity in English-speaking philosophy. This is evidenced by numerous articles by critics and followers, as well as interviews with the philosopher himself. Unfortunately, Hacker as a thinker is practically unknown in Ukraine and throughout the post-Soviet states. There are but a few translations of his articles into Russian, only a few articles and mentions in the monograph of the Lviv expert on analytical philosophy Andrii Synytsia (2017) and his Tomsk colleagues Vsevolod Ladov (2012), Vitaly Ogleznev and Valeriy Surovtsey (2017) are devoted to his philosophical work. In addition, most researchers of the philosophy of Hacker analyzed his historical and philosophical works, as well as works on the philosophical problems of neuroscience, while his work on philosophical anthropology has not yet been practically studied. Unlike post-Soviet philosophy, in Western thought, the ideas of Hacker's philosophy are widely discussed. This is evidenced by the articles of the Swiss scientist Hans-Johann Glock (2020), the German researcher Edda Weigand (2018) and many others. However, his latest anthropological works are not yet sufficiently known and have not become the object of special criticism. It is this gap that our proposed article intends to fill.

# **Purpose**

Taking into account all of the above, the main purpose of our article is to explicate the features of the anthropological teaching of Peter Hacker in the context of analytical philosophy with consideration to the context of European philosophy and especially within the framework of the Oxford School of **ordinary language philosophy**.

# Statement of basic materials

Having recently celebrated his 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday, Peter Hacker is one of the most distinguished living representatives of the Oxford School of Analytical Philosophy. As a disciple of one of the founders of the analytical legal theory, Herbert Lionel Adolphus Hart, he began his scientific career as an analytic lawyer, having defended his thesis "Rules and Duties" in 1966. However, his research interests soon focused on careful study, commentary and interpretation in the spirit of ordinary language philosophers (John Austin, Gilbert Ryle, H. L. A. Hart, Peter Strawson) of the philosophical heritage of the late Wittgenstein. Co-authored with his Oxford colleague G. P. Baker, he wrote commentaries on the "Philosophical Investigations" of the great Ludwig Wittgenstein, unprecedented in scale and thoroughness of elaboration of the material. Between 1980 and 2013, altogether, he published ten books, essays and commentaries on the main work of the late Wittgenstein. There are also known Hacker's survey works of the Anglo-American analytical tradition of the twentieth century and the history of the development of philosophy in English Oxford in the post-war period.

However, since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Hacker has been increasingly manifesting himself as an original thinker while his interests, within the framework of which he conducts his research, have been steadily shifting from the logical-linguistic problematics, classical for Anglo-American philosophy, to the discussion of the phenomenon of man, his corporeality, rationality, the specifics of its nature. The thinker gained popularity with the book "Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience" (Bennett & Hacker, 2003), co-authored with the Australian neurophysiologist Max Bennett on the philosophical problems of modern neurological research. It provoked a heated discussion with the participation of authoritative contemporary analytical philosophers – John Searle and Daniel Dennett (Bennett, Dennett, Hacker, & Searle, 2007).

At the end of the twentieth century, Hacker announced his intention to create a new holistic anthropology based on a rethinking of the legacy of Wittgenstein and the philosophers of the Oxford School. He calls his position neo-Aristotelianism, as opposed to Cartesian dualism, considering consciousness not as a separate mental reality, but the ability of human nature to manifest physicality.

The recent article "Two conceptions of consciousness and why only the neo-Aristotelian one enables us to construct evolutionary explanations" (Smit & Hacker, 2020), co-written with Harry Smit, is quite revealing in this regard. In it, he argues that the mind-body problem, which is key in the modern analytical philosophy of mind, can be solved by returning to the alternative neo-Aristotelian conception of the mind as the capacities of intellect. At the same time, he, together with the co-author, believes that it can be integrated with evolutionary theory and become the basis of modern anthropology. Herewith, a person is considered as an integral organism that originated from open thermodynamic systems, possessing various powers, including the mind. Hacker makes the general conclusion that "...the neo-Aristotelian conception extended with evolutionary theory is capable of testing future hypotheses..." (Smit & Hacker, 2020, p. 9).

P. Hacker's analytical anthropology is presented in the most complete form in his recently completed Opus magnum, devoted to the study of three main human abilities (powers): intellectual, passions and moral. The Hacker's Tetralogy consists of four books: "Human Nature: The Categorial Framework" (Hacker, 2007), "The Intellectual Powers: A Study of Human Nature" (Hacker, 2013), "The Passions: A Study of Human Nature" (Hacker, 2017) and finally "The Moral Powers: A Study of Human Nature" (Hacker, 2021). All of them are devoted to the anthropology, the study of the essence of Human Nature.

In the first book, Hacker analyses the conceptual foundations of analytic anthropology in terms of Wittgenstein's methodological paradigm. It is of particular interest, since in it the Oxford thinker builds a scheme for all his further presentation and gives definitions of philosophical anthropology within the framework of his concept and the main components of human nature. In the introduction to the first volume of his anthropological tetralogy, he writes: "...As I reached the end of my academic career, I felt a powerful urge to paint a last large fresco that would depict, sometimes with broad brush, sometimes in fine detail, themes which I had studied and reflected on for the last forty years" (Hacker, 2007, p. xi).

Refusing to regard philosophy as "the handmaiden of science", he thus defines the subject matter of philosophical anthropology: "Philosophical anthropology is the investigation of the concepts and forms of explanation characteristic of the study of man" (Hacker, 2007, p. 4).

Hacker correlates his anthropological concept with the Aristotelian-Wittgenstein tradition, opposing it to Plato-Cartesian dualism. At the same time, the anthropological concepts of Kant and Hume turn out to be derived from the Cartesian opposition of bodily (extended) and mental (thinking) realities. Moreover, these concepts are idealistic versions of "degenerate monism" along with "materialistic" variations: behaviourism, physicalism, and abnormal monism. Hacker's version assumes a holistic consideration of the human being as an organic unity of body and soul, and the soul does not appear as a separate entity, but as an entelechy of the body, that is, animating nature that gives life and organic unity to a human being.

Hacker in the manner of Wittgenstein believes that most of the philosophical delusions are based on incorrect usage, more precisely, the use of philosophical categories in an unspecified, unclear sense. And in the first book of his anthropological tetralogy, he analyses the key philosophical categories through which human being is interpreted: substance, causation, powers, action, teleology and teleological explanation, reasons and explanations of human action, the mind, the self and the body and – last but not least – the person.

Hacker carefully analyses, using a rich historical and philosophical material, the origin and place in the anthropological conceptual network of each of these categories, "knots" of the network, which sometimes confuse an adequate understanding of human nature. According to the Oxford thinker, philosophical anthropology is a project aimed at disentangling the "knots that we have tied in our understanding" and he tries to provide "an explanation of how we tied them and why they hold us captive" (Hacker, 2007, p. 13).

On the basis of consistent criticism of Cartesian dualism and physicalism, which, in his opinion, entangle modern anthropology with misuse and confusing statements based on Wittgenstein's philosophical "therapy", Hacker attempts to construct a conceptual framework of holistic anthropology. "Human Nature: The Categorial Framework" reaches an optimistic conclusion that humans are both autonomous actors and natural organisms.

The second book "The Intellectual Powers: A Study of Human Nature" is devoted to the analysis of human intellectual abilities (powers): consciousness, knowledge and faith, sensation

and perception, memory and imagination. This book is most related to his Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience. Most of the misconceptions in modern neuroscience and philosophy of mind, which is under its influence, are associated by him with the lack of clarity of the terms and concepts which are used. Hacker aims at conceptual clarification by paying close attention to how the terms expressing those concepts are used in order to solve and eliminate philosophical "riddles", correct mistakes, expose nonsense, and overcome conceptual confusion. Separate chapters are devoted to consciousness, intentionality and language, as well as whether they are identical with the mental in general. This is followed by a detailed discussion of knowledge, faith and their relationship. The following chapters are devoted to sensation and perception. This is followed by sections on the complex topics of memory and thinking. Hacker challenges, among other things, the idea that thinking is an activity, as well as the idea that images, words, or concepts are means of thinking. He concludes his work with a chapter on imagination, emphasizing it among the intellectual powers of man. Finally, Hacker states that "The mind a human being has is neither a substance nor a substantial part of a substance, but an array of capacities of intellect and will, and their exercise" (Hacker, 2013, p. 363).

The book of a modern Oxford philosopher evokes certain associations with the book of the British philosopher of "common sense" who lived in the 18th century Thomas Reid "Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man" (1785).

Originally, Hacker intended to set out his fundamental research on human abilities in a trilogy, the last volume of which was to be devoted to human passions and moral abilities. However, subsequently the conceived third volume was divided into two: "The Passions ...", published in 2017 and "The Moral Powers ...", appeared in 2021.

The third book of the philosopher "The Passions: A Study of Human Nature" is an analytics and dialectic of passions, needs, emotions and human relationships. The British philosopher emphasizes the role of emotions, passions and moods in human life. He claims that "emotions and moods are the pulse of the human spirit" (Hacker, 2017, p. 3). From his point of view, it is emotions and passions that give meaning to human existence: "A life bereft of emotion would not be worth living, for it would be a life without love or affection, lacking joy and delight, wanting enthusiasm and excitement" (Hacker, 2017, p. 3).

Hacker, criticizing the existing concepts of human emotion, argues that they are based on natural and acquired needs (appetites). He distinguishes the so-called paradigmatic emotions – these are fear, anger, gratitude, indignation, hatred, resentment, envy, jealousy, pity, compassion, grief, hope, excitement, pride, shame, humiliation, regret, remorse and guilt. A special kind of emotion is love, which is paradigmatic in one respect and not in another. It is the majority of emotions that form the basis of the passions and motives of human behaviour. The book ends with an analysis of love, compassion and empathy as sources of absolute values and the basis of morality. In particular, Hacker clearly distinguishes between sympathy and empathy, traces the history of the concept of "empathy" from the German "Einfühlung" to understanding it as a "mirror neurons". The Oxford thinker accompanied his book with essays on the history of love in different cultures and in different eras (Hacker, 2017).

Analysing the moral powers of a person in the final volume of his tetralogy "The Moral Powers: A Study of Human Nature", Peter Hacker turns to the analysis of morality and the highest human values: good and evil, freedom and responsibility, pleasure and happiness, death and meaning of life. He believes that the basis for the emergence and development of values is the development of forms of organic life.

He considers the categories of good and evil to be key values. Hacker quotes reasoning of American writer John Steinbeck from his famous, most philosophical novel "East of Eden" (1952): "Humans are caught – in their lives, in their thoughts, in their hungers and ambitions, in their avarice and cruelty, and in their kindness and generosity too – in a net of good and evil" (Hacker, 2021, p. 33)

On the basis of the logical classification of the Finnish thinker von Wright, he considers various "varieties" of good: "medical kindness", artifactic kindness, a variety of which is instrumental one, and finally, moral kindness or virtue. It is the latter that is an integral attribute of a person as a social being, identifying himself with a community, nation or humanity.

Evil is viewed by Hacker as the absolute opposite of good. He believes that the traditional Christian concept (based on Neoplatonism) about the absence of an ontological basis for evil, which is only the absence of good, is untenable. There is "natural evil", that is, natural disasters that take away life, property and ways of existence from people (Bazaluk & Balinchenko, 2020). At the same time, based on the analysis of the psychological experiments of Milgram and Browning, the British philosopher asserts the deep rootedness of evil in human nature itself. He believes that along with psychologists, the greatest experts in the essence of evil are the great novelists, playwrights and poets. Interesting is also Hacker's reasoning that until the eighteenth century many people justified the permissibility of evil by following God's will and increasing its glory, but starting with the French Revolution and the Jacobins, evil is justified by ideological considerations in the name of the "wonderful future" of the next generations of people.

The key problem of Hacker's ethical anthropology is the problem of free will and the possibility of its philosophical justification, which is the subject of the second part of his book. He criticizes various forms of fatalism, a variation of which is "nomological determinism" arising on the basis of Descartes' dualism. The Oxford thinker argues that "the most common form of determinism in the first quarter of the twenty-first century is neuroscientific determinism" (Hacker, 2021, p. 176). He severely criticizes it, ironically noting that "global neuroscientific determinism is a blank cheque on a non-existent bank" (Hacker, 2021, p. 177). Based on his criticism, Hacker categorically asserts that rationality, freedom and responsibility for one's actions and omissions are the most important species characteristics of a person as a generic being.

The concluding sections of Hacker's monograph are devoted to the problems of achieving happiness, the meaning of life and, finally, the problem of death and "eternal life". He is by and large an adherent of Aristotle's eudemonism, believing that "True happiness may be the love of another, or successful and virtuous public service recognized by society, or successful engagement in a favoured activity" (Hacker, 2021, p. 243).

Criticizing the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, he argues that their concepts turn a person into a simple mechanism for gratifying desire. He believes that Aristotelian ethics can serve as the basis for the science of happiness, which takes as the basis for the criteria of a happy society not the amount of gross product per capita, but minimization of alienation, preservation of and respect for the freedom and dignity of each person.

Happiness is what gives meaning to life, and at the same time, possibility to find meaning in your life and in your activities without being happy. Like pleasure and happiness, goodness and beauty, the meaning that you can find in your life comes gradually. Hacker claims that the meaning of life is comprehended by a person only at the end of his existence. And like any old man, he reflects on death.

Throughout most of the history of mankind, most people perceived death as a person's transition to another type of existence ("mortality of the body" with "immortality of the soul", "transmigration of souls" and the like). An alternative, secular view of death is to view it as the cessation of all biological functions that support life. Hacker does not give preference to any of these options, remaining agnostic in this matter. At the same time, he points out that whatever the concept of death, people are the only creatures who are aware of their mortality. It is this awareness that endows a person with a sense of the meaningfulness of his own existence. Thanatology as overcoming the fear of death is the final chord of Hacker's philosophical anthropology. This overcoming is possible only with the realization of the significance of death as a worthy end to life.

Thus, the modern British thinker Peter Hacker creates an original doctrine of philosophical anthropology, designed to analyse and explain all the significant philosophical aspects of human existence in the world. Relying on the anthropology of Aristotle, radically rethought in the spirit of the linguistic philosophy of the late Wittgenstein, he forms an understanding of man as an integral being, in which thinking appears as one of the abilities of the organism, and not as a separate entity radically different from corporeality. To reveal the essence of a person, Hacker uses the category "the human condition" as an interdisciplinary concept describing the conditions of existence inherent only in humans, used by Hannah Arendt, Giorgio Agamben and Ernest Becker. A person is seen by him as a language-using, self-conscious social being, limited by the capacities for good and evil. The person is also characterized by strong rivalry and killer instincts: "The human condition is language-using, self-conscious social animals with limited capacities for good and evil, with highly competitive and killer instincts" (Hacker, 2021, p. 360).

Peter Hacker concludes his anthropological research with such a rather ironical sentence. He believes that philosophical anthropology, having cleansed itself of metaphysical ballast with the help of analytical methods, should become the basis of a modern scientific, sober view of the nature and capabilities of human as an integral being.

# **Originality**

The novelty of our research lies primarily in the fact that, for the first time in the native philosophy, the anthropological teaching of Peter Hacker, previously not studied in Ukraine, is analysed. Referring to primary sources, we reconstructed the philosophical and anthropological teaching of the British philosopher in the unity of its basic principles and theoretical and practical results. We determined philosophical origins of the key ideas of his philosophical anthropology and substantiated their originality, systematicity and logical argumentation. His philosophical position is defined as anthropological holism, synthesizing the reinterpreted ideas of Aristotle and Wittgenstein.

## **Conclusions**

Peter Hacker is the creator of the original version of Analytic Philosophical Anthropology. This branch of philosophical knowledge, being the study of concepts and forms of explaining human reality, based on scientific achievements, is nevertheless independent in its conclusions from the knowledge of natural sciences. His anthropology is based on criticism of Cartesian dualism and physicalism, which underlie modern neurosciences and which he tries to overcome on the basis of Wittgenstein's philosophical "logotherapy". The conceptual framework of his

holistic anthropology is a rethought conceptual scheme of the Ordinary language philosophy. Hacker considers consciousness not as a separate mental reality, but one of the powers of human nature – an intellectual ability, which, along with emotional (passionate) and moral, belongs to a person as an integral socio-biological being. Asserting the free will of man, the Oxford thinker criticizes various forms of determinism, especially its most common form in modern science – neurobiological determinism, which is built on false philosophical foundations. This criticism allows the modern British philosopher to build an original, systematic and logically consistent anthropological concept that asserts the immutability of the highest human values – goodness, love and happiness.

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# Аналітична антропологія Пітера Гакера

Мета. Стаття є експлікацією особливостей антропологічного вчення Пітера Гакера з урахуванням контексту аналітичної філософії в рамках Оксфордської школи "буденної мови". Теоретичний базис дослідження визначається новітніми дослідженнями англомовної аналітичної філософської традиції, які переосмислюють місце антропологічної проблематики в системі філософського знання. Наукова новизна. На основі звернення до першоджерел реконструюється філософсько-антропологічне вчення Пітера Гакера в єдності його основних принципів і теоретико-практичних результатів. Визначено витоки ключових ідей його антропології, обгрунтована їх оригінальність, систематичність і логічна аргументованість. Його філософська позиція визначена як антропологічний холізм, що синтезує переосмислення ідеї Аристотеля і Вітгенштайна. Висновки. Пітер Гакер  $\epsilon$  творцем оригінальної версії аналітичної філософської антропології, яка заснована на критиці декартівського дуалізму і фізикалізму, що лежать в основі сучасних нейронаук і які він намагається подолати на основі вітгенштайнівської філософської "логотерапії". Концептуальний каркас його холістичної антропології становить переосмислена концептуальна схема філософії "буденної мови". Гакер розглядає свідомість не як окрему ментальну реальність, а одну із здібностей людської природи – інтелектуальну здатність, яка поряд з емоційною і моральною належать людині як цілісній соціальнобіологічній істоті. Стверджуючи свободу волі людини, оксфордський мислитель критикує жорсткий детермінізм, особливо в його найбільш поширеній формі в сучасній науці – нейробіологічний детермінізм, який побудований на хибних філософських підставах. Ця критика дозволяє сучасному британському філософу побудувати оригінальну, систематичну і логічно несуперечливу антропологічну концепцію, яка стверджує непорушність вищих людських цінностей – добра, любові і щастя.

Ключові слова: Пітер Гакер; Людвіг Вітгенштайн; філософська антропологія; філософія "буденної мови"; нейронаука; здібності людини; картезіанський дуалізм; неоаристотелізм; холізм

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