



Veranstaltet gemeinsam mit: DK+ Doctoral Programme „The Sciences in Philosophical, Cultural and Historical Contexts“ der Universität Wien  
<http://dkplus-sciences-contexts.univie.ac.at/>



Der Wissenschaftsfonds.

*Ian Hacking*

BA (British Columbia), MA, PhD (Cambridge); Professor Emeritus, Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto; Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada; 2000 Professor honoraire, Collège de France

Books:

*The Logic of Statistical Inference* (1965). *The Emergence of Probability* (1975). Französisch (2002). *Why does Language Matter to Philosophy?* (1975); Deutsch: *Die Bedeutung der Sprache für die Philosophie* (1984). *Representing and Intervening* (1983) Französisch (1989); Deutsch: *Einführung in die Philosophie der Naturwissenschaften* (1996). *The Taming of the Chance* (1990). *Le plus pur nominalisme* (1993). *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* (1995) Französisch 1995; Deutsch: *Multiple Persönlichkeit: zur Geschichte der Seele in der Moderne* (2001). *The Social Construction of What?* (1999); Französisch (2001); Deutsch: *Was heißt "soziale Konstruktion"? Zur Konjunktur einer Kampfvokabel in den Wissenschaften* (1999). *Mad Travellers: Reflections on the Reality of Transient Mental Illness* (1998); Französisch (2002). *Another new world is being constructed tight now: the ultracold* (2006). *An Introduction to Probability and Inductive Logic* (2001); Französisch 2004. *Historical Ontology* (2002). Deutsch: *Historische Ontologie* (2006).

Numerous articles and book chapters as well as reviews in *New York Review of Books*, *London Review of Books*, etc.

Recent Awards:

2002 Killam Prize for the Humanities; 2009 Holberg International Memorial Prize; 2012 Österreichisches Ehrenzeichen für Wissenschaft und Kunst.

*Abstract*

The Pythagorean cult put into motion the rather bland idea, that the world is mathematical, or more modestly, that there is a mathematical quality in nature (Dirac). It also proposed bold conjectures (in Popper's sense) about specific mathematical structures in the world, beginning with harmonic motion and the regular polyhedra. The first half of this paper sketches the ancient history, while the second moves to the 20th century, focussing on Dirac and, among other things, his Large Numbers Hypothesis. It concludes with brief remarks about Max Tegmark's programme. Pythagoreanism is preposterous but has from the beginning had a profound impact on physics, unlike what is nowadays commonly called Platonism, and which I find boring. But then the historical Plato was a Pythagorean, and that is deeply interesting.

**Ian Hacking**

(Collège de France / University of Toronto)

**The Lure of Pythagoras**

Mittwoch, 18. April 2012  
17.00

Campus der Universität Wien  
Hof 2.8, Alte Kapelle  
Spitalgasse 2-4  
1090 Wien