

PROGRAMME RUNDOWN

DAY 1: 2 FEB 2024 (FRI)

09:45-10:00	Opening Ceremony Prof. Saulius Genusas & Prof. Christian Wenzel	
10:00-11:15	Session 1 Prof. Caleb Liang, NTU The Distinction between First-Person Perspective and Third-Person Perspective in Virtual Bodily Self-Consciousness	Moderator: Prof. Saulius Genusas
11:15-11:30	Break	
11:30-12:45	Session 2 Prof. Lei Zhong, CUHK Mental Knowledge and Mental Causation	Moderator: Prof. Rafael De Clercq
12:45-14:15	Lunch	Lee Woo Sing College Shanghai Restaurant
14:15-15:30	Session 3 Prof. Lok-Chi Chan, NTU Naturalistic (Leibnizian) Monism and the Transcendental Principle of Sufficient Reason	Moderator: Prof. Andrew Brenner
15:30-15:45	Break	
15:45-17:00	Session 4 Prof. I-Kai Jeng, NTU Heidegger's Seminar on Plato's Sophist: the Dasein of the Philosopher	Moderator: Prof. Ka-Wing Leung
17:00-17:15	Break	
17:15-18:30	Session 5 Prof. Christian Wenzel, NTU Putnam's Brains in Vats and Kant's Things in Themselves	Moderator: Prof. Adam Bradley
18:30-21:00	Dinner	Jade Pavillion, Royal Park Hotel

DAY 2: 3 FEB 2024 (SAT)

10:00-11:15	Session 6 Prof. Hayden Kee, CUHK An Internal Affair: Reconsidering the Primacy of Touch	Moderator: Dr. Po-hei Lau
11:15-11:30	Break	
11:30-12:45	Session 7 Prof. Fan-lun Mang, CUHK Some Reflections on Citizens' Moral and Epistemic Character	Moderator: Prof. Nick Rimell
12:45-14:15	Lunch	Chung Chi College Staff Club Restaurant
14:15-15:30	Session 8 Prof. Jiji Zhang, CUHK Regularity-Theoretic Interventionism	Moderator: Prof. Lok-chi Chan
15:30-15:45	Break	
15:45-17:00	Session 9 Prof. Nihel Jhou, NTU Detecting the Alteration of the Past	Moderator: Prof. Tien-Chun Lo
17:00-17:15	Break	
17:15-18:30	Session 10 Prof. Yong Huang, CUHK Two Defenses of Moral Expressivism: From Simon Blackburn's Quasi-Realism to Wang Yangming's Agent-Based Moral Realism	Moderator: Dr. Yun-chak Chong
18:30-21:00	Dinner	Kitchee Bistro

SESSION 1

The Distinction between First-Person Perspective and Third-Person Perspective in Virtual Bodily Self-Consciousness

PROF. CALAB LIANG, NTU

The distinction between the first-person perspective (1PP) and the third-person perspective (3PP) has been widely regarded as fundamental and rigid, and many researchers hold that genuine bodily illusions can only be experienced from the 1PP.

We applied VR technology to investigate whether this mainstream view is correct. In our experiments, the participants were immersed in a VR environment in which they saw a life-sized virtual body either from the 1PP or from the 3PP. They either passively received tactile stimulations and/or actively interacted with a virtual soccer ball. Our VR system created novel visuo-motor-tactile correlations between the real and the virtual world: when the participant interacted with a real plastic soccer ball, he/she would feel corresponding tactile sensations and see the avatar performing the exact same movements. We found that a clear sense of ownership over the avatar was induced not only in the 1PP condition but also in the Passive-3PP and the Active-3PP conditions. We also observed evidence suggesting that it is possible to experience one's bodylocation, 1PP-location, as well as self-location, both from the 1PP and from the 3PP.

Together, we demonstrate that there is in fact no fundamental gap between embodied 1PP and embodied 3PP in the virtual world.

SESSION 2

Mental Knowledge and Mental Causation

PROF. LEI ZHONG, CUHK

In this talk, by defending a modified causal condition on knowledge, I aim to argue that mental causation is required for any type of mental knowledge (including phenomenal knowledge).

SESSION 3

Naturalistic (Leibnizian) Monism and the Transcendental Principle of Sufficient Reason

PROF. LOK-CHI CHAN, NTU

There are two recent arguments for the principle of sufficient reason (PSR). According to the ontological argument from stability (OAS), our world should be chaotic and full of bizarre and unpredictable supernatural events if PSR is false (Pruss 2009; Feser 2017; Pruss & Rasmussen 2018: 63). According to the transcendental argument from stability (TAS), if PSR is false, our mental states could occur without reason; PSR is thus required as an a priori reason to exclude these sceptical possibilities (Pruss 2009; Feser 2017; Koons & Pruss 2021; cf. Kant 1998/1781). I offer an alternative naturalistic hypothesis to account for our ontological and epistemic stability. This hypothesis is a development of priority monism, a view recently influential in metaphysics which is defended by Schaffer (2010a, 2010b, 2018), in combination with a powerful view of qualities as defended by Shoemaker (1980) and many others. Interestingly, the resulting view resembles Leibniz's (1714/1989) monistic viewpoint, namely his monadism. However, it can be maintained independently without endorsing his broader worldview, which famously emphasizes PSR.

SESSION 4

Heidegger's Seminar on Plato's *Sophist*: the Dasein of the Philosopher

PROF. I-KAI JENG, NTU

Heidegger's works on the history of philosophy are more often understood to be idiosyncratic takes on well-known figures, representing a distinctively Heideggerean view of the history of Western philosophy, and not necessarily historically accurate or faithful. These works interest scholars for more what they can teach us about Heidegger's own thought instead of the thoughts of past thinkers. This paper, by contrast, attempts to show that Heidegger's important seminar on Plato's *Sophist* makes several crucial contributions to our understanding of Plato. I discuss three themes. First, one of Heidegger's principles is that Plato must be understood in light of Aristotle, who is the peak of Greek philosophy and clarifies what remained obscure in Plato. I argue that with certain qualifications, this is not an unsound assumption. Second, Heidegger understood that the *Sophist* presents the philosopher in action while articulating the being of the *sophist* in speech. I show that even though Heidegger fails to completely unearth the full-ness of this insight, his clear statement of it leads the interpreter on the right path to understanding Plato. Finally, I show that it is quite appropriate to characterize what Plato does in the *Sophist* in Heideggerean language: Plato attempts to discern the essence of Being by way of an analysis of die Rede of authentic Dasein (= the *logos* of the philosopher). I argue that, even though the approach of the *Sophist* resembles that of Being and Time, the differences are decisive. It is those differences that result in diametrically opposed ontologies, one championing time and finitude, the other eternity and transcendence.

SESSION 5

Putnam's Brains in Vats and Kant's Things in Themselves

PROF. CHRISTIAN WENZEL, NTU

Hilary Putnam in 1981 argued that if we were brains in vats, we could not refer to the vats we are in. We could not even think that we are brains in vats. To develop this argument, Putnam relies on his externalist theory of meaning. I will argue that this theory does not work in this case. Contrary to Putnam's claim, I argue that we could think that we are brains in vats. Then I will ask whether we can meaningfully rethink Putnam's scenario within the framework of Kant's transcendental philosophy. Might it be conceivable that Putnam's computer causes the appearances we have, if we understand appearances as Kant did?

SESSION 6

An Internal Affair: Reconsidering the Primacy of Touch

PROF. HAYDEN KEE, CUHK

Many philosophers and psychologists have held that there is a priority of touch over the other senses with respect to our experience of ourselves as embodied beings. Many such claims are unclear or unconvincing, however, because they rely on vagueness or ambiguity in our commonsense notion of touch. I reconsider one such argument for the priority of touch, Husserl's influential discussion. I attempt to shed new light on his reasoning by clarifying Husserl's notion of touch with the help of a distinction between exteroception and interoception. Viewed in this light, a certain priority of touch over vision does in fact emerge. I argue, however, that it this priority is the accidental result of our bodily morphology and the medium of vision, rather than being an intrinsic priority of touch as such. Further, hearing turns out to have an interesting claim to being as basic as touch for our experience of our own bodies.

SESSION 7

Some Reflections on Citizens' Moral and Epistemic Character

PROF. FAN-LUN MANG, CUHK

Liberals generally assert that citizens have the right to lead their lives in their own ways. However, many of them also emphasize that citizens must possess qualities like fairness in social cooperation, civility, reasonableness, and the willingness to deliberate with each other. I argue that if civic virtues are important, then citizens do not have the right to lead their personal lives in any way they please. This is because they should continuously improve their moral and epistemic character in order to be morally responsible citizens.

SESSION 8

Regularity-theoretic Interventionism

PROF. JIJI ZHANG, CUHK

As an influential approach to theorizing about causation, interventionism is standardly presented as following a counterfactual line of attack. I examine the main reasons for treating interventionism as a broadly counterfactual account and argue that those reasons track features that are not essential to the attractiveness of interventionism. I outline a way to formulate interventionism that is broadly regularity-theoretic and highlight some potential advantages of this formulation.

SESSION 9

Detecting the Alteration of the Past

PROF. NIHEL JHOU, NTU

The paper proposes that there is a certain kind of natural alteration of the past, and it is physically detectable, if we assume two (popular) theories and two (unpopular) hypotheses. Popular theories are the B-theory of time and the theory of irreducible worldly chanciness. The first hypothesis is new in the field: a hypertime interpretation of worldly chanciness. Strikingly, it follows from these assumptions that there is a kind of natural alteration of the past (as opposed to 'unnatural' one by backward time travel). Further with another hypothesis, that a causal chain takes not only time but also hypertime, the paper reveals that such a natural alteration of the past is physically detectable through genuinely inconsistent observations of a particular event. This result amounts to testing metaphysical assumptions empirically. If experiments show otherwise, then the whole argument can serve as a *reductio* against some of the made assumptions.

SESSION 10

Two Defenses of Moral Expressivism: From Simon Blackburn's Quasi-Realism to Wang Yangming's Agent-Based Moral Realism

PROF. YONG HUANG, CUHK

Generally speaking, moral realism is a position good to take but difficult to defend. It is good to take because it provides a solid foundation for our moral judgements about the rightness and wrongness of actions. It is difficult to defend because it needs to explain away the apparent difference between non-moral claims such as "someone steals" and moral claims such as "it is wrong for the person to steal"; indeed, any attempts to do so have to surmount the almost insurmountable blocks piled up by moral anti-realists such as Is-Ought problem, open question argument, argument from queerness, argument from relativity, and argument from evolution, to name just a few. In contrast, moral anti-realism is a position easy to defend but not good to take. It is easy to defend because it simply accepts the apparent difference between non-moral claims and moral claims as given, explaining that, while the former describes the world, the latter prescribes it. It is a position not good to take, however, because if moral anti-realism is true, then there is no clear way for us to determine whether a particular moral claim is true, and even if there is a way to do it, it is difficult to prevent it from falling into the hopeless moral relativism.

In this chapter, we are going to examine two strategies to eat the cake and have it. Simon Blackburn's quasi-realism takes an anti-realist position, claiming that our value judgements are expression of our attitudes instead of description or representation of the reality, and yet still aims to earn the right to talk of moral truth, which he does by appealing to coherentism, pragmatism, and what I consider to be realism of another brand. The last one is most significant: our moral claims as expressions of our attitudes are true not in terms of their accurate representation of the external reality but in terms of their correspondence with our human nature. While we can only find some hint to this most promising

approach in Blackburn, who is indeed quite unsure about it, it is Wang Yangming who develops a full-blown version of moral realism of that brand, which is primarily concerned with moral properties of goodness and badness of a person, in contrast to the familiar type of moral realism, which is primarily concerned with moral properties of rightness or wrongness of action. Elsewhere I characterize it as an agent-focused moral realism in contrast to the action-focused one (Huang 2024).