

Time table (The following time is JST)

9:00~9:15 Introduction

9:15~10:00 Takeshi Sakon (Osaka City University), "A Cartesian Argument for Absolute Simultaneity"

10:05~10:50 Patrick Dawson (University of Sydney), "Relativity and the Fickle Present"

10:50~11:05 Short Break

11:05~11:50 David Braddon-Mitchell(University of Sydney), TBA

11:55~12:40 Kuniyisa Morita (Osaka University), "A Novel Argument for Fatalism"

12:40~13:30 Lunch Break

13:30~14:15 Kristie Miller (University of Sydney), "Against Phenomenal Illusionism"

14:20~15:05 Andrew James Latham (University of Sydney), TBA

15:05~15:20 Short Break

15:20~16:05 Akiko Frischhut (Akita International University) & Giuliano Torrenco (University of Milan & Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)," Moving spotlight and super-time"

Abstracts

(1) A Cartesian Argument for Absolute Simultaneity

Takeshi Sakon

While an epistemic consideration may not be a perfectly reliable guide to a metaphysical conclusion, a theory may well be criticized as a bad metaphysic if it violates something epistemically self-evident. Bourne [2002 and 2006: ch. 1] and Braddon-Mitchell [2004] have presented such an argument as to the privileged present moment, as Lewis [1986: pp.92-6] argued against the privileged actuality. Along this line of reasoning, I will try to give a rough sketch of an argument for absolute simultaneity, which can do justice to what I call the "Cartesian" notion of the present.

(2) Relativity and the Fickle Present

Patrick Dawson

It is often assumed that, if there exists an absolute present, then not only the present but all events throughout time must be foliated into slices – sets of events that are, were, or will be absolutely simultaneous, together. This leads to conflict with the theories of relativity, since the spacetime models employed within these theories do not contain such a structure of absolute slices. While it was once argued that this conflict simply disproved there being an absolute present (Godel 1949, Putnam 1967), modern critics instead argue that the absolute present can only be preserved in light of relativity theory if one accepts some seriously implausible ontological commitments (Savitt 2000, Wuthrich 2012). In this talk I discuss a novel solution to the problem of relativity. I argue that, within any of the best-known A-theories, there could exist an absolute present, without that implying that the past or the future are temporally 'sliced'. The A-theorist then argues that the theories of relativity only preclude an absolutely-sliced past, without precluding an absolute present. This response will require the A-theorist to defend certain limitations on what the theories of relativity can tell us, and to posit certain odd behaviours displayed by presentness and copresentness (whatever those things are). I argue that these limitations are, as it turns out, much more reasonable than they might first appear to be – more reasonable, perhaps, than those commitments raised in other responses to the problem of relativity.

(3) TBA

David Braddon-Mitchell

(4) A Novel Argument for Fatalism

Kunihisa Morita

This talk offers a novel argument for fatalism: that is, if one accepts the logical possibility of fatalism (that is, that fatalism has ideal conceivability, conceptual coherence, or logical consistency), one must accept that fatalism is true. What I mean by 'fatalism' is that whatever happens now was determined to happen in the past. Existing arguments for fatalism assume that the principle of bivalence is valid even for future propositions, that past truths are necessarily true, and/or that possible propositions never change into impossible propositions. However, such premises have been exposed as being doubtful. For this reason, my argument does not assume such questionable premises, and I therefore believe it to be much stronger than existing arguments for fatalism.

(5) Against Phenomenal Illusionism

Kristie Miller

Temporal dynamists typically hold that it seems to us as though time robustly passes, and that its seeming so is explained by the fact that time does in fact robustly pass. Temporal non-dynamists hold that time does not robustly pass. Some non-dynamists nevertheless hold that it seems to us as though it does: we have a non-veridical phenomenal state whose content represents robust passage. Call these phenomenal illusionists. Other non-dynamists argue that the phenomenal state in question—the target phenomenology—is veridical, and represents something other than robust passage. This paper argues in favour of this latter view. I argue that there are a number of phenomenal states that are candidates to singly, or jointly, be the target phenomenology, and that non-dynamists have no reason to suppose that any of these, singly, or jointly, represent that robust passage. Ultimately, I suggest, it is probably a mistake to suppose that there is one target phenomenology whose content non-dynamists disagree about. Rather, there are several relevant phenomenologies and these, jointly, lead us to describe our experiences in ways that suggest we have a phenomenology as of robust passage, even though those states neither singly, nor in concert, represent robust passage.

(6) TBA

Andrew James Latham

(7) Moving spotlight and super-time

Akiko Frischhut & Giuliano Torrenco

At least since Smart's "The river of time", the idea that the metaphor of time as moving could lead to a problematic duplication of time itself has seen many incarnations. While certain versions of the A-theory, such as presentism, are less susceptible to this objection, the duplication of time seems inevitable for every theory that combines the reality of space-time (or some portion of it, as in the growing block view) with

dynamic tensed feature, such as a flowing present. In this talk, we will focus on recent versions of the moving spotlight view of temporal passage (Deasy 2018, Cameron 2015, Skow 2015), and argue that any metaphysically substantive interpretation of the view requires indeed some sort of further temporal dimension, that is an ontological “super time”. We will consider a general line of defence for the A-theorists, that is to reduce super-time to a mere ideological superstructure, ultimately reducible to ordinary tenses (along the lines of Skow 2009, but the idea is already in Prior). We will show that this line of defence is ultimately not viable to the moving-spotlighter. Insofar as their view requires resources to distinguish itself from other A-theories (presentism), it has to include as substantive metaphysical principle (and not as a trivial “analytic” truth”) that the distribution of qualitative feature across space-time is preserved as the present “moves” along it. Our main argument will lead to the conclusion that this is not possible without a ontological, and not merely ideological, super-time.