

國立中正大學

哲學系學術演講

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講題：The epistemic task of thought experimentation:
Starting with a rationalist fallacy

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大綱：Counterfactual thought experiments are the usual way to show false some philosophical theses that are necessary. This paper explores a positive epistemic role for thought experiments in philosophical theorisation. The rationale of employing a thought experiment, at least in most cases, is its target thesis satisfying the formal requirement of the non-empirical Instance: If ϕ is ψ , then if ϕ_1 ($\neg\psi_1$), one can see by non-empirical way that ψ_1 ($\neg\phi_1$), where ϕ_1 and ψ_1 are instances of ϕ and ψ respectively. However, one hitherto unnoticed fallacy regarding thought experimentation and philosophical theorisation is discussed in order to circumscribe the proper utilisation of thought experiments. One major dispute of thought experimentation concerns the way one justifies one's judgement on a given thought experiment. The appeal to intuitions is heavily barraged by arguments from philosophical experimentalists. Without engaging in the dispute, this paper raises another reason why intuitions should not do essential justificatory work for philosophical theses by means of the positive role of thought experimentation. The positive role is: Giving the presupposition of the success of thought experimentation, it is shown that some or many philosophical theses are only justified non-empirically to be a rational choice in contrast to its rivals by dealing with relevant thought experiments better.