

國立中正大學

哲學系學術演講

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講題：A Cognitive Argument for Event Constitution

時間：2021.4.7 (Wed.) 15:10-17:00

地點：文學院 412 研討室

摘要：

Consider the relation between a rocking horse and the pieces of wood it is made of. A common view takes the relation to be that of constitution (or material constitution), in which two entities coincide spatially and share properties. There is an important but somewhat neglected issue about the relation: what kinds of entities could be its relata? This talk considers a candidate, i.e. events. The central question in this talk is thus: are there cases in which an event bears the constitution relation to another? The question is not new; Kit Fine raised it nearly 40 years ago. After that, the question was largely ignored, but things are starting to change. In their recent papers on events, Thomas Crowther, Simon Evnine, Tessa Jones and Mark Johnston all made creative use of the idea of constitution. I applaud their efforts; despite this, I find their arguments for event constitution lacking. They motivate constitution-based accounts by appealing to such considerations as the explanation of action and the classification of event-kinds, but sensible alternatives seem available in each of the cases. In this talk, I examine and criticize the proposals made by the aforementioned scholars. Then I suggest a new argument for the claim that some events are constituted by others: some constituted events are the truthmakers, or veridicality-makers, of certain perceptual experiences, so we need them in our ontology. This argument combines insights from what Lieven Decock calls cognitive metaphysics and what Arthur Schipper calls Aboutness Realism. In motivating this argument, I will also comment upon recent work on the potential roles of cognitive science in metaphysics.