



Comparative Philosophy as Inquiry: On the Role of Vague and Precise Abstraction?

Date: 7 November 2014 (Friday)
Time: 12:00
Venue: Conference Room 2, To Yuen Building



Dr. Ralph Weber
Senior Researcher and Lecturer
University Research Priority Program
(URPP) Asia and Europe
University of Zurich

Abstract

The subdiscipline of comparative philosophy is thriving, making its way into the curricula of ever more philosophy departments across the world. Yet, the very notion of 'comparison' remains obscure and is not even much investigated in comparative philosophy circles. It seems as if most practitioners are happy simply to assume the issue to be uncontroversial. In this talk, I first present a static account of comparison and then proceed to complicate matters by offering a dynamic account of comparative philosophy understood as an inquiry, emphasizing the role of vagueness and the paramount significance of the level of generality at which the comparison is thought to operate. I argue that each and any result of a comparison suffers from arbitrariness in the absence of a clear indication of the chosen level of generality. A better understanding of these mechanisms of comparison is crucial for the future development of the subdiscipline.

All are welcome.