

Philosophisches Seminar
der Universität zu Köln

Vortrag

von

Prof. Dr. Natalja Deng
(Yonsei University, Seoul)

»The ineffability of time«

"The relation between time and temporal experience lends itself to interdisciplinary study, and interdisciplinarity sometimes involves difficult methodological choice points. In the case of time, a central choice point concerns how to treat the question of whether time really passes, or flows, or is dynamic in a way that space is not. Analytic metaphysics gives this question pride of place, in a McTaggart-inspired A- versus B-theory formulation, which arguably has roots stretching all the way back to Heraclites and Parmenides. Meanwhile, philosophers of physics either ignore it or explicitly call for philosophers of time to 'move past' the As and Bs. This talk will explore a metaphysical view with an anti-metaphysical upshot. The view is somewhat radical with respect to mainstream philosophy of time paradigms. In a nutshell, it says that time's nature with respect to the question of dynamicity is ineffable, or beyond the conceptual grasp. My motivation is to provide a foundation for the kind of stance that aims to transcend (and move beyond) the As and Bs, but in way that takes the question seriously and thereby manages to stay relevant to metaphysics. I will suggest that this stance is already implicit in both the metaphysics and philosophy of physics literatures, in the guise of a variety of 'Tenseless Passage' approaches that aim to somehow locate dynamicity within the block universe. Given current frameworks, TP approaches can't really amount to more than a cheap re-labelling of (B-)succession as '(A-)passage'. But there is a genuine insight contained in TP. Ineffability allows us to make it explicit."

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