



Schedule with abstracts

Sunday November 25th (Humanisthuset, Umeå University)

9.30-10.50

Bram Vaassen

How to cause when powerless

Cases of negative causation, where omissions or absences cause a phenomenon, pose a dilemma for philosophers of causation. Denying the possibility of negative causation forces one to deny a wide variety of seemingly true causal claims. Embracing the possibility of negative causation forces one to endorse a wide variety of seemingly false causal claims. Proponents of negative causation have attempted to explain away the sensed falsity of such spurious negative causation claims by arguing that they might be merely inappropriate (Lewis 2000), often used outside the relevant context (Schaffer 2005) and too sensitive (Woodward 2006). I argue that these strategies fail individually and propose a new strategy according to which spurious negative causal claims are false because they are sensitive and the sensitivity of causal claims is context-dependent. This solution matches our intuitions but comes with the cost of denying the possibility of sensitive causation and embracing causal contextualism.

Coffee

11.10-12.30

Hedda Hassel Mørch

Phenomenal Powers: a new response to Hume

Hume famously argued that there are no causal powers, at least not as far as we can know or positively conceive of, because all causes are conceivable without their effects. But a seeming exception to this claim can be found in the realm of phenomenal properties: it is difficult to conceive of the feeling of pain making a subject who experiences it try to pursue it (or do anything else than avoid it), or the feeling of pleasure making a subject try to avoid it (or do anything else than pursue it)—at least in the absence of interfering motives. These connections are standardly explained away as merely psychological (as per Humean associationism) or merely analytic or constitutive (as per analytic functionalism). I will argue that they should rather be taken at face value, as indicating that phenomenal pain and pleasure truly necessitate their effects in a properly causal way, and that phenomenal pain and pleasure thus constitute real, irreducible causal powers.

Lunch

14.00-15.20

Henry Taylor

A powerful new anomalous monism

Anomalous monism is no longer a dominant position in the metaphysics of mind. It is generally regarded that the view faces unanswerable objections, as pointed out by Jaegwon Kim and others in the 90s. As a result, the general consensus is that it just doesn't work. The view is now effectively dead.

I will argue that this is a mistake. This paper presents a new version of anomalous monism, which solves all of the problems with previous ones. I begin by outlining two versions of anomalous monism, and show that each one is untenable. I then develop a new version, and show how it avoids the problems that beset the other versions of the view. This new version of anomalous monism draws very heavily on the metaphysics of dispositions, and powers theories of causation.

Coffee

15.50-17.10

Stephen Mumford

What tends to be

Causes tend or dispose towards their effects with a modality that is less necessity but more than pure contingency. Such a view rejects both Humeanism and the forms of anti-Humeanism that are necessitarian. A deeply tendential view accepts both an external principle and internal principle of dispositionality. These principles are defended. The tendential view can adhere to a naturalism while rejecting fundamentalism. This gives us a view that is contrasted with those of a number of other contemporary dispositionalists.

19.00-...

Dinner at Gotthards:

<https://gotthardskrog.se/en>

All are welcome, but registration is required via:

bram.vaassen@umu.se

The deadline for registration is November 21th.