

Singapore Symposium in Legal Theory (SSLT)

6-7 May 2024

Speaker: Professor Kevin Toh



The Centre for Legal Theory (CLT) is pleased to have Professor Kevin Toh as our speaker for the Singapore Symposium for Legal Theory (SSLT) seminar held on 6 May 2024.

In his seminar, “Rules, Patterns and Prophecies”, Professor Toh discussed the conception of legal reasoning and whether judges more often than not, have underlying considerations that drive their decisions, using the rules that they employ as “window dressing. He discussed how these are the two typically recognised levels at which legal reasoning take place – the surface level of rules, and some underlying level of consideration. In this paper, he suggests a different and more vindicatory explanation of the reasoning judges employ, and the relation between the two levels of legal reasoning. Professor Toh also discussed theoretical components and the connectionist conception of cognition, and how these concepts may shed light on how legal reasoning is employed.



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In his roundtable discussion, Professor Toh discussed whether there is value in adopting a meta-theoretical approach, and if a dedicated metatheory of law is feasible. In sharing his observations, he suggests that the preliminary question to ask is whether legal theory must borrow or has to be subjected to the metatheoretical endeavours of general philosophy.

Kevin Toh is the Professor of Philosophy of Law at the Faculty of Laws, University College London. Previously, he was an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at San Francisco State University, and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Indiana University in Bloomington. Prof. Toh has also held visiting fellowships and/or professorships at University College, Oxford University; University of Edinburgh; Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security and Law in Freiburg; Osaka University; and Roma Tre University. He was a law clerk for Associate Justice Charles Fried at the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in the 1997-98 term. His work focuses on legal philosophy, philosophical ethics, and constitutional theory.

More about the SSLT seminars at <https://law.nus.edu.sg/clt/the-singapore-symposium-in-legal-theory/>

This post event highlight is also available in pdf [here](#).