

PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIUM

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"The Semantic Significance of Disagreement"

Friday, March 6, 2009

Paper: 3:30 P.M.; Learning Center, Room 194

Refreshments: 5:30 P.M.; Ashe Building, Room 735

Dr. Rattan received his Ph.D from Columbia in 2002, and is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto, working in philosophy of mind, language, and epistemology. His recent publications include "Indeterminacy, A Priority, and Analyticity in the Quinean Critique", *European Journal of Philosophy* (forthcoming), "On the Value and Nature of Truth", *Journal of Philosophical Research* (2008), and "The Two Worlds of Deflationism", *Journal of Philosophy* (December 2007).

Abstract

Recently, philosophers have been concerned with the question of the epistemic significance of disagreement. Two broad kinds of responses have been pursued in the literature, the *dogmatic* or *steadfast*, and the *skeptical* or *conciliatory*. Those who defend the dogmatic or steadfast response often emphasize the relevance of the first-person perspective in addressing the question of the epistemic significance of disagreement. But these philosophers have been clear neither about what the first-person perspective is, nor how or when it can, plausibly, justify the dogmatic or steadfast response. In this paper, I try to achieve greater clarity on exactly what the first-person perspective is and to determine how and when it is relevant to the question of the epistemic significance of disagreement. I defend a conclusion on the question of the epistemic significance of disagreement that is neither dogmatic nor skeptical, but that more accurately describes the structure of rational entitlements and tensions at work in disagreement. Surprisingly, the key to understanding the epistemic question is a semantic insight about the nature of thoughts about thoughts.



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