

The Department of Philosophy Presents

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Close-Hipp 202



Bias, Perspective, & Introspection

In this talk, I sketch a general framework for theorizing about bias and bias attributions. I attempt to show that the account illuminates a number of important psychological phenomena, including the following: (i) the fact that accusations of bias frequently inspire not only denials but also countercharges of bias (“you only think that I’m biased because you’re biased!”); (ii) the fact that we tend to see ourselves as less biased than our peers (the so-called ‘bias blind spot’); and (iii) the fact that we tend to see people who share our views as less biased than people who don’t. I explore the circumstances in which we’re rationally committed to believing that those who disagree with us are not only mistaken but also biased simply because they disagree with us in the way that they do. In addition, I argue that the account also sheds light on another notorious and well-documented psychological phenomenon: the fact that introspection is an unreliable way of detecting our biases. On the account that I offer, the unreliability of introspection for this purpose isn’t a contingent fact that depends on the finer details of human psychology but rather holds of necessity: even God could not have made us creatures who reliably detect our own biases by way of introspection.