

The Department of
Philosophy Colloquium
Series Presents

Talking About Nothing

Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, Metaphor, and Reference



Date: Thursday,

February 20, 2025

Time: 4:00–5:30pm

Location: Sakamaki C-308

The seventh-century philosopher Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, in a passage explaining his theory of metaphor, also discusses the problem of negative existentials and non-referring terms. I show how Kumārila's broadly descriptivist solution to these puzzles acts as a defense of his preferred theory of metaphor. This case also illustrates the importance of taking Mīmāṃsā texts like the Tantravārttika seriously as philosophical works, even if, given their concern with Vedic hermeneutics, they are less often the topic of modern philosophical interest.

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