



Oddělení pro studium novověké racionality FLÚ AV ČR

Vás zve na přednášku

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On Political Authority and Obedience

The talk considers Peter Winch's novel approach to Contractarianism in his 1990 "Certainty and Authority", which links Hume's criticism with arguments from Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*, to take on the desire-belief conception of action: the view that reasonable action is based on justified belief. He argues that rationality is itself based on primitive and habitual trust and acceptance, i.e. obedience, of authority. Far from grounding community, rationality, itself bound up with these habitual reactions, is thus implicit in the practices of the community and these life-practices form the foundation for any reasonable decision and action.

Against this I argue that: 1) primitive reaction and habit cannot make sense of obligation, (and hence obedience), since it ignores obligation's conceptual and free character; 2) the genealogical account of obedience running all the way from family to politics, cannot deal with political authority understood as rule of law; 3) law is inseparable from theoretical, indeed philosophical, reasoning whose demand for *logon didonai*, for justification, presupposes doubt; 4) that many 'ordinary' institutions and practices of our society are theoretical in origin and may at any point be subjected to further 'rational' inquiry.

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