

ABSTRACT

One activity for which philosophers are perhaps best known is having disputes with one another. Some non-philosophers, and increasingly many philosophers, believe that a number of these disputes are silly or misguided in some way. Call such silly or misguided disputes defective disputes. When is a dispute defective? What kinds of defective disputes are there? How are these different kinds of defective disputes different from one another? What does it mean to call a dispute 'merely verbal'? These questions will all come up for consideration in Part One of this manuscript. In Part Two I will examine whether certain disputes in ontology and over the nature of possible worlds are defective in any of the ways described in Part One. I shall focus mainly on the question of whether these disputes are merely verbal disputes, though I shall examine whether they are defective in any other ways.