Im Rahmen des PHILOSOPHISCHEN KOLLOQUIUMS findet am Donnerstag, 11. Juli, folgender Vortrag statt:

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Frege, Carl Snell and Romanticism
Fruitful Concepts and the ‘Organic/Mechanical’ Distinction

A surprisingly neglected figure in Frege scholarship is the Jena physics and mathematics professor Carl Snell. I’ll restrict attention here to just this aspect of his thought: the role of the concept of “organic”, and a contrast with “mechanical”. Snell turns out to have been a philosophical Romantic, influenced by Schelling and Goethe, and Kant’s Critique of Judgement. In Frege’s environment, the “organic/mechanical” contrast, understood in a distinctively Romantic fashion, had reached the status of “accepted, recognized cliché”. More generally, Frege’s environment was more saturated with what we now call ”Continental philosophy” than we might expect.

This context-setting has a payoff for our reading of Frege’s texts: many expressions and turns of phrase in Frege that have been regarded as vague, throwaway metaphors turn out to be literal references to ideas that would have been salient among the people in Frege’s environment that he spent time with day-to-day. In particular, this is true of Frege’s account of “extending knowledge” via “fruitful concepts” and his rejection of the idea that logic and mathematics can be done “mechanically”. When Frege appealed to “organic connection” and speaks of fruitful concepts as containing conclusions “like a plant in its seeds”, he would have expected these phrases to have been understood in a very specific way, as alluding to a recognized contrast between “organic” and “mechanical” connection that was applied by Snell and those close to him not only to distinctions between biological and physical reasoning but also to distinctions of types of reasoning in arithmetic and geometry.

nächster Vortrag: 18. Juli
Wilson Mendonça, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro
Supervenience Arguments against Robust Moral Realism