Supervenience Arguments against Robust Moral Realism

Two influential supervenience-based arguments against robust, non-reductive moral realism can be found in the recent metaethical literature: the co-extensiveness argument and the explanatory argument. After stating the most plausible supervenience thesis in metaethics, the talk deals with the first argument. The main issue here concerns the legitimacy of infinitely disjunctive properties, which leads to the rejection of the co-extensiveness argument. The target of the next sections is the explanatory argument. It can be conceded to reductivism that necessities entailed by moral supervenience require a sort of explanation ultimately based on an identity claim. However, reductivists usually go astray when they treat this as a matter of identifying a moral property with a natural one. The common conception of reduction, which makes the set of the reduced properties a subset of the set of the reducing properties, cannot be held. It is abandoned in favor of a novel approach to reduction recently articulated by Mark Schroeder: reduction by analysis. The resulting account meets the challenge of the explanatory argument as moral properties can be reduced by being analyzed in, without being identified with, natural properties. Moreover, it is compatible with the spirit, if not with the letter, of robust realism.

Alle Interessierten, insbesondere auch Studierende, sind herzlich eingeladen.

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Wir wünschen allen eine erholsame vorlesungsfreie Zeit.