



Fachbereich Philosophie

Fachbereichskolloquium

Wintersemester 20/21
18:15 bis 19:45

Im Rahmen des Philosophischen Kolloquiums findet am **Donnerstag, 12. November**, folgender Vortrag statt:

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The Subject Matter Problem, or: What is Normative Ethics About?

What determines the wrongness of an action? According to utilitarianism, it's the actions' effects on general well-being. According to Kantianism (in one version), it's whether the action's maxim can be willed to be universal law. According to contractualism, it's whether the action would be forbidden by a norm that is reasonable to accept for everyone. Clearly, these three traditions in moral philosophy propose very distinct accounts of moral wrongness. They are commonly perceived as rivals, that is, as presenting alternative answers to a common question. What is this common question? What is the subject matter proponents of these traditions are talking about, or referring to?

I argue that this question is non-trivial and underestimated. The disparity of the answers we get from the mentioned traditions may be taken to suggest that they are actually talking past each other. The different methodologies applied in moral philosophy ---throughout its history as well as in contemporary debates---may be taken to provide further evidence that normative ethicists from different traditions are not properly disagreeing with each other because they aren't talking about the same things. My talk's main point is that, in order to avoid this problem (at least in contemporary debates), and for a few additional reasons, we need a general conception of morality's subject matter. It should (1) clearly define what morality is about while (2) being sufficiently general to capture different traditions. I (tentatively) propose such a conception, present my main line of argument for it, and discuss a few of its advantages and disadvantages.

Alle Interessierten, insbesondere auch Studierende, sind herzlich eingeladen.

