

Guest Editor's Preface

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The papers collected in this issue explore some of the themes which have been at the center in recent debates in metaethics. Two papers deal with the question of reasons for action and the problem of motivation. An attention for questions of normativity and motivation may actually be seen as a new start in the work in metaethics after some time of neglected interest for this approach to moral philosophy. Lorenzo Greco gives an illustration of the contribution which Bernard Williams gave to the question of internalism and externalism in the theory of rationality. While doing this he also sets the scene of the debate which has taken place after Williams, and discusses figures such as Parfit, Korsgaard, and McDowell. Luciana Ceri offers a description of the various positions which have been developed on the question of motivation and their connection with theories of the meaning of moral discourse.

A different family of questions has grown from the old problem of moral properties and their connection with properties such as colors and other secondary qualities. This line of thinking, which goes back at least to the British moralists' debates (e.g. F. Hutcheson and D. Hume), was revived by the work of John Mackie. To Mackie's philosophy and to its connection to previous views in ethics, expressed by Westermarck and Russell, is dedicated Barbara De Mori's paper. She places Mackie's complex contribution within recent debate over realism and antirealism in ethics. Alessio Vaccari takes his starting point from Mackie's error theory in order to elaborate on and compare Blackburn's projectivist position to McDowell's use of the secondary qualities metaphor. Maurizio Balistreri's paper also revives the debate between a sentimentalist and a rationalist account of ethics; he argues that a proper description of the collaboration that aesthetics gives to an appropriate ethical formation of the self can only be offered within a sentimentalist perspective.

Gianfranco Pellegrino treats a problem which is strictly connected to the theme of moral properties: the question of supervenience. He explores the history of the concept and shows its fate in views such as Dancy's particularism. While doing this he suggests a connection between the two enterprises of metaethics and normative theory. In his paper Piergiorgio Donatelli proposes a re-reading of the history of analytic metaethics. He concentrates on the notion of moral language, from its

origins with Moore and Ross up until Hare, and suggests another line, with Wittgenstein as its starting point.

The issue is intended to offer an account of some of the most discussed topics in metaethics, suggest further readings, and provoke new questions.