

Moral Properties and Moral Imagination

By

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ABSTRACT

"Moral Realism" is about an argument against moral realism, why it is unsound, and what emerges from that. The argument is that if there were moral properties, they would be queerly related to non-moral properties and this is sufficient reason to think there are no moral properties. The argument is unsound for two reasons. The first emerges from consideration of sensational properties like being in pain or being in ecstasy—they bear the queer relation to non-sensational properties. The second emerges from consideration of vice properties like being an instance of greediness—they are not queerly related to non-moral properties. Analogies between moral and sensational properties are discussed.

A disanalogy between the moral and sensational is important to "The Explanatory Gap" which discusses Levine's notion of an explanatory gap, relates it to the queer relation discussed in "Moral Realism," and criticizes one use to which it is put. The criticism emerges from consideration of the disanalogy between the moral and sensational: our moral imagination is considerably more limited than our sensational imagination.

That there are limits to our moral imagination is interesting. "Imaginative Resistance" solves an old puzzle from Hume about the limits of our imaginative capacities, for example, the inability of some people (myself, for example) to imagine that baseless killing is morally permissible. Both the puzzle and solution illuminate the natures of imagination and possibility and the relation between them.

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