

Social Cooperation, Our Moralizing Nature, and the Moral Stance

Lecture by **Karsten R. Stueber**

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Universitätsstraße 7 (Hörsaal 2i NIG 2.Stock C0228) Vienna

Abstract: This talk will try to make some headway in thinking more clearly about human morality by looking at some recent evolutionary attempts to ground human morality and our obligation toward each other naturalistically. For this purpose, it is useful to distinguish between the Kantian conception of a moral stance and what I refer to as the domain of our ordinary moralizing attitudes. Pace Tomasello and others, we should, however, not think of joint intentionality and collaboration as containing an implicit and intrinsic dimension of normative obligation that commits us to the normative authority of the moral stance. Rather, by nature, we are moralizing rather than genuinely moral animals. Nevertheless, the conception of social normativity based on an empirical investigation of human nature is very much compatible with the manner in which Adam Smith's conceives of the domain of social normativity as emerging from our empathic sensitivity to the mental attitudes of others. A Smithean explication of human sociality will allow us to reflectively recognize we are normatively committed to the impartial spectator perspective or the moral stance as a regulative ideal that implicitly guides us in finding each other intelligible as agents acting for reasons.

Karsten R. Stueber is a Professor of Philosophy at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. He is working at the intersection of the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of the social sciences, and metaethics and he is particularly known for his work on empathy..



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