

Gilles GAUTHIER
Université Laval à Québec (Canada)

Justifications morales et persuasion

Moral Justification and Persuasion

Abstract: Like all other justifications, moral justifications are intended to persuade. However, they are formally unable to achieve this objective, due to their failure to be justified themselves. In a first part, the persuasive deficiency of moral justifications is explained in the light of the theory of speech acts and a distinction between argument and opinion. The main idea developed here is that an illocutionary act with a persuasive aim must be accomplished by an argument whose justification must include a justifying element or mark out a justifying function, which is not the case with moral justifications. In the second part of the article, we consider the perlocutionary possibility that, despite a moral justification's intrinsic inability to persuade, the addressee may nevertheless be persuaded by it: in this case, the addressee simply adheres to the moral justification without discussing it.

Keywords: moral justification, illocutionary act, perlocutionary effect, argument, opinion.