



Institut für Christliche Philosophie

Gastvortrag

Michael Lacewing
(London)

Emotions and the Virtues of Self-Understanding

Mi., 22. 4. 2015, 18.00 Uhr s.t., Seminarraum VI (Karl-Rahner-Platz 3)

The thought that emotions play a central role in moral epistemology goes back at least to Aristotle. It is, of course, the centrepiece of various non-cognitivist theories, but has more recently been defended by cognitivists on the basis of cognitivist theories of emotion. I begin from the assumption that the passions are an important source of intuitions about reasons to act, feel, and desire in certain ways. But they can be misleading, and in ways that operate outside unawareness; they lack transparency. One cause of this is the occurrence of defence mechanisms creating unconscious distortions in the agent's understanding of what he feels and why. Such distortions in turn result in distortions in one's understanding of the situations to which one responds and the reasons which they furnish. Thus, moral enquiry may be aided by the deconstruction of defence mechanisms. I argue for the importance of close relationship and dialogue with others, together with specific forms of courage, self-acceptance, and compassion, as productive in this regard.



Michael Lacewing is Director of Research at Heythrop College, University of London, and Honorary Reader in the Research Dept of Clinical, Educational and Health Psychology, University College London. His interests lie in the overlap between ethics and mind, in particular, psychoanalysis. He has a book forthcoming with Oxford University Press entitled *Could Psychoanalysis Be a Science?* and is working on projects in metaethics, on emotions, character, and moral epistemology.

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