

Reasons for actions and reasons for beliefs
Gunnar Schumann (FernUniversität in Hagen)

Abstract:

Both beliefs and actions are things we can and sometimes are being asked to give reasons for. It seems promising to investigate both kinds of reasons and to get clearer about how reasons for actions and reasons for beliefs are interrelated. I will therefore compare some aspects of both kinds of reasons. Reasons for actions may be given sometimes by teleological explanation, sometimes by redescription. In the first part of my talk I want to show, that both these forms of reasons can not be given for belief, mainly for a conceptual reason: beliefs cannot be had *in order to* achieve some logically independent aim. In the second part of my talk I want to show that, despite the differences, both kinds of reasons are similar in a very important respect: both provide answers of the right kind to the question “Why should one do / believe this?”, i.e. they are normative in character. A general account of how the normative “force” of reasons for actions and reasons for beliefs comes about is given.