New Studies in Practical Philosophy

THE CONCEPT OF BENEVOLENCE

New Studies in Practical Philosophy
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The point of view of this series is that of contemporary analytical philosophy. Each study will deal with an aspect of moral philosophy. Particular attention will be paid to the logic of moral discourse, and the practical problems of morality. The relationship between morality and other 'universes of discourse', such as art and science, will also be explored.

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THE CONCEPT OF BENEVOLENCE

Aspects of Eighteenth-Century
Moral Philosophy

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Macmillan Education

ISBN 978-1-349-01084-4

ISBN 978-1-349-01082-0 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-01082-0

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1973

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First published 1973 by

THE MACMILLAN PRESS LTD

London and Basingstoke

Associated companies in New York Toronto

Dublin Melbourne Johannesburg and Madras

SBN 333 12055 8

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Editor's Foreword

In moral philosophy there has been a revival of interest in the problem of the *grounding* of morality. Illuminating and important as the achievements of modern philosophers have been in analysing the job, or jobs, which moral speech-acts characteristically perform, the vital question – or so it seems to many – remains, namely, ‘What is the ultimate foundation of moral obligation?’ Is the last appeal in moral argument necessarily to a consensus of moral commitment which happens to be shared by those participating in the argument, or is it to the moral tradition of the community within which the discussion occurs, or is it to something logically more fundamental than either of these, namely to facts about human nature as such? Because this question is in the air, Professor Roberts’ study of three classical moral philosophers, who related their philosophical psychology very directly to their moral philosophy, will be of more than historical interest. Not only is it valuable as an admirably clear introduction to Hutcheson, Butler and Hume, but also for the light which it shows that these classical authors are able to shed on our contemporary concerns.

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W. D. HUDSON