The aim of this session was to provide an indication of how manifold the faces of moral realism can be. To attain this aim, three different realist approaches to the status and features of moral properties were presented: pluralist, non-naturalist, and naturalist approaches.

The objection is raised against moral realism that actual disagreement in moral judgments among people is an indication that moral properties are not real. Keiichi Tamura defended moral realism from this objection by presenting a pluralist realist view. According to him, our moral judgments are made with reference to other moral judgments. This relation of reference constitutes a network of moral judgments. Within a network, moral judgments agree with one another. This agreement gives moral judgments their truth value. There can be plural networks of this kind. Those who make moral judgments within the same network form a moral community. Actions are evaluated differently in different moral communities. Thus, moral judgments should be understood in a pluralist way. Furthermore, the network of moral judgments in a moral community is already given to the members of that community, and so is already constructed independently of what moral judgments the members of that community make. In this sense, moral properties are real. Therefore, moral judgments are both pluralistic and real.

Some worries were raised from the floor about this pluralist moral realism. One of them is that it degenerates into a kind of moral relativism. Tamura responded as follows: Moral relativism denies genuine moral conflicts. By contrast, his theory allows moral conflicts. Different moral communities have different moral perspectives. But those perspectives interlace with one
another. This reciprocal interlacing of perspectives generates moral conflicts. In this sense, his theory is not relativist. But at the same time there is a sense in which his theory is implicitly relativist. Each community has its own morality and in this sense its morality is relativized to the community. This relativity is hidden by the interlacing of the perspectives, and we can read the trace of that relativity into that interlacing, even if the trace is not on the surface.

G. E. Moore tries to establish that goodness is a non-natural, simple property by offering what is called the Open Question Argument. Wolfgang Ertl suggested that this argument be read metaphysically, by considering the tight connection that exists in Moore between normative ethics and meta-ethics. Focussing on the non-naturalness of goodness, he suggested that one draw on an idea developed by Alexander of Aphrodisias according to which the accidentality of a property is not relative to the things which have it, but is a global feature of a property. This has the following implications for the ontological status of goodness.

According to Moore, some things are sometimes good and sometimes bad, which — according to the criterion of accidentality offered by Alexander — turns goodness into an accidental property. According to Moore, other things have goodness as an intrinsic, and even as an essential property, because they are good in all possible circumstances. Ertl suggested that natural properties are those which fall into exactly one type of praedicabilia. Given this, goodness cannot be a natural property. No natural property can both be an accidental and essential property.

In the discussion a great number of questions focused on this criterion of accidentality. For example, in what sense are so-called inseparable accidents different from essential properties? Inseparable accidents are accidents which certain objects cannot cease to have, and in this sense they may hold necessarily of these objects. But if this is true, necessity cannot be the criterion which distinguishes essential properties from this type of accidental properties. One part of the discussion focused on finding a finer criterion for such a distinction. Possible options suggested were distinguishing different types of necessity, and adding a further feature which essential properties are required to have. For example, essential properties are those which contribute to turning the object into the thing which it is.

Another question concerned Moore’s value pluralism. Ertl only meant to say that for Moore there are different kinds of intrinsically good things, again
taken in the sense of essentially good things, i.e. things which are good in all possible circumstances.

Many ‘naturalistic moral realists’ do not account for reference to moral properties in *existing* moral language. Makoto Suzuki’s presentation outlined such an account, on the basis of which he provided a re-construal of ‘moral realism.’ Moral terms in a current language seem to be semantically indeterminate. We need a theory that explains this feature. The naturalistic account Suzuki drew attention to is Hartry Field’s theory of partial reference, combined with Michael Devitt’s causal theory of reference grounding and reference borrowing. If one can defend such an account for the indeterminacy of moral terms, the following benefits ensue: the referents of moral terms are shared interpersonally; logical relations obtain in moral discourse; and moral disagreement is possible. Furthermore, such a theory can be defended for certain moral terms. Probably many moral terms simultaneously partially refer to nothing and partially refer to something — in fact, several things. But naturalists can still defend the prospect that through the progress of ethics and other sciences, the reference of moral terms will gradually change in such way that they come to more fully refer and more moral statements will come to attain truth *similiciter*.

Suzuki was criticized for insufficiently defending his claim that moral terms have some partial referents, and he promised to give a fuller argument in the future. He was also asked about whether his view implies that a non-standard logic such as many-valued logic applies to moral discourse. He replied that while his view does not require non-standard logic, it can make sense of the degree of truth by incorporating Devitt’s proposal (Devitt, Michael (1981) *Designation* (CUP), 165). A person in the audience suggested that the referents of philosophers’ moral terms and those of ordinary folks’ can turn out to differ, even though Suzuki’s presentation assumes that their referents, if any, are the same. While conceding this possibility, Suzuki pointed out that because moral philosophers have intended to answer moral questions in their ordinary sense, the referents of their moral terms and those of ordinary folks’ probably do not differ.