

Moral Fictionalism, the Frege–Geach Problem, and Reasonable Inference

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Outline

- 1 Three Claims
- 2 Frege–Geach Problem
- 3 An Old Problem in a New Guise?
- 4 Meeting the Challenge

Noncognitivism, Expressivism, Nonfactualism

Standard Noncognitivism involves a syndrome of three logically distinct claims:

Noncognitivism The acceptance of a moral sentence is a noncognitive attitude

Expressivism The meaning of moral sentence is determined by the noncognitive attitude its utterance expresses

Nonfactualism The meaning of moral sentence fails to represent a distinctive domain of moral fact

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Moral Fictionalism is noncognitivism without nonfactualism. To establish its truth, it suffices to:

- 1 argue for the psychological claim of noncognitivism
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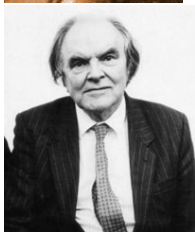
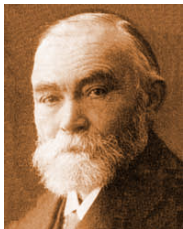
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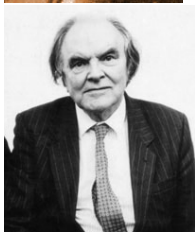
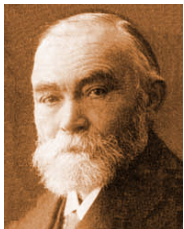
The Frege–Geach Problem



The Dilemma:

- 1 Freestanding and embedded occurrences of a moral word have the same meaning
- 2 Freestanding and embedded occurrences of a moral word differ in meaning

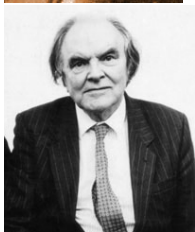
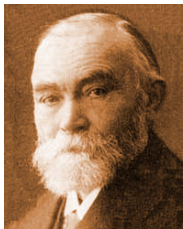
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Frege–Geach Returns?

However, one may reasonably worry that the envisaged fictionalist move doesn't in fact help at all with the Frege-Geach problem. For someone actually presenting an argument like this would be presenting a good argument. But for this to be so, what the arguer actually expresses by the premise sentence must provide good reason to accept what she actually expresses by the conclusion sentence. Kalderon's moral fictionalist faces the problem of giving an account of what is actually expressed that respects this. But this seems not to be essentially different from the traditional non-cognitivist's problem of saying what the meanings of the relevant sentences are such that the impression that argument is valid can be respected. **–Matti Eklund**

Differences



Why Eklund's challenge is not the Frege–Geach problem:

- entailment versus inference
- dialectical difference

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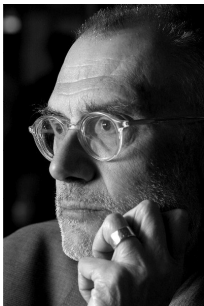
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Desire in the Directed Attention Sense



The affect involved in moral acceptance is nothing over and above:

- 1 A tendency for the object of the affect to become salient in perception, thought, and imagination
- 2 A tendency for the object of the affect to present a certain complex normative appearance

Marks of Moral Authority

- Precedence
- Noncontingency
- Well-Groundness
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A 'Good' Moral Argument

- 1 If lying is wrong, then getting one's little brother to lie is wrong.
- 2 Lying is wrong.
- 3 Getting one's little brother to lie is wrong.

Summary

- The distinction between **noncognitivism**, **expressivism**, and **nonfactualism**
- The Frege–Geach problem raises a problem for how the expressivist nonfactualist accounts for moral **entailment**
- Eklund’s objection is **no objection** but **a challenge** for the fictionalist to explain the reasonableness of moral inference
- Given the nature and content of the attitudes involved in moral acceptance (according to the account given in *Moral Fictionalism*), it is prima facie plausible that such inferences are reasonable

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