

## INTERNALISM AND THE FREGE-GEACH PROBLEM\*

**Abstract.** *According to the established understanding of the Frege-Geach problem, it is a challenge exclusively for metaethical expressivism. In this paper, I argue that it is much wider in scope: The problem applies generally to views according to which moral sentences express moral judgments entailing that one is for or against something, irrespective of what mental states the judgments consist in. In particular, it applies to motivational internalism about moral judgments. Most noteworthy, it applies to cognitivist internalism according to which moral judgments consist in motivating beliefs. Hence, in order for a metaethical view to evade the Frege-Geach problem, it should avoid stating that moral judgments are motivating.*

**Key words:** *moral judgment, motivation, Frege-Geach problem, embedding, internalism, externalism, cognitivism, expressivism, hybrid view, ecumenical view, besire*

### 1. Introduction

The Frege-Geach problem—henceforth ‘the F-G problem’—is without doubt one of the most discussed arguments in metaethics. According to the traditional understanding of the problem, it provides a challenge exclusively for expressivism. The fundamental point is thought to be that expressivism is unable to account for the meaning of moral sentences when they occur in embedded contexts, since this view claims that such sentences express non-cognitive states. In this paper, I argue that the F-G problem should not be understood to concern what kind of mental states moral sentences express. Rather, it concerns whether the mental states that moral sentences express entail that one is for or against something, what I will refer to as ‘approval’ or ‘disapproval’. The upshot of this finding is that the F-G problem is much

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\* The first version of this paper was written already in 2008. After some unsuccessful attempts to have it published, I kept it in the drawer until I received the generous invitation to contribute to the present issue. In one of the journals in which I tried to get the paper published, a suspiciously similar argument later occurred. I am particularly grateful to Gunnar Björnsson, John Eriksson, and Ragnar Francén for comments on early versions of the text.

wider in scope than normally thought: It applies to views according to which moral sentences express moral judgments that entail approval or disapproval, quite irrespective of whether they consist in non-cognitive states or not. In particular, the problem applies to motivational internalism about moral judgments, which is the most well-known instance of this kind of view.

In the next section, I explain why the F-G problem constitutes a challenge for expressivism. In Section 3, I argue that it is plausible to think that the problem is wider in scope in the way indicated above. In Section 4, I make a distinction between two kinds of internalism: *state internalism* and *object internalism* depending on whether it is the mental state or the object of the state that explains motivation. In Section 5, I discuss *state internalism*. There are three main types of state internalism: *non-cognitivist internalism*, according to which a moral judgment consists merely in a non-cognitive state; *hybrid internalism*, according to which it consists in both a non-cognitive and a cognitive state, and *sui generis internalism*, according to which it consists in a *sui generis* motivating and representational state. It is argued that all three views are subject to the F-G problem. In Section 6, I discuss *object internalism* in the form of *cognitivist internalism*. According to this view, a moral judgment consists in a cognitive state understood as a motivating belief. It is argued that this view also is susceptible to the F-G problem, in spite of stating that moral judgments consist merely in beliefs. In Section 7, I explain that a certain weak version of internalism is not subject to the F-G problem. Finally, in Section 8 I draw three metaethical lessons from the previous discussion.

## 2. Expressivism and the Frege-Geach Problem

Let us start with adopting some familiar terminology that will enable us to formulate various metaethical claims which will be discussed in what follows.

Think of a well-formed English sentence. The sentence has a certain conventional meaning that constitutes its *semantic content*. Assume that a person asserts or accepts the sentence. It is then plausible to assume that she is in a certain mental state that corresponds to the content of the sentence. We might say that the sentence, by virtue of its meaning, *expresses* the mental state in question. More precisely, what a sentence expresses can be understood as the mental state that a person needs to be in, in order for it to be compatible with the meaning of the sentence that she accepts or asserts it.<sup>1</sup> As regards ordinary fact stating sentences, this is straightforward: The semantic content of the sentence ‘It is raining’ is the proposition: it is raining. The sentence expresses the belief that it is raining, i.e. a belief which has the mentioned proposition as its object.

1 See e.g. Schroeder (2008): Ch. 2. Cf. Ridge (2003): 563–574, and Kalderon (2005): Ch. 2.

Think now of a moral sentence such as ‘It is wrong to  $\phi$ ’. The sentence has a conventional meaning that constitutes the semantic content of the sentence. In case a person understands the meaning of the sentence and accepts or asserts it, she finds herself in a certain mental state corresponding to the content of the sentence. We might adopt a common metaethical convention and refer to this state as a *moral judgment*. Accordingly, the sentence expresses, by virtue of its meaning, a moral judgment.<sup>2</sup> Metaethical views can now be formulated both in terms of the contents of moral sentences and in terms of the mental states that these sentences express.

Expressivism is a claim about the meaning of moral sentences. Understood as a thesis about what moral sentences express, it can be formulated thus:

*Expressivism:* A moral sentence, such as ‘It is morally wrong to  $\phi$ ’, expresses, by virtue of its meaning, a moral judgment that consists in a non-cognitive state in relation to  $\phi$ ing.

Expressivism can also be formulated in terms of the semantic content of moral sentences. According to expressivism, moral sentences do not, in contrast to ordinary fact stating sentences, express beliefs. There are consequently no moral beliefs that have moral propositions as their objects where these propositions constitute the contents of moral sentences. Rather, on this view the contents of moral sentences consist in the non-cognitive states they express. In Mark Eli Kalderon’s words, on expressivism ‘the content of a moral sentence wholly consists in non-cognitive attitudes conveyed by its utterance’ and this view thus reduces the contents of moral sentences to what they express.<sup>3</sup> Thus formulated, expressivism amounts to the following: A moral sentence like ‘It is wrong to  $\phi$ ’ has a semantic content that consists in a non-cognitive state in relation to  $\phi$ ing, i.e. the non-cognitive state which the sentence expresses.

Expressivism claims that moral judgments consist in a particular type of mental states: non-cognitive states. There are presumably a number of different types of non-cognitive states, such as desires, emotions, and wishes. Moreover, there are different metaphysical theories about how this type of mental states should be characterized. However, it is generally agreed that they have two features. *First*, a non-cognitive state does not represent as certain state of affairs as being the case. It thereby contrasts with a cognitive state, primarily beliefs, which has this function. *Second*, a non-cognitive state is such that if a person is in this type of state, she is *for* or *against* something. In what follows, I will formulate this aspect by saying that she *approves* or *disapproves* of something. Thus, non-cognitive states have an essential

2 I take ‘moral judgment’ to be neutral between cognitivism and non-cognitivism. On the former view, it consists in a cognitive state (like a belief); on the latter, it consists in a non-cognitive state (like a desire).

3 Kalderon (2005): 53. Cf. Blome-Tillman (2009): 279–285.

feature: They entail approval or disapproval. However, this is compatible with the possibility that they share this feature with other mental states. This will be important later on.

Let us now consider the F-G problem. It is helpful to describe it in three steps where the second step is the crucial one.<sup>4</sup> First, consider a freestanding sentence: (1) 'It is wrong to lie.' According to expressivism, (1) expresses a non-cognitive state such that a person who finds herself in this state disapproves of lying: she is against lying. Expressivism gets support from the fact that it seems very plausible that a person who accepts (1) disapproves of such actions. Second, consider a complex sentence where (1) occurs embedded: (2) 'If it is wrong to lie, it is wrong to get one's little brother to lie.' It seems evident that a person might accept (2) without disapproving of lying, since she need not think that lying is wrong. Third, a sentence has the same meaning irrespective of whether it occurs freestanding or embedded.<sup>5</sup>

What I consider as the basic point in the F-G problem amounts to the following when applied to expressivism. According to expressivism, a freestanding sentence such as (1) expresses, by virtue of its meaning, a non-cognitive state, which entails that a person who accepts (1) disapproves of lying. However, it seems that a person who accepts a complex sentence, such as (2), in which (1) is embedded, need not disapprove of such actions. Hence, it appears that a person who accepts (2) need not be in the mentioned non-cognitive state. Expressivists then owe us an explanation as to how a moral sentence, such as (1), can have the same meaning when it occurs freestanding and when it occurs embedded, such as in (2).<sup>6</sup>

In contemporary metaethics, it is commonly stressed that expressivists have the problem of explaining how the meaning of complex sentences can be a function of the meaning of the sentences that constitute their parts. The most common illustration concerns logically valid arguments. Consider:

- (1) It is wrong to lie.
- (2) If it is wrong to lie, then it is wrong to get one's little brother to lie.
- (3) Therefore, it is wrong to lie.

Clearly, (3) logically follows from (1) and (2). However, in order for (3) to follow from (1) and (2), it appears that the antecedent in (2) needs to have the same meaning as (1). Thus, expressivists owe us an explanation as to how such arguments can be valid. More generally, they need to explain how complex sentences, such as (2), get their meaning from their parts, such as (1) and (3).

4 Cf. Schroeder (2010): 44–47.

5 Geach (1965): 449.

6 For two early formulations of this problem, see Geach (1960): 221–225, and Searle (1962): 423–432. For some recent and clear accounts, see e.g. Sinnott-Armstrong (2000): 677–693; Kalderon (2005): 52–66, and Schroeder (2010), Ch. 3, 6, and 7.

### 3. Generalizing the Frege-Geach Problem

In what follows, I would like to draw attention to an aspect of the F-G problem that seems to have gone unnoticed in the debate.<sup>7</sup> The defining characteristic of expressivism is that moral sentences express a certain type of mental states: non-cognitive states. However, the F-G problem does not refer to the claim that moral sentences express a *particular type of mental states*. Rather, it refers to the claim that moral sentences express mental states *that have a certain feature*: they entail *approval* or *disapproval*. More precisely, it appeals to the fact that a person who finds herself in a non-cognitive state with regard to an action entails that she approves or disapproves of the action in question, that she is for or against it. Thus, it is not the claim that a moral sentence such as ‘It is wrong to  $\phi$ ’ expresses a non-cognitive state which is the root of the problem for expressivism, but rather the claim that the sentence expresses a mental state which has a certain feature: it entails disapproval of  $\phi$ ing. In other words, it is the ‘being for or against’ feature that is the real target of the F-G problem, rather than moral judgments consisting in a particular type of mental states.

The fact that expressivism claims that a moral sentence such ‘It is wrong to  $\phi$ ’ expresses a non-cognitive state is *relevant* as to why this view is susceptible to the F-G problem. However, this fact is merely *indirectly* relevant. It is relevant because the fact that a person finds herself in the non-cognitive state in question *entails* that she disapproves of  $\phi$ ing. It is not directly relevant because the problem does not refer to the non-cognitive state as such, but to a certain feature that is had by such mental states.

To see this clearer, recall the second and crucial step in the F-G problem. Its fundamental point is that a person who accepts (2) need not disapprove of lying, not that she need not find herself in a non-cognitive state as regards lying. The fact that a person who accepts (2) need not disapprove of lying entails that she need not be in the non-cognitive state that (1) is assumed to express. However, this is merely a consequence of the fact that a person finding herself in this non-cognitive state entails that she disapproves of lying. The point does not appeal as such to the expressivist claim that a moral sentence expresses a non-cognitive state.

Importantly, this suggests that the F-G problem might apply to other metaethical views than expressivism.<sup>8</sup> As we have seen, it is not the fact that expressivism claims that a moral sentence such as ‘It is wrong to  $\phi$ ’ expresses a non-cognitive state which is the root of the problem for this view, but rather that the non-cognitive state entails a particular feature: disapproval of  $\phi$ ing.

7 I develop this part of the argument in more detail in Strandberg (2015a): 1–15

8 In Strandberg (2015a): 1–15, I provide a fuller explanation of why metaethicists have been led to think that the F-G problem applies exclusively to expressivism. For another manner in which the problem might generalize, see Eklund (2009): 705–712.

However, as already mentioned, there might be other mental states that entail that one is for or against something. This suggests that other metaethical views, according to which moral sentences express mental states that have this feature, also are subject to the F-G problem.

#### 4. State Internalism and Object Internalism

In the last section, it was hypothesized that the F-G problem can be generalized to metaethical views according to which moral sentences express mental states entailing approval or disapproval. These views have the following claim in common:

*The Intrinsic Claim:* It is conceptually necessary that, if a person judges that  $\phi$ ing is morally wrong, then she disapproves of  $\phi$ ing.

In the remainder of the paper, I will not be concerned with this abstract claim, but with a view that is in the focus of much of the metaethical debate: motivational internalism. There are presumably a number of different types of approval and disapproval, since there are different ways of being for or against something. However, one important characteristic of being for or against something is that one is *motivated* in different manners. As a consequence, it can be hypothesized that the F-G problem is generalizable to internalism according to which moral sentences express moral judgments that involve motivation.

A generic version of internalism can be formulated as follows:

*Motivational Internalism:* It is conceptually necessary that, if a person judges that it is morally wrong to  $\phi$ , then she is, at least to some extent, motivated to see to it that  $\phi$ ing is not performed.<sup>9</sup>

Internalism can be formulated as a claim about what moral sentences express: The moral sentence ‘It is morally wrong to  $\phi$ ’ expresses a moral judgment which is such that, if a person finds herself in this mental state, then she is motivated to see to it that  $\phi$ ing is not performed.

In what follows, I will be concerned with a broader version of internalism than what normally is considered. According to this view, there is a

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9 For an overview of different types of internalism, see Björnsson et al. (2015): 1–20. For helpful clarifications of particular aspects of internalism and alternative manners of understanding it, see e.g. Cuneo (1999): 361–363; Svavarsdóttir (1999): 163–165; Lillehammer (2002): 1–25; Lippert-Rasmussen (2002): 8–15; Schroeter (2005): 1–23; Tresan (2006): 143–148; Tresan (2009): 51–72; Zangwill (2007): 93–97; C.B. Miller (2008): 233–255; Francén (2010): 117–148; van Roojen (2010): 495–525; Strandberg (2011): 341–369, and Strandberg (2012): 81–91. The literature also includes considerations about the empirical support of internalism. See e.g. Roskies (2003): 52–53; Cholbi (2006): 607–616; Kauppinen (2008): 1–24; Strandberg and Björklund (2013): 319–335, and Milevski (2015): 113–126.

conceptually necessary connection between a person's moral judgment about an action and her general motivation in relation to it, not merely between her moral judgment about her own prospective action and her motivation to perform or not to perform it. Thus, the phrase 'see to it that  $\phi$ ing is not performed' should be understood to include all types of cases where a person is motivated to hinder  $\phi$ ing in various manners, e.g. being motivated not to  $\phi$  herself, motivated to hinder others from  $\phi$ ing, motivated to advise other people not to  $\phi$ , etc.

However, in a fundamental respect I will adhere to the traditional understanding of internalism, since I will be concerned with a view according to which a person's moral judgment is part of what explains her motivation. Thus, a person's moral judgment that it is wrong to  $\phi$  is part of the explanation of why she is motivated to see to it that  $\phi$ ing is not performed.<sup>10</sup> Thus, I will be concerned with versions of internalism according to which motivation is 'internal' or 'intrinsic' to moral judgments.

We might further distinguish between two versions of internalism of this kind. According to *unconditional* versions of internalism, the necessary connection between moral judgments and motivation holds for every person. According to *conditional* versions of internalism, this connection holds only for those who satisfy a certain condition. In what follows, I will formulate my arguments in terms of the first version in order to avoid unnecessary complications. In Section 7, I return to this distinction and explain that there are certain forms of unconditional internalism which are not susceptible to the F-G problem.<sup>11</sup>

Internalism, as formulated so far, does not say anything about what it is about a moral judgment which explains that it is motivating. There are basically two alternatives: It might be something about *the kind of mental state* that constitutes a moral judgment, *or* it might be something about the *proposition* that is the object of the moral judgment. Thus, there is a distinction between two types of internalism that will be useful in the ensuing discussion:

*State Internalism:* (i) Motivational Internalism. (ii) It is the fact that a person's moral judgment to the effect that it is morally wrong to  $\phi$  involves a kind of mental state that is motivating which explains that she is motivated to see to it that  $\phi$ ing is not performed.

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10 According to an alternative version of internalism, we *classify* a judgment as a *moral* judgment only if it is accompanied by motivation, but the moral judgment is not involved in the explanation of the motivation. See Tresan (2006): 143–165, and Tresan (2009): 51–72. Cf. Sneddon (2009): 41–53. My arguments do not affect this version of internalism. I argue against this view in Strandberg (2016): 42–43.

11 According to yet another version of internalism, the necessary connection between moral judgments and motivation does not hold on an individual level, but at a communal level. See e.g. Gert and Mele (2005): 275–283, and Bedke (2009): 189–209. My arguments do not affect this version of internalism.

*Object Internalism*: (i) Motivational Internalism. (ii) It is the fact that a person's moral judgment to the effect that it is morally wrong to  $\phi$  has a certain proposition as its object which explains that she is motivated to see to it that  $\phi$ ing is not performed.

These views are in principle neutral as regards what kind of mental state a moral judgment consists in. However, they naturally connect with two distinct views in this regard.

According to *state internalism*, it is the fact that a moral judgment involves a *kind* of mental states which is characterized by being motivating that explains motivation. On the most common version of this view, moral judgments partly or wholly consist in a particular type of non-cognitive states that motivate to action: *desires*. It is often maintained that there are cognitive states, in the form of beliefs, that can motivate, but this is not something that characterizes beliefs as a *kind* of mental states, as is suggested by the plausible view that not *all* beliefs motivate. On another version of state internalism, moral judgments consist in *sui generis* mental states ('besires'), which are understood as mental states that are neither beliefs nor desires, but which belong to the kind of mental states that is motivating.

According to *object internalism*, it is the fact that a moral judgment has a certain proposition as its object which explains that it is motivating. Object internalism is naturally combined with the view that moral judgments consist in *beliefs*. In case a moral judgment involves a mental state belonging to a *kind* of mental states that is motivating, there would be no need to refer to the propositional object of the state to explain motivation, which suggests that moral judgments consist in beliefs on this view. Moreover, it must be something about moral beliefs that explains why they, as opposed to other beliefs, are motivating. The explanation seems to be that such a belief has a moral proposition as its object.

## 5. State Internalism and the Frege-Geach Problem

There are primarily three versions of object internalism: non-cognitivist internalism, hybrid internalism, and *sui generis* internalism.

### 5.1. Non-Cognitivist Internalism

The simplest version of state internalism maintains that moral judgments consist in desires:

*Non-Cognitivist Internalism (NCI)*: (i) Motivational Internalism. (ii) A moral judgment consists in a desire.

According to this view, the sentence 'It is wrong to  $\phi$ ' expresses a moral judgment which consists in a desire that  $\phi$ ing is not performed. In order to



explain that a person has such a desire, we need to assume that she has a desire that actions that have a certain feature *F* is not performed and that she believes that  $\phi$ ing has *F*. However, on the present view this latter desire and belief are not part of the judgment that a moral sentence expresses. The moral sentence only expresses a desire with regard to  $\phi$ ing.

We can now see that *NCI* is subject to the F-G problem. First, consider a freestanding sentence such as (1): ‘Lying is wrong’. According to *NCI*, the sentence expresses a judgment which consists in a desire that lying is not performed. It follows that a person who accepts (1) is motivated to see to it that lying is not performed. Second, consider a sentence in which (1) is embedded, such as (2): ‘If it is wrong to lie, then it is wrong to get one’s little brother to lie’. It seems evident that person might accept this sentence without being motivated to see to it that lying is not performed, since she need not think that lying is wrong. Thus, advocates of *NCI* owe us an explanation as to how (1) can have the same meaning when it occurs freestanding, as in (1), and embedded, as in (2).

It should not come as a surprise that *NCI* is subject to the F-G problem, since it entails expressivism which is the traditional target of the argument. However, what is noteworthy is the reason *why* *NCI* is susceptible to this problem. The reason is not that it claims that a moral sentence such as (1) expresses a moral judgment consisting in a non-cognitive state in the form of a desire. The reason is rather that this view entails that such a sentence expresses a moral judgment consisting in a mental state that is motivating. Thus, the explanation why *NCI* is subject to the F-G problem verifies the suggestion in Section 3 that the F-G problem is wider in scope than usually thought.

## 5.2. Hybrid Internalism

According to *hybrid internalism*, a moral judgment consists in a complex mental state constituted by a non-cognitive state and a cognitive state.<sup>12</sup> It might be represented as follows:

*Hybrid Internalism (HI)*: (i) Motivational Internalism. (ii) A moral judgment consists in a (a) desire and (b) a belief.

There are different versions of *HI*, among other things depending on what the object of the desire in (a) amounts to: whether it is a single action, a

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12 Hybrid internalism entails hybrid expressivism according to which a moral sentence expresses both a non-cognitive state (desire) and a cognitive state (belief). See e.g. Ridge (2006): 302–336; Ridge (2007): 51–76; Ridge (2009): 182–204; Boisvert (2008): 169–203; Boisvert (2014): 22–50, and Hay (2013): 450–474. Cf. Eriksson (2009): 8–35. For overviews of different versions of hybrid expressivism, see Fletcher and Ridge (2014): viii–xvi, and Strandberg (2015b): 91–111. For critical assessments, see e.g. Schroeder (2009): 257–209; Schroeder (2010): Ch. 10, and Strandberg (2015b): 91–111.

certain feature, or all actions that have a certain feature.<sup>13</sup> In what follows, I will consider the last version which is the most common. It can be formulated thus:<sup>14</sup>

*Action Type Hybrid Internalism (ATHI)*: (i) Motivational Internalism. (ii) The sentence ‘It is morally wrong to  $\phi$ ’ expresses a moral judgment which consists in (a) a desire that actions which have a certain feature F are not performed and (b) a belief to the effect that  $\phi$ ing has F.

We can now see that also *ATHI* is subject to the F-G problem. First, consider (1). According to this view, (1) expresses a moral judgment consisting in a general desire that actions which have a certain feature F are not performed and a belief that lying has F. It follows that a person who accepts (1) is motivated to see to it that lying is not performed. Second, consider (2). A person who accepts (2) need not be motivated to see to it that lying is not performed. Thus, advocates of *ATHI* owe us an explanation of how (1) can have the same meaning when it occurs freestanding, as in (1), and when it occurs embedded, as in (2). As there are no relevant differences between various versions of *HI* that would affect how they fare with regard to the F-G problem, it is plausible to think that it applies to this view in general.<sup>15</sup>

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13 These alternatives correspond to different versions of hybrid expressivism. See Strandberg (2015b): 91–111.

14 The reason why it is most common is that entails a version of hybrid expressivism which is thought to be able to explain how moral sentences can figure in logically valid arguments. The idea is that irrespective of whether a moral sentence occurs freestanding, such as (1), or occurs embedded in a complex sentence, such as (2), it expresses a general desire that every action that has a certain feature F is not performed. As every occurrence of (1) expresses the very same desire and the relevant belief or proposition, it is argued that an argument like (1)–(3) is logically valid. See e.g. Ridge (2006): 302–336; Boisvert (2008): 169–203, and Schroeder (2010): Ch. 10. The view is sometimes defended by making an analogy between moral sentences and slurs. It might appear that a slur like ‘wop’ expresses a negative attitude irrespective of whether it occurs freestanding or embedded. For criticism, see e.g. Strandberg (2015b): 96–104.

15 In defence of *ATHI*, it might be objected that I have misconstrued (b). It might be argued that a moral sentence should not be understood to express the *belief* that  $\phi$ ing has F, but rather the *proposition* that  $\phi$ ing has F:

*Action Type Hybrid Internalism\* (ATHI\*)*: (i) Motivational Internalism. (ii) The sentence ‘It is morally wrong to  $\phi$ ’, expresses a moral judgment which consists in (a) a desire that actions which have F are not performed and (b) a proposition to the effect that  $\phi$ ing has F. According to this view, a person who accepts (2) need not believe that lying has F. As a result, she need not be motivated to see to it that lying is not performed. However, there are reasons to think that the revision would not help the view under consideration. First, it might be argued that *ATHI\** suffers from other problems than *ATHI*. For example, on *ATHI\** it becomes mysterious what it means that a sentence expresses something. According to *ATHI*, a moral sentence expresses mental states, but according to *ATHI\** it expresses both a mental state and a proposition. It might be doubted that that there is a plausible notion of ‘express’ according to which a single sentence can express two types of items that are inherently distinct in the way mental states and propositions

We have seen that the F-G problem applies to *HI* according to which a moral sentence expresses a moral judgment in the form of a complex mental state consisting in a non-cognitive state, in the form of a desire, and a cognitive state, in the form of a belief. Importantly, it is not the claim that a moral sentence expresses a particular type of mental state which makes it subject to the F-G problem. It is rather the claim that a moral sentence expresses a mental state which is motivating that makes it susceptible to this difficulty. Thus, the fact that *HI* is subject to the F-G problem reinforces the suggestion in Section 3.

More importantly, the fact that *HI* is subject to the F-G problem provides reasons to think that it can be generalized to other versions of internalism in two directions.

First, the F-G problem applies to *HI* according to which a moral sentence expresses a moral judgment consisting in a complex mental state constituted by a desire and a belief. This complex mental state has two significant features: It functions to motivate to action, in virtue of involving a desire, and it functions to represent a certain state of affairs, in virtue of involving a belief. It follows that the F-G problem applies to other views according to which a moral sentence expresses a mental state that has the same characteristics as the mentioned complex mental state. That is, it applies to views according to which a moral sentence expresses a mental state that both functions to motivate and to represent.

Second, the F-G problem applies to *HI* according to which a moral sentence expresses a moral judgment that partly consists in a cognitive state in the form of a belief. According to *HI*, moral sentences might consequently be true or false.<sup>16</sup> This means that the F-G problem might apply to a metaethical view even if it entails that moral sentences have truth-values. Furthermore, it raises the question whether the F-G problem might apply to a view according to which a moral sentence only expresses a belief, provided it has the relevant connection to motivation.

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are. Moreover, it is difficult to make sense of the notion that a moral judgment consists in a mental state and a proposition. The same type of problems occurs if the view is formulated in terms of the contents of sentences rather than what they express. Second, I do not think that moving from *ATHI* to *ATHI\** makes any important difference to the argument above. According to *ATHI\**, (1) expresses a desire that actions having F are not performed. However, it is unclear why this would be the case when (1) occurs embedded in a complex sentence such as (2). To illustrate, consider a moral sceptic who accepts (2). Assume that she denies that there are any actions which are wrong because she denies that there are any actions which have F. It is difficult to understand why she would need to have a desire that actions having F are not performed and be accordingly motivated. In Strandberg (2015b): 99–102, I argue that the most influential version of hybrid expressivism suffers from a similar problem.

16 Ridge distinguishes between ‘ecumenical expressivism’ and ‘cognitivist expressivism’. On the former view, a moral sentence expresses both a belief and a desire, but it is not the case that the sentence is true if the belief is true. On the latter view, a moral sentence expresses both a belief and a desire, and the sentence *is* true if the belief is true. Ridge (2006): 302–336. Cf. Barker (2000): 268–279, and Boisvert (2008): 169–203.

### 5.3. *Sui Generis* Internalism

We should next briefly consider the third version of state internalism:

*Sui Generis Internalism* (SGI): (i) Motivational Internalism. (ii) A moral judgment consists in a *sui generis* mental state ('besire').<sup>17</sup>

The *sui generis* mental state to which the view refers has two aspects: First, it represents a certain state of affairs as being the case. Second, it motivates to action. Thus, 'It is wrong to  $\phi$ ' expresses a moral judgment in the form of a *sui generis* state which represents it as being the case that  $\phi$ ing is wrong and motivates to see to it that  $\phi$ ing is not performed. A person who is in this *sui generis* state is consequently motivated to see to it that  $\phi$  is not performed.

We have already seen why SGI is subject to the F-G problem.<sup>18</sup> As noted in the last section, the problem applies to views according to which a moral sentence expresses a moral judgment consisting in a mental state that both functions to motivate and represent. Hence, SGI is subject to the F-G problem for the same reason as hybrid internalism (HI).

## 6. Object Internalism and the Frege-Geach Problem

In this section, I will argue for the controversial claim that object internalism is subject to the F-G problem.

### 6.1. Cognitivist Internalism

We saw in Section 4 that object internalism is most plausibly combined with the view that moral judgments consist in beliefs. We get:

*Cognitivist Internalism* (CI): (i) Motivational Internalism. (ii) A moral judgment consists in a belief.

The view can be formulated both in terms of what a moral sentence expresses and in terms of its content. Formulated in the first manner: The sentence 'It is wrong to  $\phi$ ' expresses a moral judgment in the form of a moral belief that  $\phi$ ing is wrong. If a person holds this belief, she is motivated to see to it that  $\phi$ ing is not performed. Formulated in the second manner: The content of

17 For clarifications of the nature of this kind of mental state, see e.g. Millikan (1995): 185–200. Cf. Zangwill (2008): 50–59. The term 'besire' was coined in Altham (1986): 284. It is not always clear whether a particular author advocates *sui generis* internalism (GCI) or cognitivist internalism (CI). However, among the authors that can be interpreted to defend the former view, see e.g. Little (1997): 59–79; Bedke (2009): 189–209, and Swartzler (2019): 975–988.

18 I discuss this view more thoroughly in Strandberg (2015a): 1–15. Cf. Björnsson (2001): 87.

the sentence 'It is wrong to  $\phi$ ' consists in the proposition: it is wrong to  $\phi$ . A belief that has such a proposition as its object is motivating in the indicated manner.

Let us start by clarifying *CI*. It might be asked what explains that a moral belief is motivating on this view. The most plausible answer seems to be: It involves a moral proposition as its object.<sup>19</sup> There are mainly two reasons for this contention. First, it is generally accepted that not all beliefs are motivating.<sup>20</sup> It must consequently be something about moral beliefs or, more broadly, normative beliefs, which explains why they, in contrast to other beliefs, are motivating. The only thing that seems to distinguish them from other beliefs is that they involve a certain proposition as their object. This view finds evidence in various claims by cognitivist internalists and other philosophers who have commented on this view.<sup>21</sup> Second, in order for moral beliefs that are motivating to be genuine *beliefs*, and not some other type of mental states, it needs to be a moral proposition which explains why they are motivating. Assume that it is denied that it is moral propositions that make moral beliefs motivating. It has then to be something about the nature of the kind of mental states that make up moral beliefs which explains that they are motivating. In that case, it is difficult to see that these mental states are genuine beliefs rather than desires, or beliefs in conjunction with desires, or some other type of mental states, like *sui generis* mental states. Moreover, on this assumption *CI* would not be an instance of object internalism, but of state internalism, in which case it can be argued that it is vulnerable to the arguments above. It is noteworthy that none of these arguments appealed specifically to the claim that moral sentences express desires, but to the claim that they express states belonging to a kind of mental states that is motivating. If *CI* is assumed to state that it is something about the nature of the kind of mental states constituting moral beliefs which explains that they are motivating, it might in other words be suspected that these arguments can be directed against this view as well.

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19 A moral proposition which explains motivation need not be moral in the sense that it explicitly contains a 'thin' moral concept such as wrongness. See e.g. McDowell (1979): 14.

20 But see Bromwich (2010): 343-367.

21 For explanations of the nature of this kind of beliefs, see e.g. Noggle (1997): 90-91; Jacobson-Horowitz (2006): 561-580, and Pearson (2015): 255-276. See also e.g. Lewis (1988): 323-332; Wedgwood (1995): 273-288; C. Miller (2008): 222-266, and Tanyi (2014): 331-348. Among the authors that can be interpreted to advocate this view, see e.g. Nagel (1970), Part Two; McDowell (1978): 13-29; McDowell (1979): 331-350; Platts (1979): 255-263; McNaughton (1988): Ch. 7; Wiggins (1991): 51-85; Dancy (1993): Ch. 2; Dancy (1999): 217-223; van Roojen (2002): 26-49; Tenenbaum (2006): 235-264, and Bromwich (2010): 343-367. See also Mele (1996): 747-753; Scanlon (1998): 37-41, and Shafer-Landau (2003): Ch. 5.

Thus, according to *CI* a moral belief is motivating in virtue of involving a moral proposition as its object, *not* in virtue of being a belief. The motivating force of a moral belief does not depend on the fact that one *believes* so and so, but on *what* one believes: the moral proposition constituting the object of the belief. In this way, a moral proposition can be said to bestow motivating force on a belief, whereas the belief does not have any motivating force merely in virtue of being a belief.<sup>22</sup> We might put it in the following way: Motivation is *inherent* to moral propositions in the sense that what explains that a moral belief is motivating is that a moral proposition, in virtue of its nature, is such as to make beliefs motivating. However, motivation is *not inherent* to beliefs since they are not, in virtue of their nature, motivating. In other words, an explanation of why a moral belief is motivating refers to a feature the moral proposition has in virtue of being a moral proposition, not to a feature the belief has in virtue of being a belief.

According to *CI*, a moral proposition consequently has two aspects. First, it has a *cognitive aspect* in that it, like other propositions, represents a certain state of affair.<sup>23</sup> If the proposition is the object of a belief, it is presented as being true or, to put it in another way, the state of affair in question is presented as being the case. Second, it has a *motivational aspect* in that it, *unlike* other propositions, is such as to make beliefs motivating. Moreover, *both* these aspects are *inherent* to a moral proposition in the sense just mentioned. Thus, the fact that a moral proposition represents a certain state of affairs is explained by the nature of the proposition, not by being an object of a certain belief. Likewise, the fact that a belief which involves a moral proposition as its object is motivating is explained by the nature of the proposition, not in virtue of being a belief.

There are some issues with regard to *CI* that should be mentioned but that are not pertinent to the present discussion. One issue concerns how the claim that a belief is motivating should be spelled out. According to an influential view, the difference between beliefs and desires is a matter of ‘directions of fit’: Beliefs aim at fitting the world whereas desires aim at getting the world fitting them, which in turn can be accounted for in different ways. In a similar vein, *CI* can be understood to imply that moral beliefs, in

22 Hilla Jacobson-Horowitz aptly puts the view as follows: ‘In the sense relevant to their role in practical reasoning, then, it is not the psychological mode of beliefs which determines their dominant direction of fit and thus their motivation character (in this respect their mode is “transparent”), but rather their content. Thus, if a belief’s content is a normative, requiring, content—as is the case with moral beliefs—the belief has a requiring character and may play a motivational role. The content of a belief being a normative content endows it with requiring character, its psychological mode—which is responsible for its classification as a cognitive attitude—notwithstanding’ (Jacobson-Horowitz (2006): 563). In the same vein, Ralph Wedgwood writes that in case there are beliefs that are motivating, ‘they would have this tendency in virtue of their *content*, not simply in virtue of being beliefs’ (Wedgwood (1995): 274). See also references to Noggle and Pearson above.

23 Cf. Wedgwood (2007): 59.

contrast to other beliefs, have both these aims in virtue of involving a moral proposition.<sup>24</sup> Another issue concerns the connection between beliefs and desires.<sup>25</sup> On one view, a moral belief is motivating in the sense that what motivates is the belief itself without the help of any desire. On another view, a moral belief is motivating in the sense that it by itself gives rise to a desire.<sup>26</sup> However, on *CI*, what makes the belief motivating on either alternative would be a moral proposition.<sup>27</sup> <sup>28</sup>

Let us now return to the F-G problem. Think again of a freestanding moral sentence, such as (1). If we grant cognitivism, *CI* might seem plausible since it is reasonable to assume that a person who asserts the sentence is motivated to see to it that lying is not performed. However, a person might assert a sentence where this sentence occurs embedded, such as (2), without being thus motivated.

According to *CI*, (1) expresses a belief that has the following proposition as its object: *it is wrong to lie*. I will refer to this as '*the first belief*'. The sentence (2) expresses a belief that has a proposition as its object where this consists in a conditional proposition: *if it is wrong to lie, then it is wrong to get one's little brother to lie*. I will refer to this as '*the second belief*'. Thus, (1) expresses a belief that has as its object a certain moral proposition and (2) expresses a belief that has as its object a proposition where this moral proposition constitutes the antecedent. The moral proposition in question is: *it is wrong to lie*.

Now, it can be argued that advocates of *CI* need to explain how it can be the *same proposition* in these two cases. We saw above that on this view a moral proposition has two aspects: a cognitive and a motivational aspect. We also saw that a moral proposition has both these aspects in virtue of being a certain proposition and not in virtue of being an object of a particular belief. When it comes to the *cognitive aspect*, the proposition in question is clearly the same with regard to the two beliefs that are expressed in (1) and (2): In both these beliefs, the proposition represents a state of affairs, viz. that it is wrong to lie. However, when it comes to the *motivational aspect*, it might be

24 Cf. Wedgwood (1995): 274, and Jacobson-Horowitz (2006): 566.

25 See e.g. Shafer-Landau (2003): 122–123, and Persson (2005): 54.

26 The first alternative seems to be adopted by e.g. McDowell and the second by e.g. Nagel.

27 Further, it might be asked how the contention that a moral proposition has this motivational aspect should be understood. In an early paper, Ralph Wedgwood argues that there is no plausible conception of propositions which is compatible with the claim that propositions make beliefs motivating (Wedgwood (1995): 273–288). In what follows, I will for sake of the argument grant that propositions can have this aspect.

28 The version of internalism under consideration is often conjoined with a denial of the Humean theory of motivation. However, as *CI* is understood here, this inference is not obvious. According to *CI*, a moral belief is motivating, but it seems at least conceivable that this belief is caused by a desire and that no belief is motivating unless it is caused by a desire. This view is compatible with the Humean contention that no belief is sufficient for itself for motivation but that all motivation requires an independently existing desire.

asked how it can be the same proposition with regard to the two beliefs that are expressed in (1) and (2). According to *CI*, a moral belief is motivating in virtue of involving a moral proposition as its object, not in virtue of being a belief. However, the second belief, the belief expressed in (2), is clearly not motivating in spite of having as its object a proposition of which this moral proposition constitutes a part. It thus seems that the moral proposition in question makes the first belief motivating whereas it does not make the second belief motivating. Moreover, the proposition does not seem to affect the motivating force of the second belief in any respect whatsoever. In other words, it appears that in these two beliefs the moral proposition remains constant as regards its cognitive aspect but not as regards its motivational aspect. This makes it justified to ask how it can be the *same proposition*.

It might be responded that *CI* has the resources to avoid the F-G problem. The reason why non-cognitivist internalism (*NCI*) and hybrid internalism (*HI*) are subject to this problem is that they entail that a moral sentence expresses a mental state which is motivating. Likewise, they entail that the content of a moral sentence consists in a mental state which is motivating. However, *CI* need not understand the meaning of moral sentences in terms of mental states. In particular, it does not claim that the content of a moral sentence is constituted by a mental state, but a proposition, and so it might seem that the F-G problem does not apply to this view.

However, this response is misguided since the F-G problem for *CI* can be formulated in terms of the content of moral sentences. The content of (1) is the proposition: it is wrong to lie. The content of (2) is the proposition: if it is wrong to lie, then it is wrong to get one's little brother to lie. Thus, the proposition that is the content of (1) constitutes the antecedent of the content of (2): *it is wrong to lie*. When it comes to the cognitive aspect, this proposition is clearly the same with regard to both (1) and (2): In both cases, it represents the same state of affairs. However, when it comes to the motivational aspect it might be asked how it can be the same proposition in the two cases. The second belief, the belief which has as its object the content of (2), is clearly not motivating, despite the fact that it has as its object a proposition of which the moral proposition under consideration is a part. Again, it might be asked how it can be the *same proposition*.

We are now in the position to strengthen the formulation of the F-G problem for *CI*. As we saw earlier, according to this view a moral proposition has both the cognitive and the motivational aspect in virtue of being a particular proposition. In other words, both aspects of a moral proposition are *inherent* to it in the sense that it is in virtue of its nature that a moral proposition has these aspects. In view of this fact, it is especially worrying that the proposition appears to have both aspects with regard to the first belief, but only one aspect with regard to the second belief, since the nature of a proposition cannot be affected by being combined with another proposition.



The F-G problem for *CI*, understood in terms of the content of moral sentences, thus amounts to this. According to this view, the content of a freestanding sentence, such as (1), consists in a proposition that has two aspects: a cognitive and a motivational aspect. However, when the sentence occurs embedded in a complex sentence, such as (2), its content consists in a proposition that seems to have the first aspect but not the second. Therefore, advocates of *CI* owe us an explanation of how a freestanding and an embedded occurrence of a moral sentence can have the same proposition as their content. As a consequence, they owe us an explanation of how a freestanding and an embedded moral sentence can have the same meaning.

We can now see that the F-G problem for *CI* also can be formulated in terms of the logical validity of moral arguments. Recall the argument (1)–(3). If the antecedent of (2) does not have the same meaning as (1), (3) would not follow. As (3) does follow, they have to have the same meaning. However, we have seen that there are reasons to doubt that (1) and the antecedent of (2) can have the same meaning according to *CI*.

## 6.2. Two Defences of Cognitivist Internalism Considered

In order to evade the F-G problem, defenders of *CI* need to explain how it can be the same moral proposition with regard to the two beliefs we considered above, in spite of the fact that the proposition has the cognitive aspect in both cases but appears to lack the motivational aspect in the latter case.

According to the first defence, a moral proposition that occurs separately, without being combined with another proposition, has both the cognitive and the motivational aspect. However, a moral proposition that is combined with another proposition has the cognitive aspect but lacks the motivational aspect.

It is not difficult to see that this defence is misguided. A proposition does not change by being combined with other propositions. It thus contributes in the same way irrespective of whether it occurs alone or as an antecedent of a conditional. It is then difficult to see how this suggestion can explain why a moral proposition has the motivational aspect in one case but not in the other. Moreover, advocates of *CI* cannot uphold the idea that it is only when a moral proposition occurs separately that it has the motivational aspect. Think of a belief that has as its object the proposition: it is wrong to lie *and* it is wrong to get one's little brother to lie. It is reasonable to think that, on *CI*, a person who holds this belief is motivated.

According to the second defence, a moral proposition that is *believed* has both the cognitive and the motivational aspect. However, a moral proposition that is *not* believed has the former aspect but lacks the latter. This presumably appears as the most plausible defence, but as we will see, it suffers from basically the same difficulty as the first response.

There are different views about what it means that a proposition is believed, but in the present context these differences are not essential, and it

should not be difficult to translate what I say to the preferred vocabulary. We may consequently describe it in the following commonsensical way. Consider the first belief, which has as its object the proposition: it is wrong to lie. In this case, the proposition is believed because the belief presents it as being true. Formulated in another way, the proposition is believed because the belief presents the state of affairs in question as being the case. Consider next the second belief, which has as its object the proposition: if it is wrong to lie, it is wrong to get one's little brother to lie. In this case, the moral proposition at issue—it is wrong to lie—is not believed, because the belief has a conditional proposition as its object where this proposition constitutes the antecedent. According to the second defence, it is the different relations these two beliefs have to this moral proposition which explains that it has the motivational aspect in the first case but lacks it in the second case.

We can now see that the second defence fails for the same reason as the first one. According to the present defence, the reason why the first belief is motivating whereas the second belief is not, is that the moral proposition in question is believed in the first case but not the other. We have already seen that whether a proposition is believed or not depends on whether it is presented as being true or is part of a complex proposition such that the belief does not present the proposition as being true. As regards the first belief, the moral proposition is presented as being true. As regards the second belief, the moral proposition is not presented as being true because it constitutes the antecedent of a conditional. However, we have already seen that a proposition is not affected in any way by being combined with another proposition so as to become part of a complex proposition, such as the antecedent of a conditional. Whether a proposition is believed or not cannot influence the nature of the proposition. Hence, the present suggestion is unable to explain why the moral proposition has the motivational aspect with regard to the first belief but lacks it with regard to the second belief.

There is also another difficulty for the second defence. According to *CI*, a moral proposition has both a cognitive and a motivational aspect, and it has both these aspects in virtue of being a certain type of proposition. The cognitive aspect of the moral proposition under consideration is clearly the same with regard to both the beliefs we have considered: It represents a certain state of affairs. The fact that the first belief represents it as true whereas the second belief does not, cannot alter this fact. In both beliefs, the contribution this proposition makes is consequently the same as far as the cognitive aspect is concerned. Now, since the motivational aspect of the moral proposition also is supposed to be a feature it has in virtue of being a certain proposition, it seems that the same consideration should apply to it too. It consequently seems that the proposition should contribute in the same way as regards the two beliefs when it comes to the motivational aspect respect as well. But it does not. As a result, the second defence cannot help to explain why it is a matter of the same proposition in the two cases.

## 7. Two Versions of Conditional Internalism

In section 4, I distinguished between unconditional and conditional versions of internalism. On the first view, the necessary connection between moral judgments and motivation holds for every person, whereas it on the second version holds only for those who satisfy a certain condition. The distinction cuts through the division between state and object internalism, which means that there are unconditional and conditional versions of all four types of internalism I have considered. In subsequent sections, I argued that various unconditional versions of internalism are subject to the F-G problem. In this section, I will consider whether conditional versions of internalism is able to avoid it.<sup>29</sup> Consider:

*Conditional Internalism:* It is conceptually necessary that if a person judges that it is morally wrong to  $\phi$ , then she is, at least to some extent, motivated to see to it that  $\phi$ ing is not performed, given that she satisfies condition C.

In this claim, 'C' can be specified in a number of different ways, but it has to be such that it does not render the internalist claim trivially true. What is important for our purposes, however, is that there are two broad but distinct kinds of conditional internalism.

According to *strong conditional internalism*, there are cases where a person's judgment to the effect that it is wrong to  $\phi$  is sufficient by itself for her to be motivated to see to it that  $\phi$ ing is not performed. We might test whether a particular conditional internalist claim is of this kind by considering whether there is any possible world where a person's moral judgment is sufficient by itself for her to be accordingly motivated. If there *is* such a possible world, the claim in question belongs to this kind. According to this view, C can be understood to specify the *absence* of a hindrance of some sort for the judgment to be motivating, such as absence of certain mental conditions or 'non-normal' circumstances.<sup>30</sup> In case the hindrance in question is absent, the moral judgment is sufficient by itself for motivation.

29 For defences of unconditional internalism, see e.g. Lenman (1999): 441–457; Joyce (2001): 17–29, and Bromwich (2016): 452–471. McDowell's version of cognitivist internalism is presumably an instance of unconditional internalism, since he maintains that a person who is not accordingly motivated does not hold the moral belief in question. See e.g. McDowell (1979): 16. Cf. McNaughton (1988): Ch. 8.

30 Unfortunately, it is not always entirely clear whether a certain version of conditional internalism should be classified as strong or weak. However, in strong conditional internalism condition C seems often to be understood as the absence of particular mental conditions, such as addiction, apathy, compulsion, emotional disturbance, etc. See e.g. Dancy (1993): 25, and Svavarsdóttir (1999): 165. (However, Svavarsdóttir does not defend this view.) Alternatively, it might be understood as the absence of 'non-normal' circumstances. See e.g. Blackburn (1998): 59–68; Gibbard (2003): 152–154, and Dreier (1990): 9–14. For criticism, see e.g. Strandberg (2012): 81–91.

Now, strong conditional internalism entails that it is something about the very moral judgment which explains that it can be sufficient all by itself for motivation. In line with the distinction between state and object internalism, there seems to be two alternatives: Either the moral judgment involves a mental state which belongs to a kind of mental states that is motivating, *or* it has a moral proposition as its object which makes it motivating. As a consequence, the F-G problem applies to strong conditional internalism in the same manner as it applies to unconditional internalism.

According to *weak conditional internalism*, there are *no* cases where a person's judgment that it is wrong to  $\phi$  is sufficient by itself for her to be motivated to see to it that  $\phi$ ing is not performed. Again, we might test whether a certain internalist claim is of this kind by considering whether there is any possible world where a person's moral judgment is sufficient by itself for motivation. If there is *no* such possible world, the claim in question belongs to this kind. According to this view, C can be understood to specify something that *needs* be present in order to assure that a person who makes a moral judgment is motivated.<sup>31</sup> Thus, a person's moral judgment is not such that it all by itself can be sufficient to explain her motivation. Rather, it is her moral judgment *in conjunction with* the fact that she satisfies C that provides such an explanation. As a consequence, it is difficult to see that the F-G problem applies to weak conditional internalism on either of the two lines I developed above. The most prevalent version of this view understands C in terms of practical rationality.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, although there are versions of conditional internalism that escape the F-G problem, this is by no means the case as regards every instance of this view. The versions of internalism that are subject to this problem has the following in common: They entail that a person's judgment that it is wrong to  $\phi$  can be sufficient by itself for her to be motivated to see to it that  $\phi$ ing is not performed. Accordingly, all types of unconditional internalism and strong conditional internalism are subject to the F-G problem, whereas weak conditional internalism is not. It should be stressed that this does not mean that the arguments of the previous sections are insignificant. It is widely thought that conditional versions of internalism are problematic for various reasons. Especially, it has been shown difficult to come up with a notion of practical rationality that does not threaten to make the resulting claims vacuous.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the only versions of hybrid internalism (*HI*) I know of are instances of unconditional internalism, and most versions of cognitivist internalism (*CI*) appear to be instances of unconditional internalism or strong conditional internalism.

31 See e.g. Korsgaard (1996): 5–25; Smith (1994): Ch. 3; Wedgwood (2007): Ch. 1, and van Roojen (2010): 495–525. For criticism, see e.g. Strandberg (2013): 25–51.

32 See Smith (1994), esp. Ch. 3. Cf. Korsgaard (1986): 5–25, and Wedgwood (2007): Ch. 1.

33 See e.g. Lenman (1996): 298–299; Sayre-McCord (1997): 64–65; Svavarsdóttir (1999): 164–165; A. Miller (2003): 221; Roskies (2003): 53, and Schroeter (2005): 4.

## 8. Three Metaethical Lessons

In this paper, I have argued that the Frege-Geach problem applies to the two basic forms of internalism: state internalism and object internalism. It applies to state internalism in all its three versions: non-cognitivist, hybrid, and *sui generis* internalism. Moreover, I have maintained that it also applies to object internalism in the form of cognitivist internalism. However, I also pointed out that the F-G problem does not apply to weak conditional versions of internalism. I conclude the paper by drawing three general lessons concerning the scope of the Frege-Geach problem.

First, the Frege-Geach problem might apply to a metaethical view irrespective of what type of mental state a moral sentence is claimed to express. According to non-cognitivist internalism, a moral sentence expresses a non-cognitive state, but according to hybrid internalism it expresses a non-cognitive state in combination with a cognitive state, and according to *sui generis* internalism it expresses a distinct type of mental state. Further, according to cognitivist internalism a moral sentence expresses a purely cognitive state. However, all these views are subject to the Frege-Geach problem.

Second, the Frege-Geach problem might apply to a metaethical view even if it entails that moral sentences can be true or false. According to hybrid internalism, *sui generis* internalism, and cognitivist internalism, moral sentences have truth-values. However, they are still subject to this problem.

Third, the Frege-Geach problem might apply to a metaethical view even if it emphasizes that the content of a moral sentence consists in a proposition. Assume that it is argued that the content of a sentence cannot consist in a mental state, like a belief or desire, but must consist in a proposition, or some other abstract entity. However, we have seen that the problem applies to cognitivist internalism even if this view is understood to claim that the content of a moral sentence consists in a moral proposition.

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