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Mark Eli Kalderon, *Moral Fictionalism.*
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. xii + 193 pp.

Recent advocates of moral fictionalism have proposed it as a revisionary doctrine. For example, Richard Joyce argues for an error theory about morality and then suggests that it would be useful to retain moral talk as a fiction.[1] In *Moral Fictionalism,* Mark Kalderon argues instead for fictionalism as an account of existing moral discourse. He proposes fictionalism as a semantic program for metaethical noncognitivists and suggests that this program has the virtue of avoiding the Frege-Geach problem that faces metaethical expressivism.

In chapter 1, Kalderon argues for noncognitivism from what he claims to be asymmetric norms governing our reaction to disagreement with epistemic peers concerning moral and nonmoral questions.[2] Chapter 2 argues against the expressivist alternative in semantics, taking Allan Gibbard's norm expressivism as its exemplary target. Chapter 3 explores forms that a fictionalist moral semantics might take, and chapter 4 considers some consequences for moral inquiry of adopting a fictionalist metaethic. Here I focus on issues that arise from Kalderon's discussions of moral psychology and of fictionalist semantics.

Kalderon frames his account as an attractive semantics for noncognitivists. However, this is potentially misleading because his conception of moral psychology is significantly different from that of most contemporary noncognitivists. He argues that the central moral psychological state ("moral acceptance") is not belief. However, one might take the cognitive to include states like hypothesizing or pretending, which are (to follow David Velleman's helpful usage) ways of "representing as true." Like believing, these states are supposed to contrast with conative states like desiring.[3] Kalderon suggests that moral acceptance is a composite state, involving both representational and

1. *Myth of Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Daniel Nolan, Greg Restall, and Caroline West in "Moral Fictionalism versus the Rest," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 83 (2005): 307–30, also defend fictionalism as a revisionary doctrine.

2. Kalderon's confidence in this asymmetry appears to me to be implausible. However, this chapter constitutes an original proposal that will be of interest to participants in the current debate over the epistemological consequences of disagreement.

3. David Velleman, *The Possibility of Practical Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 249–50.

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conative elements, which cannot be analytically decomposed (49). This is a novel form of noncognitivism in both metaphilosophical temperament and content: contemporary noncognitivists typically exhibit reductive ambitions in moral psychology and emphasize the distinctively conative character of moral judgments.[4]

According to Kalderon, moral acceptance involves a complex pattern of attention and normative appearance that together constitute an affect. He draws an analogy between the role of the affective component of moral judgment and the way that erotic desire colors our phenomenology and focuses our attention (45). One worry about Kalderon's moral psychology is that moral assessment seems compatible with failure to possess the affective and phenomenological tendencies that Kalderon suggests are constitutive of it. For example, when I judge that it was wrong of Brutus to stab Caesar, the flatness of my affect contrasts strikingly with being in the grip of erotic desire. Show me a vivid dramatization of Caesar's stabbing and I may respond with rich affect, but surely my moral judgment is the same in these two cases.[5]

Kalderon's distinctive proposal is that noncognitivism can be combined with a fictionalist moral semantics. Such a proposal faces two explanatory challenges. First, the fictionalist seemingly owes us an account of the content of the moral fiction: just what am I pretending if I pretend that it was wrong to stab Caesar? Second, he must explain the nature of the speech-act that connects this content with the psychological state of moral acceptance.

Kalderon finesses the first challenge by suggesting that fictionalism is compatible with the possibility that there might be no (noncircular) way of specifying the content of the moral fiction. He appeals to an analogy with the alleged impossibility of giving full literal paraphrases of metaphors (131). However, accepting this response does not eliminate the relevant explanatory burden. For example, it is hard to pretend that an action is zorky if one has no idea what it would be to *be* zorky. Thus, the fictionalist must at least explain how his account permits one to grasp the content of the moral fiction.

Kalderon offers a valuable discussion of the semantic options for moral fictionalists. However, it is exploratory in structure and may thus disappoint readers hoping to evaluate a detailed positive proposal. Kalderon's

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4. Another important way in which Kalderon's account differs from that of other contemporary noncognitivists is that he is a noncognitivist about *morality*, and he says surprisingly little about practical or epistemic norms. By contrast, many contemporary noncognitivists are motivated partly by puzzlement about how normative thought could fit into a broadly naturalistic worldview. They thus tend to be noncognitivists about normative thought generally.

5. Other noncognitivists have denied that their basic noncognitive state is partially constituted by such affective content. For example, Allan Gibbard describes his basic normative attitude as "flavorless recommendation" in *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 49.

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optimism in the absence of such a proposal may derive from his accepting two contentious theses. First, he suggests that moral fictionalism would be "semantically uncontroversial" (119, 146). However, this is at least an overstatement: consider, for example, the host of semantic objections to hermeneutic fictionalism about metaphysical discourse offered by Jason Stanley.[6] Second, Kalderon sometimes seems to take the fact that noncognitivism and expressivism are independent doctrines to secure the possibility of noncognitivist fictionalism. Thus, he claims on the basis of this independence that "it ought to be clear that a fictionalist could accept any of the accounts of moral acceptance provided by standard noncognitivists" (117). This is far from obvious. A fictionalist moral semantics will be defensible, if at all, only in virtue of a complex of facts relating psychology and semantic convention. Some noncognitivist moral psychologies might simply not be amenable to such treatment.

Kalderon's leading claim on behalf of fictionalist semantics is that it permits noncognitivists to avoid the Frege-Geach problem. In its simplest form, the problem is to explain the apparently obvious validity of moral arguments like the following:

1.   Intentional killing is wrong.
2.   If intentional killing is wrong,
      then Brutus's stabbing Caesar was wrong.
3.   Brutus's stabbing Caesar was wrong.

Because expressivists take 'wrong' not to contribute to the propositional content of sentences like (1)–(3), they face the delicate task of explaining why we take arguments like this one to be valid.

Fictionalism avoids this problem by holding fixed the intuitive semantic content of moral sentences. However, there is a second explanatory challenge in the vicinity: to explain why moving from accepting the premises of such an argument to accepting its conclusion appears to be good reasoning.[7] An analogous argument involving metaphor brings out the force of this problem for fictionalists:

1′.   Juliet is the sun.
2′.   The sun is a mass of incandescent gas.
3′.   Juliet is a mass of incandescent gas.

If (as Donald Davidson suggests)[8] the semantic content of a metaphor is just its literal content, then this argument is presumably also valid. However,

6. "Hermeneutic Fictionalism," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 25 (2001): 36–71.

7. Matti Eklund also presses this worry: "Fictionalism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer 2007 ed., ed. Edward N. Zalta, plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2007/entries/fictionalism/.

8. "What Metaphors Mean," *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 245–64.

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coming to believe (3′) on the basis of believing (2′) and accepting (1′) as a metaphor would be silly. Nor would believing (2′) and *pretending* that Juliet is the sun require one to pretend that Juliet is a mass of incandescent gas. Reasoning using both moral and nonmoral premises does not look silly in the way that reasoning using both literal and figurative premises can, and moral fictionalism has the burden of explaining why this is so.

Moral Fictionalism, then, perhaps raises more questions than it answers. However, Kalderon argues creatively for a novel metaethical program in this book. These arguments will thus be of interest to anyone who wishes to expand their sense of the possibilities in moral semantics and in metaethics more generally.

Tristram McPherson
Princeton University

Jiwei Ci, *The Two Faces of Justice.*
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006. viii + 252 pp.

The topic of Jiwei Ci's *The Two Faces of Justice* is the nature of the disposition to be just, as opposed to a substantive theory of the correct norms of justice. The problem of the book is to work out how this disposition can be both conditional and unconditional, that is, how it is that one can be motivated to be just only as long as others are too and yet also experience the demands of justice as categorical imperatives. Ci's solution is that although the purpose of justice is the reciprocal, hence conditional, satisfaction of interests, the institutions of justice are sustained through the cultivation of an unconditional virtue. The disposition to be just is consequently transformed through a Nietzschean process of enforced "forgetting." But the Janus-faced nature of the motivation of justice is nevertheless revealed by the emotion of resentment: "As a product of forced forgetting, resentment betokens the eviction of the conditionality of justice from consciousness and yet its simultaneous retention in the unconscious" (182).

In the first chapter, Ci argues that the reactive attitude of resentment demonstrates that reciprocity is a necessary structural element of the disposition toward justice. One feels resentment at the violation of norms of justice only insofar as one has not violated them oneself and only because the commitment of others to those norms is an important reason why one does