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Grammar and Function:
Peter Geach's Ethics

Katharina Nieswandt

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Introduction

Geach is best known for his contributions to theoretical philosophy: Most of his more than one hundred papers and a dozen books are on logic, philosophy of language and metaphysics. But he also made significant contributions to ethics. Particularly influential were a series of short metaethics papers, which are small masterpieces, both in terms of philosophical content and style. In usually less than ten pages, Geach delivers sharp analyses and powerful objections against influential schools. His arguments are always so clear and his examples so simple that they leave the reader wondering why no one before Geach detected the problems he points out.

Short Biography

Peter Thomas Geach was born on March 29, 1916, in London. His parents separated shortly after his birth. Until he was four, Geach grew up with his mother's parents, who were Polish immigrants. During this time, his father taught philosophy for the colonial administration in India. He had been educated by McTaggart, Russell and Moore. After his father secured a court order, Geach junior moved to a paternal relative and finally to a boarding school. Since the age of four, he had no more contact with his maternal family, and he had to relearn Polish again as an adult.

In 1938, Geach completed a BA at Oxford, with a stipend from Balliol College. During the same year, he met Elizabeth Anscombe. They married in 1941 and had seven children. Geach spent most of his career at the Universities of Birmingham and Leeds, where he was appointed to the logic chair in 1966, but he often traveled for international visiting appointments and lecture series. Geach died on December 21, 2013, in Cambridge.

The earliest philosophical influence on Geach was his father. When Geach was eight, the father retired early and moved back to the UK. He provided the young Geach with a systematic education in logic. The son describes him as "a very strange man." Thus, Geach senior changed his religion "about three times a year," and he "always had persuasive arguments in favour of his latest belief, which he would bring out for his son's benefit," who "for some time followed my father through his various phases of faith" (Geach in Lewis 1989, 2). Geach senior was horrified at the contradictory conception of divine omnipotence that the son had been taught in his absence. As a cure, he prescribed McTaggart's *Some Dogmas of Religion*. "The remedy was entirely successful; I felt towards McTaggart thereafter as Lucretius did towards Epicurus; he had delivered me from a mentally crippling

superstition, and I could now think like a free man." (Geach 2001, 4-5). Decades later, McTaggart's work was temporarily forgotten, but for Geach it remained a life-long point of reference (see, e.g., Geach 2002, 191-193). In 1979, Geach published an introduction into McTaggart's Philosophy.

In the late 1940s, Geach spent a lot of time in Cambridge, where he met Wittgenstein and von Wright. With the former he often took walks. His experience of these was similar to that of the young Wittgenstein with Frege: "[A]ttempts at light conversation were immediately quashed, and careless talk about philosophy was ruthlessly and devastatingly exposed" (Geach in Lewis 1989, 13). Geach's first book, *Mental Acts* (1957), was strongly influenced by Wittgenstein. A methodological maxim to which Geach repeatedly alludes throughout his work is formulated in *PI* § 593: "A major cause of philosophical diseases—a one-sided diet: One nourishes one's thinking with only one type of example." Geach often combines this maxim with the idea that "the logician's role in philosophy" is that of an "accountant," particularly in moral philosophy, since "[m]any moral philosophers have invested a lot of their intellectual capital in the unsound, watered stock of dubious semiotic theories" (Geach 1977a, 7).

The two most profound influences on Geach's thought, however, were probably Anscombe, with whom he also co-authored (e.g. a translation of Descartes' major works), and the Catholic faith, to which both had converted independently of each other during their studies. Many of Geach's writings discuss metaphysical and logical questions of Catholic theology. Geach's moral philosophy, too, is strongly influenced by Catholicism. This holds for his theory of the virtues (see below), as well as for his views on questions in applied ethics (such as contraception).

The Grammar of Moral Expressions such as "Good" or "Should"

Geach's perhaps most famous paper, "Good and Evil" (1956), is representative of his style and many of his skills. He proceeds from a completely uncontroversial, grammatical insight—here the distinction between "attributive" and "predicative" adjectives, introduced by linguists. He then spells out wide-ranging conclusions for ethics, in less than ten pages. In "Good and Evil," the argument leads him to reject two major schools of metaethics, non-natural realism and expressivism.

An attributive adjective precedes a noun; Geach's example is: "a red *book*." A predicative adjective follows a verb such as "to be," "to stay" or "to become," e.g.: "This book *is* red." While "red" can be used in both these ways, some adjectives (logically) only permit an attributive use—Geach discusses the examples "small," "forged" and "putative." Surface grammar admittedly suggests the opposite, since we often formulate sentences such as: "Peter Geach *was* small." This sentence, however, contains an implicit reference to a noun: Peter Geach was a small *human being*.

This shows in the fact that such sentences cannot be split. The sentence "X is a small flea," e.g., cannot be split into "X is a flea" and "X is small," which would be no problem with the sentence "X is a red car." In order to use an attributive adjective, "some substantive has to be understood" (34). For the adjective is used in reference to a kind of object and thus to the kind's specific norms.

Geach's philosophical thesis is that the adjectives "good" and "evil" are (logically) attributive. "[T]here is no such thing as being just good or bad, there is only being a good or bad so-and-so" (34). Thus, the sentence "X is a good car" cannot be split into "X is good" and "X is a car." And if we say that Peter Geach was good, we either mean that he was a good philosopher or a good teacher or a good person, depending on context. "Good" always requires a reference (at least implicitly) to an object that provides an object-specific norm.

Consequently, "good" can denote a variety of very different properties. While a good car might be a fast car, a good teacher might be characterized by patience. This important observation is shared by two important groups of metaethicists: non-natural realists (whom Geach calls "objectivists") and expressivists/non-cognitivists (whom Geach calls "Oxford Moralists"). According to Geach, however, both schools draws entirely false conclusions from the fact that "good" can denote widely different properties.

Non-natural realists (Geach probably thinks of Moore here) regard these many different uses of "good" as an imprecision of ordinary language. According to this theory, there is a single property of goodness, which all good objects share and which only philosophical analysis can uncover. Geach, however, has just demonstrated that all attributive adjectives show such variety. But who would conclude from this that, e.g., all small objects share that same primitive property of smallness?

Expressivists (Geach mainly targets Hare) regard these very different uses of "good" as an indication that the respective sentences aren't assertions but rather recommendations: "'That is a good book' means something like 'I recommend that book' or 'choose that book'" (36). According to this theory, the goodness of cars differs from the goodness of

teachers because we value and recommend speed in cars but patience in teachers. Geach points out that we hardly commend a person by calling them, e.g., a good burglar. More important, however, is that the above argument also applies here: Adjectives such as "small" show the same variety, but nobody concludes from this that sentences such as "This is a small car" aren't assertions.

Apart from these objections to other schools, "Good and Evil" also makes a significant positive contribution: In using an attributive adjective, we apply the norm of the respective kind of object. If we say, e.g., that Bess is a good burglar, then we use the norm of burgling: Bess is perhaps exceptionally quiet, unscrupulous and quick. This means that kinds such as *human being* or *action* also possess a norm, to which we allude when we say that Bess is an evil human being or that her actions are bad actions.

This thesis, of course, is not new; it forms the core of Aristotelian naturalism, and Geach does not further elaborate it in "Good and Evil." But he provides a completely new argument for this thesis, viz. that "good" is an attributive, not a predicative adjective, and that its use hence requires a norm that has to be provided by the object in question.

What Geach demonstrates in "Good and Evil" for these two adjectives applies in a similar form for many moral expressions.[1] In "Whatever Happened to Deontic Logic?" (1982b), Geach argues that, after von Wright's seminal work "Deontic Logic" (*Mind* 1951), most of the research in this field took a wrong turn, which now constantly generates pseudo-problems. In his original formalism, von Wright applies deontic operators such as "ought," "may," "is obligatory" or "is permissible" to kinds of actions, such as "It is permissible to get married" or "It is obligatory to honour parents" (1). Later, he and many other authors apply theses operators only to facts or situations, such as "It ought to be the case that: *A* invites *B* for lunch." Ever since this reinterpretation, paradoxes can be generated systematically. In our lunch example, the situation that ought to be realized seems to necessitate two actions: The active invitation by *A* and the passive allowing-themselves-to-be invited by *B*. Now it might be that one of these actions ought to be carried out, whereas the other ought not. Perhaps *A* has often been invited by *B* and ought to reciprocate one of these days. That doesn't entail, however, that *B* ought to accept *A*'s invitation. (*B* might be much richer than *A*, e.g., and then it could be inappropriate for *B* to have his lunch paid for by *A*.)

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1   I am grateful to Dr. Ulf Hlobil for pointing out the parallel discussed in this paragraph to me. He also alerted me to the fact that Kit Fine's "Essence and Modality" (*Philosophical Perspectives* 1994) introduces a thesis for alethic modality that is largely analogous to Geach's claim about deontic expressions.

Geach described the source of such paradoxes as follows: "[O]bligation essentially relates // to an agent, it is *somebody's* obligation; if instead we try to think of the ought-to-be-ness, *Sein-sollen*, of a situation involving the agent, then our thinking is going to be *confused*" (2-3, emph. orig.), because our most fine-grained distinction will be between situations, and that causes the above problem. Just as "good" refers to something that offers a measure of evaluation (often the nature of the evaluated object), deontic expressions such as "ought" refer to something for which there is a duty or a permission (often the agent).

The Frege-Geach Problem

Geach's papers "Ascriptivism" (1960) and "Assertion" (1965) prompted a wave of expressivist responses that still continue fifty years later (see bibliography). Geach's thesis, however, initially appears so trivial, that he cautiously introduces it as follows: "This may appear so obviously true as to hardly be worth saying." (Geach 1965, 449)

Geach's apparently trivial thesis is this: "[A] proposition may occur in discourse now asserted, now unasserted, and yet be recognizably the same proposition" (449). In other words, a certain content can be asserted by the speaker or be neutrally reported, without this changing the content itself. Neutral reports embed the proposition, e.g. in a conditional or a question. Whereas the sentence "Smith is the murderer!" (462) makes a normative claim about Smith, "If Smith is the murderer, then ..." or "Is Smith the murderer?" report the same proposition in a neutral way. The proposition, however, is the same in all cases, viz. 'Smith is the murderer'.

Geach credits Frege, in the early work *Begriffsschrift*,[2] with this discovery. There, Frege distinguishes between content *(Inhalt)* and assertive force *(behauptender Kraft)*, and he even introduces a sign for the latter, the assertion stroke. Geach calls this distinction the "Frege point" (449). Today, the name "Frege-Geach Problem" is more common. Frege's distinction only constitutes a problem, of course, if irreconcilable with one's theory.

As it turns out, the distinction is irreconcilable with a whole family of theories, which we could call "anti-descriptivist" (Geach 1960, 222; 1965, 461). Geach criticizes several theories in philosophy of language here, such as Austin's speech-act theory (*How to Do Things with Words*, 1962) and Strawson's theory of predicates (*Individuals*, 1959). The most significant

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2   See §§ 2–4. More explicit references are to be found in the introductions of Frege's various unfinished attempts to provide an overview of his work, such as *Kurze Übersicht meiner logischen Lehren*, *Einleitung in die Logik* and *Meine grundlegenden logischen Einsichten.*

impact of Geach's critique, however, was in ethics. Geach's insight seemed to contradict the central tenet of expressivism/non-cognitivism.

Expressivists hold that moral utterances cannot have descriptive content; therefore, utterances such as "What Smith did was wrong" aren't assertions. What they are instead is a matter of debate: Ayer (*Language, Truth and Logic*, 1936), e.g., takes them to be a public pronouncement of the speaker's feelings; for Hare (*The Language of Morals*, 1952), they resemble imperatives. All agree, however, that moral utterances have as little content as the spontaneous exclamations "Boo!" or "Stop it!" in Smith's direction. (One consequence of this is that moral utterances can neither be true nor false.)

Against this, Geach (1960, 224; 1965, 461 seqq.) points out that moral utterances can be embedded. Sentences such as "If what Smith did was wrong, then he will receive a prison sentence," "Either what Smith did was wrong or the file is incomplete" or "Was it wrong what Smith did?" are grammatically correct and meaningful. Expressivists, however, cannot explain what such sentences mean. If the embedded utterance stands by itself, expressivists explain its meaning as a speech act, but speech acts cannot be embedded. Therefore, expressivists cannot explain the meaning of sentences in which moral utterances are embedded.

The most obvious response for expressivists would be to say that the embedded and the independent utterance have different meanings. This leads Geach to the second step of his argument: If Frege is correct, then we always use the same proposition, no matter whether we assert or embed it. That Frege is correct, however, seems almost trivial, as noted in Geach's introduction. We can furthermore easily give examples of inferences which expressivists, too, would regard as valid, but which would be invalid if the suggested difference in meaning existed. Take the following *modus ponens*:

1. If what Smith did was wrong, then he will receive a prison sentence.

2. What Smith did was wrong.

3. *Therefore*, Smith will receive a prison sentence.

The antecedent "If what Smith did was wrong" in line 1 and the independent "What Smith did was wrong" in line 2 must have the same proposition as their content, viz. 'What Smith did was wrong'. If they expressed different propositions or if line 2 had no content (but were, e.g., a refined way of shouting "Boo!"), then this inference would be invalid—which it clearly is not.

Today, there is a vast and highly specialized literature on the Frege-Geach problem. Geach's original targets—mostly emotivism and prescriptivism—have been modified in all conceivable ways in order to circumvent the problem. Prominent alternatives are Gibbard's idea of hyperplans or Blackburn's quasi-realism. (Most contemporary literature belongs to formal semantics rather than ethics.) This second generation of expressivists agrees with Geach's diagnosis, and they attempt to develop a variant of expressivism that allows that moral utterances have content.

Many of the new variants of expressivism have prompted new versions of the Frege-Geach problem. Contemporary expressivists usually assume that linguistic utterances owe their meaning to their role in expressing mental states (a view that Geach would have vehemently rejected). Therefore, contemporary literature often formulates the Frege-Geach problem as follows: According to expressivism, the mental states expressed in assertions have to differ systematically from the mental states expressed in moral utterances, but no such difference is visible in our language. Moral terms can be embedded just as any other term, and the semantic consequences are the same.

The Supposed "Naturalistic Fallacy"

In the 1960s, more and more philosophers began to question the idea of a "naturalistic fallacy."[3] This thesis, originally introduced by Hume,[4] says that it is in principle impossible to infer a judgment about what should be the case from a judgment about what is the case. Hence many moral philosophers held that moral conclusions cannot be inferred from mere facts. In 1976, Geach published two short, much discussed papers on this topic, "Murder and Sodomy" and "Morally Significant Theses." Both provide examples of obviously valid inferences of moral conclusions from mere statements of fact.

One type of example that Geach discusses has the following structure (see 1976a, 346): *A* believes that a pickpocket should be imprisoned, but she wants to let someone who manipulated the prime rate get away with a fine. *B* argues against this as follows: Large-scale market manipulations are a more severe crime than petty theft. More severe crimes have to be punished at least as harshly as less severe crimes. Imprisonment is harsher than a fine. Therefore, people who manipulate the prime rate should be imprisoned if pickpockets

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3   Important papers are Anscombe's early "On Brute Facts" (*Analysis* 1958), as well as Searle's more often-cited "How to Derive 'Ought' from 'Is'" (*Philosophical Review* 1964).

4   See his *Treatise on Human Nature,* 3.1.1, §9. (The expression "naturalistic fallacy" is by G. E. Moore.)

should be imprisoned. Now, *A* and *B* seem to have a real moral dispute here, and *B*'s conclusion hence seems to have moral content. According to the doctrine of the naturalistic fallacy, it should therefore be impossible to infer *B*'s conclusion from pure statements of fact. Geach points out that that is false: *B*'s conclusion can be inferred, for instance, from the premise that everyone who manipulates the prime rate is a pickpocket. That premise might be false, but that doesn't invalidate the inference. More importantly, it is a premise about pure facts: It says that all elements of the set "manipulators of the prime rate" are also elements of the set "pickpockets." If we concede that *B*'s conclusion has moral content, then we also have to concede that moral judgments can be inferred from judgments of fact.

According to Geach, the possibility of such inferences "ought not to surprise anyone: the difference between the factual and the evaluative, or the moral and the non-moral, never did look like the sort of difference of which logic ought to take account, any more than there is a special logic of rudeness or obscenity" (1976a, 347).

Natural Teleology

It has often been claimed that teleological explanations are obsolete, especially in biology: Any teleological explanation can supposedly be substituted for an efficient causal explanation, which furthermore is the real (usually meaning: the scientific) explanation of the phenomenon. According to this view, teleological explanations are at best a convenience of ordinary language, but often they constitute misleading anthropomorphizations. In two papers, "Teleological Explanation" (1975a) and "Contingency, Cause and End" (2002), Geach defends the opposite view: Efficient causal explanations presuppose teleological concepts.

When we speak of general laws of nature, e.g., we actually describe tendencies, Geach says. This has been noted by others before; Geach (2002, 195) himself uses an example from Mills' *Logic* (III.10, §5): If force is exerted on a body, then that body has a tendency to move in the direction opposite the force, and we can formulate a corresponding general law of motion. This law, however, only describes a tendency because other forces—gravity, e.g., but also further events—might work in the opposite direction of the body's movement. The concept 'tendency', however, is a teleological concept, Geach (1975a, 93) claims. Instances of teleological vocabulary in biology are even more obvious, e.g. when authors say "that 'evolution' would not have 'allowed' the [pineal gland][...] to survive if it and its internal

secretion were now useless" (2002, 197), or consider "catchpenny titles as 'the blind *watchmaker*' and 'the *selfish* gene'" (198, emph. orig.).[5]

Those who oppose teleological explanation often try to eliminate the concept of a tendency through a counterfactual analysis of opposing efficient causes. Geach regards this idea as incoherent: "For what actually happens cannot be the resultant of a lot of things that would happen if only there were not other things that would happen if only there were not yet other things (or perhaps the first-mentioned things) that would happen if...." (195). If, e.g., something would raise a body's temperature by 25°C, while something else would reduce it by 10°C, so that said body under their joint influence ends up 15°C warmer than before, then we cannot regard its temperature as the result of two opposing causal processes, a warming by 25°C and a cooling by 10°C, since both these events never happened (193-4).

The teleological content of efficient causal explanations also shows in their logical structure, according to Geach. He points out that efficient causal inferences are non-monotonic; i.e., their validity can be changed by adding further premises (1975a, 90; 2002, 199-200). The same is true of practical inferences. Geach therefore thinks that a logic of natural tendencies would best be modeled on a logic of imperatives (an idea, which he never carried out).

One reason for the wide-spread rejection of teleological explanations, Geach thinks, is the mistaken assumption that such explanations imply further ends (1975a, 85-7). Many natural processes, however, are cyclical, and the cycle itself often has no further function: "If mayfly grubs hatch in order to develop into mayflies, and mayflies—which have no means of eating, only enough stored energy to reproduce—live in order to produce eggs that are to hatch into mayfly grubs—what then, it may be asked, is the whole process in aid of? Isn't it futile, like the labours of Sisyphos? The difficulty arises only because we tacitly suppose we have to look for an end *after* all the generations of mayflies" (87, emph. orig.).

The Role of the Virtues in Moral Life

As early as the 1970s, Geach already attempted to give a comprehensive account of the individual virtues and their functions (Geach 1977a; Geach 2001 further develops some of these themes). He gave a series of lectures, the first of which, "Why Men Need the Virtues" (1977a, 1-18), sketches a theoretical framework that many future Aristotelian naturalists took

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5   Both books are by British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins and are explicitly anti-teleological.

over and expanded. Geach argues here that natural teleology and contemporary natural science are compatible; he defends Aristotle's idea of a human function, and he argues that the cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, temperance and courage) are necessary to perform that function—at least on any halfway plausible conception of it.

There are a number of different ways to spell out the human function and hence the function of the cardinal virtues. Geach himself explicitly proceeds from a Christian premise: The ultimate function of all individual virtues is to enable human beings to overcome original sin (168). Despite its influence on Aristotelian naturalism, Geach's own theory does hence not belong to this family of theories: Geach proposes a religious virtue ethics.

Even though many later authors rejected Geach's Christian framework, his lecture series had an enormous influence. Thus, Geach defends the thesis that a character trait can only be called a "virtue" if employed in the service of good deeds (157, 167), and he discusses interesting objections against the idea of a necessary unity of the virtues (161-7) or against consequentialism (90-103). Especially his examples have been perceived as helpful and have been developed further by others: Thus, Geach already argues that life-form judgments cannot be statistical judgments, by pointing out that it is correct to say that the function of acorns is to grow into oaks, even though only a tiny minority of all acorns effectively does (21). And he points out that the virtues do not necessarily contribute to the well-being of their possessor: "Men need virtues as bees need stings. […] [A]n individual man may perish by being brave or just, all the same men need courage and justice." (17)

Annotated Bibliography

As mentioned in the introduction, ethics was only one of the many fields in which Geach published. The following bibliography hence only lists a very small selection of his enormous work.

Contributions to Ethics

1956:   Good and Evil. *Analysis* 17 (2), 33–42.

1958:   Imperative and Deontic Logic. *Analysis* 18 (3), 49–56.

Opposes Hare's attempt to construct a logic of moral utterances solely from imperatives. Geach says that many moral utterances have a fundamentally different logical structure and can hence not be rendered as imperatives. (One example are permissions.)

1960: Ascriptivism. *Philosophical Review* 69 (2), 221–225.

1965 Assertion. *Philosophical Review* 74 (4), 449–465.

1975a: Teleological Explanation. In: *Explanation: Papers and Discussions*, ed. by Peter Achinstein & Stephen Körner. New Haven: Yale UP, 76-95.

1975b: Reply to Comments. In: *Explanation: Papers and Discussions*, ed. by Peter Achinstein & Stephen Körner. New Haven: Yale UP, 112–117.

1976a: Murder and Sodomy. *Philosophy* 51 (197), 346–348.

1976b: Morally Significant Theses. *Open Mind* (The Philosophy Journal of the Open University) 4, 20–26.

1977a: *The Virtues* (The Stanton Lectures 1973–74). Cambridge, New York: Cambridge UP.

1977b: Again the Logic of "Ought." *Philosophy* 52 (202), 473–476.

A reply to critiques of Geach 1976a and b (see "Secondary Literature").

1979: Some Hobbesian Theses about Justice. *Dialectics and Humanism* 6 (4), 45–50.

Geach's political views were deeply influenced by Hobbes. Here, he defends Hobbes' view of justice within a state.

1982a: Moral Autonomy Still Refuted. *Philosophy* 57 (219), 127–129.

A further reply to critiques of Geach 1976a and b. ("Autonomy" here refers to the autonomy of ethics alleged by Hare and others, i.e., the impossibility of inferring ethical from non-ethical judgments.)

1982b: Whatever Happened to Deontic Logic? *Philosophia* 11 (1), 1–12.

Reprinted in: Peter Geach & Jacek Holowka (eds.): *Logic and Ethics.* (Nijhoff International Philosophy Series 41). Dordrecht 1991: Springer, 33–48.

2001: *Truth and Hope* (The Fürst Franz-Josef and Fürstin Gina Lectures 1998). Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame UP.

> *Develops some earlier themes of Geach's work, mostly his theory of truth, but in chapters 4 and 5, Geach returns to his views on lying and promising introduced in Geach 1977a, chapter 6.*

2002:   "Contingency, Cause, and End." In: *Die Normativität des Wirklichen*, ed. by Thomas Buchheim, Rolf Schönberger & Walter Schweidler. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

Secondary Literature on Geach's Moral Philosophy (Selection)

Hare, Richard (1957). Geach: Good and Evil. *Analysis*, 17 (5), 103–111.

Searle, John (1962): Meaning and Speech Acts. *The Philosophical Review* 71 (4), 423–432.

> *Part I treats the same problem as Geach 1960 and 1965. Searle gives examples in which "good" is embedded, and he shows that the meaning of "good" in these cases cannot be that the speaker recommends something.*

Winch, Peter (1975): Comment: Geach on Teleological Explanation. In: *Explanation: Papers and Discussions*, ed. by Peter Achinstein & Stephen Körner. New Haven: Yale UP, 95–105.

Henry, Grete (1975): Comment. In: *Explanation: Papers and Discussions*, ed. by Peter Achinstein & Stephen Körner. New Haven: Yale UP, 105–112.

Hare, Richard (1977): Geach on Murder and Sodomy. *Philosophy* 52 (202), 467–472.

> *A reply to Geach's counterexamples against the supposed naturalistic fallacy in Geach 1976a and b. Geach 1977b is a brief rejection of this and the following paper:*

Borowski, E. J. (1977): A Pyrrhic Defence of Moral Autonomy. *Philosophy* 52 (202), 455–466.

Borowski, E. J. (1980): Moral Autonomy Fights Back. *Philosophy* 55 (211), 95–100.

> *A reply to Geach 1977b. Geach 1982a is a brief rejection of this and the following paper:*

Hurka, Thomas (1980): Geach on Deriving Categorical "Oughts." *Philosophy* 55 (211), 101–104.

Karmo, Toomas (1988): Some Valid (but not Sound) Arguments Trivially Span the "Is"-"Ought" Gap. *Mind* 97 (386), 252–257.

> *Attempts to circumvent the problems raised in Geach 1976a and b through a model on which the same judgments count as moral judgments in some possible worlds but not in others.*

MacIntyre, Alastair (2002). Virtues in Foot and Geach. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 52 (209), 621–631.

Compares the theory of the virtues in Geach 2001 with that of Philippa Foot in Natural Goodness *(Oxford UP 2001).*

Haldane, John (2002). "Truth and Hope, by Peter Geach." *Journal of Philosophy* 99 (3), 157–162.

A critical overview of the main theses in Geach 2001.

Schroeder, Mark (2008): What is the Frege-Geach Problem? *Philosophy Compass* 3 (4), 703–720.

A contemporary, accessible overview of the original formulations of the problem by Geach and Searle and of the ensuing debates, solely treating ethics.

Thomson, Judith Jarvis (2008): *Normativity* (The Paul Carus Lectures 2003). Peru, Ill.: Open Court.

Chapters 1 and 2 elaborate the main theses from Geach 1956.

Schroeder, Mark (2011): *Ought*, Agents, and Actions. *Philosophical Review* 120 (1), 1–41.

Defends the thesis developed in Geach 1982b that "ought" does not (always) refer to facts or situations.

Charlow, Nate (2014): The Problem with the Frege-Geach Problem. *Philosophical Studies* 167 (3), 635–665.

A contemporary stock-check of which expressivist theories are refuted by which version of the Frege-Geach problem (as well as a new suggestion for a variant of expressivism designed to circumvent it).

Rowland, Richard (2016): In Defence of Good Simpliciter. *Philosophical Studies* 173 (5), 1371–1391.

A contemporary attempt to reject Geach 1956 as well as later elaborations (e.g., by J. J. Thomson or Foot).

About Peter Geach

Lewis, Harry (Ed.) (1991). *Peter Geach: Philosophical Encounters*. Essays by Peter Geach and Others. Dordrecht: Kluwer/Springer.

A Festschrift of 330 pages, which also contains a highly readable "Philosophical Autobiography" (1–25), as well as a bibliography of Geach's works up till 1989 (307–315). The bibliography can be accessed here: link.springer.com/content/pdf/bbm:978-94-015-7885-1/1.pdf.

The book is divided into three topics, "History of Philosophy," "Logic and Identity" and "Philosophy of Religion." Each begins with a short introduction by Geach, followed by papers by colleagues—among them Quine, Anscombe and Müller. In the last section, Geach replies to these papers.

Haldane, John (2016): Anscombe and Geach on Mind and the Soul. *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 90 (16), 369–394.

Investigates Geach's and Anscombe's early philosophical works as well as how they influenced each other.

Several obituaries appeared after Geach's death. The following two are especially recommended:

O'Grady, Jane: Peter Geach obituary. *The Guardian*, December 26, 2013 (revised December 27): https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/dec/26/peter-geach.

[No author]: Emeritus Professor Peter T. Geach. The University of Leeds, *Obituaries 2014*. https://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/obituaries/2014/geach_peter.html.