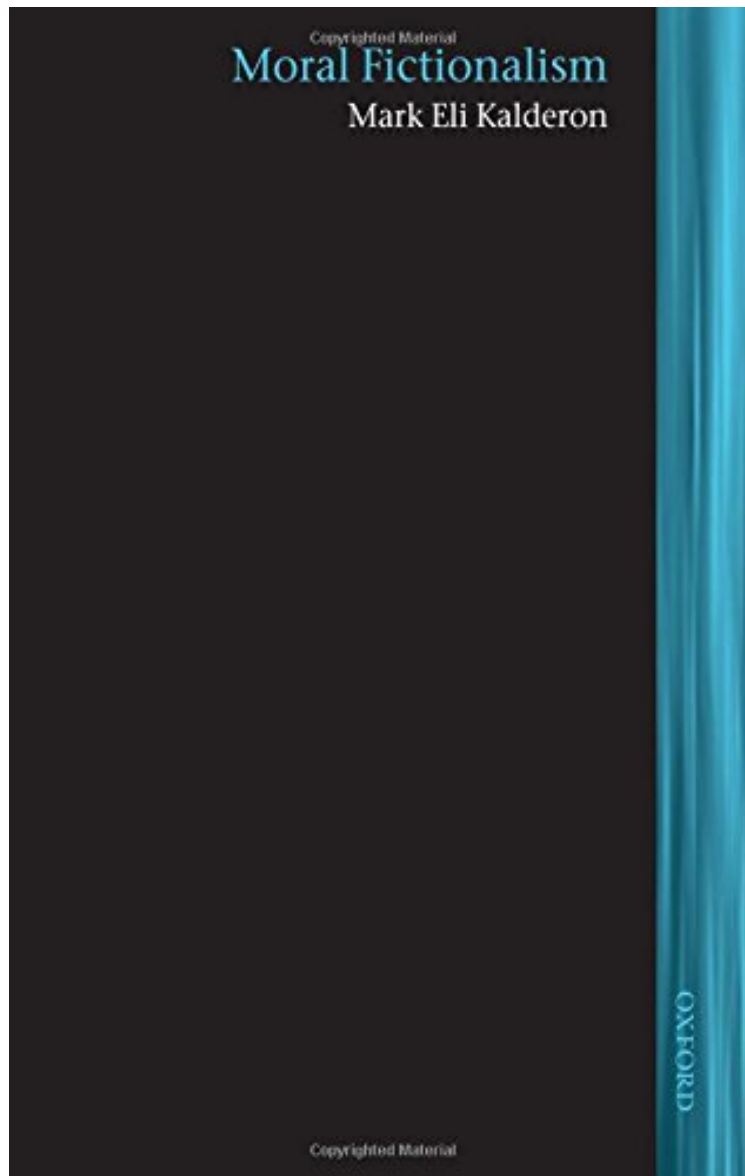


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Moral Fictionalism (Lines of Thought)

Mark Eli Kalderon

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Mark Eli Kalderon : Moral Fictionalism (Lines of Thought) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Moral Fictionalism (Lines of Thought):

Moral realists maintain that morality has a distinctive subject matter. Specifically, realists maintain that moral

discourse is representational, that moral sentences express moral propositions--propositions that attribute moral properties to things. Non-cognitivists, in contrast, maintain that the realist imagery associated with morality is a fiction, a reification of our non-cognitive attitudes. The thought that there is a distinctively moral subject matter is regarded as something to be debunked by philosophical reflection on the way moral discourse mediates and makes public our noncognitive attitudes. The realist fiction might be understood as a philosophical misconception of a discourse that is not fundamentally representational but whose intent is rather practical. There is, however, another way to understand the realist fiction. Perhaps the subject matter of morality is a fiction that stands in no need of debunking, but is rather the means by which our attitudes are conveyed. Perhaps moral sentences express moral propositions, just as the realist maintains, but in accepting a moral sentence competent speakers do not believe the moral proposition expressed but rather adopt the relevant non-cognitive attitudes. Non-cognitivism, in its primary sense, is a claim about moral acceptance: the acceptance of a moral sentence is not moral belief but is some other attitude. Standardly, non-cognitivism has been linked to non-factualism--the claim that the content of a moral sentence does not consist in its expressing a moral proposition. Indeed, the terms "non-cognitivism" and "non-factualism" have been used interchangeably. But this misses an important possibility, since moral content may be representational but the acceptance of moral sentences might not be belief in the moral proposition expressed. This possibility constitutes a novel form of non-cognitivism, moral fictionalism. Whereas non-factualists seek to debunk the realist fiction of a moral subject matter, the moral fictionalist claims that that fiction stands in no need of debunking but is the means by which the non-cognitive attitudes involved in moral acceptance are conveyed by moral utterance. Moral fictionalism is non-cognitivism without a non-representational semantics.

from previous edition Do we really believe the moral claims we make, or are we just pretending? In likely the most provocative metaethical book of 2005, Mark Eli Kalderon argues for "hermeneutical" moral fictionalism: our ordinary practice of moral judgement involves a form of make-believe rather than genuine belief. ... It is an important original contribution that should be read by all scholars and advanced students of metaethics, and will be of interest to those engaged in parallel debates in other areas of philosophy ... I admire the book greatly ... for its bold originality and creativity, its attention to detail, and its clear argument. It will deservedly invigorate the metaethical debate for some time to come.' Stephen Finlay, Notre Dame Philosophical Society
About the Author Mark Eli Kalderon is in the Department of Philosophy, University College London.