

Since we largely dispensed with the argument from relativity, we spent much time examining the two arguments from queerness that exist in Mackie's writing. Each argument is quite simple, but does attempt to establish very interesting conclusions.

The argument from ontological queerness

- (1) Moral statements express beliefs that are true only if there are objectively prescriptive facts.
- (2) There are no objectively prescriptive facts.
- (C) All beliefs that moral statements express are false.

If such entities existed, then they would be 'queer' - i.e. unlike the rest of the entities in the universe. (Mackie 1977, 38) Why would they be queer? Well, they would be a kind of fact that by the mere believing of it introduces / creates motivation in you that wasn't there before. At time t_0 , you do not believe a moral truth, and lack motivation to follow it. At t_1 , you come to believe the moral truth and gain motivation to follow it because of the belief.

Are any other beliefs like that? Mackie doesn't think so, and so these kinds of beliefs if they existed would be so weird. Now, just because something is weird isn't a reason to not believe it, so Mackie needs to get us to see not only are they weird but that they are unneeded to explain moral behavior. For that, we get the second queerness argument.

The argument from epistemological queerness

Add two further premises to (1):

- (1) Accessing moral values would require a special faculty of moral perception.
- (2) There is no such faculty of moral perception.
- (C) We cannot know about moral values (even if they exist).

Now, it is extremely clear that Mackie is assuming a naturalist worldview for the epistemic argument. Should you, like Moore, reject naturalism, then this second argument loses its force. There is, however, more to say. From the Routledge handout for this reading:

But Mackie presses the argument from epistemological queerness by asking what the connection between natural properties and moral properties is. For instance, we commonly say things like 'that's wrong because it is cruel'. If we take cruel to mean 'causing pain for fun', then cruelty is a natural property. It is a psychological fact that something causes pain, and another psychological fact that someone's motive is taking pleasure in doing this. But what is the relation between these facts and the 'fact' that acting in this way is wrong? How can we establish whether it is wrong or not? It isn't an analytic truth, and we can't deduce it. Intuitionism fails to tell us how morality is related to anything else, how natural facts contribute to moral thinking. This makes it even more puzzling how we could come to know about moral properties.