

The World is Not Enough

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Short abstract: Throughout his career, Derek Parfit has claimed, quite provocatively, that anyone who possesses normative concepts is in a position to know, on the basis of their competence with such concepts alone, that Reductive Realism in ethics is not even possible. But the small amount of attention this claim has received has been exclusively critical. Our claim is that this has been a mistake. On one way of understanding Parfit's claim, it serves as a premise in an argument that poses a new and serious challenge to Reductive Realism. In a slogan, Parfit can be read as arguing that the familiar metaphysical disagreement between Non-Reductive and Reductive Realists can be settled on novel conceptual grounds, once we have a proper appreciation of the structure of normative concepts.