THE PROBLEM OF OTHER ATTITUDES

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Abstract

Noncognitivists are known to face a problem in extending their account of straightforward predicative moral judgments to logically complex moral judgments. This paper presents a related problem concerning how noncognitivists might extend their accounts of moral judgments to other kinds of moral attitudes, such as moral hopes and moral intuitions. Noncognitivists must solve three separate challenges: they must explain the natures of these other attitudes, they must explain why they count as *moral* attitudes, and they must explain why the moral attitudes are systematically correlated with ordinary propositional attitudes. After presenting the problem, several contemporary theories with some initial promise for solving it are examined and found to be insufficient.

Noncognitivists take a very distinctive approach to understanding morality. Instead of seeking an explanation for what it is for an action to be morally wrong, they suggest that we can best understand morality by understanding what it is to *judge* that an action is wrong. According to traditional versions of noncognitivism, to judge that an action is wrong is (at least in part) to adopt a conative attitude towards it. To judge that an action is wrong is not to adopt an attitude toward a proposition regarding the extension of a moral property, except in a minimalistic sense of "proposition" and "property." If they can provide a sufficient account of our attitudes about morality, noncognitivists hope that they can avoid any need for a deeper metaphysical account of moral properties.

Whether or not they succeed in this depends on whether or not they can provide an account of our attitudes that is adequate to the psychological complexity of moral psychology. Nothing will be lost for the present purposes if, to simplify, we assume that noncognitivists are committed to interpreting moral judgments as attitudes of disapproval and approval of actions.[1]

A complete noncognitivist account, however, needs to characterize not just straightforward attributive judgments, but all of the kinds of moral judgments that we make.

Peter Geach (1965) famously contended that noncognitivists of the time had not done enough to accommodate logical complexity. He suggested that while they may have provided a plausible characterization of judgments like the judgment that insurance fraud is wrong, they hadn't yet begun to tell us how to characterize the judgment that insurance fraud is wrong if stealing is wrong, or the judgment that everything John does is wrong unless fish are unable to feel pain. The lesson for noncognitivists was that they needed a systematic account of moral judgments that respected their potential complexity. Since Geach's paper, there have been a number of concerted efforts (including Hare 1970, Blackburn 1984, Gibbard 2003, Schroeder 2008, Ridge 2014) to provide just what Geach claimed they were lacking.

The potential complexity of moral judgments is just one part of the noncognitivists' troubles; a separate but related problem has received much less attention. Noncognitivists have restricted their focus almost entirely to moral judgments. By doing so, they have ignored other kinds of attitudes. The noncognitivists' silence on these other attitudes is as problematic for their views as was their earlier silence on logically complex moral judgments.

MORAL UNCERTAINTY

This problem hasn't gone entirely unnoticed. A version of it was introduced by Michael Smith (2002) when he claimed that noncognitivists might have trouble accounting for the existence of gradations in our beliefs about morality. We are more certain about some of our moral judgments than we are about others. Given the spirit of noncognitivism, gradations of moral uncertainty cannot simply be characterized as degrees of belief regarding a special class of

propositions. So, Smith wondered, what has the noncognitivist to say about the nature of such gradations?

Smith presented this as a problem for making sense of a property (gradability) that beliefs and moral judgements appear to share. We can also understand it as a problem of providing a noncognitivist interpretation of moral uncertainty. Beliefs exist on a spectrum: full beliefs lie on one side, disbelief on the other side, and uncertainty in the middle. Smith was concerned about how moral judgments could vary along a similar spectrum. The question of what sort of attitude sits in the middle of that spectrum is inseparable from the question of what changes between attitudes as one moves along the spectrum.[2] While noncognitivists might be able to tell a good story about the nature of the moral judgments that occupy the extremes of the spectrum, they had not done the same for the nature of moral uncertainty.

Smith observed that moral judgments appear to be gradable along three different dimensions: they can differ in terms of certitude, robustness, and importance. "Certitude" refers to our level of confidence in the judgment, "robustness" to how easily we change our mind, and "importance" to how morally significant we take the issue to be. We can be very confident about very unimportant issues, not confident about very important ones, and disposed to different degrees to change those attitudes upon the receipt of new evidence.

The problem is that noncognitivists identify moral judgments with states that are gradable along only two dimensions: they can differ in strength and in robustness. We might disapprove of some things more strongly than others, but there aren't two different ways of doing so. So noncognitivists are forced to find space for three dimensions of gradation within an attitude that really only admits of two. If they cannot make sense of the three dimensions of gradation of moral judgments, they cannot provide an adequate theory of moral uncertainty.

Some sophisticated responses have been offered to save the noncognitivist from Smith's challenge. These responses provide insight into just what kind of noncognitive attitude moral uncertainty might be. The scope of the problem, however, places greater demands on what might count as an adequate solution. I will return to these responses at the end of the paper, after I present the problem in full.

THE PROBLEM OF OTHER ATTITUDES

John is faced with a moral dilemma about whether or not to lie to his spouse to protect her from needless distress. He is unsure what the right thing to do is, even though he knows all of the morally relevant features that bear on his decision: he knows that lying will leave everyone happier in the long run, but it involves disrespecting the autonomy of a rational individual. He decides to lie. Afterward, he *hopes that he did the right thing*.

Mary's daughter has been kidnapped by terrorists and held for ransom. She has the ability to pay, but she recognizes that the ransom would serve to fund their activities and encourage them to commit greater evils. She *wishes that her special obligations to her loved one made paying the ransom morally permissible*, but she thinks that it does not.

Leigh has thought long and hard about the trolley problem. As a card-carrying consequentialist, Leigh judges confidently that the right thing to do is to pull the lever and push the fat man. While she have no doubts about it, she still sympathizes with those disagree, because despite her considered judgment, she shares the *intuition that it is wrong to push the fat man*.

Hoping that lying was the right thing, wishing that paying the ransom was morally permissible, and intuiting that pushing the fat man is wrong are moral attitudes. A moral attitude is an attitude that we would ordinarily describe as being somehow about morality. In the context

of noncognitivism, it is controversial whether or not (and in just what sense) moral attitudes are actually attitudes about morality. Nevertheless, it is easy to distinguish moral attitudes from others based on their appearances.

There are lots of moral attitudes. We can be angry that we were wronged and we can regret that we've wronged others. We can imagine fictional worlds in which different moral principles are true and we can suppose, in the course of a hypothetical argument, the vilest moral principles.[3] In fact, every ordinary propositional attitude appears to have a moral analogue.[4]

The existence of other moral attitudes creates three problems for the noncognitivist, which I will collectively refer to as the "problem of other attitudes." The first problem is to provide a characterization of each moral attitude. The second problem is to explain what makes these other attitudes count as *moral* attitudes – what justifies their inclusion in a single category? The final problem is to explain why it is that our attitudes are systematically paired, so that for each ordinary propositional attitude, we are also capable of having an attitude that acts just like a propositional attitude with a special content. I'll explain each problem in turn before considering whether existing proposals designed for making sense of moral uncertainty can be extended to other attitudes.

CHARACTERIZING OTHER ATTITUDES

A cognitivist would say that the moral attitudes are just the familiar attitudes of hoping, wishing, intuiting, anger, regretting, imagining and supposing that somehow represent the world as being a certain way with regard to morality. Traditional noncognitivist theories, on the other hand, suggested that moral judgments do not represent the world as being any way with regard to morality; moral judgments ought to be characterized by their special functional role, not by special representational contents. Traditional noncognitivists cannot say that moral attitudes are

just ordinary propositional attitudes with particular moral contents, so they must explain what these attitudes are, just as they need to explain what mental states are expressed by logically complicated moral sentences.

Noncognitivists could retreat from noncognitivism when it comes to characterizing these other attitudes. They might suggest that moral hopes are just ordinary hopes with representational contents. Perhaps to hope that one did the right thing is just to hope that one's action had certain non-moral right-making properties, or that ordinary people would regard the action as right, or that one would regard it as right under suitable idealization.

This response is plausible in some cases. Generally, moral attitudes are closely entwined with propositional attitudes regarding non-moral properties. We typically hope that we did the right thing because we hope that our actions had whatever properties normally make an action right.

Even so, this response leads to an oddly heterogeneous theory of moral attitudes. It suggests that while invariant realism, subjectivism, and relativism are inadequate as views about the contents of about moral judgments, one may be adequate for other moral attitudes. Furthermore, it will probably require giving moral predicates a disjoint semantic treatment depending upon the context of use. If we assume that the expression, "If only it were not wrong to pay the ransom, but alas it is wrong," expresses both a moral wish and a moral judgment, then we will need to hold that "wrong" makes a different contribution to the sentence's expressive capacity in each of the places in which it occurs.

This response, however, has larger problems. We sometimes adopt such attitudes toward fundamental moral issues. For instance, Mary might wish that paying the ransom was morally permissible because she wished that personal connections could justify favoring the well-being

of some people over others. This wish would not necessarily be a wish that paying the ransom actually had good consequences, or that other people would find the action permissible. When Mary wishes that paying the ransom were acceptable, she may not be merely wishing that she (or anyone else) had a psychology that permitted paying the ransom. The wish could fundamentally concern morality. No way of re-interpreting the attitude as an ordinary propositional attitude can account for this.

It might be thought that contemporary noncognitivist theories, bolstered by minimalist interpretations of content, fare better. We can perhaps provide a reasonably plausible minimalist semantics, according to which expressions like "All moral attitudes take a moral content as an object" are true. However, it doesn't follow from this that minimalists can skirt the problem. Minimalist noncognitivists must distinguish their view from cognitivism. According to Jamie Dreier, minimalist noncognitivists "are distinguished by their claim that there is nothing to making a normative judgment over and above being in a state that plays a certain 'non-cognitive' psychological role, a role more like desire than it is like factual belief. In particular, to explain what it is to make a moral judgment, we need not mention any normative properties." (2004, p. 39)

The same presumably goes for the other moral attitudes. While noncognitivists may admit that there are special moral contents, they must maintain that those contents are superfluous to characterizing the moral attitudes. In the absence of any better analysis of the fundamental commitments of noncognitivism, I'll assume that Dreier is right, and so minimalist noncognitivists are committed to finding a way of characterizing the other moral attitudes without evoking any special moral representational contents.

The challenge of providing a characterization of these other attitudes is complicated by two considerations. First, noncognitivists will need a characterization of moral attitudes that is different from the characterization they provide for their ordinary propositional analogues. Hopes, wishes, intuitions, anger, regrets, imaginings, and supposings all take representational contents in their standard forms. The characterization of individual propositional attitudes will surely invoke their contents.[5] In explaining what it is to hope that one's keel has cleared the shoals, we can expect to mention the keel and the shoals (or the properties of keelhood and shoalhood) and lay out the relation between the attitude and its object(s).

Dreier contended that even minimalist noncognitivists are committed to being capable of avoiding moral properties or propositions when characterizing moral judgments (and presumably other moral attitudes). It is unlikely that we can give a single characterization of moral and non-moral hopes that relies essentially on non-moral properties or propositions for non-moral hopes and does not rely on moral properties or propositions for moral hopes. Unless we restrict noncognitivism to moral judgments, we shouldn't expect to be able to treat other moral attitudes in precisely the same way we treat their ordinary propositional analogues.

Second, the functional role that noncognitivists use to characterize moral judgments can't simply be extended to the other attitudes. Noncognitivists have traditionally agreed that moral judgments have a special connection to motivation. Most extant noncognitivist characterizations from Ayer (1936) to Gibbard (2003) rely on some such connection. When we judge that an action is wrong, we typically have some motivation not to do it. However, many other moral attitudes are either not motivational or not motivational in quite the same way as moral judgments. Wishing that it were permissible to pay the ransom needn't have any impact on one's motivation to pay the ransom. Imagining or supposing that an action is morally wrong will

generally not motivate a person to avoid that action. The functional roles of the other moral attitudes are different from the functional role of moral judgments.

Noncognitivists need some story to tell about other moral attitudes. They should not retreat to cognitivism about other attitudes, but neither the story they already have for moral judgments nor the story that they have for the other propositional attitudes can be directly extended. It appears likely that noncognitivists will need a novel characterization for each of the other moral attitudes.

ACCOUNTING FOR THE MORALITY OF MORAL ATTITUDES

Moral attitudes have something in common. It is tempting to say that they all share a topic. According to traditional versions of noncognitivism, however, moral attitudes do not share representational content by virtue of being moral attitudes, and according to minimalist versions of noncognitivism, moral attitudes can be characterized independently of whatever representational content they do share. Furthermore, moral attitudes do not all share the same functional role. Moral hopes must play a very different role in our cognitive lives than moral intuitions and moral anger. If noncognitivists are to hold that the category of moral attitudes is held together by neither shared representational contents nor by a shared functional role, they owe some alternative explanation of what unifies the attitudes, and explains the temptation to say that they share a topic.

Some insights into this question might be drawn from work that seeks to explain the unity of the category of moral judgments across individuals and cultures. In response to David Merli's (2008) contention that noncognitivists face a serious problem in accounting for the range of attitudes that do and do not count as moral judgments, Gunnar Björnsson and Tristram

McPherson (2014) proposed that our verdicts about which judgments count as moral judgments can be explained in light of the central function played by moral judgments.

On their account, paradigmatic moral judgments are characterized by features that allow them to sustain cooperation by directing social hostility to uncooperative individuals. Björnsson and McPherson explain that we should expect people to regard judgments that fail some of these features to count as *moral* judgments in order to allow for some degree of continued engagement and productive discourse with the deviant judges. Cooperation with deviants remains possible so long as they do not deviate too much, but it still requires that we regard each other as making judgments about the same topic.

While this approach is very promising when it comes to explaining our verdicts about which attitudes count as a moral judgments, it is less helpful for the problem of other attitudes. Other moral attitudes do lack some important features of moral judgments, but they do not play anything like the role in managing cooperative activities played by moral judgments. As a result, we cannot point to the advantages of continued engagement in order to explain our disposition to regard moral attitudes as sharing a topic with moral judgments.

Laura Schroeter and François Schroeter (2014) have offered another account of how it is that individuals who make divergent moral judgments can nevertheless count as making judgments about the same topic. According to their proposal, we innately see some concepts as distinct tokens of the same type. Schroeter and Schroeter describe this as the appearance of *de jure* sameness between concepts. On their proposal, such appearances help to fix concept identity across individuals prior to the determination of the content of their respective token concepts. Since we take other individuals to be making judgments about the same kind of thing, the content determining properties of our individual token concepts figure into the determination of

their collective content. Our individual moral judgments count as judgments about the same topic, not because they just happen to align in the ways that are important for content determination, but because the contents of normative concepts are determined collectively so as to guarantee individual semantic conformity.

Schroeter and Schroeter acknowledge that their approach to content determination is consistent with noncognitivism, and so, at first glance, it appears to be possible to extend their account to an explanation of why moral attitudes share a topic. Such an explanation would hold that appearances of *de jure* sameness between the concepts employed in different kinds of attitudes play an important role in securing the collective content of those attitudes, and that as a result our various moral attitudes are guaranteed to share a topic.

Despite this initial promise, this approach faces a significant hurdle. It does nothing to explain what sorts of contents our moral concepts could have that would be both acceptable to noncognitivists and make sense in the context of other moral attitudes. On their proposal, concepts do not share contents merely because they appear to be the same concept. Instead, they receive their contents collectively in virtue of such appearances. If there is no possible noncognitive content capable of being shared by disparate varieties of moral attitudes, the appearance of sameness must be unsubstantiated. We cannot straightforwardly extend their proposal into a noncognitivist explanation of the topical unity among moral attitudes because the sorts of functional role properties that noncognitivists use to characterize moral concepts in the context of moral judgments do not make any sense for other moral attitudes.

Moral attitudes other than judgments do not play the same functional roles as other attitudes, and so any attribution of non-representational functional contents cannot capture what moral attitudes share with each other. If we cannot explain what content the concept *wrongness*

has within the context of a moral hope, we have not explained how moral hopes are truly moral attitudes.

There is clearly something in common between the judgment that it is wrong to commit fraud, the hope that it would be wrong to give one's child's college fund to charity, and the supposition that it is wrong to eat shellfish on Sunday. It is not an arbitrary fact about language that we use "wrong" in referring to these different attitudes. If we provide a separate analysis of each kind of moral attitude and do not explain what it is that unites them as moral attitudes, we will have missed out on something important. Not only do noncognitivists need to characterize each of the other attitudes, but they also need to provide some account of what they all share.

ACCOUNTING FOR SYSTEMATICITY

For every kind of attitude that can take an ordinary propositional object, there exists a moral analogue. For hopes, there are moral hopes. For desires, there are moral desires. We can be perplexed, surprised, revolted, angered, and disconcerted by morality. We can make moral suppositions in the course of deliberation. We can imagine things to be morally different than we take them to actually be. These moral analogues are attitudes that most people would naturally be inclined to regard as propositional attitudes with a propositional content, characterized by their relation to that content in the same way that their analogues are. But according to noncognitivism, the appearance is largely illusory. In explaining what it is to be a given non-moral attitude, we will need to make use of its non-moral content. In explaining what it is to be a given moral attitude, we will not need to utilize any special moral content.

There is no other collection of (uncontroversially) noncognitive attitudes that exhibits the same systematic pairing with ordinary propositional attitudes.[6] To take one example, there is no collection of fear-like attitudes that includes fear-hopes, fear-wishes, and fear-intuitions that

masquerades as attitudes of hopes, wishes, and intuitions with a special sort of non-propositional fear-related content. We may hope that the new addition to a horror movie franchise is as scary as the last, but this attitude is a mundane hope about the movie's impact upon our psychology. Attitudes about scariness are transparently psychological in a way that attitudes about morality are not. Judging that something is scary is not the same thing as being scared by it.

Some facet of the moral attitudes must explain why they are systematically paired with ordinary propositional attitudes. Cognitivists have a clear explanation for this. All propositional attitudes – hopes, regrets, imaginings, anger, despair, intuition, amusement, perplexity, and so on – can be taken to any proposition. Moral attitudes are just propositional attitudes directed at moral propositions. The same account that explains what it takes to be a non-moral hope also explains what it takes to be a moral hope. Insofar as propositional attitudes can have any propositional object, it is unsurprising that we can have other moral attitudes. Noncognitivists owe a similarly robust explanation.

EXTANT PROPOSALS

The scope of the problem of other attitudes means that piecemeal accounts of the nature of individual moral attitudes are of questionable value. There are two responses to Smith which, whatever their prospects for handling Smith's particular challenge, are inadequate as responses to the full problem of other attitudes. These responses are worth rehearsing for three reasons. First, they draw on the existing theories with the most promise for providing a full solution to the problem of other attitudes. Second, they throw light on the difficulties that noncognitivists will encounter when trying to provide a full solution. Finally, they show the inadequacy of these theories as final noncognitivist theories.

Both responses attribute greater structure to moral judgments and use this structure to make sense of moral uncertainty. One does this by decomposing moral uncertainty into two separate attitudes. The second does this by adding structure inside the content of the attitude. The additional structure provides some help in solving the problem, but neither response is fully successful as it stands.

Michael Ridge (2007, 2014) proposed an account, ecumenical expressivism, according to which moral judgments are really pairs of other attitudes.[7] To judge that an action is wrong is, very roughly, to simultaneously judge that the action has a certain property and to disapprove of actions that have that property. Typically, we are uncertain whether an action is wrong if we are uncertain whether it has a certain property. If I am uncertain whether or not fish are conscious, and I disapprove of killing all and only things that are conscious, then I count as being uncertain whether it is wrong to kill fish.

Though Ridge does not discuss the problem of other attitudes and nothing that he has said commits him to any particular answer, the account that he provided for uncertainty might initially be thought to be easily extended to other attitudes. We might, for instance, try to explain moral hopes as combinations of hopes about an action's properties and desires regarding actions with those properties: I hope that lying was the right thing to do by hoping that lying had some property, such that I desire that actions with that property be performed.

This would align Ridge's proposal with the approach, discussed earlier, that suggested that we adopt a cognitivist account of the contents of other moral attitudes. This approach faced a problem with fundamentally moral attitudes, which will also apply to its particular application to moral uncertainty. Take, for instance, a person who believes that even though fish are not conscious, they still have first-order desires not to be harmed. She might be uncertain whether it

is wrong to kill fish because she is uncertain whether it is morally permissible to kill anything with non-conscious desires not to be harmed. In such cases of fundamental moral uncertainty, we are uncertain about the moral question, but not because we are uncertain about any non-moral question.

Ridge is aware of this problem, and he introduced a complication to his account to accommodate it. According to Ridge, not every case of moral uncertainty involves non-moral uncertainty. In making sense of judgments of fundamental moral uncertainty, Ridge fell back to an uncertainty-as-indifference analysis. To be fundamentally morally uncertain whether an action with certain properties is wrong is, roughly, to feel neither strongly for nor against actions with its properties. The more certain we are, the more strongly we feel. Sometimes we may know all of an action's non-moral properties and still be unsure about whether it is moral. In such cases, Ridge suggested that degrees of moral uncertainty reflects degrees of indifference.

The same strategy can't be extended to the other moral attitudes. A person may judge that it is wrong to benefit his friends and family at the expense of strangers and wish that it wasn't wrong without wishing that it lacked any non-moral property that he believes it to have. A person may know that moral responsibility requires freedom of choice, but imagine a fanciful story in which moral responsibility is accrued for things entirely beyond one's control. This need not require imagining that actions in this story have any non-moral properties that explain the moral difference. In general, we can have attitudes that are fundamentally about morality in precisely the same way that Ridge acknowledged we can be fundamentally uncertain about morality.

Insofar as gradations of indifference are helpful, they can only be utilized for understanding moral uncertainty – there is nothing similar that one might use to handle other attitudes fundamentally about morality.

Andrew Sepielli (2012) proposed that any noncognitivist view with the resources to overcome the Frege-Geach problem also has the resources to make sense of moral uncertainty. Though he recognized that there might be other avenues open to noncognitivists, he thought that the most promising route to answering the Frege-Geach problem involves positing complex contents as the object of moral attitudes, in the style of Mark Schroeder's (2008) Trojan noncognitivist proposal.

On Schroeder's proposal, noncognitivists should regard moral judgments as involving three components. The first component is the attitude, which is a conative state that Schroeder refers to as "being for" (a technical term which nevertheless borrows substance from an implied relation to the attitude of favoring). To *be for* an action is to have some sort of positive attitude towards it. The second two components of the attitude together comprise its content. Schroeder suggested that noncognitivists need complex contents and that part of the content is responsible for making the attitude count as a moral attitude. On Schroeder's proposal, moral judgements are attitudes of being for that are directed at actions of attributing blame. The judgment that insurance fraud is wrong is an attitude of *being for* directed at a content of *blaming for insurance fraud*. The fact that its content concerns *blaming for* insurance fraud partly explains why the attitude is an attitude about the morality of insurance fraud. Schroeder thought that this additional structure is needed to solve the Frege-Geach problem, and Sepielli observed that it can also be used to give an account of moral uncertainty.

Schroeder's proposal gives us two distinct gradable aspects of moral attitudes. According to Sepielli, moral judgments can differ in how *for* blaming the judge is, and they can differ in how severe the blaming is that the judge is for. This answers Smith's concern about the distinction between importance and certitude. To be relatively certain that insurance fraud is wrong is to be *very for* blaming for insurance fraud. To be relatively uncertain whether insurance fraud is wrong is to be *mildly for* blaming for insurance fraud. To be uncertain whether insurance fraud is wrong but confident that if it is, it is very wrong, is to be mildly for very strongly blaming for insurance fraud.

If Schroeder's proposal is adopted, then we might say that moral attitudes all share a part of their content. Since Schroeder suggested that moral judgments are states of being for blaming for, we might hold that all moral attitudes are attitudes about blaming. Schroeder also suggested that beliefs are also attitudes of being for, but they are not directed at kinds of blaming. (They are instead directed at actions of proceeding as if something or other were the case.) So moral judgments and ordinary beliefs differ in that they are the same kind of attitude directed at different contents.

We might be able to systematically extend this to other attitudes. To form a hope may be to have some other attitude toward blaming, to form a moral fear is to have yet another other attitude toward blaming, and so on. In each case, the same attitude may produce a moral attitude when directed at a content concerning blame, and an ordinary propositional attitude when directed at another kind of content.

While the proposal is promising in outline, it is hard to fill in the details. For the proposal to be adequate, we need to specify the content that all moral attitudes share and give an account of the nature of the attitudes, other than being for, that are directed at those contents.

Take the case of hope. The most straightforward way to make sense of moral hopes in Schroeder's framework is to think of them as hopes about blaming. Perhaps to hope that it is wrong to lie is to hope that one will be blamed for lying (or to hope that one's ideal self would blame one for lying), but it seems that any link between hopes about morality and hopes about blaming can be severed. Someone could hope that lying was the wrong thing to do without simultaneously hoping that people are actually (or counterfactually) blamed for lying.

This doesn't mean that additional structure cannot help the noncognitivists solve their problem, but it does mean that Schroeder's suggestion will not suffice all by itself. Whatever help it provides with the special case of moral uncertainty, it will need to be significantly modified or elaborated to handle the other moral attitudes. While Schroeder suggested that additional structure could solve the noncognitivist's problems, the appeal of his account depends largely on the story he tells about the components of this structure. Yet Schroeder only developed the details for moral judgments. Whether or not noncognitivists can plausibly fill in the details for other attitudes remains to be seen. The problem is not trivial. It places new and distinct demands on an adequate noncognitivist theory.

CONCLUSION

The three parts of the problem of other attitudes are tightly interconnected. A suitable solution should simultaneously characterize each moral attitude, explain their moral unity, and help us understand why they are systematically paired with their ordinary propositional analogues. Nothing that I have said guarantees that a solution cannot be found, but existing noncognitivist accounts have not taken the problem into consideration. It is doubtful that an adequate noncognitivist theory will be found until this changes.

NOTES

[1] Noncognitivists have developed a number of different accounts of the nature of attributive moral judgments. For a sample of the variety, see Ayer (1936), Gibbard (1992), and Horgan and Timmons (2006).

[2] Not everyone agrees that full belief and full uncertainty differ in the same sort of way as more certain beliefs and less certain beliefs. Smith was specifically concerned with explaining the latter. Whether or not full uncertainty and less than certain belief are versions of the same attitude, the problems created by the fact that we can be uncertain about moral issues and the fact that we can make judgments with varying degrees of certainty are clearly linked and should probably receive a unified explanation.

[3] It is unusual to refer to imagination and supposition as attitudes. In the context of the problem of other attitudes, however, it makes sense to group them in with traditional attitudes.

[4] The problems persist whether or not we ultimately adopt a noncognitive analysis of other propositional attitudes, as Schroeder (2008) suggests. The apparent inclusion of moral content in attitudes must reflect some non-representational difference between moral and propositional attitudes. That difference demands an explanation.

[5] If they do not, Dreier's proposal doesn't successfully distinguish noncognitivism from moral realism.

[6] Attitudes that might represent exceptions to this claim include other normative attitudes, epistemic modals, and probability assignments. The status of these other attitudes is controversial for the same sorts of reasons.

[7] A number of other philosophers, including Boisvert (2008) and Schroeder (2013), have proposed similar accounts in order to deal with the Frege-Geach problem.

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