

Noncognitivist Error Theory

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[This preliminary version is actually a bunch of notes, with some important insights that should be further elaborated and straightened out.]

A main result of Meinongian theory of objects is the introduction of noncognitive agentive oughts. And yet according to the theory of objects these oughts are objective and so a kind of ideal existence is accorded to them. So oughts should support moral realism. The support for this conjecture in direction of realism is phenomenological: one experiences the objectivity of oughts. According to the phenomenological argument, a realist conclusion follows from what one experiences. This can be countered through questioning reliability of intuition leading to metaphysical conclusion. Given that oughts are purported objects at the noncognitive side of basic experiences to which they correspond, they allow for expressivist interpretation. Abductive reasoning as based upon wide reflective theoretical equilibrium confirms in an indirect manner that realist interpretation of oughts is most probably wrong and that the irrealist noncognitivist take is a sensible bet. Prospects of noncognitivist error theory, of moral judgments' being based upon morphologically backed chromatically illuminating rationality of reasons, and of moral judgments' vagueness are provided in support of this claim. The shape of a possible noncognitivist error theory is assessed.

Standard and moderate error theory

Error theory (Mackie 1977) came as a new take upon the opposition between cognitivist and noncognitivist approaches to the moral judgment. Traditional cognitivists (Moore, Ross) held it that moral judgments are beliefs or belief like, and that accordingly they describe a certain reality, being consequently either true or false in their ascriptions. So cognitivism involved ontological or metaphysical realism in the package deal that it offered. Then came noncognitivists (Ayer, Stevenson, Hare) who took moral judgments to be more or less emotional expressivist responses to the encountered situation, proposing package deal with moral irrealism: there was no need to postulate some independently existing moral reality such as the one coming in the form of moral properties given that noncognitivist approach was not descriptive and that neither did it aim to establish truth or falsity of its judgments.

Error theory put into question these established distinctions all in reshuffling them. It namely combined cognitivism with irrealism, the first belonging to the semantic and the second one to the ontological or metaphysical realm.

Cognitivism	Error Theory	Noncognitivism

Nonnaturalist intuitionism Moore		Boo-hooray
Intuitionist pluralism Ross		Commands

Realism

----- Irrationalism

Figure 1

The lines in the figure indicate that error theory sticks with cognitivism. According to it moral judgments are beliefs or belief like, and thus they describe some reality, being true or false as the consequence of this. Another right side positioned involving line in the figure shows though that error theory does not embrace moral realism as the classical cognitivism did. It namely indulges into the area of metaphysical or ontological irrationalism. All in being beliefs or belief like, thus describing some reality and referring to it, moral judgments have no support in the ontological or metaphysical area. If some of moral judgments would be false and some true, this would fit the descriptive and the accompanying realist mould. If on the other hand moral judgments are *all* false, given that nothing corresponds to them in the ontological realm, this is another matter. This is as well where the name error theory comes from: moral judgments are all in error, since they all describe something which does not exist, that is not there: a moral reality that cognitivism involves. It is interesting to ask at this stage what it means to be in error, in the usual everyday circumstances. I thought that the session was at 10am, but it actually was scheduled for 9am. So I was in error and I missed that event. There was nothing such as the 10am session which I tried to attend. I mistakenly took the road towards B all in thinking that it will bring me to the place A. So I was in error: there is no A at the end of the road that leads to B. This is error in respect to what my beliefs describe and in respect to what is there in the world as related to this. Error though has a contextualist angle, which comes to the fore in *general* statements such as the one that underlines error theory. And obviously error in this respect involves an epistemic dimension. What do you prefer: the clock that is correct twice a day or the one that is never exact? I prefer my clock that misses the right time for a minute or two to the one than stands still and thus displays the correct time twice in a day. So error can be bad or harmless. Which one of these does error theory buy? It seems to go with the bad error by embracing the general statement about all moral judgments missing their descriptive target. But given that it is a *metaethical* claim, thus the one that involves preconditions of moral judgments and not the specific moral judgments, it leaves space for a *moderate* version of error. After all, few people would agree that moral judgments such as that it is wrong to torture toddlers just for fun is in error. It is not in error, one can say, as considered in the immediately evaluated situation. But it may be characterized to be in error *in respect to its metaethical ontological or metaphysical evaluation*, where one does not value specific moral judgment appropriateness or correctness, but its fitting the general metaethical mold. As just indicated, this may be one window of opportunity for the introduction of error theory *moderate* brand.

Standard error theory asserts support for *objectivity* at the *cognitivist* side of the overall preceding cognitivism-realism and noncognitivism-irrationalism moulder. Thus, moral judgments as *beliefs* are *aiming at descriptive and true or false* reality. They come with a powerful *experience of objectivity*. These cognitivist expectations -- and this is where error comes from -- are not fulfilled though at what was expected to be the customary ontological/metaphysical realist side of the standard cognitivist package deal. In fact, it turns out that the standard combination of

cognitivism and moral realism is *metaethical* in the sense that it overviews the landscape from a *third person point of view objectivist perspective*. It does not take the evaluation of moral judgments to succeed in an immediately engaged first person perspective (where I agree that it is *true* to say how torturing animals just for fun is morally wrong), but in a distanced metaethical perspective (where I say that it is *false* that moral wrongness in the just discussed case refers to an objectively existing moral property). From this *distanced* perspective upon the moral situation, classical error theory engages into general metaethical evaluation of moral judgment, and not into the first-order first person point of view engaged moral evaluation.

There is the question whether appropriating more moderate first person and direct engagement bringing evaluation would still leave the space for *error*. One can say that error would just stick to the metaethical, moral ontology and metaphysics involving realm. It would not be there with the first person engaged valuation. Here is the opportunity to take a look at a version of moderate error theory where error sticks just with metaethical evaluation and does not go along with one's immediate engagement into the to be valued concrete situation. From this point of view, one can say, the *agentive* dimension of one's moral engagement was put under parentheses. But this is curious, given that moral judgment is based upon the moral evaluation of one's agency: one morally values one's acts in direction of praise and blame, of basic desert. If now one reinstates the importance of one's evaluative engagement in the concrete situations involving agency: where would still be place for error in such a setting? The blame would just point into the direction of the detached metaethical third person perspective evaluation.

Notice that standard error theory follows expectations of the cognitivism-moral realism package deal, just asserting that these expectations are not fulfilled on the ontological-metaphysical side. So it inflates *cognitivist* stuff, all in proclaiming its skepticism about the ontological or metaethical cognitivist support. Inflating cognitivist side leads to the basis of beliefs, to their *phenomenological* underpinning.

It does not seem that there is space for error in direct agentive engagement situations. Or what would this be? It would be something like engaging in error from the first person view engaged perspective, not from the objectivist third person point of view perspective. Such error theory would involve, among other things, *particular situations* where my moral judgment turns out to be wrong or false. I judge that politician to pursue a morally good or correct policy as based upon the evidential material that I have in support for such a judgment. I read about the politician in the news. Unbeknownst to me however, the politician really is a crooked dude. So I committed an error in my judgment. This is my subjective error about which I may not be aware, and which is realized to be that error from the third person objective perspective. That's not a general error. I am not necessarily in error about *all* of my moral judgments (as the metaethical ontological third person point of view perspective would have it). Notice that each moral *judgment*, as the matter that belongs to the area of language/thought, and not to the world --according to my transvaluationist take on vagueness -- is *vague*. In this respect, there is no ultimate barrier that separates its true from its false applications. Judgments, being vague, are never 100% true or false. So again, they will be subject to error just from the metaethical third person point of view objectivist perspective in its distance to the judger's direct engagement into

the situation. This is a generalist take on how matters stand though, and does not apply to moral evaluation in *particular* concrete situations.

It seems that moderate error theory will have to subscribe to specific engaged errors of moral evaluation in situations, perhaps measured to be errors from outside of these situations, without committing itself to the *generalist* error ascription to *all* moral judgments, as it is the case with the standard error theory.

Recently a view was proposed (Olson 2014) that error theory gets supported by *normative queerness*, and not by ontological properties, supervenience or epistemic access related brands of queerness. In simple terms, this could mean that metaethical (ontologically and epistemically forthcoming) moral realm does not provide the queerness which is needed for error theory, but that the queerness is in, say, confusing moral normativity in one's direct moral evaluative engagement in a specific situation.

Notice as well that standard error theory is an upshot of engagement into cognitivism/noncognitivism dimension *without* that moral *judgment* would be treated first of all as consciousness or phenomenology supported matter, specifically coming with *agentive* dimension that comes along with belief constitution. This is strange for the very title of cognitivism comes from an attempt to treat moral judgments as *beliefs*. But these beliefs come without their constitutive phenomenology or consciousness in standard forms of cognitivism. On the other hand, the emotional basis of standard noncognitivism tends to come without *reasons*, really, in opposition to the supposed motivational weirdness of cognitivist normativity as observed from the standard cognitivist error theory. These *reasons* may come into a judgment in an *indirect* manner, chromatically illuminating the encountered situation from the judger's cognitive background. This *indirect* take on things requires *constitutive* role of *phenomenology*. Standard error theory clings to phenomenology, but in an objectivity targeting manner. There is something to this, given that there is the *phenomenological experience* of objectivity involved into moral judgment. But it is questionable whether the aimed objectivity points into ontological metaethical direction of third person point of view judgmental engagement.

The way towards *moderate* error theory version goes in direction of recognizing possible error in moral judgment in the area of first-order moral judgment engagement into the concrete situation at hand. Such an engagement is *agentive*, as phenomenologically evaluated cognitivism shows. So ontological, queer motivational and supervenient considerations that were there in favor of standard error theory give way to concrete situation keyed *normative queerness*. That's queerness without metaethical third person point of view support. *Phenomenology* needs to be assessed as constitutive and as first person point of view keyed. And *intertwining* between two constituents of moral judgment as an *intentional* phenomenon needs to be recognized: between an intentional *content/object* and between the intentional *act*. Given that cognitivism first of all cares about intentional object/content, attention shifts towards *act* as the basis of *noncognitivist* approach to intentionality and to moral judgment.

One way to slide towards *moderate* error theory is thus to embrace the side of intentional *act*, of *agentive* judgmental engagement. This brings then as well what was missing in the standard cognitivist error theory in its putting the stress upon objective metaethical ontological perspective.

Noncognitive agentive oughts

A main result of Meinongian theory of objects is the introduction of noncognitive agentive oughts.

Classical cognitivism-noncognitivism controversy took beliefs to be in the center of attention as moral judgment models. Cognitivists take moral judgments to be beliefs or belief like, whereas noncognitivists take them to be non-belief states, such as emotional states. Why did the shift towards presenting moral judgments as beliefs (or non-beliefs if noncognitivist) occur? An answer may be in the effort to provide conceptual analysis of basic moral terms such as moral goodness (Moore). Parallel to the conceptual definitory approach in these matters, there was requirement towards securing the investigated area, that of goodness in the considered case. This direction was helped by the introduction of moral judgments (which purportedly contain such predicates as moral goodness) as *beliefs*, with their already mentioned *descriptive* and *truth-ascribing* functions. Beliefs are supposed to describe some reality, such as states of affairs, and if they are correct in their description, they are true and false otherwise. As just mentioned, this complements the descriptive function effort proper to these beliefs.

There is a possible problem for presentation of moral judgments as beliefs, or for what may be called their reduction to beliefs. Cognitivism, the position according to which moral judgments are beliefs, namely stands at the *cognitive* side of psychological experiences, just as this position's name indicates. According to a long tradition though with Aristotelian roots, matters of morals and ethics are not to be found at the cognitive, but at the *emotive* side of psychological experiences. There is good basis for this, in the fact that moral judgments are evaluations of *actions*, and that these are related rather to the emotive and not to the cognitive side of psychological experiences, if we characterize them in broad terms. Here is a rendering of such an account¹:

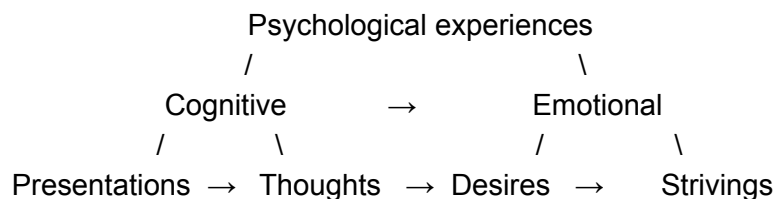


Figure 2

Psychological experiences are divided into cognitive and emotional ones. Cognitive experiences consist of presentations and thoughts, whereas emotional ones consist of desires and strivings. The arrows in the lower row present relation of dependency. Thoughts depend upon presentations and desires depend upon thoughts, providing their basis for strivings. Here is an example that illustrates this asserted one-sided dependency. I can form a presentation of a cat. And this is then the precondition for myself being able to form a cat directed thought. The reasoning is that I could not have formed my cat thought without being able to form a cat

¹ The account has Brentanian roots and is basically shared with all of his school.

presentation as its precondition. Now, the reasoning goes, if I entertain a desire to see the cat I can only form it with my former ability of cat thought production. And if I strive to acquire cat-like flexibility in my upper body this valuing of my potential future state explains to you why I visit the gym. Several points in this one-sided dependency between the kinds of psychological experiences may be put into question, as does perhaps the very one-sided dependency between cognitive and emotional experiences. The important thing however is the very distinction between cognitive and emotional kinds of experiences, as understood in the just sketched broad terms.

Brentano famously held moral or ethical realm to be tied to the *emotional* and not to the cognitive side of human psychological experiences. There are good reasons for this. Morals or ethics has to do with human *actions* and specifically with the evaluation of these actions, in direction of moral goodness or badness, judging what is morally right and wrong. Our moral or ethical evaluation of persons succeeds through evaluation of their actions, for which they are responsible and to which our blame or desert apply. We may of course praise or blame persons for their thoughts and perhaps even for presentations that they form, but these evaluations of ours seem to have weight just in respect to these thoughts and presentations serving as possible guide to actions. Thus Brentano famously positioned ethics and morals on the side of emotional experiences that he dubbed with the generic term of *Gemuetsbewegungen*, i.e. the movements of our emotional moods in a wide ranging description. Only later were these emotional experiences divided into passive and active ones (desires, strivings), in parallelism with cognitive passive-active duality of presentations and thoughts. (This emotional side of experiences distinction was proposed by France Veber and was appropriated by his teacher Meinong along with his school. See Marini Emmanuele thesis.)

The important thing is as follows. Brentano and his school were right in that they recognized morals and ethics as positioned at the emotional side of psychological experiences. In a strange move though this Aristotelian insight into the nature of moral and ethics was replaced by the shift of ethical matters to the *cognitive*, left side in the above depicted table of psychological experiences. Why did this happen? Because Moore introduced definitory analysis of basic ethical concepts such as moral goodness as his departure, with its descriptive and truth-ascribing domain of application. Moral judgment was in agreement with such a move considered to be *belief*, for belief describes and it can be seen as true or false, as we formerly said. But this is *strange*, for *moral* judgment should actually be ranged on the side of emotional and not of cognitive psychological experiences as Aristotelian tradition has it. In fact, this was recognized after a while, as noncognitivism (Ayer, Stevenson) came on the stage. Moral judgments were then considered to be emotional experiences, but strangely again as measured in their opposition to the cognitive descriptive and truth-conditional realm. This is why noncognitivists took moral judgment to be nondescriptive and as not primarily aiming at truth or falsity of the area to which they were supposed to correspond. This is reflected in the strange title of *noncognitivism* for such a generic kind of approach, which basically says that moral judgments are non-belief states.

Notice that Brentanian take on moral judgment has its Aristotelian roots in that it recognizes moral realm to succeed in the emotional and thus action related area of psychological experiences. It has as well Cartesian roots in that moral judgment is recognized

as *constituted* by phenomenology or consciousness. Moral judgment is therefore a *qualitative* experiential psychological experience. Notice as well that reduction of moral judgment to belief or to non-belief (noncognitive) state in Moorean tradition and its aftermath administers secondary place to the role of emotions and agency and does not take care of phenomenological experiences as something constitutive. The role of agency, which is basic for moral evaluation, along with responsibility and moral desert ascriptions, is therefore in fact absent from the cognitivism-noncognitivism options. A special question, just to be hinted at here is about incompatibility of agentive phenomenology with cognitivism-noncognitivism opposition in its entirety, and consequently its basic incompatibility with *virtue* ethics. (This has as well consequences for virtue epistemology).

If one takes as one's departure Brentanian Aristotelian inspired view of moral judgment, then the objectivity is not to be searched for across the line from cognitive towards ontological realm. Such an ontological underpinning from the side of moral realism is understandable if one starts with moral judgment as belief on the cognitive side of psychological experiences. But classical error theory transgresses into emotional experience ontological irrealist support, all in staying with a strange phenomenology supported reasoning. The strangeness of this support is in that phenomenology of belief is actually not on the side of phenomenology that is proper to *judgment*.

According to the schema of experiences above (Figure 2) strivings are active upshot of passive desires. (Of course all emotional experiences are active in respect to passive cognitive ones.) Meinongians take it that there are intentional objectual correlates to each kind of experiences. Objects in this sense come to presentations, objectives such as states of affairs to thoughts. Desideratives are objects that correspond to desires, and dignitatives are the ones that correspond to strivings. Values come along with these. (See the upcoming Figure 3.)

Now, oughts as a species of values are objective. But they are agentive as well, because they are to be found in the emotional part of experiences. In the now customary terms, oughts are objective and noncognitive, thus agentive. They are agentive because they are such in respect to cognitive experiences. They are noncognitive because they really are not beliefs. But the expression noncognitive is still misleading, because it indicates opposition to beliefs, which according to definitory and referential tradition of cognitivism leave out constitutive phenomenology. This one though will come with vengeance in the phenomenological argument such as it appears in the classical error theory.

Oughts' ideal objectivity

According to the theory of objects oughts are objective and so a kind of ideal existence is accorded to them.

In order to point to the place occupied by oughts we can help ourselves with the extension of Figure 2, which presented the structural dependency of experiences according to the Aristotelian inspired Meinongian species of Brentano's account. According to Meinong, there are *objects* that correspond to the basic experiences. These objects have an ideal objectivity existential status. In this manner Meinong provided an interpretation of Brentanian intentionality relation. Brentano just said that in psychological experienced such as thoughts or desires we

are directed at something. Two interpretations emerged of what this something would be in generic sense: either contents or objects. (Twardowski, Sajama) Some of Brentano's students thought that thinking about the cat I am directed at the content /cat/ (Husserl). Whereas Meinong thought that I am directed at the *object* /cat/. Obviously content goes along with narrow interpretation, whereas object requires a broad understanding. The object /cat/ is supposed to exist independently of what is going on in my mind, so that my cognitive faculties can just provide an access to it. We may think about the object /cat/ in this sense as about a Platonic ideal kind of object. Meinong thought that the ideal realm of his objects allows for an objective investigation by the research program of the theory of objects, perhaps in a similar manner as there may be an objective investigation of the ideal realm of mathematical objects. At the bottom of the following figure there are kind of objects that correspond to each of basic psychological experiences. In this manner, Brentanian dictum that in every thought something is thought about and in every desire something is desired, is interpreted as pointing to objects.

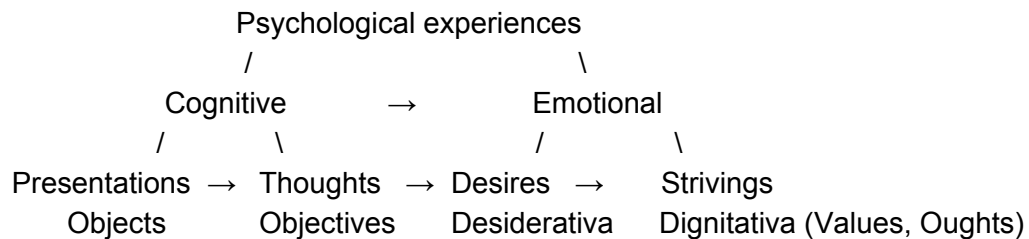


Figure 3

If a form a presentation of a cat, this one is directed at the ideal object /cat/. If I think that the cat is on the mat, my thought is directed at the ideal objective, perhaps state of affairs that /the cat is on the mat/. My desire that the cat would be here gets directed at the ideal object desiderative /I desire that the cat should be here/. Whereas in the case as I really value the presence of the cat, I am directed at the ideal object of the dignitativa kind /it ought to be the case that the cat is here/. Notice that both desires and strivings are active, in respect to cognitive experiences. But strivings are agentive in respect to desires as well. It is my effort in the direction of valuing to be directed at an ideal dignitativa object. Ought may be understood as a deontic prefix here, pointing in the ideal direction of values. Oughts thus point to ideal objectivity.

Notice that ideal objectivity of oughts is *normative*. It is true that Meinong understood values and oughts to be ontological stuff. But it is as well fair to say that they are not really such stuff in the ultimate ontological sense. Oughts are rather normative in that they point us towards obligations that we are committed to, towards possible prescribed actions. In this sense, again, it would not be appropriate to count oughts as ultimate ontological stuff. Certainly they are not ontological in the sense that cats or cars are. But if they are ideally ontological as theory of objects seems to point out, then this is close to their *normatively* interpreted status.

This last remark will become important as we try to evaluate the place of oughts in moral judgments. From the Figure 3 it follows that oughts are doubly agentive being on the side of emotional experiences and being at the active side of this one in respect to desires. The agency

related to oughts is objective in that they come along with *values*, and values certainly are something that we experience in an objective, independent of our desires manner.

An important thing is that with oughts, we have experience of objectivity that is *normative* and *not ontological*. Oughts do not describe a situation as beliefs do. They rather point to our possible future *action*. So they are agentive indeed.

The purported realism phenomenological support of oughts

One might think that oughts should support moral realism. This would be in agreement with cognitivist interpretation of moral judgment, where this one would have the function of describing some mind independent reality. The support for this conjecture in direction of realism may be phenomenological: one experiences the objectivity of oughts.

From the point of view of cognitivism-realism package deal, oughts -- according to their Meinongian interpretation as ideal independently existing objects -- would support moral realism. But the ideal objectivity of oughts is as we says rather *normative*, and this is why they are first of all phenomenologically experienced as objective, without that an ontological correlate would necessarily stick to them. This is underpinned by the fact that oughts as Meinongian objects appear as the objective correlates at the *emotional* side of psychological experiences. This by itself points into direction of their possible agency supporting normative nature, away from their descriptive or ontological engagement.

From this point of view, oughts as normative matters rather support irrealism. This is so, as we hinted at, given that oughts are on the side of emotional psychological experiences as their correlates. According to the noncognitivism-irrealism package deal they would fit that slot. But irrealism as absence of descriptive function is not tackled here; rather the whole ontological stuff should be ditched for their *normative* appropriateness.

Phenomenological argument for realism

According to the phenomenological argument, a realist conclusion follows from what one experiences. Such an argument is formulated by intuitionists (McNaughton, Dancy). Phenomenological arguments sound convincing, first of all from common sense angle. But here is an alert to be cautious in these matters.

Phenomenological argument is namely wrongly keyed to the cognitive side of psychological experiences, for it starts with the presupposition that moral judgment is cognitive (or again non-cognitive if expressivist, which is just in opposition to the presumed cognitive nature of moral judgment). So moral judgment -- as basically cognitive -- is supposed to lack any *constitutive* phenomenology. The (wrongful: wrongful in respect to the real phenomenologically supported nature of moral judgment) reasoning of the phenomenological argument then proceeds as follows. Phenomenological experience of moral judgment points to the experienced objectivity: I experience moral judgment to be directed against my immediate wishes and as aiming at the objectively recognized moral reality. So one should recognize this independently existing moral reality in the ontological sense. This is then conclusion in direction

of moral ontological realism, which accords with the left cognitive side of psychological experiences according to the Meinongian scheme (Figure 3). This reasoning is wrong given that it misses the real nature of phenomenologically constituted moral judgment which is not at the cognitive side of psychological experiences, as the Moorean definitory and referential tradition presumes. The real nature of phenomenologically constituted moral judgment is on the *emotional* side of psychological experiences. But this does not involve noncognitivism, because this one is just the opposition to cognitivism. Noncognitivism wrongly concluded in direction of irrealism, wrongly in the sense that it ultimately bought the view that there is *no* objective moral reality out there, including the objective *reasons*. In this sense it is an expected matter to see the popularity of social intuitionism that, in agreement with the overall noncognitivist approach to which it belongs, denies the importance of objective *reasons*, asserting just the *emotional* (noncognitive) response to the encountered situation as constituting moral judgment. Denial of the importance of *reasons* in moral judgment from the side of social intuitionism fits well with the classical cognitivism-realism noncognitivism-irrealism distinction. According to this one, noncognitivism comes bundled with moral irrealism, and this is just the position of social intuitionism. But this position goes against the genuine nature of moral judgment which recognizes that judgment to be on the *emotive agentive* side of psychological experiences, and that as well recognizes moral judgment to be directed at the *objective moral realism of reasons* involving reality which exactly involves *reasons* as something *objective*. From the perspective of genuine moral judgment that operates on the *emotive agentive* side of psychological experiences, social intuitionism just fits the misleading (misleading in respect to the real nature of moral judgment) right side noncognitivism-irrealism package deal. It goes noncognitivist in recognizing emotional nature of moral judgment. But instead of embracing moral realism, i.e. realism of reasons, it treats these reasons as ontological or referential, which accords with the left side cognitivism-realism package deal. This wrongful cognitivism-realism and noncognitivism-irrealism distinction comes from the (wrong) presupposition that moral judgments are beliefs and thus that they are descriptive and truth value centered. This is wrong if moral judgments are supposed to be ordered into the *cognitive* side of psychological experiences. As said, moral judgments are basically on the *emotive* side of psychological experiences, and they involve *moral experiential realism*, in the sense that they come along with *objectively experienced moral reasons*. In the just explained sense moral theory is right in that it combines cognitivism and irrealism as fitting the nature of moral judgments. But it is simply wrong to conclude from this that moral judgments are all in error. Error theory is the upshot of the wrongful dilemma of treating moral judgments as either belonging to cognitivism-realism package deal or to the noncognitivism-irrealism package deal. Error theory rightly sees moral judgments as having objective pretensions. But these objective pretensions go with moral judgments' phenomenological experience of *objectivity of reasons*. And this experience of objective reasons in moral judgment goes along with their *emotive* and *agentive* nature. Notice that by embracing the wrongful cognitivism-realism and noncognitivism-irrealism opposition, *agentive* and *emotive* nature of genuine moral judgment is put under question, in profit of the misleading supposed descriptive and truth aiming nature of moral judgments as beliefs. Moral judgments are *not* beliefs, because they are located at the *emotional* and *agentive* side of psychological experiences. So error theory is right that there is combination of realism and

cognitivism in moral judgments, provided that these are reinterpreted in accordance with the real nature of moral judgment. What moral error theory recognizes as cognitivism is actually *emotion involving* nature of moral judgment (one is committed to moral judgment because one experiences it in an engaged *emotional* sense). What moral error theory recognizes as the experiential realism is actually *phenomenologically experienced objectivity of reasons involved into and constitutive for moral judgment*. It is wrong though to treat this *phenomenological experienced* objectivity of reasons as fitting the *realism* slot from the cognitivism-realism package deal. Error theory stays with this cognitivism-realism package deal, where cognitivism is understood as moral judgment being belief, and where realism is understood as ontological-metaphysical realism. Seen from the real *emotive* and *agentive* nature of moral judgment though moral judgment is *emotive* and *agentive* kind of psychological experience. And this engaged kind of psychological experience comes with *phenomenological experience of objectivity of reasons* that are in the basis of moral judgment. This *phenomenologically experienced objectivity* cannot be rightly evaluated as one belonging to the ontological-metaphysical objectivity. Evaluating it in this manner just follows the cognitivism-realism package deal with its descriptive and truth-ascription aiming Moorean definitory metaethical roots (aiming at the *definition* and accordingly at determining *nonvague referential domain* or space of moral goodness). Genuine moral judgment though is positioned at the *emotional* side of psychological experiences and it involves *phenomenological experience of objective reasons*. These reasons are not realist in the ontological-metaphysical sense, for the simple fact that they are *normative* reasons and that they are experienced in accordance with this. There is *normative pressure and phenomenological experience of objectivity* going along with *reasons* that are constitutively involved into formation of moral judgment. But this does *not* involve ontological-metaphysical existence of these reasons. They are *normative* features. Notice that there is *no* constitutive phenomenology in the cognitivism-realism package deal of treating moral judgments as descriptive and truth-ascribing matter. But there *is* *phenomenology* involved into the genuine moral judgment taking place on the *emotional* side of psychological experiences. In this sense error theory points out something important for the nature of moral judgment and its relation to cognitivism-realism and noncognitivism-irrealism package deals: *If one takes as one's departure in treating moral judgment cognitivism, one will end up in error* according to the cognitivism-realism bundle. There is experience of objectivity in moral judgment, but this experience has *no* ontological-metaphysical basis. Here the presupposition is that moral judgment is belief and that it describes some reality, being true or false. But moral judgment is nothing of this, being situated on the *emotional* side of one's psychological experiences. So in fact, moral judgment is not in error once as it is conceived as emotional experience, for error was diagnosed on the side of its cognitivist descriptivist treatment. Being situated at the emotional experiential side, it goes along with the feeling of *objectivity*, which is not of ontological-metaphysical but of the *normative* experiential phenomenological nature. The real nature of moral judgment thus combines *emotional* and *agentive* side with the *objective* phenomenological *experience* side. Constitutive phenomenology is crucial for moral judgment. It finds place in the *agentive-emotional* and *objective normative reasons experience* combination. This phenomenology is sorrily lacking from both cognitivism-realism and noncognitivism-irrealism package deals. Error theory exposes

error of starting with these package deals when dealing with moral judgment. Going back to the first schema, we can say that error theory, by combining cognitivism with irrealism, actually puts both cognitivist and realist presupposition into question. According to it, if moral judgment is belief, it is in error, and it does not involve realm of moral realism. In fact, moral judgment is *not belief* given that it has no descriptive and truth-assigning primary functions and tasks. It is as well not irrealist in the ontological-metaphysical sense of moral reality. Moral reality is rather *phenomenologically experienced normative matter*.

Going back to *phenomenological argument* from here, one can easily see that it is shaped according to the cognitivism-realism / noncognitivism-irrealism package deal presuppositions. Phenomenological argument namely starts with phenomenological experience and it concludes in direction of ontological or metaphysical reality. Phenomenological experience is thus supposed to proceed from moral judgment *as belief*, and of course then, given the descriptive and truth-ascribing presupposition as this belief's function, it then goes in direction of ontological consequences. But if moral judgment is not descriptive belief but engaged *emotional* experience supported by objectively authoritatively experienced *reasons*, there is no need for it to be measured by ontological involvements. It is well happening at the *normative* side. This is what is hinted at by pointing the relevance of *normative* side in discussing error theory, at expense of ontological, motivational, supervenient queerness. Olson (2014) claims that just *normative* queerness is relevant for error theory evaluation. We conclude that the normative dimension is what is hinted at by error theory.

This shows the importance of *oughts* in moral judgment evaluation. For *oughts* are objective value correlates at the *agentive* emotional side of psychological experiences. According to the (now discredited) package deal noncognitivism-irrealism, these *oughts* are to be searched for at the noncognitivist side of psychological experiences. Moral judgments as agentive and emotional experiences are genuine, so they do not need to be formulated as opposing cognitivism (descriptive and truth aiming). There is *phenomenological experience of objectivity*, and this experience is *normative*, there is *normative objectivity* that we deal with, phenomenologically experienced. Notice that there is no constitutive phenomenology in the cognitivism-realism and noncognitivism-irrealism package deals of treating moral judgment. Especially important as well is the fact that these package deals exclude *agentive* dimension which normally comes with the emotional side of experiences (as Aristotle and Brentano hold it).

Limits of introspection

Phenomenological argument conclusion can be countered through questioning reliability of intuition leading to the metaphysical conclusion.

The conclusion of phenomenological argument is appealing. Whatever one experiences should be complied with, in absence of support to the contrary. In this manner, phenomenological argument appeals to *introspection* as the guide towards appreciation of what exists, to the evaluation of ontological realm. Such a move of ascertaining metaphysical conclusion on the basis of direct introspective insight may be put into question though. (Horgan on injecting the phenomenology of agency into the free will debate.) There are limits to what introspection can secure us. Such limits may well apply to the phenomenological argument. This

is especially a possibility once as the objectivity which this argument points at proves to be *normative*, in accordance with it appearing at the side of objectual correlates of emotive phenomenological experiences, as happens to be the case for oughts.

Expressivist oughts

Given that oughts are purported objects at the noncognitive side of basic experiences to which they correspond, they allow for expressivist interpretation.

Oughts as objectual correlates of psychological experiences at their emotional side are of agentive nature. Their experienced objectivity is *normative*, they point to possible future *actions*. In this sense they fit well with expressivism, in its opposition to cognitivism. But notice that the real normative support of oughts is phenomenologically experiential, in accordance with the genuine nature of moral judgment. There cannot be any direct ontological support for reality at which oughts point through one's intuitive assessment of the situation.

Abductive support of irrealism

Abductive reasoning as based upon wide reflective theoretical equilibrium confirms in an indirect manner that realist interpretation of oughts is most probably wrong and that the irrealist noncognitivist take is a sensible bet.

From the ontological side, oughts are supposed to be realist. But in fact they are irrealist. They are not fitting any ontologically evaluative mould. Evaluation of ontological realist interpretations leaves us wanting. In opposition to the expected (from phenomenological argument side) direct confirmation of realism, one should rather embrace irrealism, speaking in these terms. But the proof comes in an indirect manner, where one proceeds by showing inappropriateness of realist interpretations, starting with the package deal of cognitivism-realism and noncognitivism-irrealism that support them. The support for the position has to be abductive and not succeeding in a direct manner as phenomenological argument building on intuition would like to have it.

Noncognitivist error theory prospects

Prospects of noncognitivist error theory, of moral judgments' being based upon morphologically backed chromatically illuminating rationality of reasons, and of moral judgments' vagueness are provided in support of agentive noncognitive irrealism.

Agentive noncognitive irrealism, or *normative* experiential phenomenologically supported realism gets support in an indirect abductive manner. Here are some of these points that need to be elaborated.

Moral judgments are based on *reasons*. These reasons support moral judgment from the cognitive background of morphological content. Through this background, reasons chromatically illuminate the encountered scene and provide its valuation.

Moral judgments are *vague*. So it would be wrong to expect them to be descriptive in the truth-conditional exclusivist manner. Even more so if one considers that moral judgments are on the side of language-thought according to the transvaluationist take on vagueness.

Moderate error theory

Standard error theory built upon cognitivism/noncognitivism duality with its ontological upshots. Moderate version of error theory allows for engaged valuation in specific situations and so it circumvents metaethical objective third person point of view. It appropriates phenomenology and agency from the first person engaged point of view. If such a position may be called noncognitivist, it is because the normative oughts it relies on are to be found upon the emotional side of experiences as their objectivity involving correlates.

Noncognitivist error theory, cognitivist expressivism and fictionalism

Taken that we buy noncognitivist error theory in the just given terms, of moderate kind. Now, the problem of distinction between such error theory and cognitivist expressivism appears. Cognitivist expressivism is expressivism, so it can appropriate normative objectual ought correlates on the emotive side of psychological experiences. It is cognitive. But unless it abandons the cognitivism-realism package deal, it has scarce prospect of gaining some scores. Fictionalism as well, from this point of view, shows misleading nature of cognitivism-realism and noncognitivism-irrealism package deals, and the need to get back to the genuine phenomenologically agentively and normatively supported moral judgment. Fictionalism is under the spell of descriptivism in a negative sense and therefore it is wrong in tackling the nature of moral judgment.

Illuminating reasons, expressivism and moral particularism

Some points are especially important as supporting the phenomenologically constituted genuine agentive and normative moral judgment.

The first thing that was muddled through cognitivism-realism and noncognitivism-irrealism package deals was that *reasons* support moral judgment, and that they do this in an indirect manner, by chromatically illuminating the encountered scene.

The second point is *expressivism*. One can buy it right, but not under the spell of the just mentioned package deals, which are exposed by the vagaries of the classical error theory and by its moderate offshot. Expressivism catches the intuition that moral judgments are normative, on the agentive side of psychological experiences.

Moral *particularism* with its holism of reasons in a particular situations can as well be in support of the genuine normative moral judgment account.