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Realism and the Challenge of Moral Dilemmas

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I

Bernard Williams appeals to phenomenology of moral dilemmas to provide arguments against moral cognitivism (and realism). In two of his papers, "Ethical Consistency" and "Realism and Consistency" Williams attempts to show that moral judgments have some features in common with desires and, regarding these features, they are different from purely descriptive assertions. We can put his arguments this way:

- (i) There are moral dilemmas that we have no way to put one of the alternative's aside, though realists maintain that we can and have to do so.
- (ii) There are moral dilemmas that though we may find support for one of the alternative, yet we experience some kind of *regret* about the abandoned one, a feeling that is both moral and rational.

In this context, by moral cognitivism I mean the view that moral judgments are assertions about the way world is. Moreover, moral realism is the view that cognitivism is true *and* there are true moral judgments – to exclude the error theory.



William's claim is that all good moral theories should (and can) explain two mentioned phenomenon, but moral realism cannot to do so. Therefore, moral realism is not a good moral theory, i.e. is false.

II

In the literature, dealing with these kind of arguments, realists usually appeal to *epistemic limitations* and the strategy seems. Let us apply this strategy to the aforementioned objections:

Realist's answer to (i): realists do not maintain that we actually (or even potentially) *know* the answer to any moral dilemma. It is all right for realists to claim that we know *many* or *a few* of them. (Maybe it is even possible for a realist to believe that there *are* true moral judgments, though we have no way to *know* them.) In other word, it is better to understand realism as a metaphysical position. In fact, realists can defend different epistemological positions.

Realist's answer to (ii): realists can be humble and take into account our *epistemic limitations*. Having this in mind, maybe one feels *regret* because she is *not certain* about her decision.

These two responses seem promising: there could be moral realists that have no trouble with William's demands in phenomenology of moral dilemmas. However, it is not that simple.

III

As Zangwill points out, there is another aspect of William's second argument that is not considered: if moral judgments are beliefs, how they can produce *regret* as an

emotion? And in what sense this emotion can be *moral*? Related to this, William asks us how a *prima facie* duty that is not a duty anymore can make us feel anything, let alone regret.

A possible way to explain how a moral *belief* produces a moral *emotion* is by appealing to a desire-based externalism. (In this section, I mainly use Zangwill's work on the issue). Consider this general model:

- (1) Maryam has a general desire to do morally right actions.
- (2) She believes that doing A is morally right.
- (3) (1) and (2) together, produce the desire to do A.
- (4) She believes that doing B is morally right.
- (5) (1) and (4) together produce the desire to do B.

Now, suppose that A and B are two options in a dilemma. In this situation, even if Maryam finds reason to choose A over B, this doesn't mean that she does not have the desire produced by (1) and (4). And it is this *desire* that produces *regret*. Here, regret is result of the *unsatisfied* desire to do B.

Yet this is incomplete. First, I have to say something about this regret being *moral*. Zangwill tells us that it is not the best to understand cognitivism/non-cognitivism by the distinction between cognitive (such as belief) and non-cognitive (such as desire) propositional attitudes. Indeed, the better way is consider the main point: the idea is a metaphysical one, about the *world*. The question is not about different propositional attitudes, but the *content* of those propositional attitudes. Thus if cognitivist maintains that moral judgments are beliefs, she thinks that the object of belief is a realistic content representing the world. Now, there is no reason that she cannot maintain that one can have other (non-cognitivist) propositional attitudes to the *same* "realistic representational content". If we can have moral beliefs, then one can have moral *desires* too.

Second, I have to say something about William's claim that why a *prima facie* duty that *is not a duty anymore* can makes us feel anything – because that *was* a duty



but is *not* a duty. This account of Ross's *prima facie* duties is not an accurate and defensible one. This account is partly because of the term "*prima facie*" that can be misleading. Although Ross himself uses "*prima facie*", what he means is "*pro tanto*". Here is the difference: in a dilemma, Sara have to choose between meeting a friend on time (A) and transferring his sick mother to hospital (B). We can say Sara has a *prima facie* duty to do A and a *prima facie* duty to do B. also, we can say Sara has a *pro tanto* reason to do A and a *pro tanto* reason to do B. In the former, misleadingly it *seems* that if Sara all-thing-considered have to do B, then the duty to do A is canceled – it has been a *prima facie* duty, not a *real* one and now she knows that there is no duty to do B. However, this is not what Ross (and other realists) mean by the term. On the other hand, using the latter term, even if all-thing-considered Sara must do B, the reason to do A is not canceled - but B has *override* it in this situation. Thus there still is a *pro tanto* reason to do A, and A is a *real* duty, though in this *situation* there are stronger reasons that override it. That is, in a moral dilemma, all the alternatives are *real* duties and none of them is canceled even if the right alternative is known. In fact, the all-things-considered choices is based on all the *pro tanto* duties involved in the situation.

IV

It seems that the two objections to cognitivism (and realism) could be met by appealing to our epistemic limits, Ross's ethical theory, and providing an externalist desire-based account compatible with a realist outlook.

However, I think realists can learn from these objections and become a more *modest* realist. I do not think that these responses by realist can solve *all* the problems surrounding moral dilemmas. Maybe it is the case that realist can explain why in some dilemmas we cannot find any way to decide - perhaps it is because of our epistemic limits and nothing is wrong with cognitivism or moral realism. They also can tell us why in some dilemmas we can decide and find support for our preferred alternative, yet we feel *regret* for the missed alternative - it is because an externalist desire-based account is in need. Maybe they can explain why that regret is rational

and moral - it *rational* because it is result of a suitable procedure and it is *moral* because of the moral content of the producing *desires*.

Yet, I think, there remains something unexplainable. This picture has so little to say about cases such as *Sophie's Choice*. Consider a mother forced to choose between these two options: choose one of his three children and kill him/her *or* they kill all the children. Certainly, she cannot choose one of his children. There is no way to do that, but it is not simply because of some kind of *epistemic limit*. (Pretending that “it’s just a case of epistemic limits” sounds shocking to me.)

Let me conjecture a diagnosis point: It seems that there is a presupposition here that for all moral situations (including dilemmas) there is *the* right answer. If this is the case, there should be the right answer for Sophie’s choice too, accessible or inaccessible for us. However, I think realists can think more about the presupposition and possible ways to understand it. That might help them in dealing with moral dilemmas - and many other issues in ethical theory, of course.



Infinitism is the Solution to the Regress Problem

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Introduction

In this paper I will argue that since a belief cannot be invoked as a reason for itself and reasons invoked to justify a belief need other reasons themselves, coherentism and foundationalism fail to provide a solution to the regress problem associated with the structure of justification. This is because in the first case circular reasoning assumes the truth of the original belief and fails to generate any additional justification and in the second case the decision to terminate the regress of reasons would be arbitrary and the regress would be resumed once the truth of any basic belief is questioned. I'll then proceed by attempting to defend infinitism as a solution to the regress problem which can explain how reasoning can justify a belief, why there are degrees of justification and how justification can be complete.

The Regress Problem

The regress problem is an argument for a very strong form of global skepticism that denies the possibility of any justified beliefs. According to this argument, since (1) to be justified, a belief requires reasons and (2) reasons themselves need to be justified beliefs (3) therefore, to be justified in believing something, one must believe it on the basis of an infinite number of reasons. But since (4) no human being can have an infinite number of reasons (5) it is impossible to have justified beliefs. Suspension of belief would then seem to be the appropriate attitude to every

proposition: if we are not justified in believing anything, we should not believe anything.

Once the regress begins, there can only be three ways to terminate it, none of which are valid according to the skeptic:

- Foundationalists deny the first premise because they think that the regress terminates in justified basic beliefs.
- Coherentists deny the step from premises 1 and 2 to 3 because they think that a circular chain of reasons can justify a belief.
- Infinitists deny that the skeptical conclusion follows from the premises because they think that an infinite chain of reasons can justify a belief.

Infinitists will take a belief to be sufficiently justified only when we have engaged in providing “enough” reasons along an endless and non-repeating path of reasons. A belief would be completely justified only if every reason in the path were provided. Nothing is ever completely settled, because no belief is ever completely justified, but as we engage in the process of providing reasons, our beliefs become better justified—not because we are completing the task, but rather because we have provided more reasons for our beliefs. How far forward in providing reasons we need go is a matter of the pragmatic features of the epistemic context, just as which beliefs are being questioned or which can be taken as reasons is contextually determined.

Infinitists claim that an infinite chain of reasons can justify a belief because they do not envision justification as a property of a proposition that can be transferred to another proposition. It views propositional justification as emerging when and only when there is an endless set of nonrepeating propositions such that each succeeding proposition provides an adequate epistemic basis for the previous one. Reasoning is often viewed as a means for transmitting justification from reasons to beliefs but infinitism considers reasoning as a means for generating justification.

Historical Discussion of Infinitism

Although there has been some recent interest in infinitism, it has been usually rejected and neglected throughout the history of western philosophy because of Aristotle’s objections and it remains a minority view about the structure of justification.



Aristotle objected that infinitism doesn't correctly describe our epistemic practices, that our finite minds cannot grasp or produce an infinite series of reasons and that infinitism cannot explain the origins of justification.

The rationalist and empiricist philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries were foundationalists, and although they disagreed about the nature of basic reasons, they both assumed the truth of foundationalism and dismissed infinitism.

Infinitist Objections to Foundationalism and Coherentism

Peter Klein is the leading defender of infinitism in contemporary epistemology. In his major works on the structure of justification, he evaluates foundationalism, emergent coherentism, and infinitism and concludes that infinitism provides the best solution to the regress problem because knowledge is inconsistent with circular reasoning, which rules out coherentism, and inconsistent with arbitrariness, which rules out foundationalism. In doing so, he invokes two principles:

- 1) Principle of Avoiding Circularity
- 2) Principle of Avoiding Arbitrariness

The first principle rejects circular reasoning as a method of producing justified beliefs. He appeals to this principle as an objection to traditional coherentism. Because emergent Coherentists accept this principle, he invokes the second principle against them.

The second principle requires that a reason be provided for every reason. This implies that only reasons can justify beliefs and there can be no justified basic beliefs. Therefore the choice of basic beliefs in Foundationalist theories of justification is arbitrary. Since emergent Coherentists consider every belief in a coherent set of beliefs to be justified merely because they are members of such a set, they consider all such beliefs to be basic and therefore emergent coherentism should be regarded as a form of foundationalism.

He concludes that the combination of these principles entails that the evidential ancestry of a justified belief be infinite and non-repeating. Thus, someone wishing to avoid infinitism must reject one or both of them. It is the straightforward intuitive

appeal of these principles that is the best reason for thinking that if any beliefs are justified, the structure of reasons must be infinite and nonrepeating.

Contemporary Arguments for Infinitism

The Features Argument for Infinitism

Infinitism is the only theory of justification that can explain why there are degrees of justification and how justification can be complete.

It explains why there are degrees of justification by claiming that degrees of justification correspond to the length of the series of reasons you have for your belief.

It explains how justification can be complete by claiming that to be completely justified in believing something you must have an infinite array of adequate reasons for it.

Traditional foundationalism cannot explain why there are degrees of justification because it claims that basic reasons are self-justified because of their truth. But unlike justification, truth doesn't come in degrees.

Metajustificatory foundationalism, which claims that basic reasons must have a certain property, cannot explain how justification can be complete because once it provides a reason for thinking that a belief exemplifies that property and having that property is epistemically important, the basic belief would be more justified which violates the definition of complete justification.

Regress Arguments for Infinitism

The Enhancement Argument for Infinitism

Only infinitist reasoning can rationally enhance the justification of a disputed claim because coherentist reasoning assumes the truth of the claim and foundationalist reasoning is arbitrary at its terminus. (And once the truth of the basic belief is questioned, the regress would start again).



The Interrogation Argument for Ininitism

A belief becomes fully justified if it is supported by reasoning .Adult human knowledge requires this full justification .Since every reason is open to question (Legitimate interrogation) only indefinite reasoning can result in full justification. Therefore adult human knowledge requires an indefinite series of reasons.

The Proceduralist Argument for Ininitism

This argument begins with the claim that knowledge is a reflective success which requires procedure (careful thinking). Proper procedure requires reasoning and every reason requires another reason. Therefore knowledge requires an infinite series of reasons.

Common Objections to Ininitism

The Finite Mind Objection

As finite beings, we cannot produce an infinite series of reasons to justify our beliefs. Therefore ininitism leads to skepticism about justification.

The ininitists have responded to this objection by claiming that we need to access an infinite series of reasons, we don't need to actually produce it.

The Proof of Concept Objection

Ininitism fails to offer a proof of concept because it provides no actual examples of an infinite series of reasons.

The AC/DC Objection

A proposition and its denial can both be supported by infinite chains of reasons but ininitism lacks the recourses to eliminate one of these chains.

**The Unexplained Origin Objection**

If a reason always requires another reason, infinitism can never explain the origins of justification.

The Misdescription Objection

By demanding reasons for beliefs that cannot be justified by reasons, infinitism misdescribes the structure of reasons supporting our justified beliefs.



Philosophical Inquiry (P4C) for the Classroom

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Philosophy for Children, or P4C for short, is a teaching method based on:

- ✓ Group enquiry (working together in a community of enquiry to understand difficult issues/concepts);
- ✓ Reflection (thinking about discussions and possibly changing attitudes/actions as a result);
- ✓ Developing skills (critical and creative thinking, communication skills and working with others).

P4C was devised in the late 1960s by Professor Matthew Lipman. As a professor of Philosophy at Montclair University, New Jersey he was perturbed by his undergraduates' lack of critical thinking skills. Moreover, he believed that the social and political turmoil that characterized this period in US history was a consequence of people's inability to think rationally and reasonably. Lipman concluded that children need to be introduced to philosophical thinking early on their development and thus Philosophy for Children was conceived as an educational program for 6 to 16 year olds.

Originally based on texts written by Lipman himself, to encourage philosophical thinking, P4C has now grown into a an approach to education, employing a diverse range of resources – pictures books, news, film and TV, music, poetry, the list goes on - as stimuli to encourage children and young people to ask and discuss philosophical questions together.



P4C is based on the principle that children should be given the opportunity to ask and openly discuss questions which are of relevance and importance to them. Regular engagement in the process of formulating and discussing these questions as part of a community of enquiry develops thinking and communication skills, as well as helping pupils towards a better understanding of the topics they discuss. In addition, taking part regularly in a community of enquiry can help foster an inclusive, supportive and cooperative ethos within a class or even throughout a whole school.

Although it is both welcome and necessary that different opinions are expressed in a philosophical enquiry, this is done in a supportive, non-confrontational way, where the aim is to explore together, as a community, issues arising from a question and to try to draw some conclusions. In this way, P4C helps children to listen to, take account of, and respectfully but critically challenge other points of view. They learn to formulate reasoned arguments and to articulate their opinions to others.

P4C is distinctively different from other dialogical pedagogies. For instance, it differs from debating because participants are encouraged to be open to the prospect of changing their minds as a discussion develops and are not required to take up opposing sides; and although the set up resembles circle time, the emphasis on enquiry, questioning and critical analysis means that P4C is a very different approach.

Multi-dimensional thinking which philosophy for children involves

Critical thinking: What is meant by ‘critical thinking’? Characterizations range in complexity from Robert Ennis's admirably brief which says “critical thinking is reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do” to a complex statement by a group of 46 panelists including Lipma himself convened by the American Philosophical Association's Committee on Pre-College Philosophy:

“We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based.... The ideal critical



thinking is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in the selection of criteria, focused in inquiry, and persistent in seeking results which are as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit.”

Creative thinking: Lipman says as it is evident, creative thinking is to apply originality, productivity, imagination, independence and experimentation to solve a problem. Creativity begins to manifest itself when one reorganizes the information in hand to go further and gain knowledge by setting criteria, analyzing and making creative judgment. Creative thinking is when one is able to consider and generate alternative answers, come up with new ideas and make analogies.

Caring thinking in Lipman has the most deal on concern. But what is it? As Lipman says Caring thinking involves learning to collaborate with others in a community of enquiry, developing empathy and respect for others. Discussion in a community of enquiry requires the group to develop trust and the ability to co-operate, and to respect the views of others. They develop insight into the problematical nature of knowledge, and the need to subject what they read, see and hear to critical enquiry. Through this process they develop self-esteem as thinkers and learners. P4c aims to foster two attitudes in general- being mindful of one and of others.

It means being guided by questions such as:

- What do others think?
- Can I understand what they think?
- Can I learn from what they think?

The Structure of a P4C session

- Focusing exercise – sharing the learning objectives, reminding the agreed rules, and using a relaxation exercise or thinking game to ensure alert yet relaxed attention



- Sharing a stimulus – presenting a story, poem, picture or other stimulus for thinking
- Thinking time – children think of what is strange interesting or unusual about the stimulus and share their thoughts with a partner
- Questioning - children ask their own (or partner's) questions which are written on a board, these are discussed and one is chosen to start the enquiry
- Discussion - children are asked to respond, building on each other's' ideas, with the teacher probing for reasons, examples and alternative viewpoints
- Plenary – review the discussion (e.g. using a graphic map), invite last words from children to reflect on the discussion, making links to real situations and possible 'homework'

Why P4C?

Firstly, Philosophy for Children can help enhance communicative skills as well-developed habits of intelligent behavior. These habits of intelligent behavior include being: Curious –through asking deep and interesting questions Collaborative – through engaging in thoughtful discussion Critical – through giving reasons and evidence Creative – through generating and building on ideas Caring – through developing awareness of self and care of others Philosophical discussion develops the kinds of thinking – the capacity to ask and seek answers to existential questions.

Secondly, philosophical enquiry provides a means for children to develop discussion skills – the capacity to engage in thoughtful conversations with others.

Thirdly, philosophical discussion of complex objects of intellectual enquiry such as stories enhances critical thinking and verbal reasoning - the capacity to draw inferences and deductions from all kinds of texts.

Fourthly, philosophical enquiry helps develop creative thinking - the capacity to generate hypotheses and build on the ideas of others.

Fifthly, doing philosophy with children helps develop emotional intelligence – the capacity to be self-aware and caring towards others, providing essential practice in active citizenship and participative democracy.



Sociology in morality and its priority on sociology of morality

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Introduction

Sociology of morality is an interdisciplinary field that has new issues and little by little has attracted the more attention of both sociologists and moral philosophers than past times.

The basic precondition to find a solution for promotion of moral status in communities is the evaluation of the level of morality. This is sociological studies on moral institutions and relations, and again the condition of this one is, to provide the precise definition of *sociology of morality* and explain its matters and benefits.

Main discussions of this approach are the relationship between common morality of society and its social structure ,the relationship between Class and morality,the relationship between power and morality and the relationship between economy and morality.

Sociology of morality and sociology of ethical knowledge

Knowledge in traditional views is quite subjective and individualistic but in new views its impacts and effects causes the knowledge to be necessary for sociological analyses (Stark.1958) and in some radical opinions knowledge is seen as a culture (McCarthy.1996).

Ethical knowledge is subject of sociology/ sociology of knowledge and in minimal or radical opinions related to society (Thomas.2006).

The main point is that the subject of moral sociology is not moral actions and reactions that situated in society in objective form but moral sociology exactly studies the moral objective relations that are made by formal behavior. These conducts necessarily are not consistent with ideal and claimed moral theories; in other words, meaning of morality in sociology of morality is not ethical theory but is morality in practice or practical ethics.

Sociology of morality_ in_

Sociology of morality in sport, media, economy, education, and many other branches of professional or applied ethics helps researchers to improve the accuracy of research but when we, for example, face the term of sociology of morality in science, we conclude that this study is related to level and position of ethics in scientific institutions, researches, and relations (Merton.1973). However, it should not be confused with sociology “in” morality, which it will be discussed later.

Moral Sociology

The aim of sociology in morality is that if a clear sociological view_ even there is no obvious view_ in ethical theory existed, what are its limits and impacts? In fact, does social form and structure of moral agents change the ethical judgments of them? In other words, sometimes we analyze social impacts of one moral opinion by sociology even if these impacts are not consistent with claims and norms of that moral opinion but the purpose of sociology in morality is to make clear social status and its effects on moral theory.

Sociology in morality unlike sociology of morality is not sociological study_ although it uses many of its materials and information (Small.2010); it want to show that what social view is located in foundation of moral systems and what is the significance and impact of requirements and conversions of community in theory.

If we want to show practical reflection of ethical theory in society, in fact, we have entered into field of sociology of morality but the aim of sociology in morality



is to understand the society position and explore the sociological approach, which is situated in theory regardless of its practical impact in society.

For instance, we may conclude that in Kantian moral theory, society and its divisions does/ should not have any effect on moral judgments. This is sociology in Kant's ethics but if we go beyond this field and want to analyze the possibility of Kant's ethics in society and its dimensions, in fact, we have turned to sociology of Kant's ethics and perhaps our results of research is incompatible with goals and norms of Kantian view.

Finally, we can say sociology of morality wants to know what the impact of morality on society is but sociology in morality wants to know what is the impact of the society on morality. This study approach through understanding the sociological principles and assumptions that is located in moral systems, which tries to assess the difference of current sociological status with those principles and assumptions and thereby opens the way to correct or improve the ethical theory (Dirbaz & sadeghi.2011).

Obviously sociological vision and components, which are laid in moral theories, are different from social norms and rules derived from these theories. It is true that one of the best ways to understand the sociological vision, is the analysis of these norms, but sociology in morality seeks a more fundamental and deep conception. It even wants to find sociological roots in individual norms and values of moral theories; because one sociological opinion not only will affect the social norms but also affect the individual norms.

As a preliminary summary unlike the sociology of morality, sociology in morality is:

First, it is a part of moral philosophy and not sociology (emphasizing on the word “in” confirms that this study is a process “within” the scope of research ethics).

Second, in terms of background, it is rather new and more innovative

Third, in term of subject, it follows the feedbacks and reflections of social visions and views in morality and not the feedbacks and reflections of morality in society.



Given the foregoing discussion of our arguments, for proving the necessity of sociology in morality, it follows:

First, base on researches' results of sociology of Knowledge and even according to minimalistic approach in this field (Glover.Strawbridge.1985) it should endorse that theories and theorists are affected by sociological views and social structures regardless of its "amount and type."

Second, even if a small part of rules, aims, and norms of a moral theory were in contrast with a particular society or a sociological vision, inevitably the moral agents, who are following the theory, will have difficulty to operate their morality.

Third, for solving this dilemma the best way is the analysis of the effects and reflections of the social construction on the theories/ theorists and compare it with the social positions and sociological views of moral agents in the present or a particular society that we have called it sociology in morality.

The necessity of the Sociology in morality

When a sociologist/sociologist of morality tries to study the relationships between society and morality by sociological methods and tools, at least several approaches can be obtained by the results of his/her research:

1. Society based approach

This view consider the scale of moral/ anti-moral attitudes of society and its sympathy or hostility toward a moral theory and base on its popularity tries to criticize the theory and tell of its defects or even the necessity to reject it or by being sure of the majority's confirmations with that ethical theory confirms its accuracy and power.

Utilitarianism, Contractualism and ideas that generally know the society or person effective in the formulation of ethics, are more willing to this approach because these views have not any alternatives for beliefs of person or the majority.



Although they claim that they can morally criticize the conducts of person or the society, regarding their theoretical foundations, when person or majority of society selects another way, they should follow them. Therefore for example John Stuart Mill as a utilitarian theorist, repeatedly emphasizes on this point (Mill.2006) and finally the contemporary Contractualists such as John Rawls selects the decision and agreement of society in specific way for justification of ethics (Gaus.1999).

2. Ethics based approach

This attitude tries a sympathetic approach toward ethical theory and a critical approach toward society and by assuming the validity of this theory, only survey the level of moral commitments in society without checking the practical successes of it in public. Those who believe in religious ethics or the sanctity of ethics and also those who know their theories superior for any reason _ including its rational preferences regardless of its publicity, interests and reactions _ although we will see there is not logical commitments between religious ethics and ethics based approach.

Combinational approach

This view instead of monotonic vision to morality or society attempts to explain the distance between social facts and ethics by a pathologic and critical attitude. It should have:

First: multi factor vision and not single factor one

Second: sympathetic and critical vision to morality and society

Third: case-by-case study and not general one

In fact in this approach neither society is absolute criterion nor morality, by with choosing a fair method, social facts sometimes justified by weakness of moral will (1) sometimes by weakness of moral structure in society(2) and sometimes by weakness of ethical theory(3).

By the first case which is related to topics of psychology of ethics , and by checking the distance between moral motivation and moral action and issues such as



will, habit and even the mind, we trying to find the reason for the lack of moral commitment (Thero.2006).

By the second case although again we observe the weakness of moral will, we study this fault in a larger frame and we assume that the moral weakness is affected by weakness of social structure and we do not address every responsibility and fault to the person in the society.

By the third case, we directly criticize the theory but to be sure that we do not impair theories for practical, non-structural and solvable problems, initially it is necessary to test previous cases in each ethical issue.

The main point is that all approaches and specifically combinational approach need sociology in morality although they are part of a moral sociology.

In fact, the sociology in morality by answering these two questions paves the way for assessment of moral status; otherwise, sociologist or ethics scholar cannot identify the society and morality without sociology in morality and also cannot correctly find the weak point and be fair in judgment between moral theories and social facts.

According to all previous points, it can be said sociology in morality is a research field that:

One: explain the amount of social construction's impact on ethical theory/theorist,

Two: describe the amount of compatibility and requirement between norms, goals, and methods of one ethical theory and a particular social structure.

A moral philosopher or ethic scholar that preferably in terms of sociology have sufficient information and vision and try to help the sociology of morality and display the hidden roots and dimensions of ethical theories should do that.

Sociology in “religious morality”

Believers who think their ethical theory is sacred because that is part of religion and cannot be changed, may conclude that sociology in morality will distort their



religion by the development of relationship between religious ethics and facts that is not necessarily commensurate with divine commands and lead to attenuate the core or one of the main components of religion.

It seems that this worry is caused by lack of sufficient accuracy in the meaning of sociology in morality because this investigative attitude equally can implicitly lead to a change in religious ethics and the same amount has the capacity for more perception of religion and its finer points. In other word when sociology in morality comes to ethical theory's field, it only wants to display the rate and type of connection between the society and morality in age of establishment of religion and prove the relationship between religious ethics and social variables, which is not a convincing reason for reform in ethical theory.

Do not forget that there is a long way to reach the reform in ethical theory based on historical and social requirements and specifically several conditions must be provided. These conditions are respectively:

A: prove the compatibility between a part of the morality and a society or social structure (by sociology in morality).

B: prove the impossibility or difficulty of the actual part of morality in current society (by sociology of morality).

C: prove that the distance between the facts and values not caused by weakness of moral will but the effect of new society's changes (By psychology of morality).

D: insure that proposed alternative for correct or updated ethical theory is in accordance with its general structure and does not disrupt the integration and performance of other sections of theory (by moral study).

As you can see the fulfillment of one the four conditions is related to sociology in morality and it should struggle with sociology of morality, psychology of morality and ethical studies.



Conclusion

Finally, with regard to all expressed topics, condition of moral sociology with deep and diagnostic vision for analysis the ethical status is in the hand of sociology in morality. Perhaps statistical sociology, which just represents statics and reality of society, does not need sociology in morality but analytical sociology that following the causes of events should not ignore the information that is obtained from sociology in morality because studying the moral status of society is incomplete without reflection of moral theory that is prevalent in society.



A new review of Pascal's Wager and the Many Gods Objection

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Perhaps The Many Gods Objection¹ (MGO) is one of the most important objections to the Pascal's Wager. In this paper, we distinguish between three versions of MGO and show that these three versions come sequentially. We, first, argue that the first version of MGO which asserts that Supposition of other possible alternative deities results in non – preferability problem is a wrong formulation of MGO and it should be reformed. Then we show that by reforming of the first version of the MGO the second version arises. This version claims that supposition of other possible alternative deities results in mathematical indeterminacy problem. Then we suggest a solution for mathematical indeterminacy problem. After that, we show that by solving mathematical indeterminacy problem, third version of the MGO arises. This version claims that supposition of other equiprobable possible alternative deities results in non – preferability problem. Finally, we as a response to versions which endorse non – preferability problem show that non – preferability problem is based on denial of a principle which is true.

¹ Jeff Jordan nicely distinguishes between two kinds of MGO; possibilist version and actualist version. actualist version is limited to actual religions found in the world unlike possibilist version. By this distinction in hand, we should mention that in this paper we are concentrated on actualist version of MGO. (Jordan, 2006)

**Pascal's Wager**

by considering that:

(1) If God exists and S believes in Him, then God, infinitely, rewards S and

(2) If God exists and S does not believe in Him, then, God, infinitely, punishes S and

(3) If God does not exist, then all things are on a par and finite; Whether S believes in God or does not,

We can construct matrix (1):

	God exists	\sim (God exists)
Believe in God	$+\infty$	F
\sim (Believe in God)	$-\infty$	F

Matrix (1)

If we suppose that the probability of existence of God is p and the probability of non – existence of God is $(1-p)$, EU for believe in God and not believe in God is:

$$EU(\text{believe in God}) = (P \times \infty) + (1-P) \times F = +\infty$$

$$EU(\text{not believe in God}) = P \times (-\infty) + (1-P) \times F = -\infty$$

According to EU for each action, believing in God is more rational than not believing.



The Many Gods Objection (MGO)

One of the most important objections to the Pascal's Wager is called many gods objection. The main idea of this objection is as follows:

Matrix (1) has overlooked other possible states of the world. It has limited the states of the world just in tow states: existence of God and non – existence of God. 'God' in matrix (1) has two main features:

4) He, infinitely, rewards believers

5) He, infinitely, punishes non – believers

According to (4) and (5) all supernatural deities who have features (4) and (5) are good candidates for 'God' in matrix (1). If we search among religions in the world we can find some religions which have claimed these two features for their own deities. If so, matrix (1) is flawed. A perfect matrix should consider all possible alternatives. (Voltaire, 1971, p. 280, Stephen, 1898, pp. 241-284)

The first version of MGO (MGO1)

MGO generally asserts that all possible alternative deities should be considered in Pascal's Wager. But what if we consider other possible alternative deities? The answer of the first version of MGO is as follows:

- 1) Supposition of other possible alternative deities results in non – preferability problem

Some those who have formulated MGO1 hold that (6) (Gustason, 1998, p. 31-39, Saka, 2001, p. 321-324, Jordan, 2006, p. 84-87).

If we suppose g2 with features (4) and (5) rather than Christian God, we can form matrix (2):

	g2 exists	\sim (g2 exists)
Believe in g2	$+\infty$	F
\sim (Believe in g2)	$-\infty$	F

Matrix (2)

If we suppose that the probability of existence of g_2 and non – existence of g_2 is respectively q and $(1-q)$, EU for believing in g_2 and not believing in g_2 is:

$$EU(\text{believing in } g_2) = (q \times \infty) + (1-q) \times F = +\infty$$

$$EU(\text{not believing in } g_2) = q \times (-\infty) + (1-q) \times F = -\infty$$

Recommendation of matrix (2) is that believing in g_2 is as the same rational as believing in Christian God. As Jordan, Saka and Gustason believe; since there is no reason to adopt analysis (1) over analysis (2), there is no decision – theoretic reason to believe Christian God rather than the g_2 .

An objection to MGO1

I believe that formulating of MGO like MGO1 has a mistake. The main idea of this objection is as follows:

- 2) Constructing of two matrix, *separately*, for Christian God and g_2 is mistaken

This is because in matrix (1) in state that ‘Christian God does not exist’ it’s not obvious that whether g_2 exist or not. Strictly speaking, this state that ‘Christian God does not exist’ can be divided in two other states:

- 8) Christian God does not exist and g_2 does not exist
- 9) Christian God does not exist and g_2 exists

Therefore; the state that ‘Christian God does not exist’ is not a determinate state. If so, MGO1 is not a satisfactory formulation of MGO. According to what we said, constructing two matrixes, *separately*, for two possible alternative deities is mistaken and all possible alternatives should be considered in *one* matrix.

The second version of MGO (MGO2)

MGO2 arises after reformation of MGO1. The main idea of MGO2 is as follows:



- 10) Supposition of other possible alternative deities in one matrix results in mathematical indeterminacy problem.

Reformation of MGO1 is very easy. If we gather all possible alternatives in one matrix, the objection to MGO1 will be avoided. Then we have matrix (3):

	Christian God	g2	$\sim (\text{Christian God}) \wedge \sim (g2)$
Believe in Christian God	$+\infty$	$-\infty$	F
Believe in g2	$-\infty$	$+\infty$	F
Believe in neither	$-\infty$	$-\infty$	F

Matrix (3)

Given that the probability of existence of Christian God, g2 and neither is, respectively, p, q and r, calculation of EU for each action is as follows:

$$EU (\text{Believe in Christian God}) = p \times (+\infty) + \{q \times (-\infty) + r \times F\} = \infty - \infty$$

$$EU (\text{Believe in g2}) = p \times (-\infty) + \{q \times (+\infty) + r \times F\} = \infty - \infty$$

$$EU (\text{Believe in neither}) = p \times (-\infty) + q \times (-\infty) + r \times F = -\infty$$

According to above calculations it seems that there is another problem rather than non – preferability problem. The statement $\infty - \infty$ is an indeterminate and incalculable statement in mathematics. If so, calculation of EU for believing in Christian God or g2 is impossible. If so, we cannot decide between alternative actions in which to believe.

A response for mathematical indeterminacy problem



If we ponder on former calculation of EU we can find out that mathematical indeterminacy problem is raised because of use of follow principle in our calculations:

$$11) \quad n \times \infty + f = \infty$$

Where n and f are finite numbers. If we can eliminate principle (11) from our calculations and replace it with another principle we can escape mathematical indeterminacy problem. Our new principle should have two features: first, it should be empty of number ∞ and the second, it should have this characteristic that a small number when summing with a large number can be avoided. Therefor we replace (11) with (12):

$$12) \quad n \times A + m \times B \approx n \times A$$

If $A \gg B$ (read A is very very larger than B) and

$$0 < n, m^1 < 1$$

By these explanations we can reconstruct matrix (3) as follows:

	Christian God	$g2$	$\sim (\text{Christian God}) \wedge \sim (g2)$
Believe in Christian God	$+A$	$-A$	F
Believe in $g2$	$-A$	$+A$	F
Believe in neither	$-A$	$-A$	F

Matrix (4)

¹ n and m can be defined as follows:

$$n \text{ or } m = \frac{x}{y} \text{ where } x \neq \infty \text{ and } y \neq \infty$$



Such that $A \gg F$. by theses replacement EU for each action will be:

$$EU(\text{Believe in Christian God}) = p \times (+A) + q \times (-A) + r \times F = (p-q) \times A + r \times F \approx (p-q) \times A$$

$$EU(\text{Believe in } g2) = p \times (-A) + q \times (+A) + r \times F = (q-p) \times A + r \times F \approx (q-p) \times A$$

$$EU(\text{Believe in neither}) = p \times (-A) + q \times (-A) + r \times F \approx -(p+q) \times A$$

According to these new calculations, unlike the former calculations (matrix (3)), EU for each action is calculable and one does not encounter mathematical indeterminacy problem.

The third version of MGO (MGO3)

One might object that although mathematical indeterminacy problem can be solved by replacing (11) with (12) and MGO2 can be prevented, but by this replacement MGO1 emerges again. The main idea of MGO3 is as follows:

- 13) If possible alternative deities in a decision – theoretic matrix is equiprobable then non – preferability problem arises.

In calculation of EU for matrix (4) if $p > q$, then EU for believing in Christian God exceeds the other alternative actions and therefore one can decide what to do and if $p < q$, then EU for believing in $g2$ exceeds the other alternative actions and therefore one can decide what to do, as well. Hitherto there is not any problem. But what if $p = q$? Suppose that all possible alternative deities are equiprobable in matrix (4). Then, the result of EU calculations for matrix (4) will be:

$$EU(\text{Believe in Christian God}) = (p-q) \times A + r \times F \approx r \times F$$

$$EU(\text{Believe in } g2) = (q-p) \times A + r \times F \approx r \times F$$

$$EU(\text{Believe in neither}) = p \times (-A) + q \times (-A) + r \times F \approx -(p+q) \times A = -2pA$$

As we can see, although EU for believing in Christian God and believing in $g2$ exceeds EU for believing in neither, but the equality of EU for believing in Christian God and believing in $g2$ results in non – preferability problem. By using pragmatic reason, one cannot prefer believing one of them rather than the other.



A response to MGO3

Let alone MGO3, for a moment, and suppose that there are some possible alternative deities of which EU are the same and their probabilities are different. In this case we encounter non – preferability problem. George Schlesinger's (Schlesinger, 1994, pp.83-100) response to this kind of non – preferability is based on following principle:

- 14) If EU for some alternative actions is the same, then, one should perform the act of which probability of success exceeds the others

According to (14) if for two acts, for example believing in Christian God and believing in g2, EU is the same, then one should believe in Christian God if His probability of existence exceeds the probability of existence of g2 or believe in g2 if its probability of existence exceeds the probability of existence of Christian God. This principle is useful when the probabilities are different. But does principle (14) work when the probability of success for all alternative actions is the same? The answer is no. This principle is satisfactory when the probabilities of success for all alternative actions are different. If so, principle (14) cannot solve non – preferability problem in MGO3. This is because in MGO3 it is supposed that all possible alternative deities are equiprobable and therefore the probability of success for all alternative actions is the same. As we can see Schlesinger's response is not satisfactory for MGO3. Is there another principle instead of (14) which can solve non – preferability problem in MGO3? The answer is yes. Consider the following principle:

- 15) If EU for some alternative actions of which probability of success are equal is the same, then, a free agent can, legitimately, perform any of them. Performing any of them is rational.

According to (15) if we suppose that the probability of existence of Christian God is the same as the probability of existence of g2 and also their EU is equal and exceeds the EU of believing in neither, then, there is not any difference between believing in Christian God and believing in g2. If one believes in Christian God he or she has performed a rational action on the basis of pragmatic considerations, as well as, if one believes in g2. If someone advocates MGO3, he rejects (15). Indeed, he or she has presupposed that by calculation of EU for alternative actions, one action should, uniquely, be recommended. (Gustason, 1998, p. 31-39)



Generally those who believe that the many gods objection results in non – preferability problem should reject (14) in such a case that the probability of possible alternative deities are different or (15) in such a case that all possible alternative deities are equiprobable. Therefore; advocates of MGO3 should reject (15). But they should explain why they reject (15). It seems plausible that (15) is true. Suppose, for example, you are going to buy a car and there are three choices before you; car1, car2 and car3. Suppose, again, that you are going to decide which car to buy on the basis of pragmatic considerations. Imagine after some pragmatic reasoning, you conclude that first: buying car3 is not reasonable compared with buying car1 and car2 and second: buying car1 is as the same reasonable as buying car2. What do you do in such situation? Do you refrain from buying a car just because buying car1 is as the same reasonable as buying car2? It is apparently obvious that you can, easily, choose a car between car1 and car2, randomly. If you buy car1 you have performed a rational action and if you buy car2 you have performed a rational action as well. What makes your performance irrational is buying car3. Your performance in this example supports principle (15). If principle (15) is true, then, MGO3 does not result in non – preferability problem.