Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy
VOL. 30, NO. 2 · APRIL 2025
https://doi.org/10.26556/jesp.v30i2.4043

MORAL DISAGREEMENT AND THE QUESTION UNDER DISCUSSION

Stina Björkholm

When conservatives and progressives discuss the moral status of abortion, they can disagree despite their different views of what it is for an act to be wrong or right. Contextualists about normative language have famously been challenged to give an account of what speakers disagree about in such cases.[1] They maintain that the extensions of moral expressions are determined by an agent-sensitive parameter at the context of utterance. If speakers refer to different properties when they use moral expressions, they turn out to be talking past one another when they make seemingly conflicting moral claims. Hence, the conservative and the progressive seem unable to have a first-order moral disagreement about whether abortion is wrong, if contextualism is correct.

This paper addresses how contextualists might explain moral disagreement by drawing attention to the broader conversational context in which utterances are made rather than trying to locate a conflict between the semantic contents expressed or contents that are pragmatically conveyed by utterances.[2] Such accounts of disagreement focus on the shared assumptions among the interlocutors about the background of their communicative exchange. I defend an account according to which the shared conversational background, *inter alia*,

1 This problem has been widely discussed in relation to contextualism (and relativism) about taste predicates, epistemic modals, and other normative and evaluative expressions. See, for example, Kölbel, "Faultless Disagreement"; MacFarlane, "Relativism and Disagreement"; Huvenes, "Varieties of Disagreement and Predicates of Taste" and "Disagreement Without Error"; Cohnitz and Marques, "Disagreements"; Marques, "Doxastic Disagreement"; Brendel, "Contextualism, Relativism, and the Problem of Lost Disagreement"; Khoo, "The Disagreement Challenge to Contextualism"; and Zeman, "Faultless Disagreement." I focus on moral disagreement in this paper. However, there is potential for the positive account presented here to be further developed to explain disagreement in these other areas as well.

2 Plunkett and Sundell, "Disagreement and the Semantics of Normative and Evaluative Terms" and "Metalinguistic Negotiation and Speaker Error"; Pérez Carballo and Santorio, "Communication for Expressivists"; and Khoo and Knobe, "Moral Disagreement and Moral Semantics."

includes questions that the interlocutors mutually aim to resolve.[3] In a nutshell, the proposal is that speakers can use moral expressions with different extensions but still mutually accept that they have a shared question that they aim to resolve.

The structure of the paper is as follows. I start in section 1 by clarifying the way that the problem of lost disagreement is understood in this paper and provide reason to pursue accounts of disagreement that focus on the broader conversational setting. In section 2, I present problems for three such accounts. In section 3, I present my own preferred view and explain how it avoids the problems from section 2. Lastly, section 4 concludes.

1. THE PROBLEM OF LOST DISAGREEMENT

Contextualists maintain that a speaker's personal moral outlook, or the standards or norms of her society, is relevant to determine the extension of a moral expression at a context of utterance. If the extension of a moral expression varies depending on the context of utterance, two speakers who embrace different moral norms or come from different societies will refer to different properties when they use that expression. For instance, consider the following two utterances:

1. "Abortion is wrong."
2. "Abortion is not wrong."

If the speaker of 1 accepts a moral norm according to which an act is wrong iff it has the property (or a set of properties) of being *F*, and the speaker of 2 accepts another moral norm according to which an act is wrong iff it is *G*, they will refer to different properties when they use 'wrong'. The speakers are therefore *talking past* one another, since one talks about whether abortion is *F*, and the other talks about whether it is *G*. *They are not talking about the same thing*. We might, for instance, think of a disagreement between a conservative and a progressive who assert 1 and 2 as being of this kind. While this problem also arises for other normative disagreements in which speakers assume different norms (such as rationality or taste), I will focus on moral disagreement here.

The main challenge for contextualists will not be taken to be that they must show that the contents of 1 and 2 are *exclusionary,* i.e., that both claims cannot be true.[4] The reason is that it is controversial whether moral disagreements

3 Roberts, "Context in Dynamic Interpretation" and "Information Structure in Discourse."

4 The claim that moral disagreements are exclusionary is put forward in Streumer, *Unbelievable Errors*, for instance.

between people who embrace different norms or standards are intuitively exclusionary. Studies suggest that people are more inclined to think that at least some moral disagreements are exclusionary, but they do not treat moral disagreements on a par with disagreements about matters of fact.[5] Moreover, people are more inclined to think that disagreements between people within the same culture are exclusionary than disagreements between people from different cultures—and even less so for potential disagreements between humans and extraterrestrials.[6] These studies might not vindicate that truth in moral matters is relative, but they provide enough evidence that exclusion is not to be treated as a desideratum for a satisfactory account of moral disagreement.

Instead, I consider the main challenge for contextualism to be that intuitively, the speakers are not talking past each other; they share a common topic and disagree about it. The problem for contextualism is that this intuition constitutes evidence that moral expressions should not be given a contextualist semantics since other context-sensitive expressions do not render the same intuitions. In cases of standard context sensitive expressions such as 'I', 'here', and 'now', there is not even a seeming disagreement. If two different speakers assert "I am tired" and "I am not tired," it is obvious that they do not disagree. In other cases of context-sensitive expressions, the speakers might appear to disagree, but once they clarify their terminology, they will realize that the disagreement is *merely verbal*. For instance, when two speakers assert sentences such as "Jim is tall" and "Jim is not tall" and intend different contrast classes for tallness (e.g., tall *for a twelve-year old boy* and not tall *for a grown-up man*), their disagreement will resolve once this difference is brought to light. The issue for contextualism is that unlike these cases, there is intuitively a disagreement in 1 and 2, and the disagreement is not resolved once the speakers' divergent moral norms are clarified. This constitutes evidence that moral expressions are not context sensitive and therefore risk undermining the view.[7]

5 Goodwin and Darley, "The Psychology of Meta-Ethics," "The Perceived Objectivity of Ethical Beliefs," and "Why Are Some Moral Beliefs Perceived to Be More Objective than Others?"; Beebe, "Moral Relativism in Context"; Wright et al., "The Meta-Ethical Grounding of Our Moral Beliefs"; Sarkissian, "Aspects of Folk Morality"; Pölzler, "Revisiting Folk Moral Realism"; Pölzler and Wright, "Anti-Realist Pluralism" and "An Empirical Argument Against Moral Non-Cognitivism."

6 Sarkissian, "Aspects of Folk Morality."

7 There is a version of this kind of argument that can be pressed not only for contextualists but also for naturalists who maintain that all speakers invariably refer to the same property when they use the expression 'wrong'. The problem is put forward by Eklund, who argues that even if our concept 'wrong' invariably refers to the same property regardless of context of utterance, there might be another society or language that includes a 'wrong'-*like* concept, 'wrong*', which invariantly refers to another property ("Alternative Normative

While I focus here on the moral disagreement between the speakers of 1 and 2, the problem is more general, since it arises for other forms of normative and evaluative language. Moreover, the need for an account of common topic for expressions that are not coextensive has even turned out to generalize beyond the area of normative and evaluative language.[8] There are many cases in which people have (or have had) very different uses of an expression, but disagreements involving this expression are not easily resolved by simply clarifying one's terminology. Examples include not only normative expressions such as 'wrong' and 'right' but also expressions such as 'woman', 'know', 'person', and 'atom'. If some of these other expressions are also context dependent or polysemous, then the fact that disagreement persists in the moral case need not provide conclusive evidence that the extensions of moral predicates cannot be context sensitive. Rather, intuitions can vary between different cases in which speakers use an expression with different extensions. There are cases in which there is no intuition of disagreement at all (e.g., with 'I'), cases in which there is an intuition of disagreement that is defeated once it is acknowledged to be merely verbal (e.g., with 'tall'), and cases in which the disagreement intuition persists even if a divergent terminology is revealed (e.g., with 'wrong', 'woman', 'atom', etc.).

This suggests that speakers may share a *common topic* that does not correspond to common extension. As Herman Cappelen puts it, "Sameness of topic doesn't track sameness of extension."[9] Still, contextualists owe an account of how to accommodate that speakers talk about the same thing, even if they use an expression with different extensions. What is normative disagreement without coextension, and how does it differ from merely verbal disagreements?

Before I move on to consider the approach to disagreement that I focus on here, I will briefly discuss some of the other proposed solutions that have been defended.[10] One option is to say that it is not a speaker's individual norm that determines the extension of the moral term but instead the norm accepted by the speaker's whole community or society. If so, disagreements between speakers of the same community constitute a disagreement in belief over whether an

Concepts" and *Choosing Normative Concepts*). For reasons of space, I put aside this problem here, but I believe that a solution that I put forward in section 3.1 below might be able to solve this problem too.

8 The focus on common topic in relation to these concepts comes from the field of conceptual engineering. For overviews, see Cappelen, *Fixing Language*; and Cappelen et al., *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics*.

9 Cappelen, *Fixing Language*, 110.

10 For helpful overviews of the problem of disagreement, see Cohnitz and Marques, "Disagreements"; Tersman's entries for "moral disagreement" in the *International Encyclopedia of Ethics* and the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; and Björnsson, "The Significance of Ethical Disagreement for Theories of Ethical Thought and Talk."

act satisfies this common norm.[11] This response does not, however, account for disagreements between speakers from different communities.[12]

Another option is to explain moral disagreement as a disagreement in attitude and to maintain that the relevant attitude is pragmatically expressed by the utterance of a moral sentence.[13] The main problem for such accounts is to explain what it is for two attitudes to conflict in a way that constitutes a disagreement. One proposal is that two attitudes conflict when an individual cannot rationally accept both attitudes at the same time. This is criticized by Teresa Marques, who argues that this account of conflict is unsatisfactory because two mental states may give rise to intrapersonal conflict without thereby giving rise to interpersonal conflict.[14] For example, there is a conflict between the intention to stop smoking and the intention to have a cigarette when these intentions are held by the same person, but not if they are held by different people. Moreover, Marques further argues that it is controversial whether combinations of noncognitive attitudes can be irrational at all.[15]

Another proposal is to say that two noncognitive attitudes conflict when they cannot both be satisfied.[16] To evaluate whether this condition provides a successful account of disagreement, we need to consider what the relevant attitudes are more exactly (e.g., preferences, approval/disapproval, exhortations) and what would be required for them to be satisfied or frustrated.[17]

While there is much more that might be said in relation to these proposals, I will now move on to consider approaches to solving the problem of lost disagreement that appeal to the broader conversational setting in which moral utterances are made. Such accounts of disagreement appear well equipped to meet the challenge because they focus on the assumptions among interlocutors about their communicative exchange. These accounts might therefore have the resources to explain what the common topic is between interlocutors who assert compatible propositions but nevertheless intuitively disagree—where this is explained by appeal to mutual assumptions about the communicative

11 Harman, "Moral Relativism Defended"; and Finlay, "The Pragmatics of Normative Disagreement."

12 I talk about norms here, but one may talk about standards or ends instead.

13 Stevenson, *Ethics and Language*; Huvenes, "Disagreement Without Error"; and Björnsson and Finlay, "Metaethical Contextualism Defended."

14 Marques, "Doxastic Disagreement," 128.

15 Marques, "Disagreeing in Context," 6.

16 Stevenson, *Facts and Values*, 3; Björnsson and Finlay, "Metaethical Contextualism Defended," 27–28; and Ridge, *Impassioned Belief*.

17 For discussion and critique of this approach, see Marques, "Disagreeing in Context," 6–7; and Dreier, "Truth and Disagreement in Impassioned Belief," 457–58.

exchange instead of trying to find a clash in the semantic or pragmatic contents conveyed by the sentences that the interlocutors assert.[18] Since contextualists are committed to the claim that the semantic contents of sentences such as 1 and 2 are in fact not in tension, this approach seems like a fruitful way to explain why the speakers of these sentences nonetheless disagree.

In the next section, I discuss existing accounts of disagreement that follow this line of thinking and argue that they face serious problems. In section 3, I present a novel account and argue that it avoids the problems of the previous views and provides a forceful way for contextualists to make sense of different forms of disagreement.

2. OBJECTIONS TO PREVIOUS ACCOUNTS

The first account to be discussed is by David Plunkett and Timothy Sundell, according to which some disagreements can be understood as *metalinguistic negotiations* concerning how a term ought to be used.[19] For instance, when two speakers disagree about whether Jim is tall, they might disagree in virtue of having different opinions about how the term 'tall' is or ought to be used in the context. Similarly, speakers who use a moral term with different extensions might disagree because they are engaged in a metalinguistic negotiation about how a moral term ought to be used in the context. Hence, the disagreement is explained not by the semantic or pragmatic contents expressed by the speakers' utterances but rather by appealing to their metalinguistic commitments regarding what they are (or should be) talking about when they use the term 'wrong'.

The second kind of accounts that I discuss here are ones that adopt Robert Stalnaker's framework of communication. According to this framework, assertions aim to update the *common ground*, which consists of a set of propositions accepted as mutual belief among a group of interlocutors.[20] One such account of disagreement has been defended by Justin Khoo and Joshua Knobe.[21] According to them, speakers morally disagree when they propose incompatible

18 A problem for any account of disagreement that focuses on the broader setting of the communication is that people who have never engaged in conversation may disagree, which can be taken as evidence that disagreement is primarily about conflicting mental states. One response is to simply say that the accounts are restricted to disagreement in discourse. Another response is to develop a counterfactual account of disagreement, saying roughly that two speakers *would* disagree *if* they engaged in conversation with one another.

19 Marques, "Metalinguistic Negotiation and Speaker Error," 150; Plunkett and Sundell, "Disagreement and the Semantics of Normative and Evaluative Terms."

20 Stalnaker, "Common Ground," 704.

21 Khoo and Knobe, "Moral Disagreement and Moral Semantics."

norms to be added to the common ground (against which the moral sentences they utter will be assessed for truth). A similar account is defended by Alejandro Pérez Carballo and Paolo Santorio.[22] Their view is primarily presented as an account of how some forms of expressivism can make sense of communication as a kind of information exchange. Still, the view sheds light on how contextualists (and perhaps expressivists) may give a metalinguistic account of disagreement. According to Pérez Carballo and Santorio, speakers can disagree even if they adopt different norms, because when they engage in moral discussion, they presuppose it to be common ground that there is a norm that they ought to converge on.

All three of these accounts face two main problems. The first is a circularity worry. For the metalinguistic negotiation account, the issue is that one normative disagreement is reduced to another normative disagreement: the disagreement about what is *wrong* is reduced to a disagreement about how 'wrong' *ought* to be used. But we get the same disagreement problem at the metalinguistic level too. If the speakers accept different linguistic norms, then their disagreement about how the moral terms ought to be used is also lost.[23]

The Stalnakerian accounts also face this problem, because they similarly end up reducing moral disagreement to another normative disagreement. To see why, consider how Khoo and Knobe argue that the disagreement is about which norm *ought to be* added to the common ground, where to propose adding a norm to the common ground is a matter of *affirming* that norm, through "putting these norms forward as guides for living," communicating about some act that "we *should* not perform it, that we *should* feel guilt if we do, that we *should* encourage others to avoid doing it, and so on."[24] Similarly, Pérez Carballo and Santorio argue that even when interlocutors actually subscribe to different moral norms, they presuppose that there is a norm or standard "on which the participants' attitudes *ought to* converge."[25] But in much the same way as with the metalinguistic negotiation account, we now need an account of this further normative disagreement.

In response, proponents of these views might argue that there are two different *oughts* at play here—and their disagreement account is supposed to explain one but not the other. For instance, a proponent of the metalinguistic account might argue that moral disagreement is reduced to a disagreement about how

22 Pérez Carballo and Santorio, "Communication for Expressivists."

23 Eklund presents a version of this circularity problem in relation to the problems mentioned above in note 7 above (*Choosing Normative Concepts* in the chapter "Alternative Normative Concepts").

24 Khoo and Knobe, "Moral Disagreement and Moral Semantics," 131, 127 (emphasis added).

25 Pérez Carballo and Santorio, "Communication for Expressivists," 608.

'wrong' ought to be used, where this 'ought' is linguistic, not moral. While it is true that the disagreement is reduced to a linguistic 'ought' that is not moral, the question still arises how to account for disagreements in which this linguistic 'ought' is invoked. For contextualists about the linguistic 'ought', the same problem will arise again. There will be contexts where the meaning of the linguistic 'ought'—as it is used by different speakers—varies.

The second main problem is that the views misplace the topic of the disagreement. This worry is put forward by Cappelen, who argues that the metalinguistic negotiation view misrepresents what topic the speakers intuitively disagree about. The issue is that first-order moral disagreements are simply not intuitively about negotiating the meanings of words.[26] A related problem is raised by Marques, who argues that metalinguistic negotiation accounts of evaluative disagreement do not provide the right kind of disagreement. She argues that there are merely procedural linguistic reasons at stake rather than genuine evaluative reasons or norms.[27] In a nutshell, the problem is that the accounts provide us with the wrong kind of disagreement.

This problem can also be pressed for the Stalnakerian accounts. The first-order moral disagreement between conservatives and progressives is reduced to a disagreement about which norm to accept into the common ground.[28] But intuitively, the disagreement between the speakers of 1 and 2 is not about that. A conservative and a progressive may disagree about which is the correct moral norm, but they *also* disagree about whether abortion is wrong. These are two different disagreements. Hence, the Stalnakerian accounts also misconstrue the topic of disagreement as one about fundamental norms rather than about the moral status of abortion.

In addition to these two broader problems that affect all three views, there are also other more minor worries for the accounts. A worry about the metalinguistic negotiation account is that it seems to provide the same story for moral disagreement and merely verbal disagreement (such as the disagreement about tallness). Both types of disagreement are metalinguistic negotiations. But as I have argued in section 1, these are intuitively different. A similar criticism is raised by Marques in her discussion of Sundell's view of aesthetic and taste predicates as gradable adjectives.[29]

26 Cappelen, *Fixing Language*, 175.

27 Marques, "What Metalinguistic Negotiations Can't Do," 46.

28 One might argue that this view ultimately amounts to a metalinguistic negotiation account since the norm that is under negotiation is what determines the semantic content of the moral term.

29 Marques, "What Metalinguistic Negotiations Can't Do"; and Sundell, "The Tasty, the Bold, and the Beautiful."

A worry for the Stalnakerian proposals is that they rely on the thought that the common ground includes norms. But it is not obvious how to fit norms into Stalnaker's notion of common ground, which *by definition* consists of propositions accepted as mutual beliefs.[30] A similar worry has been raised by Rae Langton, as well as Marques and Manuel García-Carpintero, concerning the view that derogatory language adds practical contents (such as emotions or norms) to the common ground.[31] Marques also raises this problem in her criticism of the views by Khoo and Knobe and Pérez Carballo and Santorio. She argues that these views do not successfully provide "an account of shared acceptances of norms."[32] While this problem may not undermine these views, it demonstrates that there is much more to be said about the occurrence of norms in the common ground before such norms can play a crucial role in a satisfactory account of disagreement.

I will now present a new account of disagreement for contextualism and then argue that it solves the problems that have been raised in this section.

3. Moral Disagreement and Dynamic Pragmatics

According to dynamic pragmatics, there is a shared body of assumptions among a group of interlocutors that adjusts depending on the utterances that the interlocutors make. The most well-versed version of this idea—discussed in section 2 above—is Stalnaker's view that interlocutors make pragmatic presuppositions about what is common ground.[33] More recent developments in dynamic pragmatics provide a broader notion of a *discourse context*, which includes not only the common ground but also a *question set* and a *to-do list function*.[34]

30 For a positive proposal of how to solve this problem, see Björkholm, "Norms of Behavior and Emotions in the Discourse Structure."

31 Langton, "Beyond Belief," 85; and Marques and García-Carpintero, "Really Expressive Presuppositions and How to Block Them," 141. To be clear, Marques and García-Carpintero *defend* a view according to which derogatory utterances add reactive attitudes to the discourse context, but in defending this view, they criticize the option of saying this while maintaining the traditional Stalnakerian picture where the discourse context consists only of propositions accepted as common ground. They argue that to explain the conversational effects of derogatory claims, we need to accept a broader picture of the discourse structure that "include[s] at least a Stalnakerian common ground (the propositions that are accepted as true), QUD, and a set of plans" (141).

32 Marques, "Illocutionary Force and Attitude Mode in Normative Disputes," 460.

33 Stalnaker, "Common Ground," 704.

34 Portner, "The Semantics of Imperatives Within a Theory of Clause Types" and "Imperatives and Modals"; and Roberts, "Context in Dynamic Interpretation" and "Information

The to-do list function assigns properties onto an individual interlocutor's to-do list that represent acts or act-types that the interlocutor is committed to act in accordance with.[35] Note that to-do lists represent something other than mutual belief *about* what is permissible or required. The common ground may include the proposition that *it is required that* S *sits down*; and interlocutors might accept this proposition as part of the common ground, but *S* has not thereby *committed* to sitting down. It is when the act of sitting down is added to an interlocutor's to-do list that she publicly commits to performing the act (at least insofar as the other interlocutors are concerned). Put differently, a to-do list represents the acts an interlocutor is committed to perform, whereas the common ground can represent the beliefs they have about what the interlocutor is permitted or required to perform.[36]

The question set represents the *questions under discussion* (QUDs) of a conversation. By accepting a QUD into the question set, the interlocutors mutually accept that they aim to resolve it. The semantic contents of questions can be represented as the set of propositions that provide possible answers to it.[37] These are the *set of alternatives*. A QUD is resolved when the interlocutors successfully add one (or more) of the propositions among the set of alternatives to the common ground.

A *constituent* question such as "Who won Eurovision?" is represented by the set of (relevant) *polar* questions that constitute subquestions to it. For instance, the set of alternatives for "Who won Eurovision?" include the subquestions "Did Ukraine win Eurovision?", "Did Italy win Eurovision?", "Did Finland win Eurovision?", etc. The set of alternatives for such polar questions is represented by the propositions that provide *yes* and *no* answers to them. For instance, the set of alternatives for "Did Ukraine win Eurovision?" is "Ukraine won Eurovision" and "Ukraine did not win Eurovision."

In some cases, a constituent question is *partially* answered by answering one of the polar questions among the set of alternatives. For instance, a constituent question such as "Who competed in Eurovision?" is partially answered by answering the polar question "Did Ukraine compete in Eurovision?"—which is one of the polar questions among the set of alternatives. But resolving this polar

Structure in Discourse." Instead of to-do lists, one might use the notion of plan sets. See Han, "The Syntax and Semantics of Imperatives and Related Constructions."

35 Another option is to follow Ninan and represent a to-do list as a list of propositions (e.g., "*S* opens the door") that the interlocutor is committed to making true ("Two Puzzles About Deontic Necessity").

36 As Portner puts it, "at some point we have to form a commitment to act," which is the aspect of conversation that the to-do list models ("Imperatives and Modals," 381).

37 Karttunen, "Syntax and Semantics of Questions."

question does not provide a complete answer (since there are more countries than Ukraine that competed). By contrast, "Ukraine won Eurovision" would be a complete answer to the QUD "Who won Eurovision?"

I will now show how this framework can be used to provide an account of disagreement for contextualists. Bear in mind that like all models, this framework makes simplifications. It should be understood as a rational reconstruction of what happens in conversations and how the mutually accepted body of information is structured. The primary aim of the account presented here is to uncover the way that this formal framework can be used to represent what goes on in different cases of disagreement and to argue that it provides a way to understand what the common topic is, even when each speaker uses an expression with a different extension.

I will start by giving an account of disagreement that explains the different kinds of disagreement presented in section 1, namely, exclusionary disagreement, merely verbal disagreement, and disagreement without coextension—where moral disagreements between speakers who embrace different moral norms belong to the last category. I will argue that the QUD framework can be used to account for the differences between these kinds of disagreement. In section 3.2, I will then discuss how this account fares better regarding the objections presented in section 2 above.

3.1. The QUD Account of Disagreement

The perhaps most straightforward way of thinking about a disagreement between two people who make seemingly conflicting assertions is that they are asserting incompatible propositions or hold incompatible beliefs. However, as Charles Stevenson famously points out, we can also conceive of a second type of disagreement—namely, disagreement in attitude—and, as briefly discussed in section 1, this thought has been developed in more detail in more recent debate. The proposal presented here can be understood as developing a third way of understanding disagreement—namely, as being over *questions*.

In a nutshell, I develop an account of what it is for the interlocutors who assert 1 and 2 to disagree about *whether abortion is wrong*, where this is explained as a disagreement over a mutually accepted question. In contrast to the approach of accounting for disagreement in belief or attitude, this questions-based approach does not aim to give an account of how the contents that are semantically or pragmatically expressed by two utterances are in conflict. Rather, the aim is to account for the way that two speakers who assert compatible propositions can disagree because they assert these propositions as answers to one and the same question that they aim to resolve. They are thus not speaking past each other.

The account crucially relies on the thought that interlocutors can accept QUDs that are *opaque*, which allows them to accept a common question even though they accept different moral norms. Before going into detail about what opaque questions are, I describe Stalnaker's related notion of *defective* contexts: a context is defective, according to Stalnaker, when the interlocutors' presuppositions about what propositions are in the common ground do not align, and it is nondefective when the interlocutors presuppose the same things.[38] In defective contexts, the interlocutors do not presuppose the same propositions in the common ground. According to Stalnaker, defective contexts might sometimes hinder efficient communication, but often, defects have little or no effect on communicative exchange.

In much the same way as the discourse context can be defective due to mistakes about what propositions are common ground, it can also be defective when interlocutors accept different QUDs. Interlocutors can make mistakes about whether a proposition is common ground, and they can make mistakes about whether a question is in the question set. Hence, the question set can be defective.

The notion of an opaque QUD captures something different from defective question sets. When interlocutors accept a nonopaque QUD, they have a shared idea of the meanings of their terms, whereas in opaque contexts, they do not. The difference between opaque and nonopaque QUDs is represented in the discourse context by means of the set of alternative answers. An opaque QUD has a wider set of propositions under each alternative answer than a nonopaque QUD has. To illustrate, consider first how a nonopaque polar QUD includes only one proposition under *Yes* and one under *No*. This can be represented as follows:

"Did Ukraine win Eurovision?"

Yes	*No*
Ukraine won Eurovision	Ukraine did not win Eurovision

FIGURE 1

In conversations between interlocutors who share the moral norms or standards that determine the meaning of their moral expressions, the interlocutors can accept a QUD that is nonopaque in much the same way as the QUD in figure 1 above. For instance, if two speakers who share moral norms disagree about whether abortion is wrong, they can have the following QUD (where *F* is the wrong-making property according to their shared norm):

38 Stalnaker, "Common Ground," 717.

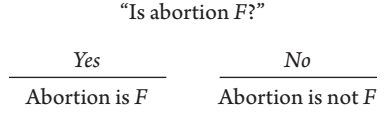

FIGURE 2

By contrast, in cases where the interlocutors do not subscribe to the same moral norm that determines the content of their moral expressions, the interlocturos do not have a clear *shared* idea about what property 'wrong' or 'right' refers to. However, they nevertheless engage in conversation with one another. In such cases, they accept an opaque QUD in which the expression 'wrong' must be understood as a placeholder. While the set of alternatives to a nonopaque QUD includes one proposition under *Yes* and one under *No*, it is characteristic of opaque QUDs that the set of alternatives includes a wider set of propositions than QUDs normally do when they are nonopaque. This can be represented in the following figure:

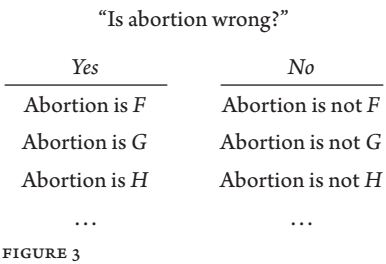

FIGURE 3

To clarify, when the moral question enters the discourse structure, it is represented as an opaque QUD in the way represented in figure 3. But it will still be true that for each speaker, if they were to utter the question "Is abortion wrong?" the semantic content of this sentence will be context sensitive in much the same way as when they make assertive moral utterances. But since conversations are understood as cooperative and rational goal-oriented endeavors according to the Stalnakerian picture, the content of the question cannot have this specific content, as it occurs as a mutually accepted QUD. The speakers take themselves to have a meaningful conversation about the wrongness of abortion even if they come to realize that they differ in their fundamental moral commitments. This must be reflected in their shared discourse structure in a way that respects them as rational and cooperative speakers. The QUD is therefore opaque as it occurs in the shared question set.

To illustrate, imagine again a conservative and a progressive who engage in a conversation about whether abortion is wrong. In this case, the progressive

is aware that the conservative does not share her deeper moral values, and vice versa. But they are nevertheless engaged in a conversation about whether abortion is wrong. To make sense of this, we can utilize the notion that a QUD can be opaque. It would be uncharitable to ascribe to the progressive the belief that they both accept a common inquiry of, for instance, trying to find out whether abortion respects a woman's right to autonomy over her own body, since the progressive knows that this is not reasonably what the conservative has in mind.[39]

With the distinction between opaque QUDs and defective contexts in place, it is now possible to explain how moral disagreement over opaque QUDs differs from exclusionary disagreement and merely verbal disagreement. In merely verbal disagreements, the question set is defective. The interlocutors' presuppositions about what QUDs are in the discourse context do not align. In such cases, they assume they have a shared (nonopaque) QUD but are mistaken about which QUD is mutually accepted. For instance, suppose that an interlocutor raises a QUD pertaining to whether Jim is tall. Since 'tall' is vague and reference-class relative, we can have discourses in which the speakers are talking past each other since they assume different contrast-classes for 'tall'. One interlocutor might think that the QUD concerns whether Jim is tall *for a twelve-year-old boy*, and the other assumes that the QUD concerns whether Jim is tall *for a grown-up man*. In this case, the speakers take themselves to share a QUD, but they are mistaken. They presuppose different (nonopaque) QUDs.

Hence, in merely verbal disagreements such as the one over whether Jim is tall, the interlocutors have a defective context in which one speaker accepts a QUD illustrated in figure 4, and the other speaker accepts the QUD represented in figure 5.

"Is Jim tall (for a twelve-year-old boy)?"

Yes	*No*
Jim is tall (for a twelve-year-old boy)	Jim is not tall (for a twelve-year-old boy)

FIGURE 4

39 It seems reasonable to think that there is at least some discrepancy between the deeper moral values of most interlocutors, even if not all cases are as extreme as the progressive and conservative case. We can think of cases in which speakers accept a nonopaque moral QUD as quite rare, since speakers will often not be aware of the moral norms that are accepted by the other. It makes sense to think of most moral conversations in which speakers are unsure about their interlocutor's moral values to be ones in which they accept opaque QUDs.

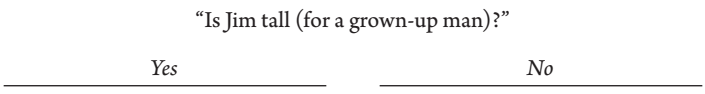

FIGURE 5

This is different from moral disagreement over opaque QUDs. In the disagreement about abortion between the progressive and the conservative, the *Yes* and *No* cells include more alternatives since the interlocutors mutually accept *the same* opaque QUD. When the speakers of 1 and 2 make their assertions 'abortion is wrong' and 'abortion is not wrong', they each propose different ways of answering this QUD—asserting propositions from the *Yes* and *No* cells, respectively. If they would accept either 1 or 2 into the common ground as an answer to the QUD, the question would be resolved and thus removed from the question set. But neither of them accepts what the other says into the common ground as an answer to their mutually accepted QUD. The opaque QUD remains in the question set unresolved, and their disagreement persists.

Note that the thought is not that an opaque moral QUD remains in the question set because the propositions asserted are merely *partial* answers to it. Rather, each proposition among the set of alternatives should be understood as a *complete* answer to the opaque QUD. Hence, the account presented here is not that the propositions in the *Yes* and *No* cells provide partial answers to the opaque QUD of whether abortion is wrong. Rather, the interlocutors disagree because they accept a common QUD and propose different propositions as complete answers to it, but neither of them accept that the proposition the other asserts resolves their mutually accepted QUD.

One might push back on this way of distinguishing between moral disagreement and merely verbal disagreement, arguing that if contextualism is correct and the speakers assert propositions that concern different things, they do not seem to have a common QUD after all. Instead, each of their respective utterance will be considered off topic from the perspective of the other, since they do not consider the norm accepted by the other to be relevant for determining the moral value of abortion.[40] For instance, the properties that are relevant according to the progressive's moral norm will be irrelevant to answering the QUD of whether abortion is wrong, according to the conservative. Hence, it turns out to be a merely verbal disagreement or a case in which they simply speak past each other.

40 Thanks to an anonymous referee for pointing me to this objection.

In response, it is important to highlight two things. First, it is because of the cooperative nature of conversation that it is reasonable to think that the QUD accepted by the conservative and the progressive is an opaque one. So we want to make sense of the way that the speakers engage in a common inquiry, and the notion of opaque QUDs is designed to make sense of this.

Second, since both propositions asserted are part of the set of alternatives to this opaque QUD, neither of them says something that is off topic. It is correct that neither of the speakers thinks that the proposition asserted by the other is *the* answer to the QUD, but each can still accept that the proposition asserted by the other is a possible answer among the set of alternatives.

To compare, suppose you engage in a conversation with someone about who won Eurovision, and you believe that Ukraine won Eurovision. Even though you think that this is the answer to the QUD, you can still accept that there are other propositions that constitute possible answers (and propositions that do not). For instance, you accept that "Italy won Eurovision" and "Finland won Eurovision" are other alternative answers (but "Costa Rica won Eurovision" is not). Similarly, the progressive can accept that the proposition that she asserts is the answer to the opaque moral QUD and yet accept that the proposition asserted by the conservative is another possible answer among the set of alternatives. Insofar as they accept an opaque QUD, neither of their assertions is off topic.

Hence, the account presented here can explain the difference between merely verbal disagreements and moral disagreement without coextension. Moreover, it also distinguishes disagreement without coextension from exclusionary disagreement. In exclusionary disagreements, such as when the two speakers disagree about whether Ukraine won Eurovision, they accept the QUD from figure 1, to which there can be only one true answer. Similarly, in a moral disagreement where the interlocutors accept the same norm, the interlocutors can accept a QUD such that the *yes* and *no* cells include only the propositions "abortion is *F*" and "abortion is not *F*" (represented in figure 2). Since abortion cannot both be *F* and not be *F*, their disagreement is exclusionary. Hence, some moral disagreements may be of this kind.

In moral disagreement where the speakers do not share their fundamental moral norms, such as the disagreement between the progressive and the conservative, they will instead accept an opaque QUD. In such cases, the disagreement is not exclusionary because it will be true that the interlocutors *could* accept the proposition that the other asserts into the common ground without being inconsistent: they could accept both that abortion is *F* and that abortion is not *G* without inconsistency. But they still disagree because they do not accept what the other has said *as an answer* that resolves the opaque QUD of whether abortion is wrong. The contents of both 1 and 2 are members of the set

of alternatives to the mutually assumed QUD. The disagreement persists since they cannot coordinate on a proposition to add to the common ground that would resolve and remove the QUD from the question set. The QUD remains unresolved by interlocutors, even though they offer answers to it that are members of the set of alternatives.

One might object to this view of disagreement by arguing that it would be uncharitable to interpret speakers who endorse *moral realism* of accepting opaque QUDs (where moral realism is the view that the meaning of 'wrong' is context invariant and that sentences in which it occurs can be objectively true).[41] Interlocutors who subscribe to different moral norms but accept moral realism might be more likely to think that they accept a nonopaque QUD of whether abortion has *the* (context-invariant) property of being wrong—to which the set of alternatives are simply "abortion is wrong" and "abortion is not wrong".[42]

One way to make sense of this example within the framework is to say that while these interlocutors think that they have a nonopaque QUD in common, the meaning of their utterances require of the discourse structure that their QUD is opaque. To clarify, if we presuppose that contextualism is correct, it will still be the case that two interlocutors who believe moral realism to be true while endorsing different moral norms will pick out different properties by their respective utterances of 'wrong'. Although they think that they are referring to the same property, they refer to different properties insofar as contextualism is true about the meaning of their claims. Since they take themselves to have a common QUD, this QUD must be represented in the discourse structure as an opaque one since the contents of their respective utterances would otherwise not be answers to the same QUD. It is therefore charitable to interpret their QUD as an opaque one to accommodate the way that they take themselves to have a common inquiry.[43]

The QUD account of moral disagreement presented here can account for the empirical data supporting that moral disagreements between people who share moral norms are exclusionary, whereas disagreements between people with

41 We can think not only of speakers who explicitly accept the philosophical position of moral realism but also of speakers who more implicitly accept the view that moral facts are objectively true.

42 Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing this concern.

43 This example raises interesting and difficult questions about how interlocutors' beliefs about what they are referring to affects the contents of the discourse structure. In general, do speakers update the common ground with the proposition they think they are asserting, or the proposition that they are actually asserting? If we assume an externalist semantics, these two are not necessarily the same, since speakers can be mistaken about what the contents of their utterances are (if the content is determined by factors other than the speakers' intentions). While I find this issue interesting, I think it goes beyond the topic of this paper.

different moral norms are not.[44] In contexts where speakers share moral norms, they have nonopaque QUDs to which there is one objectively true answer. Only one of the interlocutors can be correct. But when they share an opaque QUD, there is not one objectively correct answer, even though they strive to coordinate on one answer.

One might object to this, wondering why interlocutors strive to coordinate on one answer over opaque moral QUDs if the propositions they assert can both be true. Again, if we want to construe the interlocutors as rational, cooperative and goal-oriented, the question arises why they are inclined in this case to accept an opaque QUD at all and to coordinate on an answer to it.

One way one might try to explain this is to say that opaque moral QUDs have a certain *normative role*, and this puts pressure on coordinating on an answer to them. But what is this normative role? Matti Eklund characterizes the normative role of a moral expression as the way it is "fit to be used in practical deliberation about what to do" and how its "application has, so to speak, practical consequences in addition to merely theoretical ones."[45] While I agree with Eklund that there is intuitively something like a normative role, the characterization of what a normative role is needs to be expanded.

It is possible to make this idea more precise within the dynamic pragmatic framework. In broad strokes, the proposal is that moral QUDs have a *practical* role that resides in the way they are part of an (implicit) series of QUDs that originate from the overarching question of *what to do*. To unpack what this means, I will clarify both what an *overarching question* is and what it is to be *part of a series of QUDs*. I will explain these two things in turn.

First, in the standard Stalnakerian model, the broad overarching QUD of rational goal-oriented discourse is thought of as: *What is the world like?* This QUD is taken as a background presupposition for most (perhaps all) discourse. But as Paul Portner contends, "Conversation is also about planning and coordinating action."[46] Hence, we can combine the claims from Stalnaker and Portner by saying that there are two overarching QUDs of rational discourse: one concerning what the world is like and one concerning what to do. The role of the common ground and the to-do list function is to track answers to these two broad questions of discourse.

Second, the question set helps narrow in on more specific QUDs that are taken to be conducive to answering these broad questions, thus creating a series of interrelated QUDs. Craige Roberts maintains that when interlocutors have accepted

44 I am grateful to Isidora Stojanovic for suggesting that this is a benefit of the account.

45 Eklund, "Alternative Normative Concepts," 152–53.

46 Portner, "Imperatives and Modals," 381.

a QUD, they can either provide an answer to it or introduce a subquestion to it.[47] For instance, if the QUD is "Who won Eurovision?" an interlocutor might either say "Ukraine won Eurovision" (thereby asserting an answer) or "Did Ukraine win Eurovision?" (thereby introducing a subquestion). In addition, Roberts also acknowledges that interlocutors may add new QUDs that are conducive to answering a former one in virtue of assumptions of what else is in the discourse context.[48] I will call these *auxiliary* questions.[49] For instance, in response to the QUD of who won Eurovision, an interlocutor might ask "Did France compete this year?" which is considered relevant in virtue of the assumption that only countries that competed could have won. And thus, an answer to this auxiliary question has the potential to narrow down the set of possible alternative answers.

The notion of a practical or normative role can now be spelled out. The thought is that QUDs concerning what is wrong or right have a role in an implicit series of QUDs that originate in the broad practical QUD of what to do. Since figuring out what the world is like is crucial to be able to plan and coordinate actions, the question of what the world is like will always be an auxiliary question to the question of what to do (but not vice versa). QUDs that are taken to be auxiliary include more specific questions about what is right, wrong, or what one ought to do. It is thus part of the background assumptions of moral discourse that interlocutors want to settle a broad overarching QUD concerning what to do, and questions concerning what is right or wrong are auxiliary to answering it. Hence, the QUD "Is abortion wrong?" is not raised from nowhere—it is raised as a QUD that is assumed to be conducive to answering the broader overarching QUD about what to do. Therefore, the interlocutors aim to settle on one answer to this opaque moral QUD that is conducive to answering the overarching practical question of what to do.

To sum up, I have argued that moral disagreements can be about opaque moral QUDs. The interlocutors disagree because they both accept an opaque QUD pertaining to whether abortion is wrong, but neither speaker accepts the proposition asserted by the other into the common ground as an answer to their shared opaque QUD. The interlocutors are talking about the same thing since they are both aiming to resolve the same opaque QUD, and the contents of their assertions are members of the set of alternatives to that QUD. But neither of their asserted contents is accepted as an answer that removes the QUD from the question set. This account of disagreement allows contextualists to preserve their core commitment that when two speakers use moral expressions, the contents of

47 Roberts, "Information Structure in Discourse," 6–7.

48 Roberts, "Information Structure in Discourse," 7.

49 Björkholm, "The Duality of Moral Language," 135.

their claims vary across contexts of utterance and can therefore both be true. But at the mutually presupposed discourse level, the speakers accept a QUD to which the contents of both their assertions are potential answers—and the pressure to settle on one answer to this QUD resides in the way the question is part of an implicit series of QUDs that trace back to an overarching question of what to do.

3.2. Return to the Objections

Before I conclude, let us briefly return to the objections raised in section 2 to see how the account presented here can avoid the same pitfalls. I discussed two main objections, as well as two more specific worries for each of the views. I start here by briefly discussing the specific worries. First, I raised the worry that the Stalnakerian accounts rely on norms being part of the common ground, even though the common ground is by definition designed to model common belief. This exact objection is avoided by the account presented here since I do not explain disagreement by appealing to norms in the common ground and have therefore not incurred a burden to explain how norms are represented in the discourse context. Still, my account requires an explanation for how there can be *questions* in the discourse context—and subsequently does so by appealing to and further expanding the influential QUD framework.

Second, I argued that Plunkett and Sundell's account does not accommodate the difference between disagreement without coextension and merely verbal disagreements. The account presented here can distinguish moral disagreements from merely verbal disagreements. In the former case, interlocutors know that they employ a moral expression that they may assign very different meanings to, but they still accept a QUD that is therefore opaque. In the latter case, the speakers think that they mutually accept a nonopaque QUD, but they are mistaken. Once they realize that their question set is defective, their disagreement will dissolve upon acknowledgement that they did not have the same QUD in mind. The account does therefore not overgeneralize to cases in which interlocutors use context-sensitive expressions, but their disagreement is intuitively merely verbal. Hence, the QUD account captures the difference between merely verbal disagreements and disagreement without coextension by appealing to the difference between defective and opaque question sets.

I now turn to the two more serious problems discussed in section 2. Recall that the problem of misplacement is the objection that the first-order moral disagreement about whether abortion is wrong is reduced to the wrong kind of disagreement. As Cappelen argues, Plunkett and Sundell's account locates disagreement in the wrong place—that is, as disagreement over the meanings of words rather than as first-order moral disagreement. I have argued that the

Stalnakerian accounts also face a similar worry since they reduce the first-order disagreement to a second-order disagreement about what norms to accept.

This objection is avoided by the QUD account. The disagreement is neither reduced to a disagreement over the meanings of words nor to a deeper disagreement about what moral norms to accept. According to the account presented here, the speakers of 1 and 2 disagree about *whether abortion is wrong* even if they accept different norms—because they accept an opaque QUD. Their disagreement is about the question of whether abortion is wrong, and they fail to resolve their disagreement because neither accepts the proposition asserted by the other as an answer that removes the QUD from the question set. This is an intuitive way of thinking about disagreement as being over first-order moral questions.

The circularity problem is that the views explain one normative disagreement by reducing it to another normative disagreement. The problem for the metalinguistic negotiation account is that it reduces moral disagreement to a normative disagreement about how a normative term *ought to be used*, and the Stalnakerian views reduce it to a disagreement about which norm or standard the interlocutor's *ought* to converge on. The QUD account avoids this problem too since it does not claim that moral disagreement is reduced to a more fundamental normative disagreement. Rather, I have argued that in moral disagreements without coextension, the speakers accept an opaque QUD and disagree on which proposition among the set of alternatives resolves this question.

One might object that although the QUD account does not face exactly the same circularity worry as the other accounts, there is still some normativity in the background since I argued that we might explain the pressure for coordinating on one answer to the opaque QUD by referring to its role in a series of QUDs conducive to answering the broad overarching question of what to do. However, it is important to note that the circularity objection is not that there cannot be any normativity involved in the background of a normative disagreement. Rather, the problem is that the disagreement between the speakers of 1 and 2 should not be reduced to just another normative disagreement. Even though the question of what to do is the origin of the series of QUDs that precede the opaque QUD of whether abortion is wrong, the disagreement between 1 and 2 is not reduced to a disagreement about this overarching question.

Moreover, it can be contended that the question of what to do need not be reduced to a question of what one *ought* to do.[50] While Allan Gibbard treats the question of what to do as identical to the question of what one ought to

50 One might object that this distinction can also be made by proponents of the other metalinguistic view, and they might therefore also avoid the circularity worry. Although it might be true that they can, I think it is up to the proponents of these views to show how this distinction can be utilized to aid their respective accounts.

do, both Olle Risberg and Justin Clarke-Doane argue that they are distinct.[51] Risberg follows Gibbard's approach of treating the question of what to do as one being answered by forming *intentions* of how to act, but in contrast to Gibbard, he maintains that questions of what one ought to do (prudentially, morally, all things considered, etc.) are all questions that can be given true answers. Clarke-Doane argues that the question of what to do is answered by forming a noncognitive attitude. While I agree with Risberg and Clarke-Doane that answering the question of what to do cannot be fully answered by true propositions, my view is not that it is instead answered by forming intentions or noncognitive attitudes. Rather, as I have argued, this fundamentally practical question is answered by adding actions to to-do lists (which may in turn commit interlocutors to have certain intentions).

In short, the QUD account succumbs neither to the circularity problem nor to the misplacement problem, since it does not reduce moral disagreement to another kind of normative disagreement.

4. CONCLUSION

I have argued that interlocutors can morally disagree even when they use moral expressions with different extensions. They mutually accept an opaque QUD, and both assert propositions that are members of the set of alternatives to this QUD. But while both speakers make their assertions as intended complete answers to the QUD, neither accepts what the other says as an answer that removes it from the question set. This account allows contextualists to preserve their core semantic claim that when speakers use moral expressions, the semantic contents of their claims vary across contexts of utterance. But at the mutually presupposed discourse level, the speakers presuppose a common opaque QUD, to which the contents of both their assertions are among the set of alternatives. Hence, there is one sense in which they are talking about different things and another sense in which they are talking about the same thing: they refer to different properties but accept a mutual question. In this sense, they are talking about the same topic even though their moral expressions are not coextensive.[52]

Institute for Futures Studies
Stockholm University
stina.bjorkholm@iffs.se

51 Gibbard, *Thinking How to Live*; Risberg, "Ethics and the Question of What to Do"; and Clarke-Doane, *Morality and Mathematics*.

52 I am especially grateful to Anandi Hattiangadi, Anders Schoubye, Gunnar Björnsson and Teemu Toppinen for helpful discussions and comments on early drafts of this paper. I

REFERENCES

Beebe, James R. "Moral Relativism in Context." *Noûs* 44, no. 4 (2010): 691–724.

Björkholm, Stina. "The Duality of Moral Language: On Hybrid Theories in Metaethics." Doctoral diss., Stockholm University, 2022. http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-203526.

———. "Norms of Behavior and Emotions in the Discourse Structure." *Journal of Social Ontology*, forthcoming.

Björnsson, Gunnar. "The Significance of Ethical Disagreement for Theories of Ethical Thought and Talk." In *Routledge Handbook of Metaethics*, edited by Tristram McPherson and David Plunkett. Routledge, 2017.

Björnsson, Gunnar, and Stephen Finlay. "Metaethical Contextualism Defended." *Ethics* 121, no. 1 (2010): 7–36.

Brendel, Elke. "Contextualism, Relativism, and the Problem of Lost Disagreement." In *Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Contextualism*, edited by Jonathan Jenkins Ichikawa. Routledge, 2017.

Cappelen, Herman. *Fixing Language: An Essay on Conceptual Engineering*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Cappelen, Herman, David Plunkett, and Alexis Burgess. *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics*. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Clarke-Doane, Justin. *Morality and Mathematics*. Oxford University Press, 2020.

Cohnitz, Daniel, and Teresa Marques. "Disagreements." *Erkenntnis* 79, no. 1 (2014): 1–10.

Dreier, Jamie. "Truth and Disagreement in Impassioned Belief." *Analysis* 75, no. 3 (2015): 450–59.

Eklund, Matti. "Alternative Normative Concepts." *Analytic Philosophy* 53, no. 2 (2012): 139–57.

———. *Choosing Normative Concepts*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

Finlay, Stephen. "The Pragmatics of Normative Disagreement." In *Having It Both Ways: Hybrid Theories and Modern Metaethics*, edited by Guy Fletcher and Michael Ridge. Oxford University Press, 2014.

Gibbard, Allan. *Thinking How to Live*. Harvard University Press, 2003.

Goodwin, Geoffrey P., and John M. Darley. "The Perceived Objectivity of Ethical Beliefs: Psychological Findings and Implications for Public Policy."

have presented versions of this paper at the Graz Evaluative Language Workshop (2023), the SIFA Midterm Conference on Truth in Evaluation in Alghero (2023), and the Swedish Congress of Philosophy in Lund (2022). I am grateful to the organizers and participants of these events for the helpful feedback I received. Finally, many thanks to the anonymous reviewers of this journal. The research was partly funded by the Swedish Research Council (grant no. 2019-03347).

Review of Philosophy and Psychology 1, no. 2 (2010): 161–88.
———. "The Psychology of Meta-Ethics: Exploring Objectivism." *Cognition* 106, no. 3 (2008): 1339–66.
———. "Why Are Some Moral Beliefs Perceived to Be More Objective than Others?" *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 48, no. 1 (2012): 250–56.
Han, Chung-Hye. "The Syntax and Semantics of Imperatives and Related Constructions." PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1998.
Harman, Gilbert. "Moral Relativism Defended." *Philosophical Review* 84, no. 1 (1975): 3–22.
Huvenes, Torfinn Thomesen. "Disagreement Without Error." *Erkenntnis* 79, no. 1 (2014): 143–54.
———. "Varieties of Disagreement and Predicates of Taste." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 90, no. 1 (2012): 167–81.
Karttunen, Lauri. "Syntax and Semantics of Questions." *Linguistics and Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (1977): 3–44.
Khoo, Justin. "The Disagreement Challenge to Contextualism." In *Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Contextualism*, edited by Jonathan Jenkins Ichikawa. Routledge, 2017.
Khoo, Justin, and Joshua Knobe. "Moral Disagreement and Moral Semantics." *Noûs* 52, no. 1 (2018): 109–43.
Kölbel, Max. "Faultless Disagreement." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 104, no. 1 (2004): 53–73.
Langton, Rae. "Beyond Belief: Pragmatics in Hate Speech and Pornography." In *Speech and Harm: Controversies over Free Speech*, edited by Ishani Maitra and Mary Kate McGowan. Oxford University Press, 2012.
MacFarlane, John. "Relativism and Disagreement." *Philosophical Studies* 132, no. 1 (2007): 17–31.
Marques, Teresa. "Disagreeing in Context." *Frontiers in Psychology* 6 (2015): 1–12.
———. "Doxastic Disagreement." *Erkenntnis* 79, no. 1 (2014): 121–42.
———. "Illocutionary Force and Attitude Mode in Normative Disputes." *Metaphilosophy* 52, nos. 3–4 (2021): 449–65.
———. "What Metalinguistic Negotiations Can't Do." *Phenomenology and Mind* 12 (2017): 40–48.
Marques, Teresa, and Manuel García-Carpintero. "Really Expressive Presuppositions and How to Block Them." *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 97, no. 1 (2020): 138–58.
Ninan, Dilip. "Two Puzzles about Deontic Necessity." In *New Work on Modality*, edited by J. Gajewski, V. Hacquard, B. Nickel, and S. Yalcin. MIT Working Papers in Linguistics, 2005.

Pérez Carballo, Alejandro, and Paolo Santorio. "Communication for Expressivists." *Ethics* 126, no. 3 (2016): 607–35.

Plunkett, David, and Timothy Sundell. "Disagreement and the Semantics of Normative and Evaluative Terms." *Philosophers' Imprint* 13, no. 10 (2013): 1–37.

———. "Metalinguistic Negotiation and Speaker Error." *Inquiry* 64, nos. 1–2 (2021): 142–67.

Pölzler, Thomas. "Revisiting Folk Moral Realism." *Review of Philosophy and Psychology* 8, no. 2 (2017): 455–76.

Pölzler, Thomas, and Jennifer Cole Wright. "Anti-Realist Pluralism: A New Approach to Folk Metaethics." *Review of Philosophy and Psychology* 11, no. 1 (2020): 53–82.

———. "An Empirical Argument Against Moral Non-Cognitivism." *Inquiry* 66, no. 6 (2020): 1–29.

Portner, Paul. "Imperatives and Modals." *Natural Language Semantics* 15, no. 4 (2007): 351–83.

———. "The Semantics of Imperatives Within a Theory of Clause Types." In *Proceedings of SALT 14*, edited by Robert B. Young. Linguistic Society of America, 2004.

Ridge, Michael. *Impassioned Belief*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

Risberg, Olle. "Ethics and the Question of What to Do." *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 25, no. 2 (2023).

Roberts, Craige. "Context in Dynamic Interpretation." In *Handbook of Pragmatics*, edited by Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward. Blackwell, 2006.

———. "Information Structure in Discourse: Towards an Integrated Formal Theory of Pragmatics." *Semantics and Pragmatics* 5 (2012): 1–69.

Sarkissian, Hagop. "Aspects of Folk Morality: Objectivism and Relativism." In *A Companion to Experimental Philosophy*, edited by Justin Sytsma and Wesley Buckwalter. Wiley Blackwell, 2016.

Stalnaker, Robert C. "Common Ground." *Linguistics and Philosophy* 25, nos. 5–6 (2002): 701–21.

Stevenson, Charles L. *Ethics and Language*. American Mathematical Society, 1945.

———. *Facts and Values*. Yale University Press, 1963.

Streumer, Bart. *Unbelievable Errors: An Error Theory About All Normative Judgments*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

Sundell, Tim. "The Tasty, the Bold, and the Beautiful." *Inquiry* 59, no. 6 (2016): 793–818.

Tersman, Folke. "Moral Disagreement." In *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, edited by Hugh LaFollette. John Wiley and Sons, 2016.

———. "Moral Disagreement." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (fall 2022). https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/disagreement-moral/.

Wright, Jennifer C., Piper T. Grandjean, and Cullen B. McWhite. "The Meta-Ethical Grounding of Our Moral Beliefs: Evidence for Meta-Ethical Pluralism." *Philosophical Psychology* 26, no. 3 (2013): 336–61.

Zeman, Dan. "Faultless Disagreement." In *Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Relativism*, edited by Martin Kusch. Routledge, 2020.