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## An Ecumenical Matter?<sup>1</sup>

James Lenman

### ABSTRACT

Ridge defends a form of hybrid expressivism where normative judgements are constituted by two elements, normative perspectives and representational beliefs that invoke standards our normative perspectives determine. He thinks this view will enable him to ‘offload logical complexity’ onto the latter, representational components of our judgements, thereby taming the Frege-Geach problem and conferring a dialectical advantage over non-hybrid, ‘pure’ forms of expressivism. But this will only work if our normative perspectives are themselves consistent in ways that are resistant to such offloading. There are, moreover, serious problems with building normative perspectives into what we understand by moral judgement that appear best tamed by thinning out our understanding of them in ways that effectively collapse the ecumenical form of expressivism back into its purer cousin. The supposed dialectical advantage proves I argue, chimerical.

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<sup>1</sup> I read an early draft of this to a conference at Sheffield on New Directions in Expressivism in August 2016. I am grateful to everyone who took part and contributed to the discussion there and especially to Mike Ridge for his comments both spoken at the time and written afterwards. I also have a particular debt to my students Lewis Brooks and Graham Bex-Priestley for many highly instructive discussions of the subject matter of this paper and detailed comments on a near final draft. An anonymous referee supplied helpful comments on an even nearer one.

I have learned an awful lot from reading Mike Ridge's *Impassioned Belief*<sup>2</sup>, a brilliant book, deeply learned and densely argued with a tenacity and thoroughness that would be exhausting in a less skilful writer but which his consistently lean and lucid style renders instead simply exhilarating. It is a book that richly deserves to be the subject of a great deal of thought and discussion. So let's.

Ridge kicks off by offering analytic accounts of some core terms characteristically used to make normative claims all appealing to the notion of standards, starting with 'good':

The literal meaning of 'good' is a function from contexts of utterance to whatever would be highly ranked by any standard of a certain sort where the context gives the relevant sort.(26)

'Ought' comes next with Ridge proposing that 'ought sentences say something like:

Any standard of contextually specified kind S would, relative to a contextually specified set of background information or facts B, recommend X.(28)

The same schema does service for 'must', he thinks, if we simply substitute 'require' for 'recommend'. On 'reason' he proposes to understand :

Fact F is a reason for agent A to do/believe/feel X in circumstances C.

as:

Fact F explains why any standard of a certain sort of doing/believing/feeling would assign positive weight to A's doing/believing/feeling X.(36-37)<sup>3</sup>

These, terms Ridge says, are characteristically used to make normative claims but they are not always so used. When they are used to make normative claims (or at least *practically* normative claims to which his discussion is confined(19)) we may spell out the reference to contextually specified standard as referring to *any acceptable standard* of practical reasoning. This is later finessed to refer to any acceptable *ultimate* standard, ruling out standards based on deeper or more fundamental standards.(116)

That is the semantic account on offer here of these core terms and it is, so far as it goes, neutral about some larger questions of metaethics. For it is silent on quite how we should understand 'acceptable'. 'Acceptable' might, for all we have learned so far, denote a non-natural property, or a natural one, or we might, like Ridge, favour an expressivist reading. But deciding which of these routes, if any, to take, is not a matter of doing more semantics but of turning to a different activity, *meta-semantics*, which explains why the things semantic theory says are true and what exactly they mean, in virtue of what things have the meanings semantics says they do and how we should understand such semantic concepts as 'denotation' and 'extension'.(103) I am not really 100% clear that I understand what motivates this division of labour and how it works. Unlike 'denotation', 'acceptable' doesn't seem to be a semantic concept at all. But I'm also not at all sure much that is philosophically urgent hangs on this. I care more about whether Ridge's account of acceptability is credible than about how it is classified.

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<sup>2</sup> Ridge 2014. All page references are to this unless I say otherwise.

<sup>3</sup> I have not worded this quite as Ridge does.

So take the case of judging something, eating string say, good as an end. For Ridge this is to judge that eating string would be highly ranked as an end by any acceptable ultimate standard. But this judgement in turn is to be understood as constituted by two states of mind:

A: A normative perspective.

B: The belief that eating string would be highly ranked by any admissible standard of practical reasoning.

Where the word ‘admissible’ in B is understood as adverting to standards not ruled out by the perspective in A.(119)

It’s pretty important at this stage to get clear on what a normative perspective is. Normative perspectives, Ridge writes, ‘involve broadly desire-like states but also constitute a perspective which the agent intuitively endorses.’(113) More precisely, a bit later, we get: ‘An agent’s normative perspective is just a set of relatively stable self-governing policies about which standards to accept or reject.’(115) This is still a trifle vague, something I’ll come back to. For now the thing to get hold of is that B is a straightforwardly representational belief and A is not. This is what make this picture a form of *hybrid* or *ecumenical* expressivism, where normative judgements are not comprised simply of desire-like states (pure expressivism) or simply of representational beliefs (pure cognitivism) but of pairings of one of each of these.

One major advertised attraction of this ecumenical turn is that it helps us to handle the Frege-Geach Problem by ‘offloading logical complexity.’(114) The Frege-Geach Problem is the problem of extending any expressivist account the meaning of normative terms to their role in complex sentences such as conditionals and negations in such a way as to make good sense of the role these sentences play in valid arguments. For pure expressivists this seems to necessitate the development of ‘a logic of attitudes’, a project that has left many sceptical. But not so with the ecumenical version, Ridge urges. For the ecumenical expressivist the whole difficulty is ‘offloaded’ onto the representational belief component of our normative thoughts and thus becomes thoroughly manageable.

So consider a case of moral *modus ponens*.

Eating little bits of string is wrong.

If eating little bits of string is wrong, supplying string to stringeaters is wrong.

Therefore supplying string to stringeaters is wrong.

What each of these sentences expresses, according to Ridge, breaks down into two bits, an expressive bit and a descriptive bit. But the nice thing is that the expressive bit is the same throughout. The descriptive bits say that eating little bits of string has the property in question, that if eating little bits of string has it, then supplying string to stringeaters has it and that supplying string to string eaters has it. These claims are all perfectly straightforward descriptive claims straightforwardly related in the usual way the premises and conclusion of a valid instance of *modus ponens* are. Now say we characterise validity as a matter of accepting both the premises and the negation of the conclusion guaranteeing that one will fall into inconsistency. Effectively the logical form of the argument is:

X; P

X; If P then Q

Therefore: X; Q.

Where P and Q are ordinary descriptive claims. *P* and *If P then Q* together entail *Q*. Because X is constant, it doesn't really matter what it is. It just idles along without changing on the left hand side. We can as it were divide through by it and let the descriptive side do all the work.

Actually, I fear we can't. Whatever X is, it better be logically tractable enough for *iteration* to be valid for it. X has to at least entail X. And that means we need a logic of attitudes after all. Of course iteration is a very trivial and simple logical principle. So while this story maybe does need to allow for some kind of logic of attitudes, that logic may look very modest and minimal. In particular, it might be supposed, because X only features in isolation<sup>4</sup>, we don't need to struggle to understand it embedded e.g. in conditionals. Nonetheless iteration is not minimal enough for us to solve the Frege-Geach Problem so very simply. For if we characterise validity in terms of contradiction between the premises and the negation of the conclusion the validity of  $X \vdash X$  will consist in the inconsistency of X and not-X. And for that we need to know what 'not-X' means. And explaining negation is right at the heart of the difficulty constituted by the Frege-Geach Problem. (After all we can in familiar ways define at least the material conditional, as well as disjunction, in terms of negation and conjunction and of those two operators, conjunction doesn't plausibly look like the hard one.)

Ridge does not however think this is a problem. He denies that X by itself is any kind of judgement and so supposes there is no need to understand iteration or any other logical rule as properly applicable to it.<sup>5</sup> But that seems insufficient to the present concern. We don't just want the entailment relation to hold between *P*, *If P then Q* and *Q*. We want it to hold between *X; P*, *X; If P then Q* and *X; Q*. The reasoner surely has to adhere to X throughout *on pain of inconsistency*. But no, Ridge wants to say. As he understands validity:

the crucial test is whether a single agent could, *at one and the same time*, accept the premises and deny the conclusion of the argument. Given that an agent can at any point in time have only one normative perspective, this ensures that the reference of 'admissible' is constant throughout the beliefs relevant to testing the validity of the relevant arguments.(152)

It is important to stress here that our X here better not just be thought of as something off in the background somewhere whose only role is to fix the reference for 'admissible' in the representational component. That would be a possible view – a kind of contextualism perhaps - but not an expressivist one. X is itself *a constituent part* of the judgements whose logical relations are under discussion. (See 118-123) For another thing it might not seem at all obvious that 'an agent can at any point in time have only one normative perspective'. What might be more plausibly claimed is that a *consistent* agent can at a given point of time have only one normative perspective. But that of course brings the problem of accounting for normative consistency straight back home.

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<sup>4</sup> Of course it doesn't really. *Vide infra*.

<sup>5</sup> Correspondence (29/10/2016).

Ridge says more than this. He goes on: ‘An agent can at any given point in time have only one normative perspective because normative perspectives are just defined as the totality of the relevant sorts of emotionally tinged self-governing policies.’ But I am not at all sure that this helps. For one thing, as I already noted, the idea of normative perspectives is frustratingly vague, certainly vague enough that I am unclear quite how to unpack talk of ‘the relevant sorts’. For another, Ridge gives centre stage in his account of normative perspectives to what he calls ‘self-governing policies’ a concept he takes from Michael Bratman’s work and he adopts Bratman’s account of what these are, including the understanding of them as ‘subject to strong demands of consistency and the like’.(115) So we would want to hear more about what these demands come to. Might not the totality of my self-governing policies of the relevant sort itself be inconsistent? And what then? We want to explain the validity of our argument by diagnosing a case of *modus ponens*, not a case of *ex falso quodlibet*. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, normative perspectives had better be subject to some consistency constraints and not just because Bratman says so. Otherwise we have no reason to suppose and certainly cannot just help ourselves to the supposition, that those prosaically descriptive propositions that specify what such a perspective does and does not licence as acceptable must themselves be consistent. So we really can’t simply offload the entire issue of consistency and validity onto the latter.

Here is a different, approximately Gibbardian, story.<sup>6</sup> When I say ‘Chewing little bits of string is wrong’ I express my acceptance of a system of norms specified by what I say only as not permitting chewing little bits of string. Or to exploit what Ridge call the power of negative thinking (111-113), I express a state of ruling out all such systems that permit chewing little bits of string. That would be a form of pure expressivism where my judgement that something is wrong is ‘identified by its place in a syndrome of tendencies towards action and avowal; produced by the language-infused system of coordination peculiar to human beings.’<sup>7</sup> But though this is a form of pure expressivism we can think of normative terms such as ‘permitted’, ‘forbidden’, ‘required’ as having *descriptive correlates* in the systems of norms that inform this kind of Gibbardian normative semantics, *N-permitted*, *N-forbidden*, *N-required*.<sup>8</sup> From a logical point of view what matters is that the system of norms we suppose N to denote be invariant in a given context of logical evaluation. We can then construct for any normative sentence what we might call its *descriptive transform* (or *D-transform*) which is the sentence we arrive at by substituting for normative terms their descriptive correlates. Rather like this:

Chewing little bits of string is N-forbidden.

If chewing little bits of string is N-forbidden, supplying string to stringchewers is N-forbidden.

Therefore supplying string to stringchewers is N-forbidden.

The pure expressivist can then say that the latter, the descriptive transform of our normative argument, is straightforwardly valid in the way we are familiar with from other prosaically descriptive contexts. And they might go on to say that the original normative argument’s

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<sup>6</sup> What follows is roughly based on what we find in Gibbard 1990.

<sup>7</sup> Gibbard 1990, p. 75.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Gibbard 1990, p. 87.

validity can be understood as obtaining *in virtue of* the validity of its descriptive transform. At the same time the N-transform argument does no more than bring to the surface and make explicit a logical structure that is already present – as we have seen had better be already present – in the untransformed normative judgements.

Now this story as a solution to the Frege-Geach problem is obviously incomplete as it stands. An account is needed of this ‘in virtue of’ relation and how it is supposed to work here. But compare Ridge, who in effect wants to tell us that:

X; P

X; If P then Q

Therefore: X; Q.

where X is a normative perspective is valid in virtue of the validity of

P

If P then Q

Therefore: Q.

Again if this is to work the normative perspective that lays down the standard of admissibility these thoughts make reference to must *already* be logically structured and constrained in the right way.

The pure expressivist might say a normative argument is valid in favour of the validity of its D-transform. But while the validity of the D-transform gets us from the premises to the conclusion of a normative argument’s D-transform, it does not get us from the premises of the *original* argument itself to *that* argument’s conclusion. To do that we would need an additional principle which we may call *the N-principle*:

Validly infer the N-transform of the conclusion of anything that follows validly from the D-transform of some set of premises.

An N-transform is the result of the converse operation to that which generates a D-transform. The N-principle will apply trivially when none of our premises is normative. But it is otherwise far from trivial. Ridge would have made important progress if he had rid us of the need for any such extra step. But he hasn’t. We can allow that X; P and X; *If P then Q* together entail Q. But that is not to entail X; Q which they have to do. Whatever we think X is, it better be the sort of thing that when combined with something like Q can be the object of an entailment. And for X; P and X; *If P then Q* together to entail X; Q, it would have to be the case that inconsistency would be guaranteed to anyone who accepted the premises and denied the conclusion. And to deny the conclusion would be to deny X; Q. This Ridge tells us that that is ‘in part’ to deny Q.(152) But we need to know what it is to deny X; Q as a whole. And that is not clear. Indeed it is not clear that to deny X; Q is even in part to deny Q. After all in general to deny P & Q is not in part to deny Q. Rather it is to assert  $\sim P \vee \sim Q$  which is entirely consistent with Q. The problem of accounting for normative negation is part of what Ridge thinks he can offload, but, as is now clear, this seems very doubtful.

It is not clear then that Ridge's ecumenical story has a clear dialectical advantage. And it seems to me to suffer from the unclarity of the notion of a normative perspective. One way to understand these is expansively, as a large normative theoretical picture. Ridge sometimes encourages this understanding e.g. at p. 207 when he uses utilitarianism and Kantianism as examples of possible normative perspectives. But this is troubling. For one thing it risks making poor sense of normative disagreement When X says:

Sex outside wedlock is wrong.

And Y responds:

Sex outside wedlock is not wrong.

We take them to be disagreeing but if X is expressing (say) a utilitarian normative perspective coupled with a representational belief that no standard of practical reasoning acceptable in the light of that perspective would forbid extra-marital sex while Y is expressing (say) a conservative Christian natural law theoretic normative perspective coupled with a representational belief that no standard of practical reasoning acceptable in the light of that would allow extra-marital sex, they do rather look to be talking past one another. Secondly there is the possibility of theoretical agnosticism. Some philosophically unsophisticated people don't buy into any particular large normative theoretical picture. And some philosophically very sophisticated people – the anti-theorists - think they are right not to do so. But those people can and do have all manner of more particular normative opinions of which we want our metaethical theory to make good sense. Finally even if I am one of the theoretically opinionated users of normative language, a Kantian or a utilitarian or a natural law theorist or a whatever, that theoretical perspective very plausibly really has nothing to do with what I express when I say, for example that torturing criminal suspects is wrong. When I say that torturing criminal suspects is wrong I am committing myself on the wrongness of torturing criminal suspects and on nothing else and I am saying the very same thing as an act utilitarian or a Thomist or a Kantian would be saying by saying that torturing criminal suspects is wrong even though I am neither an act utilitarian nor a Thomist nor a Kantian. Of course I may have all manner of background commitments and attitudes but these are not any part of what I say.

Ridge might hope to tame at least the disagreement worry by plugging in his own account of disagreement which is the subject of chapter 6. Roughly, he thinks, X and Y disagree if 'in circumstances of honesty, full candour and non-hypocrisy' they would give conflicting advice to relevantly circumstanced agents.(187) So confronted with a pair of unwed would-be lovers in circumstances free of other ethically defeating considerations, X will say, *Don't do it!* While Y says, *Feel free to do it!* Only, as Graham Bex-Priestley and Yonatan Shemmer observe, they might not. Perhaps X and Y agree in valuing autonomy. They think it important Romeo and Juliet make their own minds up what they should do and so both advise them the same way: *Think very carefully about what the right thing is and act*



*accordingly*. It is not at all obvious that the honesty, candour and non-hypocrisy conditions are going to iron this sort of worry out.<sup>9</sup>

Ridge does address the second, agnosticism worry., more directly. In chapter 4 he distances himself from understanding an agent's normative perspective as 'her acceptance of any overarching normative standard.' Think of it rather as a kind of 'work in progress', something provisional and incomplete.(115) Indeed he explicitly considers the case of the moral agnostic, someone 'deeply agnostic about morality as a whole, and who therefore accepts no moral norms at all.' This person might nonetheless accept the conditional claim 'if eating meat is morally wrong, then eating beef is morally wrong'. Here he explains: 'Ecumenical expressivism requires only that the speaker is committed to *not accepting* moral standards which simultaneously forbid eating meat but do not forbid eating beef.'<sup>10</sup> So what this character is essentially doing, it would seem, is something along the lines of ruling out all normative outlooks which forbid eating meat and do not forbid eating beef. This very restrictive way of understanding the normative perspective in question is fine but it sounds striking like what Gibbard might say. If this person then comes to depart from their agnosticism just to the extent of deciding eating meat is indeed wrong, they might be taken also to rule out all normative outlooks that permit eating meat. Having now ruled out all normative outlooks that permit eating meat and ruled out all normative outlooks which forbid eating meat and do not forbid eating beef, they have neatly logically boxed themselves in to ruling out all normative outlooks that do not forbid eating beef. And that is more or less exactly what Gibbard would say.

Suppose we are thinking of this person as having a little toy normative outlook NO.

NO: H! (Standards that forbid eating meat); H! (Standards that do not both forbid eating meat and fail to forbid eating beef)

The passage of thought in moral modus ponens thus looks like this:

IMPURE MP<sup>11</sup>

NO: H! (Standards that forbid eating meat); H! (Standards that do not both forbid eating meat and fail to forbid eating beef)

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<sup>9</sup> Bex-Priestley and Shemmer 2017. In his Unpublished Bex-Priestley raises further very serious difficulties for Ridge's account of disagreement.

<sup>10</sup> I have amended the published text which is clearly a slip, as Ridge confirms (correspondence 10/11/17). The substituted words 'which forbid eating meat but do not forbid eating beef' are taken from a sentence later in the same paragraph where the desired idea is expressed as intended.

<sup>11</sup> Important note. 'H!' here is a toy device we expressivists use from time to time when thinking at a very abstract level about how a 'logic of attitudes' might work. In this context think of it as a place holder for whatever species of nonrepresentational commitment your favourite expressivist theory accords central stage. Thus Ridge would unpack it in terms of self-governing policies of standard acceptance, for Gibbard (1990) a complex syndrome of norm acceptance or , in later writings (2003), some kind of planning state. No one in this conversation is buying into the crude boo!-hurrah! theory of ethical language sometimes encountered in hostile caricature where what we do when we use normative language is boo and hurrah stuff .

Eating meat is NO-forbidden.

NO: H! (Standards that forbid eating meat); H! (Standards that do not both forbid eating meat and fail to forbid eating beef)

If eating meat is NO-forbidden, then eating beef is NO-forbidden.

NO: H! (Standards that forbid eating meat); H! (Standards that do not both forbid eating beef and fail to forbid eating beef)

Eating beef is NO-forbidden.

A more pure expressivist story might go:

PURE MP

NA: H! (Standards that forbid eating meat);

(Eating meat is NA-forbidden.)

NB: H! (Standards that do not both forbid eating meat and fail to forbid eating beef)

(If eating meat is NB-forbidden, then eating beef is NB-forbidden.)

NC: H! (Standards that forbid eating beef)

(Eating beef is NC-forbidden.)

The purist will bracket the representational elements. They're not part of the content of normative judgements which are wholly given by the nonrepresentational elements. All they do is describe the logical structure that is already present in the latter for which they offer what I have called descriptive transforms. But the same is true, had better be true, as we have seen, of the impure story.

Another observation is important. In IMPURE MP the nonrepresentational element is the same at each step. In PURE MP it is not and we need it to be. We want, as we saw, something that yields as its descriptive transform:

(Eating meat is N-forbidden.)

(If eating meat is N-forbidden, then eating beef is N-forbidden.)

(Eating beef is N-forbidden.)

For some uniform N. But this does not look like a very difficult task. One way is to think of N as representing the totality of normative attitudes supposed true. (All prominent contemporary expressivists favouring as they do some quasi-realist strategy for bringing the concept of truth to bear on such things.) The representational elements would then be read, when asserted, as claiming that NA, NB and NC respectively are among that totality but as claiming nothing else whatever about what else is or is not. More modestly still N could just be the totality of normative attitudes expressly endorsed in a given context of logical evaluation. In the impure version NO is of course uniform throughout. But to stop it looking trivial I have only explicitly represented NO as mandating the premises, not the conclusion. Naturally if it mandates the former it had better mandate the latter. But again only if it itself is

subject to consistency constraints that, at risk of labouring the point, are not credibly fully ‘offloadable’.<sup>12</sup>

One might still favour a form of very minimal ecumenicalism which removed the brackets from the representational elements in PURE MP, took them as core components of the pure argument and insisted that they are constituent parts of the relevant normative judgements. But now that seems pointless. The connection between the representational and nonrepresentational elements has tightened to the point of triviality. The representational elements just retell, in representational mode, what the nonrepresentational elements divulge. They illuminate the logical connections between the latter but, once they have done that, that is all they are needed for.

I think the sort of ecumenical view defended by Ridge is vulnerable to a nasty dilemma. The more we understand his talk of normative perspectives expansively the more extraneous content we build into normative judgements and the more we will encounter the kind of headaches discussed above over disagreement and agnosticism. The more we avoid

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<sup>12</sup> Someone might object: but of course anyone who accepts the premises of IMPURE MP *has to* accept the conclusion. Because the premises include *Eating meat is NO-forbidden* and *If eating meat is NO-forbidden, then eating beef is NO-forbidden*. If these two things are true then it must be true that *Eating beef is NO-forbidden*. So NO, the outlook in question, must indeed include *H!(standards that forbid eating beef)*. For if it did not *Eating beef is NO-forbidden*, which is supposed to be simply a description of NO, would be false, and it cannot, by *modus ponens*, be false if our descriptive premises are true. So our reasoner’s perspective is guaranteed to satisfy this description and we don’t need anything like the final step represented by the N-principle after all. I think it is instructive to see why this isn’t right. I think when we attribute to our reasoner the thought *If eating meat is NO-forbidden, then eating beef is NO-forbidden* we are really not entitled to take this to be simply a description of their normative outlook. Rather we must see it as something somewhat more aspirational than that, the outlook they aspire to have, their outlook suitably idealised by the standards that are internal to it. Remember we are trying to represent the normative outlook of someone who is committed to not accepting moral standards which do not simultaneously forbid eating meat but fail to forbid eating beef. But it is one thing *to be committed to not being like that*, another thing *to not be like that*. The description that I must trivially satisfy just in virtue of such a commitment is that I have some thought of the sort I sought to capture by the expression: *H! (Standards that do not forbid eating meat and fail to forbid eating beef)*. But I am not, in virtue of that, logically guaranteed to satisfy the description that: if I think *H! (Standards that forbid eating meat)* then I think *H! (Standards that forbid eating beef)*. (Observe the crucial way the *H!* distributes across the latter conditional but which thus fails in equivalence to the former thought where the *H!* has wide scope.) Of course a kind of coherence may demand this as a *normative* matter. But *logic* does not dictate that if someone thinks *H! (Standards that do not forbid eating meat and do not forbid eating beef)*, then if they think *H! (Standards that forbid eating meat)* they must think *H! (Standards that forbid eating beef)*. Just as if I think *H!(Being nice to cats)* then a kind of coherence demands that I am nice to cats but the thing is not, alas, logically guaranteed.

this by understanding normative perspectives narrowly, the clearer it gets that we lose nothing by ditching the ecumenical turn and staying pure.

Ridge will still, I suspect, want to disagree. He will want to insist, that the sort of story he tells is better than the sort of story Gibbard tells because of Schroeder's objection to Gibbard:

What it [Gibbard's account] is really saying is merely that 'murder is not wrong' must express a mental state that is inconsistent with all and only the hyperdecided mental states that 'murder is wrong' is not inconsistent with. And again, that looks more like a list of criteria that we hope the attitude expressed by 'murder is not wrong' will satisfy, in lieu of a concrete story about which mental state this actually is, and why it turns out to be inconsistent with the right mental states.<sup>13</sup>

I won't discuss this concern in detail here except to note that Schroeder's critique of Gibbard has been the target of some rather telling discussion by Derek Baker and Jack Woods in a recent paper in *Ethics* and by Gibbard himself in an appendix to his recent *Meaning and Normativity*.<sup>14</sup> Gibbard's account of normative meaning takes the notion of disagreement as an unexplained primitive but all semantic theories unavoidably take some notions as comparably primitive and there seems no compelling reason to suppose Gibbard's distinctively at fault unless perhaps we follow Schroeder in supposing there to be something somehow disreputable about what he called *B-type inconsistency* where that is inconsistency not explained by a single attitude towards inconsistent contents. Baker and Woods, as well as Gibbard cast considerable doubt on this supposition noting that there are in fact numerous theoretical domains where B-type inconsistency plays a pervasive and important role.

I have focused above on what are perhaps the core claims of Ridge's book constituting his distinctive version of expressivism. I have said nothing about the magisterial critical discussion of rival views in chapters 2 and 3. I really don't find much here to disagree about. Nor have I discussed the richly interesting final chapter 8, which, surprisingly in the light of what has come before, defends a reductive cognitivist account of practical rationality. An adequate discussion of this would make this review much longer and it is already long enough. So I'll stop here.

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<sup>13</sup> p. 139. Quoted from Schroeder 2008, pp. 52-53.

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