ON LEAVING ROOM FOR DOUBT: USING FREGE-GEACH TO ILLUMINATE EXPRESSIVISM'S PROBLEM WITH OBJECTIVITY

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[The Frege-Geach] problem itself, while possibly a devastating objection to expressivism, is in a certain way a fluke – it does not, I think, answer to the deeper worries some of us have about expressivism. If God whispers in the ears of all the cognitivists that the Frege-Geach problem can be very neatly solved, I do not foresee a trend of conversion to expressivism. – David Enoch, Taking Morality Seriously

Expressivism holds that normative thought and language express non-cognitive attitudes, as opposed to ordinary, descriptive beliefs. Arguably the most historically important line of objection to this view is that expressivist semantics cannot accommodate the fact that normative claims match ordinary descriptive ones in their logical behavior (the Frege-Geach problem). Yet if Enoch’s claims above are correct, few cognitivists are cognitivists because of this problem. Why, then, have cognitivists spent so much time on this issue, and comparatively little time laying out their “deeper worries” about expressivism?

Part of the explanation, I suspect, is that cognitivists recognize that their deeper worries stem largely from metaphysical intuitions. For instance, many cognitivists—especially, self-styled realists—hold that normative truth must be appropriately objective. Yet if normative thought and language aren’t representational—as expressivism holds—it is hard to see how this could be so. As Enoch puts it later in the same book, it certainly seems as though expressivists have “to believe that morality somehow depends on us, that the ultimate explanation of why it is that certain moral claims are true has something to do with us and our feelings and attitudes” (Enoch 2011, 36).

Clear as this might seem, expressivism is not a metaphysical view—at least not straightforwardly—but rather a view about normative thought and language. And many
expressivists—in particular, quasi-realists\textsuperscript{1}—claim that ultimately they can accommodate all of cognitivists’ (or at least the folk’s) metaphysical talk. Not only is there normative truth, they say, but it is \textit{objective}, it represents normative \textit{facts}, and it concerns normative \textit{properties}.\textsuperscript{2} Realists might still worry that the expressivist is failing to capture the \textit{spirit} of such talk. But these are difficult charges to make stick.

My goal in this paper is to make some of these charges stick by introducing claims about thought and language, rather than about metaphysics, that capture aspects of the relevant intuitions about objectivity. I argue that expressivists cannot accommodate the claims in question if they are to solve “the negation problem”—part of Frege-Geach. If successful, this will show that expressivists really \textit{do} have a problem with objectivity. But, importantly, it will do so without requiring any assumptions about what expressivist metaphysics look like (if there even is such a thing). As an added bonus, it will turn out that at least some aspects of Frege-Geach are more representative of cognitivists’ “deeper worries” than is initially apparent.

The bulk of the paper is spent defending the thesis that expressivist solutions to the negation problem require rejection of a particular claim about normative predicates (laid out below). First, however, I say a bit about why I take this claim to be representative of the aforementioned “deeper worries” about expressivism. I also address the extent to which expressivists themselves should find my arguments troubling.

\textsuperscript{1} Most notably, Simon Blackburn (e.g., 1998) and Alan Gibbard (e.g., 2003).

\textsuperscript{2} This has not come without its own costs, as some have become worried that this “creeping minimalism” does \textit{too} good a job of breaking down the barriers between expressivists and cognitivists, failing to distinguish the views. See especially Dreier (2004).
1. Leaving Room for Doubt

Room for Doubt (from here, simply Doubt) tells us that it is not incoherent to wonder whether anything is good or bad, right or wrong, virtuous or vicious, what we ought (not) do, what we have normative reason to (not) do, etc. Somewhat more simply, Doubt tells us that it makes sense to doubt whether there is any truth about what to do, any answer to our deliberative questions—for substantive normative claims provide answers (or at least entail that there are answers) to such questions. Standard examples of substantive normative claims are “murdering is wrong,” “pleasure is good,” and “courage is virtuous.” Normative claims that are not substantive are claims that employ normative terms but do not entail that there is an answer to the question of what to do (let alone what that answer might be). Uncontroversial examples of non-substantive normative claims are more difficult to find, but intuitive possibilities include “nothing is wrong,” “desires are non-normative,” and “one ought promote the good.” (Given its relationship with nihilistic doubt, a useful test for the substantiveness of a normative claim is whether it is a claim that a normative nihilist could coherently accept. Arguably, each of the examples just mentioned pass this test.)

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3 When combined with non-normative facts about the actual world. This is why “murdering is wrong” is a substantive normative claim even though it is possible for there to be no murder.

4 On many contemporary views, I could simply say that an appropriate application of a substantive normative predicate entails the existence of normative reasons. However, I wish to remain as ecumenical as possible, and while this sort of reasons primacy is fairly popular at the moment, I don’t think it needs to be assumed to get the point across. Nevertheless, saying this may help some gain a clearer picture of what I’m talking about.

5 “Nihilism” is sometimes used to refer to a rather diverse set of views. The view I am referring to here holds that there are no true substantive normative claims about any metaphysically possible world. Thus, someone
Some expressivists seem perfectly happy to deny **Doubt.** Perhaps most famously, R. M. Hare (1972) argues against the coherence of worrying that “nothing matters.” Simplifying a bit, for Hare there is no sense in which things might matter other than one stemming from their mattering to someone. And things clearly matter to people.

Cognitivists are typically unimpressed by Hare’s remarks. As Parfit (2006) tells us, there seems to be a sense of “matters” that Hare is simply failing to account for. This is the sense in which something’s mattering is an *objective* fact about value or about normative reasons—one that is not ultimately grounded in our attitudes towards it (or at least *may* not be, so far as our concepts are concerned).

What matters here is that if Parfit and others are right that normativity must be objective—if it must be *out there*—then surely it makes sense to wonder whether it really is. If he and others are right, we should be able to entertain doubt about normative truth just as we can about other objective things—such as when we ask our undergraduates to countenance Cartesian doubt about the external world. This is not to *accept* skepticism or nihilism about the external world, but only to recognize that such views are conceptually coherent, given that there is a gap between what *seems* to who believes that murdering is wrong, but that no one in the actual world ever commits murder, and thus that nothing in the actual world is ever wrong, does not count as a nihilist.

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6 Hare may not technically have been an expressivist. But insofar as expressivism is the intellectual descendent of non-cognitivist views like Hare’s prescriptivism, the distinction makes no difference for our purposes.

7 Though even a few cognitivists have tried to use counterexamples to **Doubt** to argue for nihilism’s incoherence (though not in those terms). For presentation and criticism of relevant arguments, see, e.g., Dworkin (1996), Olson (2010), Pigden (2007), Sinnott-Armstrong (2006), and Tännsjö (2009).
be the case and what \textit{is}. This is the sense in which \textbf{Doubt} represents intuitions about normative objectivity.\footnote{It has recently come to my attention that an analogous argument is sometimes made in philosophy of mathematics. Roughly, the idea is that there is \textit{no} room for doubt concerning the existence of numbers, and that this tells against their objectivity.}

For my own part, I find \textbf{Doubt} nearly impossible to deny. I suspect many will share this view. And, of course, I think that those who share the relevant intuitions about objectivity \textit{should} share this view. Now, to be fair, my intuitions about what is conceptually possible are no proof. For instance, some people believe that there could be true contradictions; others believe that this is conceptually impossible. Someone’s views here are failing to line up with the truth. So while I think that it should at \textit{least} count as a significant theoretical burden to rule out as conceptually incoherent something as apparently common as nihilistic doubt regarding the normative, Hare’s view might nevertheless carry the day.

But I also suspect that not all expressivists will be so quick as Hare to reject \textbf{Doubt}. As mentioned above, contemporary expressivists seem generally less willing than their mid-century counterparts to explain away or dismiss as confused apparent features of normative discourse. And obviously I think \textbf{Doubt} represents such a feature. If any expressivists agree—or find \textbf{Doubt} independently plausible—then my arguments here should worry them. I will say no more, though, about who precisely can or should embrace \textbf{Doubt}. My thesis is not that expressivists \textit{should} accept it, but only that they \textit{cannot}. And this is because \textbf{Doubt} supports a further claim about normative semantics which expressivism also cannot accommodate.
2. The No Normative Exhaustion Thesis

Again, substantive normative claims answer (or at least entail that there is an answer to) the question of what to do. Such claims typically employ substantive normative predicates (or concepts)—predicates like ‘is good’\(^9\), ‘is bad’, ‘is a normative reason’, etc.\(^{10}\) One way to think about what makes a normative claim substantive is that it does not merely use or mention one of these predicates, but that it entails that something is so predicated. This explains, for example, why “pleasure is good; pain is bad” is a substantive normative claim, while “nothing is good; nothing is bad” is not.

Now, take a set of predicates, S: \(\{P_1, P_2, \ldots P_n\}\). Suppose that S exhausts conceptual space such that, as a matter of conceptual necessity, for every subject X, X is predicated by some member of set S (X is P1 or X is P2 or … or X is Pn).\(^{11}\) Call sets of predicates that meet these conditions exhaustive predicate sets. If Doubt is true, it seems we should further accept:

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\(^9\) I’m assuming here a tight connection between the evaluative and the normative. It might turn out that this is a mistake. For instance, it might be conceptually possible that while certain things are good, there’s nothing I ought to do about it. Indeed, this might be true even if it is conceptually necessary that one ought to promote the good. Suppose, for instance, that ought implies can and that we are simply incapable of promoting any of the things that are good. Nevertheless, this possibility seems precious enough as not to interfere with our discussion here.

\(^{10}\) From here out, I will talk about predicates, though I think this is as much about normative thought as it is about language. My thanks to Walter Sinnott-Armstrong and an anonymous reviewer for pointing out the value in highlighting this. Given that we will be focusing on discussions of the Frege-Geach problem in semantic terms, however, I will word things this way.

\(^{11}\) This definition may require some adjustment. Consider the predicate set \{‘is wrong’, ‘is not wrong’\}. I take this to be an exhaustive predicate set. Yet I can think of at least two ways in which, at least on some views, there are Xs that are not predicated by any member of this set. First, suppose X is “what the present King of France just did.” People who accept presupposition failure might deny that X is either wrong or not wrong.
The No Normative Exhaustion Thesis  No exhaustive predicate set is composed entirely of substantively normative predicates.

To see why, suppose that two predicates, ‘matters positively’ and ‘matters negatively’, constitute an exhaustive predicate set. As a matter of conceptual necessity, everything matters either positively or negatively. If that were the case, then of course it would be incoherent to wonder whether anything matters, for it would be the case that all things matter either positively or negatively.\(^\text{12}\)

It should also be clear that this has nothing to do with the particular predicate(s) selected. Suppose I introduce the predicate ‘is ungood’ and tell you that this predicate and ‘is good’ constitute an exhaustive predicate set. If ‘is ungood’ is substantively normative—say, if “X is ungood” entails that you have reason to shun X, just as “X is good” entails (say) that you have reason to promote it—it would be impossible to coherently wonder whether there were any normative truth.

In the remaining sections of this paper, I argue that expressivists cannot accept The No Normative Exhaustion Thesis (from here, simply Not Exhaustive) if they are to solve the

Second, one might take the view that, conceptually, wrongness can only apply to (say) actions, and thus that if X is not an action—say, if it’s the number 2—then the question of wrongness simply doesn’t apply. While I will not attempt to specify the precise definition to take care of such cases, I think it is clear that they do nothing to undermine the general idea at work here. For instance, it may simply turn out that we need to specify that the class of Xs is limited to those that, as a matter of conceptual possibility, can be predicated by members of the set in question.

\(^\text{12}\) One might try to resist the entailment by claiming that there are coherent nihilistic doubts but that the predicates necessary to express those doubts simply don’t exist in any language. I could avoid this worry by talking about concepts instead of linguistic elements, but this would make discussion of the relevant Frege-Geach literature, which is typically framed in terms of language, somewhat awkward. In any case, I doubt this is a move any expressivists will wish to make.
negation problem. Because *Doubt* supports (if not entails\(^\text{13}\)) *Not Exhaustive*, it therefore seems unlikely that expressivists can accept *Doubt*. If I am right that *Doubt* represents an important aspect of our intuitions about normative objectivity, this may serve to clarify some of our deeper worries about expressivism. And again, any expressivists who share or wish to accommodate intuitions about normative objectivity, or who agree that *Doubt* and *Not Exhaustive* are independently plausible, should find this result troubling.

3. The Negation Problem

Consider the claims:

S1. Murdering is wrong.

S2. Murdering is not wrong.

I contend that expressivists cannot both (a) explain why S1 and S2 are inconsistent and (b) maintain that exactly one of ‘is wrong’ and ‘is not wrong’ is a substantive normative predicate.\(^\text{14}\)

Accomplishing (a) is necessary for solving the Frege-Geach problem. Accomplishing (b) is necessary for accommodating *Not Exhaustive*, since ‘is wrong’ and ‘is not wrong’ form an exhaustive predicate set.

\(^\text{13}\) See previous note.

\(^\text{14}\) This particular example may be somewhat problematic, given that many take murdering to be wrong by definition. I use this example because it is the one employed by Mark Schroeder (2008). Since I rely on Schroeder’s discussion of relevant issues further on in the paper, I use his example for consistency. It should be obvious, however, that nothing significant turns on this choice.
In the hopes of targeting as widely as possible, I proceed as follows. First, drawing on Mark Schroeder’s (2008) discussion, I consider two (indeed, arguably, the only two\(^{15}\)) ways in which expressivists might explain the inconsistency of S1 and S2.\(^{16}\) Schroeder pursues only one of these strategies, rejecting the other for reasons I recount below. In §4.1 and §5.1, I consider what I take to be the only plausible strategies available to the Schroeder-style expressivist for accommodating Not Exhaustive. I argue that these strategies are overwhelmingly likely to fail.

Schroeder’s take on expressivism is controversial. I follow his discussion not because I agree with him (though I’m inclined to), but because I think he draws useful distinctions between different kinds of solution to the negation problem. In §4.2 and §5.2, I consider whether expressivists taking the line Schroeder rejects fare any better with respect to accommodating Not Exhaustive. I conclude that they do not.

\(^{15}\) Schroeder suggests this, though not everyone agrees. There have been a number of attempts to solve the negation problem in other ways, and it is possible some of these will be able to meet the challenge I raise in this paper. See, e.g., Björnsson (2001), Silk (2014), and Sinclair (2011). I hope to explore this possibility in further work. For the moment, it seems worth considering whether the relevant challenge can be met by what has been by far the most widespread class of solutions to the negation problem.

\(^{16}\) Schroeder himself draws on Unwin (1999) and (2001) in his presentation of the problem. Schroeder discusses alternative proposed solutions from Blackburn (1988), Dreier (2006), Gibbard (2003), and Horgan and Timmons (2006). According to Schroeder, most of these proposals fail for the same reason, to be discussed shortly. I will spend some time considering whether, setting aside Schroeder’s objections, this broad kind of expressivism can accommodate Not Exhaustive. Though I will not discuss any particular proposals, the relevant discussion below applies indirectly to those mentioned here.
3.1 Inconsistency for Expressivists

S1 and S2 are inconsistent. It is natural to think that the reason why they are inconsistent is that their contents are inconsistent. It is also natural to think that if I were to assert both S1 and S2, I would be inconsistent, in the sense that I would be rationally criticizable in a particular way. Furthermore, it seems clear that if I assert S1 and you assert S2, we thereby disagree.¹⁷

Unlike the cognitivist, the expressivist cannot accept that the reason S1 and S2 are inconsistent is that they have inconsistent propositional contents (‘murdering is wrong’ and ‘murdering is not wrong’, respectively), because for the expressivist, S1 doesn’t have propositional content in the way that it does for the cognitivist.¹⁸ Rather, for the expressivist, S1 and S2 must be inconsistent because the attitudes they express are inconsistent (Schroeder 2008, 39–41).

Return now to the wrongness of murdering. As Schroeder (2008, 44–45) points out, there are a number of relevant conditions you might be in with respect to the proposition that murdering is wrong, differing only¹⁹ in where, if anywhere, we place a “not.” It might be that:

S3. You think that murdering is wrong.
S4. You do not think that murdering is wrong.
S5. You think that murdering is not wrong.
S6. You think that not murdering is wrong.

Cognitivists have no trouble making sense of these different conditions; they just take “think” to mean “believe.” What of the expressivist? Following Schroeder, imagine an expressivist

¹⁷ All assertions presumed sincere.
¹⁸ Some expressivists will accept that S1 and S2 express propositions understood in a minimalist sense, but it is widely agreed that this cannot do the relevant explanatory work it does for the cognitivist.
¹⁹ Modulo the grammatically necessary “do” in S4.
who holds that to judge something wrong is to DISAPPROVE of it, where DISAPPROVAL is a particular non-cognitive attitude.\textsuperscript{20} Now the expressivist tries to translate each of the states you might be in:

3E. You DISAPPROVE of murdering.

4E. You do not DISAPPROVE of murdering.

5E. You…???

6E. You DISAPPROVE of not murdering.

Apparently, the expressivist has no way of differentiating between merely not thinking that murdering is wrong (S4) and thinking that murdering is not wrong (S5). The reason for this is simple: For the cognitivist, in each case one bears or does not bear a particular cognitive attitude (belief) towards a predicative proposition, which has both a subject (murdering) and a predicate (‘is wrong’). But for the expressivist, the non-cognitive attitude (DISAPPROVAL) is borne simply towards an action—murdering. And so the expressivist has one less “slot for the not.”

At this point, Schroeder (2008, 45–48) argues, the expressivist has two options. First, she can introduce a new attitude. She can say that the translation includes:

5E. You TOLERATE murdering.

Yet in order to go this route, Schroeder argues, the expressivist must maintain that DISAPPROVAL and TOLERANCE are distinct, primitive, non-cognitive attitudes that are nevertheless (and apparently, inexplicably) inconsistent. For Schroeder, this is a deal-breaker. (More on this later.)

The (apparently only) other option for the expressivist is to take Schroeder’s (2008, 58–61) route, which is to make another slot for the not. The way to do this is to follow the cognitivist’s

\textsuperscript{20} Throughout, I use small capital letters to denote “special” non-cognitive attitudes. These attitudes are not necessarily those that we associate with the names given them. Thus, DISAPPROVAL may not be the attitude commonly referred to as “disapproval.” Rather, it is a stand-in for some expressivist-friendly wrongness-connoting non-cognitive attitude.
example by introducing a general non-cognitive attitude that can be borne towards something with two “slots,” rather than simply towards an action. Schroeder calls this umbrella attitude BEING FOR, and it allows the expressivist to understand S3-S6 as follows:

3F. You are FOR blaming for murdering.
4F. You are not FOR blaming for murdering.
5F. You are FOR not blaming for murdering.
6F. You are FOR blaming for not murdering.

Importantly, if Schroeder is right, expressivists will need to extend this BEING FOR solution to a view about the semantics of all declarative sentences. After all, it is perfectly acceptable to make claims that involve both normative and non-normative predicates, such as “The sky is blue and murdering is wrong.” And, as Schroeder (2008, chap. 7) argues, the only way to understand such sentences in a way that will maintain their logical form is to understand belief in terms of BEING FOR (or the other way around, but of course that’s not an option for expressivists).21 (The importance of this point will become clear shortly.)

So, according to what Schroeder calls “biforcated attitude semantics” (BAS), the semantic value of any predicate is a relation22 (e.g., ‘is wrong’ means ‘blaming for’), and judging that something is so predicated means committing oneself to bearing the relevant relation towards it (e.g., judging something wrong means committing oneself to blaming for it). Thus, in brief, “we interpret the property associated with each [declarative] sentence, ‘P’, as telling us what someone who [judges] that P is thereby committed to doing” (Schroeder 2012, emphasis added).

21 Presumably, expressivists who take the first route won’t have to extend their view in this way. Rather, they will have the larger (and more familiar) problem of having to figure out what attitude is expressed by such “hybrid” claims.

22 Actually, it’s a pair of relations. But this is irrelevant for our purposes.
In what follows, I consider two strategies BAS-expressivists might take in attempting to accommodate Not Exhaustive. I argue that each strategy is overwhelmingly likely to fail. Of course, some disagree with Schroeder that the move to BAS is necessary. It would thus behoove us to consider whether what I will call DA-expressivism (for “distinct attitudes”) fares any better with respect to accommodating Not Exhaustive. Thus, in the second part of each section addressing the BAS-expressivist strategies, I discuss whether analogous DA-expressivist strategies are likely to be more successful than their BAS counterparts. I conclude that they are not.

4. Accommodating Not Exhaustive: Strategy One

4.1 BAS-Expressivism

According to BAS-expressivism (as presented by Schroeder), when one claims that murdering is wrong, one expresses BEING FOR blaming for murdering. When one claims that murdering is not wrong, one expresses BEING FOR not blaming for murdering. I take it as given that the former judgment is a substantively normative judgment (SNJ)—i.e, a judgement that something is substantively normatively predicated. According to Not Exhaustive, if S1 is a SNJ, then S2 cannot be (again, because ‘is wrong’ and ‘is not wrong’ constitute an exhaustive predicate set). In what follows, I argue that it will be difficult, if not impossible, for BAS-expressivists to explain why one of these judgements is substantively normative while the other is not. Given this, BAS-expressivists can only maintain Not Exhaustive if they change their interpretation. Unfortunately, I argue (in §5.1) that the only obvious reinterpretation available to the BAS-expressivist fails to solve the negation problem. If these arguments are successful, it follows that the BAS-expressivist has no way to explain the inconsistency of S1 and S2 without rejecting Not Exhaustive.

Again, the first way for the BAS-expressivist to salvage Not Exhaustive is to maintain that while BEING FOR blaming for murdering is a SNJ, BEING FOR not blaming for murdering is not. The
first thing that should be clear is that for this to be the case, it must be that BEING FOR something does not itself entail making a SNJ. It’s not hard to see, though, why one might think that BEING FOR does entail making a SNJ in virtue of the kind of attitude that it is. Part of what’s supposed to be appealing about expressivism is that it vindicates our sense that SNJ has a distinctive connection with action. When I judge that something is right, wrong, good, bad, etc., it seems that I thereby commit (and perhaps am even motivated) to doing something (or not doing something). On a cognitivist view, this is surprising given wide acceptance of the idea that beliefs alone can’t lead us to act; we need a desire, or something like it, for that. If SNJs are more like desires anyway, the puzzle evaporates. Hence the appeal of expressivism.

Once we move to BAS, however, SNJ might stop looking so distinctive. It turns out that all judgements involve the same non-cognitive attitude: BEING FOR. And BEING FOR, as Schroeder himself says, commits one to doing something. This indicates that, on the face of things at least, all judgements have the same link with action that substantive normative ones do. And so expressivism might seem to lose a significant part of its traditional impetus—its ability to make sense of how SNJs differ from judgements of other kinds.

In fact, I think BAS-expressivists have a plausible response to this concern. Unfortunately, it also exacerbates the worry about Not Exhaustive. On Schroeder’s BAS model, ordinary descriptive beliefs involve (roughly) BEING FOR proceeding as if what one believed were the case. For instance, believing that grass is green is (roughly) BEING FOR proceeding as if grass is green. Here, one might point out that there apparently is nothing that, alone, counts as proceeding as if grass is green. Believing that grass is green doesn’t commit one to doing anything particular until one’s other attitudes come into play (e.g., one has a desire to have a green area in front of one’s house). Taking

23 Not everyone accepts this, but among those who do, it is a large part of what speaks in favor of expressivism.
this line, the BAS-expressivist can draw precisely the sort of distinction between descriptive and normative judgements that has been typically drawn. But she also runs headlong into my concern, for it now seems even more plausible that BEING FOR not blaming, which clearly does commit one in a particular way (i.e., to not blaming), falls on the SNJ side of this divide.

So, one possibility is that BEING FOR entails SNJ. In that case, the game is up; clearly BAS-expressivists have to reject Not Exhaustive. Alternatively, it might turn out that one can BE FOR some things without making a SNJ. In that case, it must be something about blaming, or about the combination of BEING FOR and blaming, that explains why ‘BEING FOR blaming for murdering’ is a SNJ while ‘BEING FOR not blaming for murdering’ is not.

Here, we need to remember that this isn’t really a question about blame (or murder, for that matter). ‘Blame’ is just a stand-in for whatever relation one commits to bearing towards something in judging it to be wrong. To avoid any complications caused by focusing on the particular relation of blaming, let us abstract away and say that judging that X is wrong is BEING FOR Φ-ing X and judging that X is not wrong is BEING FOR not Φ-ing X.24 The question, then, is whether there is any plausible candidate for Φ such that BEING FOR Φ-ing X entails making a SNJ while BEING FOR not Φ-ing X does not.

This seems unlikely. Continuing with my suggestion above, what makes SNJs distinctive is that what one commits to in BEING FOR Φ-ing is a discriminating relation. That is—unlike in the case of ‘proceeding as if’ (I’ve suggested)—Φ is something that, all on its own, rules in some particular actions and rules out others. But if Φ-ing is discriminating, surely not Φ-ing is as well. If committing to Φ-ing commits one to taking some action or other, surely committing to not Φ-ing further commits one to taking no such action.

24 Of course, BEING FOR is itself merely a placeholder, too.
The only potential out here, so far as I can see, is to claim that Φ is an “inherently normative relation.” To make this idea clear, let’s briefly return to blame. Roughly, the idea would be that blaming for non-wrong things is a category error. One commits to not blaming for things that aren’t wrong not in the same “moralized” sense that one commits to blaming for things that are wrong, but just in the sense that blaming for non-wrong things is irrational. Perhaps even nihilists are rationally committed to not blaming for anything, if blame is only appropriate where there is wrongness, just in virtue of the kind of relation it is.²⁵

I am resistant to this kind of line in general. But what is important here is not whether it is independently plausible, but only that it is very hard to see how BAS-expressivists could make use of this suggestion. The natural way to cash this all out, after all, is to suggest that ‘blaming for’ entails ‘judging wrong’. Where else would one locate a rational error in blaming for non-wrong things? But the BAS-expressivist cannot say this, on pain of circularity. Having just defined ‘judging wrong’ partly in terms of blame, surely she cannot also understand blame itself in terms of judging wrong. Without this, though, it is hard to see how she could maintain that blame (indeed, that almost any relation) is such that committing to bearing that relation towards something entails making a SNJ.

There still remains the possibility that it is not Φ-ing itself, but rather the combination of BEING FOR and Φ-ing, that entails SNJ (in a way that the combination of BEING FOR and not Φ-ing does not). And, to be fair, very little has been said about what BEING FOR is like, so perhaps once we understand what kind of commitment the expressivist is talking about, it will turn out that being committed in this way to Φ-ing X (for some Φ) entails judging that X is wrong. But it is at least as

²⁵ Just to help frame the thought, this is a broadly “Strawsonian” point. Thanks to David Shoemaker for helpful discussion on this point.
hard to see what kind of commitment that could be as it is to see what Φ-ing could be in the first place.  

Let’s recap: Schroeder has offered the expressivist a recipe for developing a semantic theory that can explain the inconsistency of S1 and S2. According to that recipe, SNJ involves BEING FOR—being, in some sense, committed to—bearing certain relations (the ones that constitute the semantic values of normative predicates) to objects of judgement. Thus, judging that murdering is wrong is ‘BEING FOR Φ-ing murdering’. And judging that murdering is not wrong is ‘BEING FOR not Φ-ing murdering’. If Not Exhaustive is true, then BAS-expressivists need to be able to explain how it can be that ‘BEING FOR Φ-ing’ is a SNJ while ‘BEING FOR not Φ-ing’ is not. This raises two problems: First, one might worry that BEING FOR always involves SNJ. I offered a potential response to this worry, by suggesting that some Φs—e.g., ‘proceeding as if’—might not be sufficiently discriminatory to count as committing one to action in the way SNJ paradigmatically does. However, I argued that it is unlikely that there are candidates for Φ such that committing to Φ-ing is discriminatory while committing to not Φ-ing is not. It thus seems to me that the BAS-expressivist will be unable to accommodate Not Exhaustive. At the very least, the onus is on the BAS-expressivist to give us some reason to think that she can construct a plausible theory in normative psychology to fill out the BAS schema in a way that’s compatible with Not Exhaustive.

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26 And, remember, the nature of Φ-ing itself must play a significant enough role in making BEING FOR Φ-ing X a SNJ such that BEING FOR Φ-ing X is in some relevant way different from, say ‘BEING FOR proceeding as if P’, which is apparently not a SNJ.
4.2 DA-Expressivism

Schroeder maintains that the move to BAS is necessary for the expressivist to explain the inconsistency of S1 and S2. But, as already mentioned, not everyone agrees with him on this point. It is thus worth considering whether DA-expressivism fares any better with respect to explaining the inconsistency of S1 and S2 without needing to reject Not Exhaustive.

Our example DA-expressivist holds that ‘murdering is wrong’ expresses DISAPPROVAL while ‘murdering is not wrong’ expresses TOLERANCE. According to Not Exhaustive, it follows that since DISAPPROVING of murdering involves SNJ, TOLERATING murdering does not. This is, of course, precisely analogous to Not Exhaustive’s entailing that, for the BAS-expressivist, since BEING FOR Φ-ing murdering involves SNJ, BEING FOR not Φ-ing murdering does not. The question is whether DA-expressivists can plausibly maintain this.

In his discussion, Schroeder distinguishes two ways in which attitudes can be inconsistent: *A*-type inconsistency results from bearing tokens of the same attitude towards inconsistent contents—e.g., believing that P and believing that ~P. *B*-type inconsistency results from bearing two distinct yet inconsistent attitudes towards the same content—e.g., for the DA-expressivist, DISAPPROVING of X and TOLERATING X. Schroeder writes:

*A*-type inconsistency is something that we should all recognize and be familiar with. It happens with beliefs, for example. But *B*-type inconsistency is not something that expressivists can take for granted, because there are no good examples of it. Assuming that DISAPPROVAL and TOLERANCE are inconsistent is taking for granted everything that expressivists need to explain. (Schroeder 2008, 49)

Given this, one option for the DA-expressivist is to just bite the bullet and claim that, inexplicable as it may seem, certain pairs of attitudes are B-type inconsistent, and that’s that. If the DA-expressivist takes this line, then surely it is not much of a leap for her to claim further that in each case at least one of the relevant attitudes doesn’t involve SNJ. Thus, at first blush, it seems that DA-expressivism has no trouble accommodating Not Exhaustive.
I suspect, however, that no actual expressivists would be comfortable with such a blatantly ad hoc response. Rather, it seems likely that actual DA-expressivists reject Schroeder’s move to BAS because they believe, contra Schroeder above, that there are perfectly good examples of B-type inconsistency available. If that’s the case, DA-expressivists are in no worse shape than BAS-expressivists are in appealing to an analogy to other cases of disagreement in attitude.

Are there other cases of B-type inconsistency? Some think so. In their defense of B-type inconsistency, for example, Baker and Woods (2015) mention the attitude pair like/dislike (among others). Arguably, I am irrational if I both like and dislike the same thing. Other possible example pairs might include approval and disapproval, love and hate, or respect and disrespect. In each of these cases, the attitudes in question are distinct attitudes—love is not merely the absence of hate, for instance—yet they seem to be at odds, at least to some degree.

I don’t think cases like this will get the DA-expressivist very far. I don’t think, for example, that if I love chocolate ice cream and you hate it, we thereby disagree. So the kind of inconsistency here is apparently not of the right kind to help the DA-expressivist make sense of interpersonal disagreement about the normative (which, presumably, she needs to). But I do not need to settle this issue here. The point here is only that since I believe most DA-expressivists would deny that their view is ad hoc, they are going to have to either offer a brand new explanation for B-type inconsistency (something that has never been attempted, so far as I know) or appeal to the precedent set by other examples of B-type inconsistency (as Baker and Woods do). In taking this latter tack, something like the relationship between liking and disliking is probably their best ally—the question of whether it is good enough can be set aside.

Let us assume, then, that I am right about what the DA-expressivist strategy is going to look like. The worry is this: Suppose that the DA-expressivist appeals to an analogy with a case of apparent inconsistency between distinct non-cognitive attitude pairs, examples of which, again,
might include things such as like and dislike, approval and disapproval, love and hate, or respect and disrespect. I submit that in each of these cases, the idea that the relevant attitudes are inconsistent seems acceptable because there is a sense in which the attitudes lead one in opposing directions. The ways in which one typically responds to something one likes seem to conflict with the ways in which one typically responds to something one dislikes. Something similar can be said for each of the cases mentioned and, indeed, I think, for all plausible cases of disagreement between distinct attitudes.

The complaint here mirrors the complaint against the analogous BAS move. There, I pointed out that if $\Phi$ is a discriminating relation, such that BEING FOR $\Phi$-ing commits you to doing something particular, and it is this that distinguishes it as a SNJ, surely BEING FOR not $\Phi$-ing would commit one in the same distinguishing way. Similarly, here, when a DA-expressivist says that DISAPPROVAL (at least of certain things, like murdering) involves SNJ, this means that DISAPPROVAL commits one to responding to the object of that DISAPPROVAL in certain ways that are characteristic (indeed, perhaps, defining) of SNJ. It is natural to think, on analogy with the examples of disagreement in attitude just mentioned, that if TOLERANCE is inconsistent with DISAPPROVAL, this is because TOLERANCE commits one to acting in ways that conflict with those DISAPPROVAL does. If that’s right, then it’s hard to see how DISAPPROVAL could entail SNJ without TOLERANCE’s doing the same.

As in the BAS case, this is not a proof of the impossibility of a DA-expressivist solution to this problem. Rather, it is a challenge to the DA-expressivist to give us some reason to think she can develop a plausible normative psychology. We should be suspicious of her ability to do so when we recognize how unlikely it seems that though DISAPPROVAL and TOLERANCE are similar enough to conflict—perhaps because they lead one in opposing directions, on analogy with the other examples mentioned—only one of the two has those features that make it a SNJ.
5. Accommodating Not Exhaustive: Strategy Two

5.1 BAS-Expressivism

In §4.1, I argued that BAS-expressivists are unlikely to be able to accommodate Not Exhaustive by maintaining that BEING FOR bearing a particular relation involves SNJ while BEING FOR not bearing that relation does not. Of course, this is only a problem for the BAS-expressivist if judging that murdering is not wrong involves BEING FOR something. Thus far, I assumed this was the case.

To see the second available strategy for attempting to accommodate Not Exhaustive, recall the relevant BAS interpretations (continuing to generalize from blaming to Φ-ing):

4F. You are not FOR Φ-ing murdering.

5F. You are FOR not Φ-ing murdering.

6F. You are FOR Φ-ing not murdering.

Importantly, while (5F) and (6F) entail BEING FOR, (4F) does not. Thus, if the BAS-expressivist were to reinterpret judging that murdering is not wrong in line with (4F) (at least in certain cases, such as when a nihilist is speaking), such that it is merely not BEING FOR Φ-ing murdering, then the above worries about BEING FOR entailing SNJ would dissipate. And, indeed, it seems quite plausible to think that, if judging murdering wrong is BEING FOR Φ-ing murdering, one who judges that murdering is not wrong would not BE FOR Φ-ing murdering.

Unfortunately, the expressivist is not merely trying to say something about what's going on in the head of someone who judges that murdering is not wrong; she is trying to offer an account of what such a person (let’s call him John) expresses when he says that murdering is not wrong. What’s more, it needs to turn out that John disagrees with someone who thinks that murdering is wrong.
There are potential problems along both lines. First, it may not be possible to directly express the absence of an attitude at all. Arguably, when we express something we indicate what mental state(s) we are in. But while it is quite plausible that having an attitude is a particular mental state (or set thereof), it is not at all clear that lacking an attitude is.

Second, even if it is possible to directly express the absence of an attitude, the basic challenge to explain the inconsistency of S1 and S2 would still not be met. For the problem of disagreement remains. If I believe that grass is green and you don’t (perhaps you’ve never seen grass), we do not thereby disagree. In order to take this line, then, the expressivist would have to both show that she can understand John’s utterance as expressing an absence of BEING FOR and that, in apparent contrast to all other attitudes, BEING FOR something is sufficient for disagreement with those who merely lack that attitude.

One possible out here would be to claim that John is expressing (4F) indirectly, via expressing some further attitude—call it NIHILIO. It should be clear, though, that this will be of no help to the BAS-expressivist. The relevant conflict would now be between BEING FOR and NIHILIO, as opposed to between BEING FOR and not BEING FOR. This would be an instance of B-type inconsistency, rejection of which is a large part of what motivated BAS in the first place.

Summing up: A natural alternative to understanding John’s judgement that murdering is not wrong as his BEING FOR not Φ-ing murdering is to understand him simply as not BEING FOR Φ-ing murdering. Unfortunately, this line faces a dilemma: Either John is merely expressing his lack of BEING FOR or he is expressing some further attitude as well. If the former, it is not clear why John disagrees with someone who is FOR the relevant thing (again, just as you and I don’t disagree simply

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27 As opposed to “indirectly” expressing it—reporting the absence or expressing other attitudes that entail or imply it. I discuss the possibility of appealing to such indirect expression shortly.
because you have a belief I lack). If the latter, it seems the BAS-expressivist would have to appeal to B-type inconsistency, rejection of which is what led her to BAS in the first place.\textsuperscript{28}

5.2 DA-Expressivism

As before, the DA-expressivist has a strategy analogous to the BAS-expressivist’s. Recall the DA-expressivist’s interpretations:

4E. You do not \textsc{disapprove} of murdering.

5E. You \textsc{tolerate} murdering.

6E. You \textsc{disapprove} of not murdering.

Just like the BAS-expressivist, in order to avoid the challenge of explaining why \textsc{disapproval} involves SNJ while \textsc{tolerance} does not, the DA-expressivist might look to (4E) and suggest that judging that murdering is not wrong is simply not \textsc{disapproving} of murdering.

First, we might again question whether it is possible to directly express the absence of an attitude. Second, and again as in the BAS case, this view requires the DA-expressivist to maintain that if I \textsc{disapprove} of murdering and you do not, we thereby disagree. Of course, a DA-expressivist might be able to maintain this (and, indeed, given her apparently permissive attitude towards inconsistency, perhaps she is better situated to do so than BAS-expressivists), but this

\textsuperscript{28} There are, of course, other, more radical reinterpretations I haven’t discussed. For example, the expressivist could hold that John (supposing he is a nihilist) is expressing his \textsc{being for} not \textsc{being for} anything. First, this has certain bizarre implications. For instance, for this to be a general solution to the problem, it would presumably have to turn out that all negated normative claims (“murdering is not wrong,” “pain is not bad,” “lying is not vicious”) are semantically equivalent (at least for the nihilist). I also suspect that such radical reinterpretations would run up against other arguments made in this paper, though I unfortunately do not have the space to explore this issue further here.
would surely be a rather large bullet to bite. After all, the DA-expressivist would presumably need to say why, apparently unlike with all other attitudes (I believe the grass is green; my friend who has never seen grass does not) my having and your lacking DISAPPROVAL entails that we disagree.

The final move here would be, once again as in the BAS case, to suggest that there is some further attitude (NIHILO) the having of which implies or entails a lack of DISAPPROVAL. Unlike the BAS-expressivist, the DA-expressivist may be comfortable maintaining that NIHILO is inconsistent with DISAPPROVAL without explaining why (presumably to the same extent that she is comfortable doing so in the case of DISAPPROVAL and TOLERANCE). Of course, there will be the question of how to distinguish between cases where someone is expressing TOLERANCE and cases where he is expressing this new attitude; but that might not seem so worrisome.

What is worrisome, however, is that this move completely undermines the shift away from the proposal explored in §4.2. In that section, I argued that DA-expressivists are unlikely to be able to develop a plausible normative psychology that makes sense of there being two distinct, primitive attitudes—DISAPPROVAL and TOLERANCE—that are inconsistent, yet only one of which involves SNJ. Every concern raised there will reapply mutatis mutandis to this solution—i.e., to the plausibility of claiming that DISAPPROVAL and NIHILO are inconsistent, though only one involves SNJ.29

6. Conclusion

While they differ on the particulars, every expressivist holds that substantive normative judgments express non-cognitive attitudes. Because of this, expressivists have to explain how it can be that the attitudes in question are inconsistent with whatever attitudes are expressed by opposing judgements.

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29 Or, more properly, to the plausibility of claiming that there is some attitude NIHILO that involves an absence of DISAPPROVAL and is inconsistent with DISAPPROVAL in the sense required, though, unlike DISAPPROVAL, it does not involve SNJ.
(both intra- and interpersonally). I have considered two (arguably, the only two) general ways the expressivist might proceed: She might accept some version of DA-expressivism, according to which “positive” and “negative” normative judgements express distinct but nevertheless inconsistent attitudes. Or she might accept a version of BAS-expressivism, according to which the judgements express the same attitude towards opposing contents (e.g., blaming and not blaming for murdering).

Doubt and Not Exhaustive seem to me independently plausible claims about normative thought and language. What’s more, I believe that those of us with intuitions about normative objectivity should be especially inclined to embrace them. If I’m right, however, expressivists in both the DA and BAS camps will find themselves unable to both solve the negation problem and accommodate these claims. It may well be that, at the end of the day, the quasi-realist project can vindicate quasi-objectivity. If my arguments herein are correct, though, we should conclude that quasi-objectivity simply isn’t objective enough.

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