

RESOLVED

Jeff Huggins

Originally posted on CHORA, February 16, 2010

Resolved

In four recent CHORA messages, I've provided illustrative quotes that state or imply a major longstanding problem (or dilemma) throughout much of moral philosophy, and—more to the point—I've identified the key considerations, and provided insights, that allow for the grounded and compelling *resolution* of that longstanding problem, resulting in a general advancement and also setting the stage for considerable further advancement in our understanding of human morality.

This is, of course, no small claim. Nevertheless, I'm highly confident and comfortable in making it.

(To those of you who have been following this—and often helping!—I apologize for the rather assertive tone. I'm only trying to be clear, for a broader audience and for the record. Thanks for your understanding. I wish I could convey the matter via gentle and humble poetry, or via a lyrical song perhaps, but my poetry and songwriting aren't up to the task.)

The four recent messages are these:

The Bridge, as you like it (with additional quotes) — CHORA, Feb. 11, 2010

More On The Bridge (adding to earlier) — CHORA, Feb. 13

Conscious, Informed, Responsible Human Sociality — CHORA, Feb. 13

Associated Illustrations of The Problems — CHORA, Feb. 15

The last of the four messages listed above contains a sampling of assorted quotes that illustrate, suggest, or relate in some way to the problem. (It's a problem with which you are all likely familiar.) The first two messages in the list above identify the key factors and provide some key insights involved in the resolution of the problem and corresponding advancement in understanding. The third

message in the list above provides some thoughts on terminology that may help people consider and better grasp the matter. That said, the thoughts in the third message, having to do with terminology, aren't important or necessary to the resolution of the problem itself.

I'll let the messages speak for themselves, but I'll add a few points of context here:

First, of course, two short messages—only two of the messages listed above have to do with the actual considerations and insights—can't possibly convey all context, all detail, all the step-by-step explanation, all responses to all questions, and so forth. Instead, I've done the best I can to highlight key factors, in two messages, aimed at an informed, inquisitive, and "seeking" philosophical audience. My more detailed papers explain the whole matter, including the various parts, in more detail. (I list those at the bottom of this message.)

That said, I believe that an inquisitive and "seeking" philosophical audience ought to be able to figure it out, and understand some of the implications, from the considerations, insights, and brief discussion in the four messages. Here, I'm not suggesting that it's "easy": The degree of difficulty may well depend on one's present paradigms and assumptions, and certainly the matter requires considerable thought. Nor am I suggesting that questions aren't welcome. They are! But, I *am* trying to point out that the material *is* there, and I'm hoping that philosophers who are genuinely interested in these matters will thus adopt a seeking, inquisitive, and "love of wisdom" approach to try to understand the matter. Philosophers will, hopefully, as we should, be skeptical not only about new thinking, but also about our own skepticism, and we should seek to *understand* new facts and arguments, and insights, before critiquing.

For those who have already been following the earlier messages, or for other audiences after they read those messages, an important point: To be clear, I'm *not* saying—*of course*—that the naturalistic fallacy doesn't exist or that it's not very relevant and very important. Again, that's *not* what I'm saying. (The messages themselves should make this clear.) Nor am I saying that 'is' and 'ought' are identical or that it's valid to confuse the two or jump from one to the other. That's also *not* what I'm saying.

(Can you tell by now that I'm concerned about being misinterpreted?)

Instead, what I'm saying—among other things—is this: Many interpretations of the matters of 'is' and 'ought', and/or of the naturalistic fallacy, and/or of the fact-value distinction, have gone way *beyond* the valid aspects of those issues and

have given them abilities and meanings, and have assigned them consequences, that are *not* correct and that are highly consequential in a negative way, that is, in a way that blocks the valid progress of understanding. I'll let the messages, and my other works, speak for themselves. Among other things, of key relevance is the substantial and vital relevance of scientific understanding to a grounded and integrated understanding of human morality, in the descriptive, explanatory, *and* normative senses.

Also to be clear, the scope of my work involves understanding human morality from a secular standpoint—that is, from the standpoint of the best combination of scientific understanding and sound secular reasoning that we humans can muster. That's the goal. The work does not, of course, establish anything about the existence or non-existence of God or of other supernatural entities. It approaches the matters of human sociality, social-moral dynamics, morality, and life from a secular standpoint. Among other things, it involves bridging the scientific understanding of human morality with the secular moral philosophy of the matter, into a complementary and coherent whole.

Although I've stated my arguments before, in a number of venues and on my website, and in person on occasion, these four messages [five including the present message], yet again, **publish** my understanding—i.e, convey it publicly, in writing. For easier access, I'll also place these messages on my website, along with some of the earlier messages and other papers already there.

That said, I am also interested in *co-publishing* in the normal/regular/conventional/relevant journals. By now, I have a great deal of written material, some of which is in very good shape already. But, as always, it can benefit from additional context, additional insight, polishing, excellent references, and so forth. In other words, there is a (great) opportunity here for people (or more than one) who might want to co-publish, help move these advancements forward, and help build upon them. If there is one lesson I've learned in my earlier business career, it's this: "spread the wealth".

Indeed, morality itself, of course, has much to do with cooperation in ways that bring benefits to all parties and, ideally also, to the broader community of humankind. (A great early book on the game-theoretic aspects of the matter is Robert Axelrod's "The Evolution Of Cooperation".) In this sense, there is a great deal of sensibility, appropriateness, justice, and even beauty in the idea that mutually beneficial cooperation should be used in the process to advance the understanding of morality itself. What could be more moral? And, these days, what could be more urgent?

I've listed some other, earlier materials below. They're all on my website, www.ObligationsOfReason.com. To find them, just go to the website, navigate to the "Additional Material From The Author" page, and you'll see links to all of these materials there. On the list below, for convenience, although all of the materials are relevant, I've starred (*) many of the most relevant materials, and I've **bolded** some of the best ones, that is, those that go into the entire matter or at least into particular aspects of it in the greatest depth.

As Grace Slick used to sing, "Pick up the cry!"

Thanks very much for your consideration. I appreciate it.

Be Well,

Jeff

Jeff Huggins

Los Gatos, CA

www.ObligationsOfReason.com

Items Presently On My Website (I'll add the recent four messages soon.)

To Scientifically Informed Philosophers and Philosophically Minded Scientists *

On Morality: A View and Argument (one recent Abstract) *

Life, The Bridge, and Coming Together *

"The Bridge: A-QED"

WHY and WHY and WHY

The Morality of Sustainability: *A DIY Exploration*

On Morality: Key Considerations and a Bridge *

What good am I? *

On Morality *

Robot Revelations *

Darwin, Camus, and Hamlet went into a bar, AND . . . *

A Framework and Paradigm Of Morality *

Science and Philosophy (Regarding Morality), Context, The Bridge, and etc.

“Moral Beings”, Is-Ought, Fact-Value, and Other (Big) Stuff

Portions of the Supporting Argument In Additional Forms

Regarding ‘Directional Dynamics’ and ‘Normative Facts’ *

Speaking of Hands, and Adaptations, and . . .

The Nature of the Relationship Between *Is* and *Ought*

The Nature of Morality

Some Roots and Relations, Noted *

“Robot Revelations”: An Opportunity

Illustrative Quotes