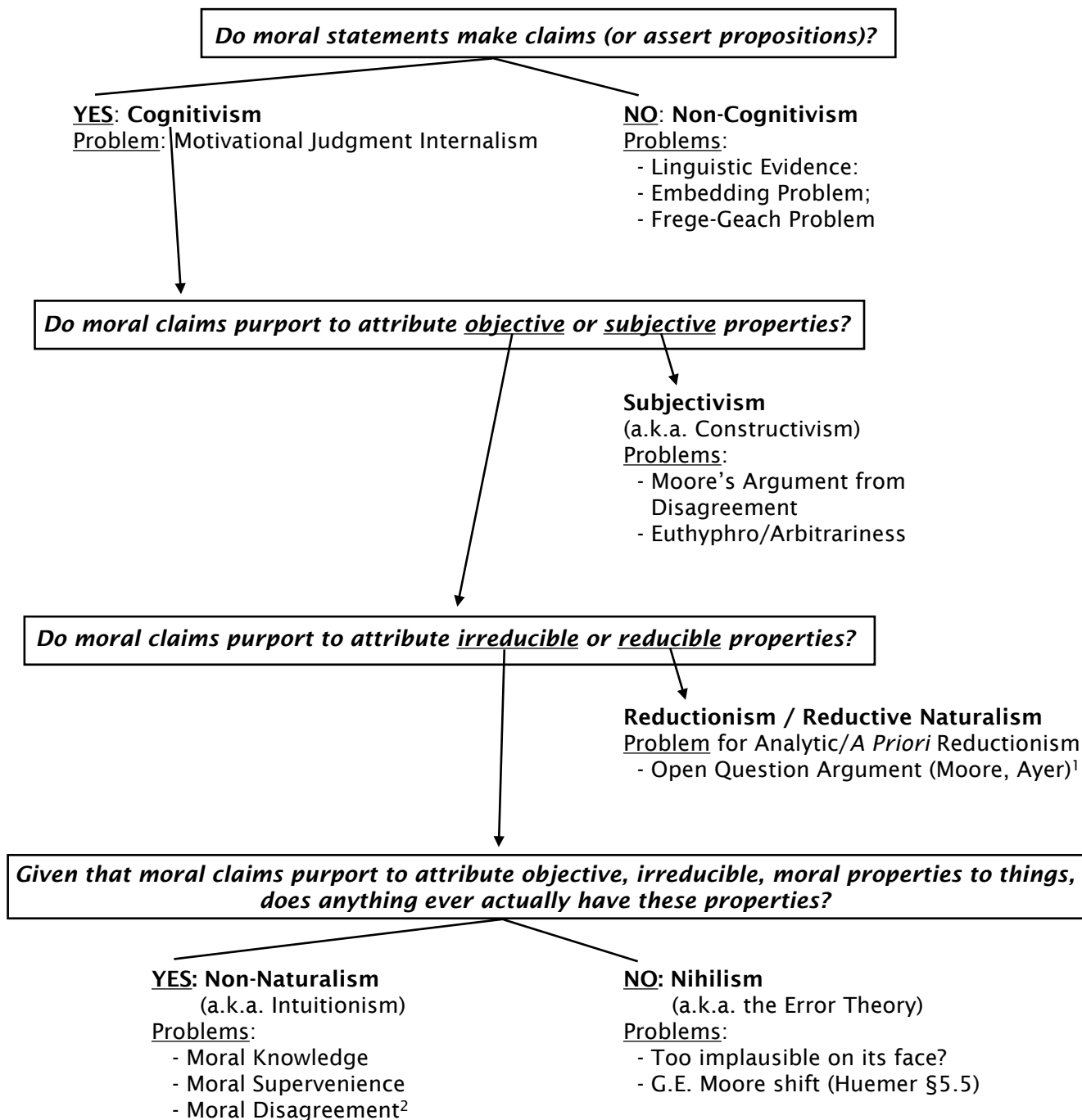


An Overview of our Metaethical Exploration
PHIL 3100 — Ethical Theory



¹ Note: up until now, investigation is largely semantic, or about the meaning of moral terms, or what moral statements are saying or doing. It's not about the way extra-linguistic reality is.

² This overview contains important omissions: e.g., Synthetic/*A Posteriori* Reductionism (see Huemer §4.4); and Non-Reductive Naturalism

A Taxonomy of Metaethics

the theories → the questions ↓	Moral Anti-Realism: there are no objective moral facts.			Moral Realism: there are objective moral facts.		
	Constructivism (Huemer: “Subjectivism”)	Non-Cognitivism (cf. “Expressivism”)	Nihilism (or “The Error Theory”)	(Objective) Naturalism		Non-Naturalism (Huemer: “Intuitionism”)
				Reductive Naturalism	Non-Reductive Naturalism	
Semantics (What do moral claims mean?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral claims mean the same as some claim about someone’s attitudes or practices. E.g., ‘What the teenagers did was wrong’ might mean that the speaker disapproves of what they did, or that our social conventions forbid what they did. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral utterances aren’t actually claiming anything. They are used instead to express “non-cognitive” attitudes, such as desires or states of disapproval, or to issue commands. They are neither true nor false (cf. “Boo Yankees!”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral terms cannot be defined in non-moral terms. Moral claims attribute a <i>sui generis</i>, irreducibly evaluative, non-natural property to something. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral claims mean the same as some naturalistic claim.**** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral terms cannot be defined in non-moral terms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral terms cannot be defined in non-moral terms. Moral claims attribute a <i>sui generis</i>, irreducibly evaluative, non-natural property to something.
Metaphysics (Are there moral facts / moral properties in the world? If so, what kind of facts are they?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are moral facts. They are <i>subjective</i> facts (i.e., facts involving subjective properties). On most forms of constructivism, they are <i>natural</i> facts (e.g., about social conventions), but on some versions they are non-natural facts (e.g., about God).* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no moral facts or properties (and moral statements aren’t even trying to talk about them). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>sui generis</i>, irreducibly evaluative, non-natural property moral claims are talking about doesn’t actually exist. Thus, there are no moral facts Thus all moral claims are false.*** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are moral facts. They are <i>objective</i> facts (i.e., facts involving objective properties). They are <i>natural</i> facts (i.e., facts involving natural properties). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are moral facts. They are <i>objective</i> facts. But there is no fact that can be expressed in non-moral terms to which they are identical. They are <i>natural</i> facts (i.e., facts involving natural properties). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are moral facts. They are <i>objective</i> facts. But there is no fact that can be expressed in non-moral terms to which they are identical. They are <i>non-natural</i> facts (i.e., facts involving non-natural properties).
Epistemology (If there are moral facts, how do we know them?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We come to know moral facts however we come to know the facts about attitudes or practices to which they are identical.** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since there are no moral facts, there is no need to explain how we can know them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since there are no moral facts, there is no need to explain how we can know them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We come to know moral facts however we come to know the natural facts to which they are identical.** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We come to know moral facts indirectly, by inferring their existence from non-moral facts that they help explain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We come to know moral facts partly on the basis of rational intuition.
Psychology (What kind of mental state are moral judgments?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral judgments are beliefs (the same sort of attitude we have to non-moral propositions). This is called <i>Cognitivism</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral judgments are non-cognitive attitudes (desires, emotions, states of approval/disapproval, or the like). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral judgments are beliefs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral judgments are beliefs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral judgments are beliefs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral judgments are beliefs.