How to cancel the Knobe effect: the role of sufficiently strong moral censure

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*Abstract*: Empirical support is offered for the claim that the original Knobe effect, whereby our intentional action ascriptions exhibit certain asymmetries in light of our moral attitudes, can be successfully cancelled. This is predicted by the view that the Knobe effect can be explained in purely pragmatic terms (Adams and Steadman 2004a, 2004b, 2007). However, previous cancelling studies (Adams and Steadman 2007; Nichols and Ulatowski 2007) have failed to identify evidence of cancellability. The key to the successful cancelling strategy presented here is to provide subjects with the opportunity to assent to statements that involve sufficiently strong forms of moral censure.

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