Moral Relativism
- suggests that moral beliefs are a product of culture and, as such, are only binding for a particular people/place/time.

Reflective Equilibrium
- A state of coherence between beliefs arrived at through a careful process of reflection.
  - The aim is to establish consistency between our beliefs by discarding or making adjustments where necessary.

Ethical Naturalism
- The view that instead of God we should look towards the natural world and to science in order to discover the principles and moral values we ought to live by.
- However, the problem with this is that while science can tell us *what is*, it cannot tell us *what ought to be*.
  - David Hume first identified this problem in *A Treatise on Human Nature* (1739).
  - Factual premises do not entail a moral conclusion.
    - i.e. descriptive premise (‘torture causes pain’) * prescriptive conclusion (‘torture is wrong’)

Nihilism
- Latin nihil, meaning nothing.
- There is no justification for the idea of moral truth and moral values are illusionary, or the rejection of such values.
  - Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)
    - Believed the absence of moral values was a good thing for it means we are free to create our own lives as we want them to be.
    - However, argued that humans are too timid to reject the dogmas of the human herd (i.e. religion and the values extended from it).
  - Some critics argue that nihilism is inherently flawed as it is hardly sustainable.

Moral Realism
- The view that there are some moral values that are inherently objective rather than expressions of personal attitude.
- However, this raises the question; how can value, such as ‘stealing is wrong’, be understood as a fact.
  - Moral realists respond to this dilemma with natural facts (i.e. statistics, newspaper reports).

Emotivism
- The belief that moral statements are nothing more than expressions of personal preferences based on feelings.
- The boo/hooray theory.
This subjective understanding of moral values as its roots in logical positivism.
  ○ Twentieth century philosophy movement.
  ○ Held the belief that for any statement to be considered meaningful it must be either analytical or empirically verifiable.
    ■ This means that any statement which did not possess the property of either truth or falsity (i.e. God’s existence, aesthetic judgement, morality) were meaningless.

However, Charles Stevenson (1908-1979) argued that moral statements are this simple.
  ○ Linguistic philosopher
  ○ Argued that when some issues a moral statement, not only are they expressing their approval/disapproval, they are also attempting to influence the feelings and behaviour of others.

Prescriptivism
  ● Subjective view of morality.
  ● R. M. Hare believed that through our moral utterances, we are recommending a course of action to others.
  ● However, unlike emotivism, prescriptivists moral statements are products of reason - not just approval/disapproval of what we do and don’t like.