Is there a Metaethical Argument Against Non-natural Moral Realism?

Jordan Walters

A

Major Research Paper

in

The Department

of

Philosophy

Under the Supervision of

Dr. Katharina Nieswandt

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts (Philosophy) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

April 8, 2020

Is there a Metaethical Argument Against Non-natural Moral Realism?

Jordan Walters

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I argue that Daniel Korman and Dustin Locke's debunking argument against non-natural moral realism overgeneralizes to non-moral domains, and as a consequence, entails an implausible epistemic principle. I call this principle NOMO: *No Modal Connection without an Explanatory Connection.* I argue that NOMO is implausible for three reasons: (1) NOMO entails an implausible constraint on empirical knowledge; (2) NOMO entails rejecting *any* view that doesn't equate "explanatory connections" with "causal connections" (which entails debunking non-causal realism across the board), and finally (3) NOMO is self-undermining. I then consider two replies and argue that they both fail. As a last step, I argue that, even if NOMO were independently plausible, it would be dialectically inefficacious against its primary addressee, the non-natural moral realist, because the latter must regard it as question-begging. I conclude by elaborating the shared root of all discussed problems: Korman and Locke's debunking argument isn't about *morality*. That is, it is not a *metaethical* argument against non-natural moral realism—it is a more general *epistemic* argument against non-causal realism (under which non-natural moral realism falls).

> "Of course, some philosophers think that something's having intuitive content is very inconclusive evidence in favor of it. I think it is very heavy evidence in favor of anything, myself. I really don't know, in a way, what more conclusive evidence one can have about anything, ultimately speaking"

> (Kripke, 1980: 42).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Table of Contents

§1. Introduction

Consider the following claims:

1. You only believe that lying is wrong because this belief enhances reproductive success.[1]

2. Your belief that God exists is an infantile projection.[2]

3. You only believe in Kripkean judgments about reference because you are a Westerner.[3]

4. You only believe that consequentialism is false because of a chemical reaction in your Ventromedial Prefrontal Cortex.[4]

5. You only believe in the analytic/synthetic distinction because you went to Oxford.[5]

Aptly characterizing the underlying structure of all of these claims, we might use the following phrase: "You only believe that because....[such-and-such]" (White, 2010: 573). What these sorts of arguments—known as *debunking arguments*—all share in common is that they aim to undermine the epistemic status of beliefs by appealing to their illegitimate origins. In their simplest form, debunking arguments consist of a causal premise and an epistemic premise. The causal premise identifies what makes it the case that, *S* believes that *p* (e.g., underlying psychological features). The epistemic premise asserts that the causal premise is an epistemic defeater for p (e.g., those underlying psychological features do not appropriately track the truth). Accordingly, the conclusion of a debunking argument is that *S's* belief that *p* is unjustified.[6]

Of increasing concern to contemporary moral philosophers are *Evolutionary Debunking Arguments*, which aim to undermine the epistemic status of moral beliefs (as construed by moral realists) by appeal to their evolutionary origins.[7] The worry is that if evolutionary forces had shaped us differently, we would hold different beliefs now. Against this, moral realists claim that

moral truths don't depend on us. Hence, so the idea goes, out of all the possible paths that evolutionary forces could have led us down, moral realists are committed to thinking that our moral beliefs and the moral facts coincide. However, that is akin to thinking that you got the winning lottery ticket *before* the numbers are even announced.[8] So, if moral realism is true, then we are most likely isolated from the moral truths.[9] The upshot, so the debunker tells us, is to reject moral realism.[10]

And yet, although this may seem like a niche worry of contemporary metaethics, the concern over the evolutionary origins of our moral beliefs dates back to Darwin who wrote:

"If…men were reared under precisely the same conditions as hive-bees, there can hardly be a doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker-bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters; and no one would think of interfering" (Darwin, 1874: 73).[11]

A similar stance on the genealogy of our moral, political, and religious beliefs seems to be taken in Marx, e.g. in *The German Ideology*, where he writes:

"If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura,* this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process [...] Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this real existence, their thinking and the

products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness is determined by life" (Marx, 1972: 154-155).

Nietzsche too, worried about the genealogy of moral and religious belief.[12] In *Human all too Human,* he writes:

"How [the belief in God] *originated* can at the present stage of comparative ethnology no longer admit of doubt, and with the insight into that origin the belief *falls away*" (Nietzsche 1986).[13]

Furthermore, in *Beyond Good and Evil,* Nietzsche appears to be suspicious of philosophical theorizing itself. Far from being an impartial quest for truth, Nietzsche displays worries that philosophy is a species of motivated reasoning when he writes:

"It has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy has hitherto been: a confession on the part of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir; moreover, that the moral (or immoral) intention in every philosophy have every time constituted the real germ of life out of which the entire plant has grown. To explain how a philosopher's most remote metaphysical assertions have actually been arrived at, it is always well (and wise) to ask oneself first: what morality does this (does *he*) aim at?" (Nietzsche, 2003: 37).

I could go on, but the lesson should be clear: major works in the history of philosophy and science from various schools defend a genealogical skepticism about moral truths. However, these debunking arguments are not only a matter of historical interest. On the contrary, they are on the rise again. From the claim of contemporary experimental philosophers that empirical data

about peer disagreement undermines our intuitions elicited vis-à-vis the method of cases,[14] to the rising interest in a supposed neural basis of moral judgment,[15] contemporary analytic philosophers are starting to take an interest in genealogical reflections on the contingency of our beliefs.[16] Indeed, debunking arguments, as of late, have made an appearance almost everywhere: the domains targeted range across "causation, chance, color, consciousness, epistemic reasons, free will, grounding, laws of nature, logic, mathematics, modality, morality, natural kinds, ordinary objects, religion, and time" (Korman, 2019: 1). Debunking arguments, then, are ubiquitous; they exist for almost any domain.

Notice that for most of the aforementioned debunking arguments, there is the assertion of a causal influence—whether it be evolutionary, historical, or psychological—on your beliefs in a domain *D*. The epistemic status of your beliefs is undermined *because* the causal features that influence and determine your beliefs are contingent. (They could have been otherwise.) Given this, it seems you would have to count it as a piece of luck that you ended up with true beliefs. However, as the debunker is quick to press, you have no good independent reason to think that you got lucky. What you should do, according to the debunker, is give up your beliefs (as you understand them).

§1.1 Resisting the debunker

Suppose you want to resist a debunking argument. What are you to do? Well, one way to resist a debunking argument is to deny the causal premise. For example, you might claim that evolutionary debunking arguments are founded on evolutionary psychology, which, in turn, relies on flimsy "just-so stories."[17] Analogously, you might deny that your moral beliefs are demonstrably *caused* by neurons firing, your historical epoch, economic superstructures, cultural contingency, or any other worldly features. Thus, according to this line of reasoning, you should

only doubt your beliefs when you are given a concrete reason to doubt that your beliefs are neither safe nor sensitive.[18]

Suppose that you think you are still justified in believing that *p*. Are you home free? Well, on the one hand, those debunking arguments that rely on diagnosing what makes it the case that you believe that *p* are no longer effective against you. On the other hand, a new, content-neutral debunking argument—put forward by Korman & Locke (forthcoming)—has been crafted to deal with this move. As Korman and Locke see it, it is the fact that there is *no* explanatory relation between your belief that *p*, and the fact *P*, that should cause you to doubt that you are reliable in believing that *p*.[19] Thus, it seems like no matter what path you take—i.e., asserting a causal influence or denying a causal influence—you end up with the same outcome: suspension of your beliefs (as you, our supposed realist, construe them). In the first case, you debunk the belief. In the second case, you should doubt the reliability of the belief.

§1.2 Recasting the debate?

So much for the general structure of debunking arguments. My point in outlining these two sorts of debunking arguments has been to sketch a rough picture of what motivates Korman and Locke's formulation of their debunking argument, and its significance for the current state of the debate. At the outset of their paper, Korman and Locke say that they aim to recast the debate between debunkers and realists. They say that the debate has bottomed out into mutual accusations of "question-begging" and that the debate should instead focus on "a certain assumption of epistemic priority" (Korman & Locke, forthcoming: 2). That is, the debate should focus on whether or not justification requires an ability to explain the causes of beliefs that we take to be reliable. Their promise, as I take it, is that we can make progress in metaethics if we focus on metaepistemology.

Korman and Locke (forthcoming) target their debunking argument at a view called non-natural moral realism,[20] which we might characterize as follows:

(1)   Moral facts are not natural facts (NON-NATURALISM).

(2)   Moral facts are attitude/mind-independent (REALISM).

(3)   We have a way of knowing moral facts (COGNITIVISM).

(4)   Moral facts are not necessarily causally connected to our moral beliefs (CAUSAL

        INEFFICACY).[21]

Daniel Korman and Dustin Locke (forthcoming: 3) call this last point the lack of an "explanatory connection." They say that a fact is *explanatorily connected* to a belief if there is a causal connection between the belief and the fact. Thus, according to Korman and Locke, it seems inconsistent to say that we have a way of knowing moral facts while also holding that moral facts are not necessarily *explanatorily connected* to our moral beliefs.[22] Why is this so? Well, usually when we claim that we know a fact, we are able to give an explanation about the relationship between our belief and the fact. For instance, if I know that there is a cup of coffee on the table in the adjacent room, I can give you an explanation (involving my perceptual faculties) about how my belief is related to this fact: I've just been there and seen it. However, the non-natural moral realist can't give this *kind* of explanation for the moral facts.

Daniel Korman and Dustin Locke think that the presence of this reliability challenge poses a unique problem for the non-natural moral realist. They motivate a debunking argument with the conclusion that non-natural moral realists ought to suspend their moral beliefs because

they cannot rationally believe that their moral beliefs are reliable without being explanatorily connected (Korman & Locke, forthcoming). Put another way, propositions 3 and 4 are in tension.

However, I argue that Daniel Korman and Dustin Locke's debunking argument against non-natural moral realism overgeneralizes to non-moral domains and thus entails endorsing a very demanding and therefore ultimately implausible epistemic principle.

Here is how I will proceed. In §2, I present Korman and Locke's debunking argument against the non-natural moral realist, which I call "THE MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT." In §3 I argue that their debunking argument against the non-natural moral realist overgeneralizes to non-moral domains, thereby forcing Korman and Locke to endorse a general epistemic principle—NOMO—that would debunk non-causal realism across the board (logic, mathematics, modality, etc...). In §4 I argue that NOMO is implausible, and in §5 I consider two possible replies. I argue that they fail. In §6, I highlight how NOMO is dialectically inefficacious against the non-natural moral realist. I close in §7, summing up what I have done.

§2. Korman and Locke's modal debunking argument

Before we get to Korman and Locke's debunking argument in its schematic form, let me define two relevant terms.

EXPLANATORY CONNECTION: A belief is *explanatorily connected* to a fact "iff it is [causally] explained by or explains some facts in [a domain] D" (Korman & Locke, forthcoming: 3).

MODAL CONNECTION: A belief is *modally connected* to a fact "iff it bears an epistemically significant counterfactual relation to some facts in [a domain] D" (Korman & Locke, forthcoming: 3)

11

What does it mean to explain a belief by a fact? Well, suppose your roommate is setting the table for breakfast. You come to have the belief that there is a cup of coffee on the table. Let's call your belief a "cup-belief." Now, suppose someone asks you why you believe that there is a cup of coffee on the table. You can explain *why* (e.g., via perception) you have your cup-belief by the fact that there is a cup on the table. Put differently, you can say that your cup-belief in this case is *explanatorily connected* to the cup-fact because it is explained by the fact to which it is connected, namely the fact that there is a cup on the table. Of course, the justification of your cup-belief can be via *direct* perception; but it could also be *indirect* justification, via testimony. The key point to note here is that your ability to give an explanation—either *directly* or *indirectly*—coupled with a reliable tracking mechanism, entitles you to your cup-belief.

Now, what does it mean to say that a belief bears "an epistemically significant counterfactual relation" to the facts (Korman & Locke, forthcoming: 3)? Well, suppose that you've finished your coffee, and there is now a bowl of cereal on the table—but you still have your cup-belief. If this is so, then it seems that you continue to hold your cup-belief when there is in fact a bowl on the table. In this case, we can say that your cup-belief isn't *modally connected* to the cup-fact because you still have your cup-belief regardless of whether or not there are any cup-facts. If in all possible worlds you still end up with cup-beliefs—even when there is a bowl of cereal on the table—then your cup-belief forming methods are unreliable. For your cup-belief to be *modally connected* would require you only having it when there are cups on the table. Once your coffee is finished and you've moved on to the cereal, you should move onto bowl-beliefs.

At this point, it is important to recognize that Korman and Locke, as I understand them, assume that modal connections *just are* causal connections, which as a consequence, stipulates a counterfactual theory of causation with respect to their definitions. There is, however,

considerable debate over this assumption.[23] I do not have the space to deal with this issue here, but in what follows it will become clear that the force of their argument turns, in part, on this assumption. We are now in a position to turn to the debunking argument in its schematic form. Here is my formulation of Korman and Locke's (forthcoming: 3) debunking argument, which I call:

MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT

(P1)   According to non-natural moral realists, moral facts are not necessarily causally connected to our moral beliefs (CAUSAL INEFFICACY).

(P2)   If one is rationally committed to believing that one's moral beliefs are not explanatorily connected to the moral facts, then one is rationally committed to believing that one's moral beliefs are not modally connected.

(P3)   If one is rationally committed to believing that one's moral beliefs are not modally connected, then one is rationally committed to withholding from one's moral beliefs.

(C)   So, non-natural moral realists are rationally committed to withholding from moral beliefs.[24]

The tension that Korman and Locke highlight with Premise 2 is that the non-natural moral realist seems to be inconsistent in holding that moral facts are not necessarily *explanatorily connected* to our beliefs (CAUSAL INEFFICACY) while also claiming that they have a way of knowing these moral facts (COGNITIVISM). Why is this so? Well, just as it seems epistemically problematic that

your cup-beliefs could reliably track cups on the table, absent of an *explanatory connection*, so too does it seem epistemically problematic that your moral beliefs could reliably track mind-independent moral facts, absent of an *explanatory connection*. No doubt, this is not an isolated worry. Indeed, the thrust behind Premise 2 shares similarities with familiar worries over Substance Dualism (e.g., the problem of explaining how an immaterial substance could interact with an extended substance—and vice versa) and Theism (e.g., the problem of explaining how a finite and contingent mind could come to grasp and have a clear and distinct idea of an infinite and necessary being).

Of course, when met with this kind of charge, the non-natural moral realist sees nothing wrong with asserting—in Moorean fashion—that these beliefs are in no need of explanation; for they seem as true as anything, and more "credible than any philosopher's argument to the contrary" (Schaffer, 2009: 357). Indeed, the non-natural moral realist will concede that they aren't *indefeasible.* To be sure, there is, in principle, something that could undermine these basic beliefs. By the non-natural moral realist lights, an epistemic defeater is some information that gives them a positive reason to doubt that their belief forming methods are reliable.

Nevertheless, by Korman and Locke's lights, in conceding that their moral beliefs aren't explanatorily connected, the non-natural moral realist has already started digging their own grave. For Korman and Locke's MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT aims to show that a *lack of an explanation* gives the non-natural moral realist a reason to think that their moral beliefs are neither safe nor sensitive. The basic idea here is that not being able to tell a story about how your moral beliefs are explained by moral facts (on the realist's construal of them) *gives you some reason to believe* that the methods that you used to acquire your moral beliefs are unreliable; and we shouldn't trust beliefs that are acquired from an unreliable mechanism.

In sum, then, Korman and Locke's MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT challenges the non-natural moral realist to either accept that (i) they are beneficiaries of a pre-established harmony of sorts[25] or to (ii) give a *reason* for why they should think that they got lucky. Both of these options seem untenable. Of course, they could give up proposition 4 and offer a naturalistic account of how moral facts supervene on—or are reducible to—natural facts. However, if they did this, then they wouldn't be non-natural moral realists, and the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT only applies to non-natural moral realists. Hence, the challenge remains.

§3. Overgeneralizing and NOMO

In this section, I'm going to argue that the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT generalizes to non-moral domains of thought, thereby committing Korman and Locke to endorsing a general epistemic principle that I call NOMO.[26] An upshot of endorsing NOMO is that it rules out all forms of *non-causal realism*. Following Jared Warren, I will define non-causal realism about X as the position which hold that X-truths are (i) mind-independent, (ii) non-trivial, (iii) truth-apt, and (iv) causally inert (Warren, 2017: 1654).[27] For any belief that has properties i—iv let's say it has feature ϕ. Perhaps the most familiar concept possessing feature ϕ is God (Warren, 2017: 1660). Consider: God is said to be (i) mind independent and (ii) truths about the nature of God are allegedly non-trivial. Moreover, (iii) sentences involving God have truth-conditions and are objects of thought. Finally, (iv) God is outside of space and time—i.e., not of *this* contingent world. Let me begin with my overgeneralization argument in its schematic form:

OVERGENERALIZATION ARGUMENT

(O1)   If the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT generalizes to non-moral domains, then it
          entails the general epistemic principle NOMO.

15

(O2)   The MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT generalizes to non-moral domains.

(C)   Therefore, the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT entails NOMO.

Consider the first premise of my overgeneralization argument: Why should you think that the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT generalizes to non-moral domains? Well, Korman and Locke do not provide an argument as to why the problem that they raise for the non-natural moral realist should be specific to the content of *moral* beliefs. Hence, the non-natural moral realist could say:

> I hold a large class of my beliefs—aesthetic, mathematical, and philosophical—to be reliable and true without having what you understand as an *explanatory connection* for them.[28] So why should I think that there is something peculiar about my moral beliefs? You haven't given me any information to undermine the reliability of my moral beliefs—you have merely pointed out that they share a characteristic feature, ϕ, with my aesthetic, mathematical, and philosophical beliefs.

Thus, if Korman and Locke's argument to the non-natural moral realist amounts to saying that,

> *Descriptive claim*. Your moral beliefs have some feature ϕ, that some of your other beliefs lack (viz. beliefs about empirical facts).

then the non-natural moral realist can easily accommodate that without doubting the reliability of their moral beliefs. Hence, it's clear that the strength of Korman and Locke's argument can't turn

on the mere descriptive claim that moral beliefs share similarities with other beliefs. It must turn

on some further claim that feature ϕ gives you reason to suspend the belief:

> *Normative claim.* Your moral beliefs have some feature ϕ that gives you reason to
>
> suspend your moral beliefs.

This, however, would apply to *any* belief that has feature ϕ. Since the MODAL DEBUNKING

ARGUMENT only holds if you accept the stronger *normative claim* as opposed to the weaker

descriptive claim then, I think it's fair to say that we can keep the logical form of Korman and

Locke's argument and swap out 'moral beliefs' for any other belief for which realists cannot give

an explanatory connection story. Reconstructing and generalizing their argument, yields the

following:

MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT*

(P1*) Non-causal realists are rationally committed to believing that their ϕ-beliefs are

   not causally connected to the facts.

(P2*) If one is rationally committed to believing that one's ϕ-beliefs are not

   explanatorily connected to the facts, then one is rationally committed to believing

   that one's ϕ-beliefs are not modally connected.

(P3*) If one is rationally committed to believing that one's ϕ-beliefs are not modally

   connected, then one is rationally committed to withholding from one's ϕ-beliefs.

(C*)   So, non-causal realists are rationally committed to withholding from ϕ-beliefs.

Take a close look at premise P2*. All that has changed is that 'moral beliefs' have been swapped for 'ɸ-beliefs.' Korman and Locke now appear to be endorsing, via P2*, the following general epistemic principle that I call the *No Modal Connection without an Explanatory Connection* (NOMO) for all domains:

> NOMO: For any belief P that S has, it is rational for S to think that P is modally connected to a mind-independent fact ψ, if and only if S can give a causal explanation involving the relation between P and ψ.

NOMO is essentially a negative principle: it says that you can have all the mind-independence, truth-aptness, and reliability that you want. However, there is a catch: NOMO says that if you add in (iv) *causal inertness* you must rationally commit to withholding ɸ-beliefs. To see how NOMO connects back with our metaethical case, recall the commitments of the non-natural moral realist:

(1)   Moral facts are not natural facts (NON-NATURALISM).

(2)   Moral facts are attitude/mind-independent (REALISM).

(3)   We have a way of knowing moral facts (COGNITIVISM).

(4)   Moral facts are not necessarily causally connected to our moral beliefs (CAUSAL
        INEFFICACY).

Here's the dialectic: According to NOMO, these four propositions cannot all be true. Let's take proposition 1 as a core commitment of the non-natural moral realist. On the one hand, NOMO says that you can hold propositions 2 and 4, in which case you posit the existence of moral facts

18

in tandem with an explanatory gap. However, NOMO dictates that you up proposition 3, i.e., you give up the possibility of moral knowledge (as the non-natural moral realist construes it).[29] On the other hand, NOMO says that you can hold propositions 2 and 3, in which case moral facts are mind-independent and we have a way of knowing them—just like facts about cups of coffee. However, in giving up on proposition 4 you end up claiming that moral facts explain or are explained by natural facts, thereby giving up proposition 1.[30] So, no matter how you carve up the terrain, NOMO says that it's inconsistent to hold propositions 1-4 together.

Let's take stock. What I have shown thus far is that the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT generalizes, and that it entails endorsing a general epistemic principle—NOMO—that debunks non-causal realism across the board. In what follows, I will give three reasons to doubt NOMO (§4) and then, in §5, I will consider two objections.

§4. The implausibility of NOMO

In this section I will argue that NOMO, as a constraint on what it is rational to believe, is implausible for three reasons.

§4.1 Trouble in the empirical domain

First, there seem to be many facts we can reliably know but couldn't if NOMO were true. For example, consider the mundane claim that we are reliable about *at least some* facts about the future. It seems uncontroversial that I know that I will be dead in a million years. It is *prima facie* rational to believe this. However, my present belief that I will be dead in a million years is in no way *caused* by the future fact that I will be dead in a million years. Nevertheless, I still seem rationally entitled to this belief.[31] It seems rational to claim that I know it, on pain of what I would commit myself to (*via* an epistemic closure principle) if I claimed that I lacked knowledge

about this future fact.[32] However, NOMO says that I can't have knowledge of some fact ϕ, without being able to give an *explanatory connection* for ϕ, which seems too stringent of a constraint, even for this case of empirical knowledge. It might be a tenable constraint on *some* forms of empirical knowledge; but as a general epistemic principle, it seems to demand too much.

§4.2 Trouble in non-empirical domains

Second, NOMO seems implausible for non-empirical claims because it seems like a category mistake to demand a causal connection for non-empirical domains. Accordingly, you might worry that NOMO entails rejecting forms of non-causal realism that seem independently plausible. Indeed, as Jared Warren notes, Fine (2001), Parfit (2011), Nagel (1986), Lewis (1984) and Sider (2011) "seem to endorse non-causal realism about mathematics, logic, ethics, and other domains as well" (Warren, 2017: 1654). No doubt, then, the non-natural moral realist might—reasoning abductively—claim that NOMO is too demanding of an epistemic principle to adopt. The idea here is that endorsing NOMO requires giving up *any* belief that lacks a causal connection. Yet, presumably, not all beliefs require explanation: e.g., every explanation has to stop somewhere; asking for a further explanation where there is none might be an epistemic vice, rather than a virtue, in this context. Of course, one can always bite the bullet: it could be that we ought to give up non-causal realism across the board, upon considering NOMO. Nevertheless, insofar as Korman and Locke have only given an argument for NOMO in the moral domain, it seems that more work is required on their part to show why non-causal realism in general is problematic.[33]

§4.3 Trouble with self-defeat

Third, NOMO seems implausible because it suffers a problem of self-defeat. Consider: NOMO says that I can't have knowledge of some fact ϕ, without being in a place to give an *explanatory connection* for ϕ. Let's say I'm unconvinced. Suppose I ask: Why should I believe in the truth of NOMO if I don't have an *explanatory connection* for the relationship between (i) my belief that NOMO is true and (ii) the fact that NOMO is true? It doesn't seem like NOMO permits us to have knowledge of its own truth because we aren't in a position to know (i) that our belief that NOMO is true is modally connected to (ii) the fact that NOMO is true.[34] Thus, NOMO seems to suffer an analogous problem of self-defeat that buried the verification theory of meaning: just as the verification principle cannot be verified, so too can NOMO—as a normative epistemic principle—not be evaluated by its own standards; for NOMO cannot be said to enter into causal relationships with our beliefs.

I have just given three reasons for thinking that NOMO, taken as a general epistemic principle governing what is rational to believe, is too demanding. I furthermore argued that Korman and Locke's MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT entails NOMO. I hence conclude that we should reject the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT.

In the next section, I consider two possible replies for the debunker, dealing with (i) the problem of self-refutation and (ii), the problem that NOMO undermines many tenable beliefs in non-moral domains of thought.

§5. A way out for the debunker?

Korman attempts to offer a reply to the counterexamples I raised in §4. He attempts to escape the worry of self-refutation by adopting an anti-realist construal of epistemic facts, and he attempts to escape the overgeneralization worry by modifying NOMO itself. However, I think that both of

these replies amount to ad hoc patches that fail to address the deeper problem; namely, that the only way to save NOMO involves adopting an epistemology according to which there is no absolute truth in any domain and hence, trivially, no truth with respect to the questions under discussion.

§5.1 A way out of self-refutation?

Korman (2019) acknowledges my point that the epistemic premise (P2) in the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT is underwritten by "a more general explanatory constraint" (i.e., NOMO) that suffers the problem of self-defeat; that is, he takes my point that the debunker cannot draw the conclusion that NOMO is true without undermining NOMO itself.[35] However, he claims that this does not show that NOMO is false or that "*no one* can rationally accept" its truth (Korman, 2019: 8). Instead, he claims that it is open for anti-realists to launch a conditional debunking argument against non-natural moral realism "so long as they are willing to extend their anti-realism to epistemic facts" like NOMO (Korman, 2019: 8).

Recall that NOMO is a general constraint on what is rational to believe. It is not a hypothetical principle that would only apply to some agents just in case they have the relevant set of attitudes; rather, it is a categorical principle that is supposed to apply to all agents irrespective of their current set of attitudes. Given this, I do not think that adopting an anti-realist construal of epistemic facts is useful in the context of this debate because such a move *trivially* makes it the case that the self-undermining objection dissolves by trading in a categorical principle for a hypothetical one.

In addition, Korman's reply is dialectically inefficacious: we cannot assume that non-natural moral realists are anti-realist's about epistemic facts. Thus, given that the force of their argument *now* hinges on anti-realism about epistemic facts, it follows that NOMO is just a report

about what follows from what—i.e., what claims about epistemic facts you should make if you find yourself endorsing the debunkers epistemic system *X*.

My general point here is that the debunker only gets to use NOMO as a premise in their debunking argument in virtue of it being categorical. Yet, crucially, and by definition, once we adopt an anti-realist construal of epistemic facts, NOMO cannot *be* categorical. Ultimately, then, it seems that the debunkers move of extending "their anti-realism to epistemic facts" like NOMO has not done them any good in this context (Korman, 2019: 8). I am willing to grant Korman's point that the apparent self-undermining feature of NOMO does not show that it is false or that "*no one* can rationally accept" it (Korman, 2019: 8). Perhaps epistemic anti-realists can accept it; but the mere acceptance of an epistemic principle does not entail its truth. Thus, I take it that either NOMO is still self-refuting or a hypothetical claim about what the debunker thinks *they* should believe.

§5.2 A way out of overgeneralization?

Another objection to NOMO was that it undermines many tenable beliefs in non-moral domains of thought (e.g., inductive beliefs or independently plausible forms of non-causal realism). Daniel Korman (2019) anticipates this worry. He claims that the debunker might attempt to weaken NOMO to "make room for justified beliefs about the future" (Korman, 2019: 8). He gives us such a proposal (which, for the purposes of this paper, I will call NOMO*):

> NOMO* "If S believes that the fact that p neither explains nor is explained by her
> belief that p *and that there is no further fact that explains both the fact that p and*
> *the belief that p*, then S is thereby rationally committed to withholding from
> believing p" (Korman, 2019: 8).

NOMO* is designed to get around some of the worries that I outlined earlier. For instance, Korman writes, "Supposing that the laws of nature figure in the explanation of both facts about future sunrises and our beliefs about them, . . . [NOMO*] . . . will not prescribe withholding belief about future sunrises" (Korman, 2019: 8). Such an argument might go as follows:

> (A1) S believes that the fact that there will be a future sunrise neither explains nor is explained by her belief that there will be a future sunrise (~EXPLANATORY CONNECTION).

> (A2) There is some further fact—laws of nature—that explains both the fact that there will be a future sunrise and the belief that there will be a future sunrise (THIRD FACTOR).

> (C) Therefore, S is thereby rationally entitled to believing that there will be a future sunrise.

Premise A2 seems too quick. Do the *same* laws of nature (whatever they might be, if there are any) that cause the sun to go up correspondingly cause my belief that the sun will go up? That seems dubious and presupposes a whole suite of philosophical commitments.[36] Even if we suppose that laws of nature constitutively figure into an explanation of why I believe that the sun will rise tomorrow, we might ask, in Humean spirit: How are we entitled to believing that (i) laws of nature as opposed to (ii) a mere association of ideas, is what figures into our explanation for why we believe that there will be future sunrises? We can't merely assert that our belief that there are laws of nature explains or is explained by the fact that there are laws of nature; for our belief that there are laws of nature could be given an alternative explanation, according to which

our belief that there are laws of nature is explained by the fact that we observe a constant conjunction of ideas.

Suppose we grant that NOMO* avoids the problem of undermining many tenable beliefs in non-moral domains of thought (e.g., inductive beliefs or tenable forms of non-causal realism). Even still, I think that, despite the modification, NOMO* also suffers a problem of self-defeat.

To see this, just ask yourself: Does the epistemic fact expressed by NOMO* explain your belief that NOMO* is true? Note that we have already ruled out the option that there is a direct *explanatory connection* for the relationship between your belief that NOMO is true and the fact that NOMO is true. That is what motivated modifying NOMO to NOMO*. Accordingly, then, the only option on the table is to tell some story about how there might be some further fact that explains your belief that NOMO* is true and the fact that NOMO* is true. Let us call this further fact "*FF*". What might *FF* be? We need to lay some constraints on the table.[37]

(A) *FF* must be *modally connected*; that is, we would need to know whether or not we would still have believed that *ff* if *FF* did not hold.

(B) *FF* must *justify* the belief that NOMO* is true.

(C) *FF* must *explain* the belief that NOMO* is true and the fact that NOMO* is true.

We are now confronted with a puzzle: proposition A says that we need to know whether or not we are reliable in believing *FF*. How might we do this? Well, according to Korman and Locke, the only way to test this is to give some sort of causal story concerning the relationship between our beliefs and the facts, which is what proposition C requires. However, by their own definition, such an explanation is off the table for abstract normative facts (which are causally inefficacious)

that figure into justifying beliefs.[38] Thus, whatever *FF* turns out to be, it cannot satisfy proposition B. This means that no further fact—whatever it might be—can justify believing that NOMO* is true. Thus, NOMO* is also self-undermining.[39]

Let me now turn to my subsequent point that even if we had some way of knowing whether or not NOMO (or NOMO*) were true, it would still be dialectically inefficacious against the non-natural moral realist to endorse such a principle in argument.

§6. Is NOMO dialectically inefficacious?

I have just given three reasons for why you might think that NOMO is implausible. I also tried to defend the implausibility of NOMO against two objections. Let us suppose you are not convinced. There is still a further problem, namely, that *even if* NOMO should be true, Korman and Locke's MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT would be dialectically inefficacious against their primary target, the non-natural moral realist.

Recall that the non-natural moral realist is committed to the irreducibility of the normative to the non-normative, all the while holding that our moral beliefs are reliable. Ronald Dworkin best articulates this:

Consider Gilbert Harman's suggestion that we cannot regard any belief as reliable unless we think that the best causal explanation of why we hold it refers to the state of affairs it describes. In some form, this test does seem appropriate to beliefs about the physical world. [...] But nothing in the content of moral (or aesthetic or mathematical or philosophical) opinions invites or justifies such a test. On the contrary, the content of these domains excludes it, because an adequate causal explanation of a belief includes showing that the belief would not have occurred if the alleged cause had not

been present, and we cannot understand or test that counterfactual claim with respect

to moral or aesthetic beliefs because we cannot imagine a world that is exactly like this

one except that in that world slavery is just or *The Marriage of Figaro* is trash

(Dworkin, 1996: 119).

The big difference between the moral (or aesthetic or mathematical or philosophical) domain and

the empirical domain, as Dworkin sees it, is that the moral domain just seems to require different

"standards for reliable belief" (Dworkin, 1996: 119). On Dworkin's view, since the standards for

the moral domain are different than the natural domain, there is nothing metaphysically odd or

queer with holding that we have a way of knowing moral facts while also holding that moral

facts are not necessarily *explanatorily connected* to our moral beliefs. Let's call this view

Reliability Standard Pluralism:

RELIABILITY STANDARD PLURALISM (RSP). The standard for the modal reliability of a

proposition P turns on facts about the domain to which P belongs.

RSP can be contrasted with what NOMO seems to require, which I'll call *Reliability Standard*

Monism:

RELIABILITY STANDARD MONISM (RSM). The standard for the modal reliability of a

proposition P turns on facts about whether or not S can give a causal explanation

involving the relation between P and the truth-maker for P.

Here's why NOMO appears to be dialectically inefficacious. Since Dworkin endorses RSP, when

Korman and Locke call into question his moral beliefs on the grounds that they are unreliable,

Dworkin will claim that the moral domain requires different "standards for reliable belief"

(Dworkin, 1996: 119), thereby retaining justification in his moral beliefs. At this point, Korman and Locke can accuse Dworkin of question-begging because he appears to be appealing to his "moral beliefs [...] to vindicate the very faculties that are responsible for those beliefs" (Korman & Locke, forthcoming: 8).[40] To this, Dworkin could reply by asserting that his moral beliefs are just as reliable as his aesthetic or mathematical or philosophical beliefs. Following this, Korman and Locke seem to have only one option left: they have to reject RSP, and thus, argue for a more general epistemic principle—NOMO—that undermines reliability in all of the domains that Dworkin mentioned. However, at this point in the dialectic, Dworkin (and non-natural moral realists) can contend that NOMO proves too much: (i) NOMO appears to rule out knowledge of future facts; (ii) NOMO undermines non-causal realism across the board; (iii) and finally, NOMO appears to be self-defeating. And without independent arguments for each of these worries, the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT appears to be dialectically inefficacious.

And yet, recall that the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT was built to *be* dialectically efficacious; it was built with the intention that it would move forward a somewhat stagnant debate. Indeed, at the outset of their paper, Korman and Locke say that the debate has bottomed out into mutual accusations of "question-begging" and that the debate should instead focus on "a certain assumption of epistemic priority" (Korman & Locke, forthcoming: 2). That is, the debate should focus on whether or not justification requires an ability to explain the causes of beliefs that we take to be reliable

However, in reorienting the debate over to a debate about "a certain assumption of epistemic priority", Dworkin seems within his right to claim that Korman and Locke are begging the question: They do not provide an argument against one of Dworkin's basic tenets (RSP); by defining reliability as they do, they start from the *assumption* that this tenet is incorrect. It hardly

28

comes as a surprise, then, that if we start off assuming that RSM is right, we get to make a debunking argument in the moral domain. Ultimately, it seems like more work is needed on Korman and Locke's part to independently motivate NOMO before the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT can be used against non-natural moral realists.

§7. Conclusion

Ultimately, whether or not the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT succeeds is still an open question. I have not answered *that* question in this paper. However, one thing remains clear: If the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT succeeds, the *reasons why* it succeeds are instructive; for the *reasons why* this type of argument succeeds—if it does—turns out to hinge on a battery of philosophical commitments outside of ethics. My argument adds to the doubts regarding the possibility of a *pure* metaethical debunking-styled argument that targets *only* the second-order status of moral claims. From what I have argued here, the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT turns out to be just another instance of an *epistemic argument* that targets the knowability of CAUSALLY INEFFICACIOUS facts.

My larger point is that, in order to get clear over the debate between so-called debunkers and realists in metaethics, we need to solve the long-standing epistemic puzzle of whether or not we are justified in believing that we have knowledge of causally inefficacious facts. The worry that we cannot know anything about causally inefficacious facts is as old as philosophy itself. (Frege's third realm and Plato's heaven, for example, have always struck some as dubious.) What that means, for the metaethical debate under discussion, I believe, is that it is *not* resolved by doing more metaethics. Metaethics, at least for this debate, must be put to the side, and epistemology must take its place. This is because the problem at the heart of the moral reliability challenge, as it turns out, isn't about *morality* at all.[41]

Endnotes

[1] See Joyce (2013: 356) for the argument that it is simply an "adaptive pay-off" that we believe such.

[2] Following Freud, you might worry that belief in God is a simply your early childhood manifestation of a "longing for [a] father" (Freud, 1927: 18)

[3] See Machery (2017: §2) for empirical data suggesting that there is significant cultural variation amongst speakers who make descriptivist judgments about reference and speakers who make causal historicist judgments about reference. Of course, very few non-philosophers actually *know* Kripke's theory of reference, but the experiments discussed in Machery's (2017: §2) book tend to reveal that persons born into a Western culture are more likely to make causal historicist judgments about reference—i.e., they are natural born Kripkeans—and persons born into non-Western cultures are more likely to make descriptivist judgments about reference.

[4] See Greene (2014: 702-718). Greene's worry is that characteristically deontological judgments, made with reference to footbridge-like cases (i.e., when participants are asked whether they would push the man off the bridge to save the five) correlate with "Amygdala activity [which] correlates positively with negative emotion in response to footbridge-like cases and correlates negatively with consequentialist judgments" (Greene 2014: 702). From this, Greene's worry seems to be that high amygdala activity indicates that people aren't "actually engaged in moral reasoning" [when they respond philosophical cases, but instead, are using their reasoning to] "justify and organize their pre-existing conclusions about what's right and wrong" (Greene 2014: 718). The upshot of this, for Greene, is that consequentialist judgments engage the Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex—which is the rational part of the brain—and therefore, are more justified than deontological judgments that engage the Ventromedial Prefrontal Cortex. For an updated

overview, see Demaree-Cotton & Kahane (2018) for discussion of the supposed relevance of cognitive science to moral epistemology.

[5] See Vavova (2018: 143) for this example, which illustrates a worry that G. A. Cohen had once it was revealed to him that, had he studied at Harvard as opposed to Oxford, he would have taken the Quinean position on the analytic/synthetic distinction.

[6] Here I follow Kahane (2011: 106) in my outline of the general structure of debunking arguments.

[7] See Vavova (2015: 104) for an overview.

[8] The lottery ticket case is drawn from Street (2016: 20).

[9] See Street (2006: 115).

[10] See Joyce (2006) Street (2006) for influential formulations.

[11] As cited in Hopster (2018: 10).

[12] In *The Genealogy of Morals,* Nietzsche writes that "[...] as a 13-year-old boy I was already preoccupied with the problem of the origin of evil" (Nietzsche, 2008: 4).

[13] As cited in Kahane (2011: 108).

[14] See Machery (2017).

[15] See Greene & Cohen (2004); Greene (2014; 2015; 2017); Greene, Sommerville, Nystrom, Darley & Cohen (2001); Kahane et al. (2012) and Kumar & Campbell (2012).

[16] See Srinivasan (2015: 325-327) for an extensive historical overview.

[17] Shafer-Landau writes: "The evolutionary account is in many ways a just-so story: We have the data here, in the form of our moral beliefs and dispositions, and are trying to infer a literally prehistoric causal story on this basis. The claim of widespread evolutionary influence (of a

doxastically discriminating kind) is not, on its face, implausible. But we should not pretend that it is free of speculation, either" (Shafer-Landau, 2012: 7, fn.6).

[18] There is some debate over how one should understand what are known as *Safety* and *Sensitivity* conditions on knowledge. For my purposes here, I follow Clarke-Doane and Baras' formulation: "Sensitivity: Our belief that P is sensitive iff had it been that ¬P, we would not still have believed that P, had we used the method that we actually used to determine whether P. Safety: Our belief that P is safe iff we could not have easily had a false belief as to whether or not P, using the method that we actually used to determine whether or not P" (Clarke-Doane & Baras 2019: 2). I would also like to note here that Clarke-Doane and Baras construe this basic thought as an epistemic principle: "Modal Security: If evidence, E, undermines our belief that P, then E gives us reason to doubt that our belief is sensitive or safe" (Clarke-Doane & Baras 2019: 1).

[19] See Daniel Korman and Dustin Locke (forthcoming: 3).

[20] See Shafer-Landau (2012: 1) for claims (1—3) and Lutz (forthcoming: 8) for claim 4. For the purposes of this paper I'll call the following commitments and other numbered claims that follow them "propositions" or sometimes "Premises" to mention a claim embedded into an argument.

[21] I.e., there is not always a causal connection between the belief and the fact. Korman and Locke (forthcoming) call those who endorse proposition 1—4 "'minimalists'." I'll take "'minimalists'" to be synonymous with "'non-natural moral realist'" for this paper. The following are representative: Nozick (1981: 342-348), Dworkin (1996: 117-126), Enoch (2010: §§3-5), Enoch (2011: §7.4), White (2010: 558-589), Wielenberg (2010: §§4-8), Parfit (2011: 532-533), Clarke-Doane (2015: §§4-6), Berker (2014), and Vavova (2015) as cited in Korman and Locke (forthcoming: 1).

[22] Of course, they are not the first to raise this general worry. Benacerraf (1973) raised it for mathematical Platonists. And as far as I can tell, Korman and Locke's argument is a version of Benacerraf's (1973) worry applied to moral facts.

[23] See Menzies (2017: §§3.1-3.4) for the various issues that counterfactual theories of causation face.

[24] See Korman & Locke (forthcoming: 3). I do not quote Korman and Locke verbatim because they specify "realists" or where I specify "non-natural moral realists" because, by my lights, naturalistic versions of moral realism although they face their own set of problems, do not suffer from this problem of lacking an explanatory connection.

[25] Enoch (2010: 413) bites the bullet on the (godless) pre-established harmony explanation. See Bedke (2014: 114) for criticism of pre-established harmony explanations.

[26] Of course. charges of overgeneralizing are hardly a new feature of metaethical debates. Rowland (2015: 161) has argued against moral error theory on the grounds that it entails endorsing epistemic error theory. See Clarke-Doane (2012) and Shafer-Landau (2012) for analogous charges of overgeneralization against evolutionary debunking arguments.

[27] I should note that i—iv are almost identically correspond to propositions 1—4 that I laid out in §1. However, in keeping with Warren's terminology, I opt to use his definitions. Non-causal realists across a variety of domains often face so-called 'reliability challenges'—challenges to explain the relationship between their beliefs and the causally inefficacious mind-independent facts. These sorts of 'reliability challenges' (or sometimes called Benacerraf-Field challenges) made explicit by Clarke-Doane (2016), have cropped up all the way from domains of modality (Stalnaker, 1996: 39-40) to logical domains (Schechter, 2014: 1).

[28] Consider Dworkin (1996: 119), who holds that we cannot test counterfactual claims about aesthetic, mathematical, or philosophical beliefs—all the while, still maintaining that those beliefs are safe, sensitive, and reliable.

[29] This might be followed by quasi-realism, such as in Blackburn (1993), anti-realist constructivism, such as in Street (2010), or moral error theory, such as in Joyce (2006).

[30] This might be followed by naturalistic construal's of moral realism, such as Foot (2001), or by some kind of commitment to a supervenience thesis, such as in Jackson & Pettit (1996).

[31] See Lutz (forthcoming: 6).

[32] Cf. Kelly & McGrath (2017: 326).

[33] See Warren (2017: 1656) for a defence of this claim.

[34] Of course, this is a version of a liar's paradox scenario. Donaldson & Lepore (2012: 130) point out that some philosophers posit context-sensitivity as a means of solving liar's paradox scenarios. But this option doesn't seem open to Korman and Locke because if they claim that the status of NOMO changes relative to a context C, then the non-natural moral realist can claim that NOMO doesn't hold in the moral domain. Of course, Korman and Locke could provide an argument to restrict the scope of NOMO. But such an argument is not yet on the table.

[35] I have identified the explanatory constraint that underwrites the second epistemic premise of the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT as NOMO. In §5.2 of Korman's (2019: 7-8) paper "Debunking Arguments," he cites an epistemic principle, that is, in my view, similar enough to NOMO to speak of them interchangeably. His epistemic principle is: "(C_2) If S believes that the fact that p neither explains nor is explained by her belief that p, then S is thereby rationally committed to withholding from believing p" (Korman, 2019: 7). Thus, for the purposes of this paper, I will take it that when Korman refers to "C_2" he is speaking of what I call NOMO.

[36] Korman seems to think that what causes my belief 'that p' also causes p (either directly or indirectly). But this commits him to thinking that mental states *just are* physical states. But there is plenty of good reason to think that token identity doesn't hold between the mental and the physical, e.g., qualia.

[37] Each of these three constraints correspond with what the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT is predicated on: A is a reliability constraint; B is a justificatory constraint which is jointly satisfied by A & C; and finally, C is an explanatory constraint. Thus, whatever FF might be, it would need to be consistent with A-C.

[38] Korman writes: "[NOMO] looks to be precisely the sort of abstract normative fact that [. . .] doesn't or can't explain our beliefs" (Korman, 2019: 8).

[39] We might opt for eliminating either A or C in this case. But if the lack of an explanatory connection here is alright, then why not elsewhere? If lacking a modal connection here is alright, then why not elsewhere? Put differently, eliminating either A or C as constraints on FF would amount to undermining the MODAL DEBUNKING ARGUMENT'S second and third premises, respectively.

[40] C.f. Lutz (forthcoming: 3).

[41] It is no accident, then, that reading the latter half of this paper, one gets the feeling that they are reading a paper that has almost nothing to do with *morality* and everything to do with *epistemology.* A librarian could accidentally shelve it under the epistemology section, and we would hardly notice. This is because the surface-level content of the question, "How do we know anything at all about moral facts?" misleads us: the real question underneath it is: "How could our mind possibly grasp truths that are causally inefficacious?"

References

Bedke, Matthew. 2014. "No Coincidence." *Oxford Studies in Metaethics* 9: 102–25.

Benacerraf, Paul. 1973. "Mathematical Truth." *The Journal of Philosophy* 70 (19): 661–679.

Berker, Selim. 2014. "Does Evolutionary Psychology Show That Normativity Is Mind-Dependent?" In *Moral Psychology and Human Agency: Philosophical Essays on the Science of Ethics*, edited by Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson, 215–52. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Blackburn, Simon. 1993. *Essays in Quasi-Realism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Clarke-Doane, Justin. 2015. "Justification and Explanation in Mathematics and Morality." *Oxford Studies in Metaethics, 10*, 80–103.

Clarke-Doane, Justin, and Dan Baras. 2019. "Modal Security." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, (00) 1–22.

Clarke-Doane, Justin. 2016. "What Is the Benacerraf Problem?" In *Truth, Objects, Infinity: New Perspectives on the Philosophy of Paul Benacerraf:*, edited by Fabrice Pataut, 17–43. Switzerland: Springer Netherlands.

Darwin, Charles. 1874. *The Descent of Man*. (Vol. 4). Prometheus Books.

Demaree-Cotton, Joanna, and Guy Kahane. 2018. "The Neuroscience of Moral Judgment." In *The Routledge Handbook of Moral Epistemology*, edited by Karen Jones, Mark Timmons, and Aaron Zimmerman, 1–40. Routledge.

Donaldson, Tom, and Ernie Lepore. 2012. "Context-Sensitivity." In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Language*, edited by Gillian. Russel and Delia Fara, 116–31. New York: Routledge.

Dworkin, Ronald. 1996. "Objectivity and Truth: You'd Better Believe It." *Philosophy & Public*

Affairs 25 (2): 87–139.

Enoch, David. 2010. "The Epistemological Challenge To Metanormative Realism: How Best To

Understand It, And How To Cope With It." *Philosophical Studies* 148 (3): 413–38.

———. 2011. *Taking Morality Seriously*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fine, Kit. 2001. "The Question of Realism." *Philosophers' Imprint* 1 (1–30).

Foot, Philippa. 2001. *Natural Goodness*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Freud, Sigmund. 1927. *The Future of an Illusion*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Greene, Joshua, and Jonathan Cohen. 2004. "For the Law, Neuroscience Changes Nothing and

Everything." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 359

(1451): 1775–85.

Greene, Joshua D. 2014. "Beyond Point-and-Shoot Morality: Why Cognitive (Neuro)Science

Matters for Ethics." *Ethics* 9 (2): 695–726.

———. 2015. "The Rise of Moral Cognition." *Cognition* 135: 39–42.

———. 2017. "The Rat-a-Gorical Imperative: Moral Intuition and the Limits of Affective

Learning." *Cognition* 167: 66–77.

Greene, Joshua D, R Brian Sommerville, Leigh E Nystrom, John M Darley, and Jonathan D

Cohen. 2001. "An FMRI Investigation of Emotional Engagement in Moral Judgment."

Science 293 (5537): 2105–8.

Hopster, Jeroen. 2018. "Evolutionary Arguments against Moral Realism: Why the Empirical

Details Matter (and Which Ones Do)." *Biology and Philosophy* 33 (5–6): 1–19.

Jackson, Frank, and Philip Pettit. 1996. "Moral Functionalism, Supervenience and

Reductionism." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 46 (182): 82–86.

Joyce, Richard. 2006. *The Evolution of Morality*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

———. 2013. "Irrealism and the Genealogy of Morals." *Ratio* 26 (4): 351–372

Kahane, Guy. 2011. "Evolutionary Debunking Arguments." *Nous* 45 (1): 103–25.

Kahane, Guy, Katja Wiech, Nicholas Shackel, Miguel Farias, Julian Savulescu, and Irene Tracey. 2012. "The Neural Basis of Intuitive and Counterintuitive Moral Judgment." *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 7 (4): 393–402.

Kelly, Thomas, and Sarah McGrath. 2017. "Are There Any Successful Philosophical Arguments?" In *Being, Freedom, and Method: Themes from the Philosophy of Peter Van Inwagen*, edited by John Keller, 324–40. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Korman & D. Locke, Daniel. n.d. "Against Minimalist Responses to Moral Debunking Arguments." *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*.

Korman, Daniel. 2019. "Debunking Arguments." *Philosophy Compass*, no. Dec: 97–118.

Kripke, Saul. 1980. *Naming and Necessity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kumar, Victor, and Richmond Campbell. 2012. "On the Normative Significance of Experimental Moral Psychology." *Philosophical Psychology* 25 (3): 311–30.

Lewis, David. 1984. "Putnam's Paradox." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 62 (3): 221–36.

Lutz, Matthew. n.d. "The Reliability Challenge in Moral Epistemology." *Oxford Studies in Metaethics* 15: 1–32.

Machery, Edouard. 2017. *Philosophy Within Its Proper Bounds*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Marx, Karl. 1972. *The Marx Engels Reader*. Edited by Robert C Tucker. Second Edi. New York City: W. W. Norton & Company.

Menzies, Peter. 2017. "Counterfactual Theories of Causation." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N Zalta, Winter 201. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford

University.

Nagel, Thomas. 1986. *The View From Nowhere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1986. *Human All Too Human*. R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2003. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Edited by R. J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin Books.

———. 2008. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nozick, Robert. 1981. *Philosophical Explanations*. Harvard University Press.

Parfit, Derek. 2011. *On What Matters*. (Vol. 2). New York: Oxford University Press.

Rowland, Richard. 2015. "Rescuing Companions in Guilt Arguments." *Philosophical Quarterly* 66 (262): 161–71.

Schaffer, Jonathan. 2009. "On What Grounds What." In *Metametaphysics: New Essays on the Foundations of Ontology*, edited by Ryan. Chalmers, David. Manley, David. Wasserman, 347–83. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schechter, Joshua. 2014. "Could Evolution Explain Our Reliability about Logic?" *Oxford Studies in Epistemology* 4: 214–39.

Shafer-Landau, Russ. 2012. "Evolutionary Debunking, Moral Realism and Moral Knowledge." *Journal of Ethics & Social Philosophy* 7 (1): 1–37.

Sider, Theodore. 2011. *Writing the Book of the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Srinivasan, Amia. 2015. "The Archimedean Urge." *Philosophical Perspectives* 29: 325–62.

Stalnaker, Robert. 1996. "On What Possible Worlds Could Not Be." In *Ways a World Might Be: Metaphysical and Anti-Metaphysical Essays*, 40–54. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Street, Sharon. 2006. "A Darwinian Dilemma for Realist Theories of Value." *Philosophical Studies*. (127): 109–166.

———. 2010. "What Is Constructivism in Ethics and Metaethics?" *Philosophy Compass* 5 (5): 363–84.

———. 2016. "Objectivity and Truth: You'd Better Rethink It." *Oxford Studies in Metaethics* 11: 293–334.

Vavova, Katia. 2015. "Evolutionary Debunking of Moral Realism." *Philosophy Compass* 10 (2): 104–16.

———. 2018. "Irrelevant Influences." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 96 (1): 134–52.

Warren, Jared. 2017. "Epistemology versus Non-Causal Realism." *Synthese* 194 (5): 1643–62.

White, Roger. 2010. "You Just Believe That Because..." *Philosophical Perspectives* 24 (Epistemology): 573–615.

Wielenberg, Erik J. 2010. "On the Evolutionary Debunking of Morality." *Ethics* 120: 441–64.