

How do we reconcile a scientific view of moral reasoning with the view that morality is objective? One approach (found in Street and Joyce) has been to abandon the objectivity of morality; another approach (found in Nagel and Huemer) has been to assert that objective moral truths are known independent of any scientific or empirical views. My research develops an under-explored view, which claims that a plausible account of the nature of morality needn't alienate us: such a view is in fact *complementary* with viewing morality as objective and knowable.

Why think that the nature of moral thinking vindicates our moral beliefs? In my paper "Hume's Vindicatory Genealogy of Morals," I develop an analysis of epistemic vindication by explicating the concept of a belief held for epistemic reasons. I then offer a close reading of David Hume's account of the origins of morality, which traces the origins of morality to human sympathy and sensibility about mutually beneficial rules. I then show how this origin-story for morality can be used to characterize us as adopting our moral beliefs on the basis of good epistemic reasons. Such a view makes it rational to maintain our moral beliefs when reflecting on their origins.

Epistemological vindications are the flipside of debunking arguments. My paper "Debunking isn't a Matter of Disagreement" intervenes in recent debates involving the evolutionary debunking of moral realism by offering an original critique of what Bogardus calls the *argument from symmetry*. That argument claims that skepticism about our moral beliefs follows from the fact that our distant evolutionary relatives could have easily formed different moral beliefs. I explain how the epistemic principle supporting Bogardus's argument requires qualification, and that such a refined epistemic principle does not generate skepticism. Even if our moral beliefs are contingent on our evolutionary history, I show how such a fact would not engender moral skepticism. This paper is currently under review.

A further line in my research considers how empirical data (evolutionary and otherwise) might undercut particular moral beliefs without undercutting the objectivity of morality. In my paper "Targeted Moral Debunking" I consider a recent challenge (due to Kahane) against Greene's view that fMRI scans and evolutionary considerations can undercut non-consequentialist moral beliefs without undercutting consequentialism. Kahane argued that if moral beliefs can be undercut by these empirical considerations, we will be led to *global* moral skepticism rather than consequentialism. My project charts a middle view: against Greene, I argue that the empirical data do not establish consequentialism as the only plausible theory in normative ethics; against Kahane, I argue that empirical data can undercut some moral beliefs without supporting global moral skepticism.

A recent project, tentatively titled "Cooperation without Opacity" argues against the view that moral reasoning engenders cognitive illusions. This view, apparent in Joyce's account of how moral thought functions as a "deliberation-stopper" and in McDowell's account of the "silencing" function of virtues, suggests that moral thought brings with it *ignorance* about one's practical situation. Against these views, I am to develop an account of how agents can reliably engage in pro-social behavior, even when they are cognizant of the apparent benefits that non-cooperation might bring. This brings the benefit of characterizing moral reasoning in a way need not alienate us from moral thought by attributing false views to moral reasoners.