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Taking Luck Seriously: A Critique of Enoch's Third-Factor Pre-Established Harmony Explanation

Michael Robert Carrick

University of Colorado Boulder, mcarrick1331@gmail.com

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Taking Luck Seriously: A Critique of Enoch's
Third-Factor Pre-established Harmony Explanation

By

Michael Carrick

B.A., University of Vermont, 2010

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Faculty of the Graduate School at

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This thesis entitled:
Taking Luck Seriously: A Critique of Enoch's
Third-Factor Pre-established Harmony Explanation
Written by Michael Carrick
has been approved for the Department of Philosophy

Chris Heathwood

Graham Oddie

Michael Huemer

Date_____

The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

Abstract

Carrick, Michael (M.A. Philosophy)

Taking Luck Seriously: A Critique of Enoch's Third-Factor

Pre-established Harmony Explanation

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Chris Heathwood

In this paper I criticize David Enoch's purported solution to what he terms the epistemic challenge to robust moral realism. The epistemic challenge is a challenge aimed at the robust moral realist to explain how there could be a close enough correlation between normative truths and normative beliefs for humans to have knowledge of the normative truths given that there cannot be a causal relation between the normative truths and the normative beliefs. Enoch suggests a third-factor pre-established harmony between normative beliefs and normative truths as an explanation of the correlation; this explanation will be examined in detail below. Enoch's solution, I contend, is unsatisfying for two reasons. First, his explanation relies on a miraculous correlation; second, it violates the sensitivity condition for knowledge.

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Taking Luck Seriously: A Critique of Enoch's Third-Factor Pre-established Harmony Explanation

1. Introduction

In this paper I criticize David Enoch's purported solution to what he terms the epistemic challenge to robust moral realism. The epistemic challenge is a challenge aimed at the robust moral realist to explain how there could be a close enough correlation between normative truths and normative beliefs for humans to have knowledge of the normative truths given that there cannot be a causal relation between the normative truths and the normative beliefs. Enoch suggests a third-factor pre-established harmony between normative beliefs and normative truths as an explanation of the correlation; this explanation will be examined in detail below. Enoch's solution, I contend, is unsatisfying for two reasons. First, his explanation relies on a miraculous correlation; second, it violates the sensitivity condition for knowledge.

2. Background: The Evolutionary Epistemological Challenge

Recently a debate in the metaethical literature has arisen centered around the question of what, if any, influence evolutionary forces have on normative beliefs, and whether such influences are troublesome for the position known as robust moral realism. Robust moral realism is the view that normative facts are objective, non-natural, and irreducible; or, in other words, robustly real.¹ Normative facts, on this view, cannot be casually networked, since they are not natural entities, or reducible to natural entities.

¹ Enoch (2011) argues for the robust existence of both moral and normative facts. For examples of similar views, see Shafer-Landau 2003, Huemer 2005, Cuneo 2007.

The issues at play, then, are (i) what type of influence evolution has on normative beliefs, and (ii) whether this influence is enough to undermine either the justification or knowledge of normative beliefs. Most of the debate has been focused on (ii), whether evolutionary influence has undermined either the justification or knowledge of normative belief for the moral realist, with plenty of philosophers making their voices heard on both sides of the issue. Sharon Street (2006), Richard Joyce (2006), Philip Kitcher (2006), and Michael Ruse (1986) have all issued the evolutionary challenge in some form or other, while David Enoch (2010, 2011), Jeff Behrends (2013), Daniel Copp (2008), Knut Skarsaune (2011), Erik Wielenberg (2010), Kevin Bronsan (2011), and Michael Huemer (2008) attempt to respond by either sheltering certain forms of moral realism from criticism, or otherwise attempting to show that evolutionary forces have brought normative beliefs in line with normative truths.

In this section I will review two specific versions of the challenge, Street's original formulation and Enoch's stronger formulation aimed at robust realism, before detailing exactly why this issue is a pressing matter for robust realists. This discussion is meant to provide background for a careful analysis of Enoch's answer to the evolutionary challenge in the next section, as Enoch borrows heavily from Street to try to answer his own challenge.

2.1 Street's Darwinian Dilemma

Sharon Street is generally regarded as developing one of the first and most nuanced versions of the evolutionary epistemic challenge in her 2006 article 'A Darwinian Dilemma for Realist Theories of Value.' The title of the article aptly

represents its contents, as Street issues a dilemma to the realist, with both options being supposedly unpalatable. Starting with the empirical premise that evolutionary forces have most likely influenced our normative beliefs, the moral realist can either accept that there is a connection between evolutionary forces and normative truths or that there is not.

If the realist responds that there is not a connection between evolutionary forces and normative facts, then the realist is left with quite the skeptical conclusion, as it would seem that our normative beliefs would most likely be off the mark. If there were no connection between evolutionary forces and normative truths then why would evolutionary influences push our normative beliefs to align with the normative truths? Street herself thinks this position to be analogous to a sailor who sets out for Bermuda, letting the course of the boat be determined only by the winds and tides.² If our normative beliefs are not false, then it is due to coincidence and this would prevent normative knowledge, and possibly justified belief as well.

On the other hand, if there is a connection between evolutionary forces and normative truths, the realist must give an explanation as to what type of relationship exists. Street believes the best option available to the realist is a tracking relation, in which having true normative beliefs somehow enhances reproduction. "In particular, it says that the presence of the judgments is explained by the fact that these judgments are true, and that the capacity to discern such truths proved advantageous for the purposes of survival and reproduction."³

However, if this is the route the realist must take then once again the realist hits a

² Street 2006, p. 121.

³ Ibid., p. 126.

dead end, because, although the tracking account is a scientific hypothesis, it is not adequately scientifically supported. Street puts forth a different explanation for normative beliefs, which she calls the adaptive link account, in which she explains that “tendencies to make certain kinds of evaluative judgments rather than others contributed to our ancestors’ reproductive success...because they forged adaptive links between our ancestors’ circumstances and their responses to those circumstances...”⁴ Street’s contention is that the adaptive link account is superior to the tracking account in three scientifically relevant ways: first, it is more parsimonious; second, it is clearer; and third, it does a better job of explaining why humans have the normative beliefs they do.

Note that the moral realist cannot simply adopt the adaptive link account instead of the problematic tracking account. The reason why is spelled out by Street:

The essence of the realist position is its claim that there are evaluative truths that hold independently of all of our evaluative attitudes. But because it views these evaluative truths as ultimately independent of our evaluative attitudes, the only way for realism *both* to accept that those attitudes have been deeply influenced by evolutionary causes *and* to avoid seeing these causes as distorting is for it to claim that these causes actually in some way *tracked* the alleged independent truths. There is no other way to go. To abandon the tracking account...is just to adopt the view that selective pressures either pushed us *away from* or pushed us in ways that *bear no relation to* these evaluative truths.⁵

Since moral facts (or properties, or whatever) are independent of our attitudes, then there are two possible options when discussing the relation between our beliefs and the facts: our beliefs track the facts or they do not. If our beliefs track the truth then the realist should adopt the tracking account, which is inadequate, and if the

⁴ Ibid., p. 127.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 134-135.

tracking account is denied the realist is stuck with the first horn of the dilemma all over again.

Thus, either path available to the realist, on Street's view, results in a dead end. The realist is committed either to the idea that our normative beliefs are most likely wrong, or to an implausible scientific explanation. Either way the realist cannot give a good explanation as to why our normative beliefs are accurate. This argument, then, is meant to be a defeater for justification of normative beliefs.⁶

2.2 Enoch's Evolutionary Epistemological Challenge

David Enoch, in *Taking Morality Seriously*, focuses a chapter on what he takes to be a similar epistemic challenge to robust moral realism. Enoch appears to think that the Darwinian dilemma, and the other forms of the evolutionary challenge, are particular ways of expressing a more general worry about moral realism, and specifically robust realism: that the striking correlation between normative facts and normative beliefs in general needs to be explained.⁷

[T]here is a correlation between (what the realist takes to be) normative truths and our normative judgments. What explains this correlation? On a robustly realist view of normativity, it can't be that our normative judgments are causally or constitutively responsible for the normative truths, because the normative truths are supposed to be independent of our normative judgments. And given that (at least basic) normative truths are causally inert, they are not causally responsible for our normative beliefs...And so the robust realist is committed to an unexplained striking correlation, and this may be too much to believe.⁸

More formally the argument can be presented as follows:

- (1) Robust moral realists believe that normative beliefs and judgments are correlated with normative truths. Consequently, the robust moral realist

⁶ Behrends 2013, p. 490.

⁷ This challenge is quite similar to the one put forth by Benacerraf (1973).

⁸ Enoch 2011, p. 159.

- must explain how this correlation between normative facts and normative truths comes about.
- (2) The robust moral realist cannot explain the correlation by the idea that our normative beliefs are responsible for the normative truths, because normative truths are independent of our beliefs.
 - (3) The robust moral realist cannot explain the correlation by the idea that normative facts explain normative beliefs, because normative facts are causally ineffective.
 - (4) The robust moral realist cannot explain the correlation between normative facts and true beliefs.
 - (5) If robust moral realists cannot explain the correlation between normative facts and true beliefs, then robust moral realism is implausible.
- (C) Robust moral realism is implausible.

This formulation is interesting because Enoch is able to frame the epistemological challenge in such a way that it is exclusively aimed at robust realism. Most other normative or moral views are not subject to this criticism because they can deny either premise (2) or premise (3).⁹

Another thing to notice about this criticism is that it is focused primarily around reliability. "This suggested understanding of the epistemological challenge is primarily about reliability...it starts from the claim that such reliability is unlikely to be brute, unexplainable."¹⁰ The robust realist, then, must either explain the reliability of normative beliefs with a story about the correlation between normative beliefs and facts, or otherwise describe such a correlation as brute. However, the robust realist has no explanation of the correlation between normative facts and beliefs, and a brute connection is too mysterious to stomach. Thus, robust realism is seemingly implausible since the reliability of normative beliefs cannot be adequately explained.

⁹ Enoch (2011, p. 160) thinks that views in which normative facts can be causally efficacious, as well as response-dependent views of normativity, can get around the formulation of his challenge. See Oddie (2005) for one attempt at developing a theory where normative facts are causally efficacious.

¹⁰ Enoch 2011, p. 160.

The challenge also applies to the justification of normative beliefs and judgments, affecting both internalism and externalism about epistemic justification. Within epistemology there is an ongoing debate about how a belief can be justified.¹¹ One camp, the internalists, hold that “epistemic justification or reasonableness can depend only on matters which are within the cognitive grasp of the believer in question.”¹² The externalist camp, by comparison, holds “that epistemic justification can depend...on matters to which the believer in question has no cognitive access at all, matters that are entirely external to his or her cognitive viewpoint.”¹³ The challenge applies to externalism because it applies to the reliability of the correlation in question; the challenge applies to internalism because justification is defeated once one understands the epistemological challenge and comes to see their beliefs as formed in an unreliable way. Due to the inability of the robust realist to explain the reliability of normative beliefs, the justification for normative beliefs is also undermined.¹⁴

Failure to explain the correlation between normative facts and beliefs results in a thoroughgoing skepticism, in which the robust realist is forced to acknowledge

¹¹ For a good overview of this debate see Bonjour 2002.

¹² Ibid., p. 221.

¹³ Ibid., p. 221.

¹⁴ It may be that the challenge only applies to internalism if the epistemic agent in question has found the time to read Enoch’s chapter on epistemology. Presumably, however, Enoch would want his claim that the epistemic challenge applies to internalism once one understands the epistemic challenge to include a wider group of epistemic agents than just those who have read his book. I am not sure if he has the resources to extend his argument to other epistemic agents who have not read his book.

that normative beliefs are unjustified.¹⁵ Such a dilemma does not bode well for the robust realist. As Enoch writes:

[S]takes have certainly be raised: if the only way to be a realist is to deny epistemic justification for any normative belief...then Robust Realism loses significant plausibility points. This is also the reason why the robust realist cannot avoid the need to explain the correlation by denying that it exists: knowing that there is no correlation between even his own normative beliefs and the normative truths, he can no longer hold these normative beliefs justifiably...The price of denying the correlation is skepticism. And it is without a doubt a serious price.¹⁶

Enoch's answer to the epistemological challenge is examined next.

3. Enoch's Solution

Before Enoch presents his solution to his epistemic challenge, he quickly discusses his strategy. I will go through his discussion because it illuminates the motivation for some of his claims. Three points will be examined.

Part of this discussion surrounds Enoch's general methodological strategy in *Taking Morality Seriously*. Enoch states at the beginning of his book that, because of the impossibility of dispatching or proving true any particular metaethical theory, one should ultimately opt for the view that is considered the most plausible. This can be measured by assigning plausibility points to different views, with points being awarded or revoked depending on how each view can handle the different problems it faces, as well as the different theoretical virtues each theory can offer.¹⁷

The tenability of robust moral realism, then, does not fully rest on whether the realist can provide a compelling explanation of the correlation between normative

¹⁵ One could perhaps argue that the correlation between normative facts and normative beliefs is brute and therefore reliable. However, a brute correlation between our normative beliefs and the normative facts is just implausible and would lead to plenty of other epistemic problems.

¹⁶ Enoch 2011, p. 162.

¹⁷ This is more of a helpful illustrative tool Enoch uses, as opposed to an actual mathematical system of preference.

facts and beliefs. Indeed, robust realism should be judged on overall plausibility points, and while an inability to answer the epistemological challenge may end up costing the robust realist significant plausibility points, if it has other theoretical virtues then robust moral realism can still be a tenable view. As Enoch writes “that some flukes remain should not be a cause for too much distress.”¹⁸

Another issue that deserves attention is the strength of the correlation that must be explained. It is not necessary for Enoch to claim that most of our normative beliefs are true, but rather only that some of our normative beliefs are true because the motivation for providing an explanation of the correlation is so the robust realist does not find herself immersed in skepticism. So the correlation between normative facts and beliefs can be relatively weak, as long as it prevents the robust realist position from collapsing into skepticism. What exactly does it mean for a correlation to be weak? Enoch explains:

In other words, so long as the realist accepts that she and the likes of her are at least somewhat more likely to get things right rather than wrong with regard to normative issues..., she can rationally and wholeheartedly if modestly hold onto her normative beliefs...and not deteriorate to skepticism.¹⁹

As long as the robust realist can give an explanation of the correlation that makes the likelihood of her normative beliefs being true higher than chance or coincidence, the robust realist has done her job and blocked the inference to skepticism. It is an interesting question exactly how weak or strong the correlation must be to satisfy this requirement, and Enoch seemingly skirts the issue. I take it that the correlation

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 166.

must be strong enough that generally people are *more likely than not* to hold true normative beliefs.

This correlation can also be further weakened due to the third issue in the discussion: the role of reasoning mechanisms in forming normative beliefs.

Given a starting point of normative beliefs that are not too far-off, presumably some reasoning mechanism (and perhaps some other mechanisms as well) can get us increasingly closer to the truth by eliminating inconsistencies, increasing overall coherence, eliminating arbitrary distinctions, drawing analogies, ruling out initially justified beliefs whose justificatory status has been defeated later on, etc.²⁰

The correlation that needs to be explained is not how our normative beliefs and truths happen to be aligned, but instead how it is that the starting point of our normative beliefs is not too far off from normative truths, or at least close enough so that we can reason to such normative truths. Our normative beliefs just need to be close to the normative truths; from there the robust realist can rely on reasoning mechanisms to get our beliefs to align with some normative truths.²¹

3.1 Pre-Established Harmony

²⁰ Ibid., p. 166.

²¹ Things are still somewhat unclear as to what it means for people to be somewhat more likely than not to get things right, as this could include where one ends up after reasoning (thanks to Chris Heathwood for this point). An individual could then seemingly start off with one true belief and, through a process of reflective equilibrium, reason their way to more moral truths, ending up with more true beliefs than false ones. I think that one true belief, before reasoning takes place, will be too weak to posit a correlation between normative beliefs and normative truths. To see why, we can revisit Street (2006, p. 124) in which she writes: "In rational reflection, one does not stand completely apart from one's starting fund of evaluative judgements: rather, one uses them, reasons in terms of them, holds some of them up for examination in light of others... Thus, if the fund of evaluative judgements with which human reflection began was thoroughly contaminated with illegitimate influence - and the objector has offered no reason to doubt this part of the argument - then the tools of rational reflection were equally contaminated, for the latter are always just a subset of the former."

Notice, however, that while one accurate normative belief may be too weak to posit a correlation, a minority of true normative beliefs would allow one to avoid Street's objection to reflective equilibrium here, as presumably a large amount of the false normative beliefs would not cohere with each other, making them subject to rejection upon reflection. Thus, one might be able to start with a minority of true normative beliefs, and through reasoning, come to be more likely than not to get normative beliefs true. This response to Street is given by Michael Huemer (2008, pp. 379-380).

Remember that Sharon Street believes that, when presented with the Darwinian Dilemma, the realist has only two options: either deny a connection between evolutionary forces and normative truths, or provide a tracking account in which evolutionary forces somehow track normative beliefs. However, there seems to be another way to explain this correlation besides the tracking account, despite Street's insistence otherwise. Generalizing, Enoch says that when presented with two different entities that appear to be correlated, there are two natural ways to describe the correlation: either entity 1 (normative beliefs) explains entity 2 (normative truths), or vice versa. However, neither of these options are open to the robust realist (see premises (2) and (3) above). In order to solve this problem Enoch presents a new solution, a third-factor explanation. The correlation between entities 1 and 2 is not explained by a relation between the two, but rather by a *third factor*; entity 3's relation to entities 1 and 2 explains the correlation between 1 and 2.

This third factor, according to Enoch, is the normative fact that survival is good; this fact explains why our normative beliefs are correlated with the normative facts. The story goes like this: Evolution pushes humans to promote their own survival. One effective way to push humans to behave so as to promote survival is to get humans to believe that survival is good; this is because we are the type of creatures that will generally be motivated to bring about things we think are good. Thus, evolution pushed us to believe that survival is good in order to get us to act in ways that promote survival. However, survival, and behaving in ways that promote survival, *actually* is good. Therefore evolution pushes us to believe some true normative facts, that survival and things that promote survival are good.

Thus, we have an explanation as to how normative beliefs are weakly correlated with normative truths.

And this completes the explanatory story needed here: survival (or whatever) is good; so behaving in ways that promote it is (pro-tanto) good; but one efficient way of pushing us in the direction of acting in those ways is by pushing us to believe that it is good to act in those ways. And, in fact, we have just seen, it *is* good so to act. So the normative beliefs this mechanism pushes us to have will tend to be true.²²

What makes this explanation ingenious is not only the fact that Enoch has the acumen to introduce a third factor into the explanation, but also the way in which Enoch is able to take material from Street's argument and turn it around, so that evolution is actually used as an explanation of, rather than an objection to, the reliability of normative beliefs. In what immediately follows, I will attempt to analyze some of more obscure aspects of Enoch's argument in order to make sure that it is crystal clear, before moving on to objections to Enoch's proposal in section 5.

4. Survival is Good

The claim 'survival is good' is more complex than it may seem on first inspection. Survival is good for whom? How is it good? Is it always good? First, Enoch directly states in what way survival must be good in order for his explanation to go through. "All I will be relying on is the assumption that survival...is actually by and large better than the alternative."²³ Enoch thus effectively makes his claim rather weak because all he needs for his claim is that survival is by and large better than not surviving. He does not need to claim that survival is intrinsically good,

²² Enoch 2011, p. 169.

²³ Ibid., p. 168.

always good, or even mostly good, but simply that survival is actually or contingently by and large a good thing.²⁴

If survival does not have to be intrinsically good, then it is worth asking whose survival is good, or whose survival is better than the alternative.

First, all the explanation really requires is that *our* survival or reproductive success is good, or that those of our ancestors are. After all, it is only the selective forces that acted on us and them that have played a role in shaping our normative beliefs, about whose reliability we are asking.²⁵

Survival need only be good for us, and possibly our ancestors, because the question of how evolutionary forces have shaped our normative beliefs is only relevant to people who are in the same evolutionary basket as we are, so to speak. It is irrelevant if survival was good for humans in the distant past, or for other animals, because so long as survival is in fact good for us and our ancestors Enoch has enough to develop his pre-established harmony explanation (selective forces are somewhat different for us now than our great hominid forefathers).

If survival need only be better than the alternative, and furthermore if it is only our survival which need be better than the alternative, for whom must our survival be good?

And when it comes to creatures like us and fairly close ancestors, the claim that their survival and reproductive success is of value gains much plausibility, I think, from the observation that survival (or some such) is at the very least good *for* the creature surviving, or *for* a close group of relatives, or something of that kind. Again, this may not be true of creatures in general...But when it comes to us and creatures like us, this claim seems very hard to deny.²⁶

²⁴ It seems that one could press Enoch on the need to give a more thorough account of the minimal conditions necessary for his claim 'survival is good.' Is it enough to have 10% of survival be good, in order to justify his claim?

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 170. His emphasis.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 171. His emphasis.

When asking in what way survival must be good, Enoch gives the answer that survival only need be good for us, and not, for example, the other creatures we share this planet with.

Thus, Enoch's claim that survival is good commits him to far less than it originally seems. Survival only need be by and large better than non-survival, only *our* survival needs to be good, and it only needs to be good for us and our ancestors. From this point forward, as I continue to discuss the normative belief that survival is good, it is this qualified version of the belief that I will be discussing.

5. Objections to Enoch's Pre-Established Harmony Explanation

Enoch reviews several arguments against his solution to the epistemic challenge to robust moral realism; two related, but different, objections will be my main focus. These objections revolve around problems of luck; more specifically, that Enoch's correlation between normative truth and normative belief is just a little too lucky to support an account of normative knowledge. The two objections are as follows:

- (1) Enoch's solution relies on a miraculous correlation between normative truths and our normative beliefs. This correlation is just too miraculous to be plausible.
- (2) Enoch's solution violates the anti-luck restriction on knowledge known as sensitivity.

Once the luck present in Enoch's solution is clear, this should also undermine justification for both externalists and internalists (externalists because his solution is unreliable, and internalists because one is aware the process is unreliable).

5.1 Objection 1: The Miraculous Correlation

Obviously if Enoch's explanation of normative knowledge only works on the assumption of a miracle, the miracle of our normative beliefs somehow correlating

with normative facts, then his explanation is too implausible to accept.²⁷ Enoch writes:

[I]sn't it an amazing fluke that whatever evolution 'aims' at happens also to be good? And isn't this itself something that calls for an explanation, an explanation that the realist is not in a position to offer?...So doesn't it follow that the story just told, far from showing how the realist can avoid commitment to miraculous correlations, *relies* on a miracle?²⁸

Enoch's account is relying on the fact that evolutionary aims coincided with at least some basic normative truths. However, isn't this somewhat miraculous considering that if evolution had happened to aim at something that was not of value then our normative beliefs would be completely off track? The realist, without some explanation as to why evolution aimed at something good rather than bad, is stuck.

Enoch is not fazed by this objection; indeed he thinks it is incoherent.

It is not completely clear that the thought that a miracle remains here can be made fully coherent. For what would have to be the case for this "miracle" not to occur? The evolutionary "aim" would have had to not be of any value. And how could that be? Fundamental normative truths are presumably necessary in a fairly strong sense...So the main way in which the evolutionary "aim" ...could have failed to be of value is if evolution has a very different "aim". But it's not clear what to make of this suggestion: for surely, it's not contingent that evolution has something to do, for instance, with survival and reproductive success rather than their opposites.

Second, how surprising is the miracle that remains?...We are, after all, epistemically lucky to have evolved in an environment in which having by-and-large true beliefs is presumably conducive to survival and reproductive success. So yes, some brute luck may remain. But it is the kind of luck that is present everywhere else....²⁹

This quite complex response can be broken down into two different arguments.³⁰

²⁷ I take Enoch to be using the term miraculous metaphorically to express an amazing fluke or coincidence, and not in the other possible sense meaning a violation of the laws of nature.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

³⁰ Enoch (2011, pp. 172-173) also has a third argument I will not discuss: "*Some* miracle, it seems to me, does remain. But this remaining miracle does not place a particularly heavy burden on Robust Realism. For first, of the striking correlation we started with (between numerous normative truths

5.1.1 Response A to the Miraculous Correlation Objection: Incoherence

Enoch first responds by asking how such a correlation is lucky if it necessarily comes about? I will formulate the first argument, Response A, as follows:

- (A1) If it is miraculous (or an amazing fluke) that evolution aimed at something good, then it must be the case that evolution could have aimed at something that failed to be good.
- (A2) Evolution could have aimed at something that failed to be good in one of two ways: either evolution could have had a different aim, or survival, or things conducive to survival, could have failed to be good.
- (A3) Survival or things conducive to survival could not have failed to be good because fundamental normative truths are necessary in some sense.
- (A4) Evolution could not have had a different aim, because evolution necessarily aims at survival or things conducive to survival.
- (A5) Therefore, evolution could not have aimed at something that failed to be good.
- (A6) If evolution could not have aimed at something that failed to be good, then it is not miraculous that evolution aimed at something good rather than not good.
- (C) It is not miraculous that evolution aimed at something good rather than not good.

I believe premise (A3) is problematic. Premise (A1) will also come under scrutiny at the end of the section.

5.1.2 Problem with Premise (A3) of Response (A)

Premise (A3) requires some brief background examination. What exactly does it mean to say that fundamental normative truths must be necessary in some sense? Kit Fine writes:

It is observed that there is a necessary connection between the naturalistic and the normative features of a given situation and it is simply assumed, given that the connection is not conceptual, that it must be metaphysical. These philosophers sometimes appeal to the fact that the connection holds in all possible worlds but it is only if these worlds are themselves taken to be metaphysically possible that the metaphysical necessity of the connection

and numerous normative beliefs) we are now left only with the one-time 'correlation' between whatever evolution 'aims' at and the good..."

would thereby be established.³¹

This would suggest that most philosophers believe that the necessity being discussed in normative discourse is metaphysical necessity, although this is somewhat contentious (Kit Fine seemingly believes there is a form of normative necessity; I will return to this point later). This necessity follows from the supervenience relation that holds between the normative and the natural, the normative somehow depending on the natural.³² Justin Clarke-Doane spells out the implications for our project of the metaphysical necessity of fundamental normative truths:

If [normative truths are metaphysically necessary], then it is not metaphysically possible for the moral truths to be very different while the descriptive truths are held fixed....What it shows is that, if the Evolutionary Challenge is to have any interest, the modality invoked in the counterfactual that had the moral truths been very different, our moral beliefs would have been the same, cannot be taken to be metaphysical possibility but must rather be taken to be something along the lines of conceptual possibility. The claim must be that had—for all that we can intelligibly imagine—the moral truths been very different, our moral beliefs would have been the same. This kind of counterfactual does seem to have epistemological significance, even granted the metaphysical impossibility of the relevant antecedent.³³

To quickly clarify terminology I will adopt Kit Fine's definitions of metaphysical and conceptual necessity. He takes metaphysical necessity to be "the sense of necessity which obtains in virtue of the identity of things," while he takes conceptual necessity to be "the necessity that holds in virtue of the identity of concepts."³⁴

³¹ Fine 2002, p. 18.

³² Most realists would not deny that a supervenience relation holds. Enoch (2011, p. 136) himself argues for a strong individual supervenience relation between the normative and the natural, reasoning that "If the robust realist can accommodate even this type of supervenience, she is practically guaranteed to be able to accommodate other, (perhaps loosely speaking) weaker ones."

³³ Clarke-Doane 2012, pp. 320-321.

³⁴ Fine 2002, p. 254.

I will pose three arguments against (A3). First, I will argue that (A3) is false because Enoch's third-factor belief – the claim that survival is good – is not, in fact, a fundamental normative truth, but rather only a contingently true belief. Second, even if Enoch's belief is a fundamental normative truth, I will argue that fundamental normative truths are not metaphysically necessary, making premise (A3) false, or making it so premise (A5) does not follow from premise (A3). Third, even if fundamental normative truths are metaphysically necessary, I will argue that they are not conceptually necessary, once again making either (A3) false, or making it so (A5) does not follow from (A3) (and eventually leading to my second main objection that Enoch's account violates anti-luck restrictions on knowledge). After I present these three arguments I will briefly turn to some other problems I find with response A.

5.1.3 Is Enoch's Third Factor a Fundamental Truth?

Let us turn back and examine Enoch's claim that survival is good, and his attempt to severely weaken the proposition so as to make it almost impossible to dispute. Survival only need be by and large better than non-survival, and it need only be good for us (and for our ancestors as well). The claim that survival is good, once sufficiently weakened to fit Enoch's purposes, does not appear to be a *fundamental* normative truth. The reason why it appears to fail to be fundamental is the stipulation by Enoch that survival only need be *by and large better* than non-survival. This claim explicitly states that survival is not necessarily better than non-

survival, but only mostly better than non-survival.³⁵ Enoch concedes this point when first arguing that survival is good:

Assume that survival or reproductive success (or whatever else evolution “aims” at) is at least somewhat good. *Not, of course, that it is always good, or that its positive value is never outweighed by other considerations, or even that it is of ultimate or of intrinsic value, or anything of the sort...*All I will be relying on is the assumption that survival (or whatever) is actually by and large better than the alternative.³⁶

It clearly seems Enoch is saying that the value of survival does not have to be considered intrinsic, and can be considered merely instrumental for his solution to work; but surely if the value of survival is merely instrumental then the proposition that survival is good is not a fundamental truth.³⁷ However, if the claim that survival is good is not a fundamental normative truth then presumably it is not necessary, making Enoch’s third-factor explanation rest on a contingent truth. Premise (A3) is therefore false, since survival or things conducive to survival could have failed to be good.

There are clearly ways we could have evolved where our survival would be bad for us, by and large. Let me present an example of a world where humans are riddled with cancer:

³⁵ Enoch may be able to counter that while it is not necessary that survival is good, it may be necessary that survival is mostly better than non-survival. However, it’s not clear how such a proposition, that survival is mostly better than non-survival, could be considered necessary if it is a probabilistic claim.

³⁶ Enoch 2011, p. 168. My italics.

³⁷ Fundamentality is a tricky concept, and usually related to derivation (if something is non-derived it is fundamental, and if it is derivative it cannot be fundamental). While the notion is somewhat opaque, I think that in morality it will be even more so considering the widespread disagreement in metaethics. However, one assumption that I will make that I do not believe to be too controversial is that fundamentality is tied to universality or universalizability in ethics. Roughly then a fundamental normative truth must be universally true. It is because of this universal condition that by and large conditions attaching to propositions are not fundamental. Another way to put the point is that by and large claims are generally understood as probabilistic, but fundamental necessary truths cannot be probabilistic.

Imagine that we are in an environment where cancer is much more prevalent than in our world. Indeed, the majority of the human population dies from cancer. There is a certain type of depression that is genetic, depression X, but luckily the depression X gene causes people to be cancer resistant. It seems quite plausible that, in such a case, evolution would select for people who have the depression X gene at a greater rate than those who do not. Let me further stipulate that one of the results of having the depression X gene is that people are so seriously depressed that they have negative well-being and their lives are not worth living. However let me further stipulate that such people, because of their culture, have a serious repugnance to suicide and birth control, and therefore these people live their lives and reproduce just much as we do in this world. In such a case evolution would still aim at survival, but survival would be a bad thing since lives would not be worth living, and therefore survival would aim at something bad.

This example just highlights the fact that our lives could have negative well-being, making them not worth living, and thus survival is not by and large better for us, but still we could be very efficient survivors. Furthermore, in this world evolution would likely continue to push us to believe that survival is good, since such a belief would still increase fitness. Notice that all other contingent normative propositions that can be substituted as the third-factor belief in Enoch's pre-established harmony model explanation will also make (A3) false, because (A3) requires the third-factor belief to be a necessary proposition.

Enoch, however, has a way around the argument that his normative belief that 'survival is good' is a contingent, non-fundamental truth. He writes:

[E]ven if the selected-for "aim" is of no value at all, the suggested explanation for the correlation between normative truths and our normative beliefs can succeed almost unchanged, if many of the things that are conducive to this aim are of value...If, for instance, well-being and feelings of interpersonal trust tend to promote reproductive success, and if *they* are good (and if there are no bad things which tend to promote reproductive success more effectively), then this suffices for the explanation above to go through.³⁸

³⁸ Ibid., p. 171.

Enoch can substitute a different necessarily true proposition as his third-factor belief, such as that feelings of interpersonal trust are good, or that well-being is good. A belief in the truth of one (or both) of these propositions seem as though it would tend to promote survival, and both propositions do seem to be fundamentally true, as there is no “by and large” condition attached to them. Even if Enoch is correct about this, however, there are still problems with (A3); it is to these other problems we now turn.

5.1.4 Normative Necessity

Kit Fine, as mentioned above, takes fundamental normative facts to be necessary, but not metaphysically necessary. Rather he believes that any necessity that normative propositions have derives from what he terms normative necessity, a form of necessity that is of a different kind than metaphysical necessity and not reducible to metaphysical necessity. This is because Fine rejects modal monism, the view that all modal claims can be defined or understood in terms of a single modal notion (for example, logical necessity). He writes:

If metaphysical necessity is taken to be that form of necessity that derives from the nature of things, then it is prima-facie highly implausible that the necessary connection between the naturalistic and the normative features of a given situation should be taken to be metaphysical. For there would appear to be nothing in the identity of the naturalistic or normative features that demands that they be connected in the way they are. It is no part of what it is to be pain that it should be bad, and no part of what it is to be bad that it should include pain.³⁹

Fine’s argument, roughly, is that if we take metaphysical necessity to be the necessity which derives from the identity of things, and there is nothing in the identity of normative and naturalistic features that they must be connected in the

³⁹ Fine 2002, p. 271.

way that they are, then it is implausible that any necessary connection between naturalistic and normative features is a metaphysical necessity. Let me bracket the issue of whether Fine is correct or not for the moment, and assume the truth of his modal pluralism.

What exactly is normative necessity? Gideon Rosen, in a careful study, claims that what makes normative propositions normatively necessary is their fact-independence: “Say that p is *fact-independent* if p is the case and would have been the case no matter how things had been in wholly non-normative respects.”⁴⁰ This leads him to define normative necessity as follows: “For a proposition p to be normatively necessary at w is for p to be a proposition true at w such that for any wholly non-normative proposition q , the counterfactual ‘if q had been the case, p would still have been the case’ is true at w .”⁴¹

Assuming that Fine is correct and normative truths are never metaphysically necessary, premise (A3) is false if Enoch wants the necessity in question to be metaphysical necessity. Now premise (A3) does not require that the proposition that survival is good must be metaphysically necessary, but only necessary *in some sense*. Thus, it appears that as long as the proposition is normatively necessary, then the premise is not false. However, I do believe that if the necessity in question is not metaphysical this will be problematic, since it is metaphysically possible that evolution could, strictly speaking, aim at something that failed to be good. This is

⁴⁰ Rosen 2014, p. 16.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 17. Notice further, that if Fine and Rosen are correct about the separation between normative and metaphysical necessity, then this fact actually helps the robust realist on a different front; the robust realist can deny the strong supervenience thesis, which some think entails naturalism. See Jackson 2003.

because evolution is not bound by normative necessity, but presumably metaphysical necessity, since evolution is a fact of the natural world, and therefore a non-normative concept.⁴² Therefore either (A3) is false, or if it is not false, then premise (A5), that evolution could not have aimed at something that failed to be good, does not appear to follow.

Some philosophers would take issue with this argument. As Clarke-Doane writes:

In order for the argument for the sensitivity of our explanatorily basic moral beliefs to work, it must also be assumed that the explanatorily basic moral truths would be metaphysically necessary...But debunkers have typically allowed that they would be, and it is clear why. The belief that the explanatorily basic moral truths would be metaphysically necessary is commonly thought to have a similar status as the belief that they are (actually) true. It is a (defeasibly) justified belief that must be undermined. If debunkers merely claimed to undermine our moral beliefs under the assumption that the belief that the explanatorily basic moral truths would be metaphysically necessary is not itself (defeasibly) justified, then the interest of their argument would be greatly diminished.⁴³

Notice, however, that this is unpersuasive against my current line of reasoning.

First, I think Clarke-Doane is wrong when he claims that one *must* assume the explanatory basic moral truths would be metaphysically necessary, because as he points out shortly below, the robust moral realist's justification for the metaphysical necessity of normative claims is defeasible. His claim, therefore, should be that it *should* be assumed that normative facts are metaphysically necessary unless such a claim is undermined.

Second, I am not under the assumption that the belief that basic moral truths

⁴² It is worth noting that Fine (2002) also argues for that natural necessity is distinct from both normative and metaphysical necessity. Evolution, if it is necessary at all, would most likely be naturally necessary on his account.

⁴³ Clarke-Doane Forthcoming, p. 12.

would be metaphysically necessary is not itself defeasibly justified, but instead I am working under the assumption that Fine and Rosen have provided arguments which work as rebutting defeaters to any justification one originally had in assuming that normative facts are metaphysically necessary. Therefore, I think that examining Enoch's claims without granting that fundamental normative facts are metaphysically necessary is not in any way unfair to Enoch in this context. That being said, I do not want my argument to totally rest on the assumption that Fine and Rosen's account is correct. It is not my purpose here to attempt to settle the dispute between modal monists and modal pluralists. Instead, I suggest that even if Fine is wrong there is still an alternative argumentative path available.

5.1.5 Conceptual versus Metaphysical Possibility

Let me take the standard approach and assume that fundamental normative truths are metaphysically necessary. Normative truths, if they are metaphysically necessary, are certainly not conceptually necessary.⁴⁴ I think that it is surely conceptually possible for evolution to aim at something not good, because it is conceptually possible that survival or things conducive to survival are not good. Therefore, once again, either (A3) or (A5) has to go.

⁴⁴Such considerations have become much more complex post-Kripke. Kripke (1980) of course, argues against the ability to make metaphysical conclusions which are derived purely from conceptual considerations, by showing that there are a posteriori metaphysically necessary truths. The most famous examples are the metaphysical necessity of water being H₂O and Hesperus being Phosphorous. While both H₂O being water and Hesperus being Phosphorous are metaphysically necessary, they are not conceptually necessary; rather it is quite easy to imagine Hesperus and Phosphorous being different heavenly bodies. What this shows us is that conceivability is not a good guide to possibility. Notice these are examples of a posteriori necessities regarding identity and natural kind terms. Kripke thus gives the robust realist an argument against the relevance of conceptual possibilities in theorizing about metaphysical possibilities. More recently some philosophers have attempted to vindicate the power of conceptual possibilities to give us true insight into the world. See Chalmers 2002, and Yablo 2003. Fiocco (2007) argues that Chalmers actually conflates epistemic and conceptual possibilities.

This argument is probably less persuasive than the same argument in the preceding section because it seems that Enoch could argue that while fundamental normative truths are not conceptually necessary, at this point they are metaphysically necessary, and therefore he has nothing to worry about. Such a response may or may not be correct. One thing to say is that while this response may save premise (A3) it does not save (A5). This is because evolution can still aim at something not good, conceptually at least. However, the conceptual possibility that the normative truths could have been different will be more problematic in another context; it will show that Enoch's explanation violates the anti-luck restriction known as sensitivity. I will explain this argument in more detail in section 6.

5.1.6 Some Other Concerns

I think there is still one area on which I can press Enoch further: if he wants to substitute his third-factor belief that survival is good with another third-factor belief that is necessary, he must find a fundamental normative truth that *evolution would actually select us to believe*. Even if the belief that interpersonal trust, or that well-being, is good is a fundamental normative truth, surely it is contingent that beliefs in such truths are conducive to survival. This just highlights the point that we are at least somewhat lucky to have evolved in an environment where these things are evolutionarily beneficial. Here is a similar example of the luck of giraffes, given by James Rachels:

The slightly longer necks of the original individuals were chance variations, which they would have had even if it did them no good. It was simply their

good luck that they happened to live in an environment in which a longer neck was advantageous.⁴⁵

Rachels here is pointing out that giraffes got their long necks by chance, and it just so happens that such a chance variation worked out in their favor because of the environment that they evolved in; those giraffes that acquired longer necks, had they resided in an environment where only bushes flourished, would not have had the same luck. In the same vein, there are ways that beliefs about interpersonal trust or well-being could have failed to be conducive to survival, or even inimical to our survival, making them unsuitable as third factor beliefs we are pushed to adopt. Imagine a world in which the environment is conducive to evolution selecting people who do not trust others at all, but instead simply use the tit-for-tat decision making strategy, over people who practice interpersonal trust. If it is the case that the beliefs that interpersonal trust or well-being are good are fundamental normative truths, but not necessarily conducive to survival, then Enoch is relying too heavily on luck, since evolution could have just as easily not selected for such beliefs. Enoch has a response to this worry, that the luck found in his account is the same luck found in our perceptual faculties being accurate, but I will hold off responding to this worry until section 8.

Another problem is that it is not clear that evolution would push us to tend to believe other fundamental normative truths, such as that interpersonal trust is good, or that well-being is good. To see this let us take Enoch's suggested substitute belief, that well-being is good, and see if it can play the role needed to make his explanation go through. And when we do this we come to the problematic

⁴⁵ Rachels 1999, p. 40.

conclusion that no other beliefs can actually play the role needed to make Enoch's explanation go through, because no other beliefs are closely aligned enough with evolutionary forces. Just because something is conducive to survival does not mean that it would be selected for by evolution.⁴⁶

To see this let us plug well-being into the third factor explanation instead of survival:

And this completes the explanatory story needed here: well-being (or whatever) is good; so behaving in ways that promote well-being is (pro-tanto) good; but one efficient way of pushing us in the direction of acting in ways that promote well-being is by pushing us to believe that it is good to act in ways that promote well-being. And, in fact, we have just seen, it *is* good so to act. So the normative beliefs this mechanism pushes us to have will tend to be true.

Well-being comes apart from evolutionary forces insofar as what is good for an individual's well-being is clearly different from what is good for an individual's evolutionary fitness.⁴⁷ For example, a person may strongly prefer not to have children and so the act of a vasectomy would be good for the individual but not for the individual's fitness. This explanation goes wrong when it is stated that evolution would be "pushing us to believe that it is good to act in ways that promote well-being." It is not clear that evolution would push us to promote our well-being; in fact it seems that acting in these ways can be evolutionarily harmful at times. Enoch can respond that while it is contingent that well-being and interpersonal trust are evolutionarily beneficial, certainly it is more probable than not that beliefs about their goodness would be selected for. It seems likely that evolution would push us to

⁴⁶ Having lots of money is conducive to survival, but it would be strange to say that evolution pushes us to believe that having lots of money is good.

⁴⁷ Evolutionary, or individual, fitness denotes the ability to be successful in reproduction.

believe that well-being and interpersonal trust are good, even if it is not necessary that evolution would push us towards these beliefs. For my argument to be plausible it must be the case that it is no more likely that evolution would push us to believe well-being and interpersonal trust are good than that evolution would push us to believe something else.

I believe that this worry can be answered by looking at the random nature of evolution. Part of what makes an evolutionary trait beneficial is the environment it is selected in. If giraffes' long necks were developed in an ecosystem that exclusively contained bushes and no trees then you can bet that the giraffe (or more specifically the giraffes that inherit the long neck genes) would have gone extinct rather quickly. In the same vein, it may be true that it is more probable than not that evolution would have selected our beliefs that interpersonal trust and well-being are good, but this more probable than not quantifier would only hold in similar environments. In other, possibly more hostile environments, it could be that it is more probable than not that the opposite beliefs, well-being and interpersonal trust are bad, would be selected for.⁴⁸ Thus, it may be that Enoch is right that such beliefs would be

⁴⁸ Here are two examples of how the beliefs that 'interpersonal trust is good' and 'well-being is good' might not be selected for:

Example 1: Imagine that our earth is somewhat different, in that our environment is much harsher. Specifically let us imagine that the earth is far more mountainous than it is today. One of the consequences of this harsher environment is that it is much harder for communities to form, for various reasons (there might be less people, it is harder for these people to traverse the terrain and therefore harder to interact physically with others, etc.). In such an environment, lacking strong community ties, it is not hard to see ways in which interpersonal trust might lower evolutionary individual fitness. Indeed, in at least some worlds like this, presumably tit-for-tat might be a better evolutionary strategy, and therefore in such worlds it is unlikely evolution would push us to believe that interpersonal trust is good.

Example 2: Imagine, once again, that our earth is somewhat different, in that our environment is much harsher. Specifically, let us imagine that the earth is far more mountainous than it is today. Two

selected for at a higher probability rate given our current and historical circumstances. But it could just as easily be pointed out that our circumstances could have quite easily been very different, and if this is accurate, then its no longer clear that evolution would have selected for such beliefs at a higher probability rate *in general*, but only given our circumstances. More formally, I can state the argument like this: If belief B would be selected at a higher probability rate if you fix circumstances X, but belief A would be selected for at a higher probability rate if you fix circumstances Y, and X and Y are equally probable (although only one set of circumstances can hold in the actual world), then the likelihood that belief B is selected for is equal to the likelihood that belief A is selected for before any of the circumstances are fixed.

It is worth pointing out here that once again Enoch does have an available response, which is that even granting that it is somewhat miraculous that we come to have true third-factor beliefs, this is no more miraculous than the fact that are perceptions are largely reliable. I will refer to this as his partners-in-guilt argument, and I will address this counter-objection by Enoch in section 8. However, let me briefly say that I think there are enough relevant differences between accurate perceptions and accurate normative beliefs to make his partners-in-guilt argument fail.

of the consequences of this harsher environment are that communities are much harder to form (for the same various reasons above), and that one is always under threat of attack. In such an environment, it may be the best strategy to never let your guard down, and therefore not pursue objects of well-being, since such a pursuit will cause one to lower one's guard. Indeed, in at least some worlds like this, presumably not believing well-being might be fitness enhancing, and therefore evolution would push us not adopt beliefs about well-being (notice, it is not the case that we would be pushed to believe that well-being is bad, we would just not be pushed to believe it is good; this could manifest itself in different ways, such as not having well-being beliefs, but also it could mean that individuals do not believe that well-being is good or bad, while still having well-being beliefs).

5.2 A Note on Premise (A1) of Response (A)

In posing his counter-objection to the miraculous correlation objection, Enoch appears to be assuming that the definition of a miracle is related to contingency: it must be the case that some event could have failed to occurred to be considered a miracle. Duncan Pritchard supports a similar notion of luck: “[L]uck turns out to be a modal notion. Very roughly...an event is lucky provided that it obtains in the actual world but does not obtain in most near-by possible worlds.”⁴⁹ The basic idea, I take it, is that an event cannot be miraculous if it is necessary. Notice that (A1) states: if it is miraculous that evolution aimed at something good, then it must be the case that evolution could have aimed at something that failed to be good. But as we have seen evolution could have failed to aim at something good, if the claim that survival is good is contingently true. Therefore it can be miraculous that evolution aimed at something good, even if it is unlikely that evolution would aim at something that failed to be good. I think that if Enoch wants the claim that survival is good to continue to be the third-factor belief in his explanation he should amend the first premise to rule out the unlikely, but possible, instances of evolution aiming at something that fails to be good. It must be changed from: (A1) if it is miraculous that evolution aimed at something good, then it must be the case that evolution could have aimed at something that failed to be good, to: (A1*) if it is miraculous that evolution aimed at something good, then it must be the case that evolution would have *most likely* not aimed at something that failed to be good.

I believe I can show (A1*) is false. To see this I will turn to Jeffrey Roland and

⁴⁹ Pritchard 2009, p. 2.

Jon Cogburn's paper 'Anti-Luck Epistemologies and Necessary Truths.' They invite us to imagine that a person named Sam wants to know whether 131,071 is a prime number. To figure it out Sam consults a calculator. Unbeknownst to Sam, the calculator is broken; however, there is a benevolent demon that has a vested interest in ensuring that Sam's calculator shows only correct answers.

In this case Sam's belief that 131,071 is a prime number is still true at nearly every relevantly similar (Sam believes that 131,071 is a prime number)-world....But now it's not the case that the method by which Sam reached his belief could easily have led him to have a false belief in a different proposition. Let $\langle q \rangle$ be a proposition appropriate to the method in question (i.e., a mathematical proposition amenable to answering by calculator). If $\langle q \rangle$ is true, then Sam's method (consulting the broken calculator being fed correct answers by the benevolent demon) will indicate that. And if it's false, Sam's method will indicate that...So there is no appropriate proposition distinct from [Sam's true belief] such that Sam might have easily falsely believed it on the basis of the method that produced his belief...⁵⁰

This example shows that Sam's belief is both lucky, because he is relying on a broken calculator that is giving him the correct answers, and not easily false because it relies on a miracle occurring, the presence of a benevolent demon controlling answers on a calculator. In every close world Sam will have a true belief using the method of consulting the possessed calculator. If this is the case, then Sam comes by his true beliefs somewhat miraculously, although his true beliefs could not have been easily false. Thus, it appears to support the idea that (A1*) is false; even if evolution would have most likely not aimed at something that failed to be good, it can still be considered somewhat lucky or miraculous that it aimed at something good.

⁵⁰ Roland and Cogburn 2011, pp. 555-556. This argument is focused on Timothy Williamson's account of safety, but it applies with equal force to Prichard's account as well.

There are also other ways one could plausibly consider the fact that our normative beliefs are miraculously true, even if evolution could have only aimed at survival (or something good). After all, evolution progresses, so to speak, through random variations in physical and psychological traits. Evolution could push us to believe that something good is bad, or push us to not have normative beliefs at all, while still aiming at something good, if we had evolved somewhat differently or if we had evolved in a different environment. Here is a possible scenario:

Imagine that we are in an environment where cancer is much more prevalent than in our world. Indeed, the majority of the human population dies from cancer. However, one group of people, amoralists, prove to be much more resistant to cancer. Scientists discover that it is a single gene that both makes the amoralist lack moral beliefs, or motivations (depending on the conception of the amoralist at work), and that makes the amoralist cancer resistant.

It seems quite likely that, in such a case, evolution would select for people who have the amoralist gene at a greater rate than those who do not. However such people would have very different normative beliefs.

Claims that Enoch's correlation is miraculous do not require that evolution could have aimed at something not good, since in the example above evolution is still aiming at survival. Such claims show two different ways we can be considered lucky that evolution pushed us to have true normative beliefs. First, we are lucky that the environment we evolved in was conducive to the normative belief 'survival is good' being fitness enhancing, and second we are lucky that random variations in traits resulted in our having accurate normative beliefs. Now, this type of luck may be totally acceptable; it may be the type of luck that is present everywhere, as Enoch is fond of saying. My overall point is that it is certainly conceivable that one consider

it miraculous that we have accurate normative beliefs even if evolution could only have aimed at something of value.

5.3 Review of Section 5

In this section I have attempted to respond to Enoch's counter-objection, that the claim that his solution relies on a miraculous correlation is incoherent. I have argued that premises (A1), (A3), and lemma (A5) all appear to be somewhat problematic. First, and foremost, from his own description of his third factor belief that 'survival is good' it seems that the proposition he is discussing is a contingent one, not necessary as he assumes. However, even if he finds a third factor that is a fundamental normative truth, and thus necessary, one can claim it is only necessary in a normative, and not in a metaphysical, sense. Even if fundamental normative truths are metaphysically necessary, they are not conceptually necessary, a fact that shows (A5) does not follow from (A3). Lastly, there are potential problems in the assumption that Enoch can just substitute in other third factor beliefs to do the job if the belief 'survival is good' cannot get the job done. Enoch must find a belief that would be likely for evolution to push us to adopt, and that can fulfill the explanatory role he needs filled, and it is unclear whether other third factor propositions can fit these two conditions adequately. Enoch, therefore, cannot dismiss the miraculous correlation objection by simply claiming it to be incoherent. We will look at another counter-objection Enoch poses to the miraculous correlation objection below, but first I will turn to a completely separate objection that is related to the conceptual possibility that the moral truths could be different.

6. A Formal Discussion of Anti-Luck Restrictions

I mentioned earlier on that I believe the fact that fundamental normative truths, even if they are metaphysically necessary, are not conceptually necessary might prove to be problematic for Enoch. On Enoch's account if the normative truths were different, a conceptual possibility, our normative beliefs would still stay the same because evolutionary forces would continue to push us to have the same normative beliefs. If this is the case then Enoch's solution fails the anti-luck constraint on knowledge known as sensitivity. As Clarke-Doane pointed out above, however, this counter-factual only makes sense if we take the antecedent to be conceptually possible, since it is metaphysically impossible. In what follows I will examine why anti-luck restrictions, so constituted, do not pose a major problem to Enoch's pre-established harmony explanation of the correlation between normative beliefs and normative truths, and then consider how sensitivity might still be problematic for Enoch.⁵¹

Enoch thinks he can bypass anti-luck restrictions:

[Y]ou may wonder whether the reliability of our normative judgments is sufficiently counterfactually robust on the suggested account to accommodate the anti-luck condition presumably necessary for knowledge. Now it's not completely clear how best to understand the anti-luck intuition, nor is it clear just *how much* counterfactual robustness is needed in order to satisfy it. Seeing that the remaining miracle on my account is not significantly more miraculous than the one involved in the 'miracle' of (for instance) our perception being largely reliable, then, it does not seem to me that there is enough luck here to make knowledge impossible.⁵²

Enoch relies on his familiar partners-in-guilt response that we will reject in section

⁵¹ One thing to quickly note is that these anti-luck restrictions are restrictions on knowledge. But Enoch is discussing a correlation. Why bring restrictions on knowledge into a discussion about a correlation. Quite simply, because the correlation is used by Enoch as an explanation of how normative knowledge is possible, or at least how it could be justified. Thus, if the correlation violates anti-luck restrictions on knowledge it would seemingly make the correlation obsolete, since the correlation is only useful if it gives rise to knowledge.

⁵² Enoch 2011, p. 174.

8. At this point I will simply deny that the miracle of our normative beliefs being accurate is the same type of miracle that we depend on in order for our perceptions to be largely reliable, with an explanation of why I reject this forthcoming. Enoch has another response available to him that he does not consider, and to see what this is we need to examine the two anti-luck restrictions currently popular in the epistemic literature.

6.1 Sensitivity and Safety

The first restriction I will discuss is sensitivity, developed by Robert Nozick.

Nozick writes:

A person knows that *p* when he not only does truly believe it, but also would truly believe it and wouldn't falsely believe it. He not only actually has a true belief, he subjunctively has one. It is true that *p* and he believes it; if it weren't true he wouldn't believe it, and if it were true he would believe it.⁵³

Nozick believes the following conditions must hold in order for a belief to be knowledge: (1) *p* is true, (2) *S* believes that *p*, (3) If *p* had not been true, then *S* would not have believed that *p*, (4) If *p* had been true, then *S* would have believed that *p*; for our purposes we will only have to worry about condition (3). The sensitivity principle, then, can be summed up as follows: "S knows that *p* only if, were *p* false, *S* would not believe that *p*."⁵⁴

One major problem with sensitivity is that it forces one to deny that knowledge is closed under known logical implication. The closure principle states that if one knows *p*, and one knows that *p* entails *q*, then one knows *q*. *P* is my belief

⁵³ Nozick 2002, p. 479. Sensitivity is essentially a counterfactual restriction on knowledge. For an updated dispositional take on sensitivity see Briggs and Nolan 2012a. Objections to the updated account can be found by looking at Turri 2012, and Bronner 2012. For responses to these objections see Briggs and Nolan 2012b.

⁵⁴ Becker and Black 2012, p. 1.

that I am sitting in my apartment in Boulder, and Q is my belief that I am not a brain in a vat in Mexico. I know that P entails Q . But notice that while I wouldn't believe that I was sitting in my apartment in Boulder in the nearest possible world in which I was not sitting in my apartment in Boulder, the same cannot be said for the belief that I am not a brain in a vat in Mexico, and therefore the latter belief isn't sensitive. I know P and I know P entails Q , but I don't know Q . Thus, the condition of sensitivity forces one to either abandon the closure principle, or to embrace skepticism.

Sensitivity's rejection of the closure principle was seen as too costly by many; a new anti-luck requirement, called safety, has been developed that does not require the rejection of the closure principle.⁵⁵

S 's belief is safe *iff* in most near-by possible worlds in which S continues to form her belief about the target proposition in the same way as in the actual world, and in all very close near-by possible worlds in which S continues to form her belief about the target proposition in the same way as the actual world, her belief continues to be true.⁵⁶

The idea is that we must take a class of nearby possible worlds, and if one's belief in the majority of these nearby possible worlds is true, then the belief is considered safe. However, for the safety restrictions to work one must form the belief using the same process in the class of nearby worlds. For example, Big Bob believes that Hokey Pokey ice cream is delicious, and Hokey Pokey ice cream actually is delicious in the majority of nearby possible worlds. Big Bob's belief that Hokey Pokey ice cream tastes good is safe. If, however, in most nearby possible worlds Hokey Pokey

⁵⁵ For a challenge to both anti-luck restrictions and their reliance on modal conditions in order to provide a good conception of knowledge, see Baumann 2008.

⁵⁶ Pritchard 2009, p. 34. Safety, having been formulated by separate individuals, comes in different forms. However for our purposes the differences between the specific versions of safety are unimportant. It should be noted that Pritchard's formulation has also come under attack for not being able to accommodate the closure principle. Kvanvig (2008) proposes a solution to this objection to keep safety as a plausible condition on knowledge.

ice cream is not delicious, then Big Bob's belief that Hokey Pokey ice cream is delicious is not safe, since Big Bob's belief does not continue to be true in those nearby possible worlds.

6.2 Necessary Truths

Remember that Enoch argues that the proposition that survival is good, if it is a fundamental normative truth, is a necessary truth. Necessary truths are problematic for the safety condition. One can come to believe metaphysically necessary propositions by luck, but because one's belief is about a necessary truth there are no nearby possible worlds in which one's belief is false. For example, imagine that Big Bob is trying to figure out whether $2+2=4$ or $2+2=5$ and cannot decide on his own. Big Bob decides to flip a coin, and if it lands on heads he will believe that the sum of 2 and 2 is four whereas if it lands on tails he will believe it is five. Big Bob flips the coin, it lands on heads, and consequently he adopts the belief that the sum of two and two is four. Notice that according to the above formulation of safety, Big Bob's belief is safe, and therefore counts as knowledge, since it trivially satisfies the condition that his belief is true in most nearby possible worlds.

Pritchard recognizes this problem and adds a (rough) condition that necessary truths must satisfy in order to count as safe:

[A]ll we need to do is to talk of the doxastic result of the target belief-forming process, whatever that might be, and not focus solely on belief in the target proposition. For example, if one forms one's belief that $2 + 2 = 4$ by tossing a coin, then while there are no near-by possible worlds where *that* belief is false, there is a wide class of near-by possible worlds where that belief forming process brings about a doxastic result that is false (e.g., a possible world in which one in this way forms the belief that $2 + 2 = 5$).⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Pritchard 2009, p. 34.

The idea is that we must not look at a belief itself, when analyzing a belief about a necessary truth, but at the belief-forming process, to see if such a process will generally bring us to have a true belief about the necessary truth in question. If such a belief forming process does not bring us to have true beliefs in the majority of the nearby possible worlds, then the belief that we arrive at via that belief forming process will not be safe, and vice versa. So, for example, once Pritchard's further condition is consulted Big Bob's belief that the sum of two and two is four is no longer safe, since flipping a coin will not bring Big Bob to have a true belief in many nearby possible worlds. In about half the nearby possible worlds the coin will land on tails, leading him to believe that the sum of two and two is five.

However Pritchard's further condition on necessary truths does not help me to establish that Enoch's third factor belief is unsafe. This is because in all nearby possible worlds evolution will continue to push us to believe that survival is good, and so there will be no nearby possible worlds in which evolution pushes us to have a false belief. But I want to argue that because the further condition doesn't make Enoch's belief unsafe, this shows a problem with the safety constraint, as formulated by Pritchard, rather than show that Enoch's belief is not a product of luck.

To see this I can proffer other examples of ways in which a lucky belief in a necessarily true proposition is considered safe even once Pritchard's further condition for necessary truths is applied. Imagine that Big Bob finds himself wondering about whether murdering innocent babies is good or bad. He decides to flip a coin to solve his curiosity, and will choose to believe that murdering innocent babies is bad if the coin lands on heads and that it is good if it lands on tails.

Furthermore imagine that Big Bob is, unbeknownst to him, in a joke shop that only sells fake two-sided coins, both sides of the coin representing heads, and he is surrounded by thousands upon thousands of fake coins. Big Bob picks a coin at random and flips it, and of course it lands on heads; Big Bob decides to adopt the belief that murdering innocent babies is bad. In all the very nearby possible worlds, and in many of the nearby possible worlds, Big Bob will garner the same result from the belief forming process, thus satisfying Pritchard's condition on necessary propositions, allowing Big Bob's belief to be considered safe according to Pritchard's safety condition on knowledge. However clearly Big Bob comes by his belief in a lucky manner.⁵⁸

I am not the first to argue that the safety condition on knowledge, as it is currently conceived, does not rule unsafe certain lucky beliefs in necessarily true propositions. Returning to Roland and Cogburn's paper, we can see they make a

⁵⁸ One could argue that there are nearby possible worlds in which Big Bob is not in a gift shop and uses the process, and in these worlds his process only brings him to the truth some of the time. Therefore it is not true that there are no nearby possible worlds in which his process brings him to believe that two and two is five, and this is enough to apply Pritchard's condition, making it an unsafe belief. I would urge one to remember, however, that Big Bob is surrounded by thousands of fake coins, so the closest possible worlds are worlds in which he just picks out a different fake coin at random. Thus there are thousands of possible worlds that are closer than a world in which Big Bob is not in the fake coin store, and this to me seems to be a sufficient to constitute the claim that in most, if not all, nearby possible worlds his belief forming process will translate to a true belief, and thus satisfy the safety condition. One might also be able to argue that there is a very near possible world in which Big Bob decides to only believe the sum of two and two is four if the coin lands on tails. I agree that this could be a nearby possible world, but not a very nearby possible world since the world in which Big Bob changes his process and has a different belief is surely much farther away than a nearby world in which Big Bob keeps the same belief and process, and just randomly picks a different coin. If such a world is just nearby then than does not pose a problem because it only has to be the case that in many, not all, nearby possible worlds the process will bring him to have the same belief. This is not to mention that it is possible to argue that such an objection cannot hold since he needs to be establishing his belief through the same belief forming process, and it is not clear that he employs the same belief forming process in the world where he determines that tails determines his true belief instead of heads. I think that this points to an issue that Pritchard needs to address, since it is unclear what exactly is considered part of the doxastic process. Ultimately if this example is too flawed to work, there are other examples of ways that the safety condition fails when it comes to analyzing necessarily true propositions. See Roland and Cogburn (2011) for these examples and Goldberg (2014) for other related counter-objections to the safety condition.

similar observation, leading them to conclude:

[S]afety-based accounts have no advantage over sensitivity-based accounts when it comes to necessary truths. Both either must adopt a radically variant semantics for counterfactuals or come up with an account of the existence of non-metaphysically possible worlds and how such worlds can be more or less similar to metaphysically possible worlds.⁵⁹

If this is true, then safety should not be used, as it is currently formulated, to analyze knowledge of necessarily true propositions, since it simply cannot successfully handle all cases of true beliefs in necessary propositions that come about through an unreliable or lucky process.⁶⁰

6.3 Sensitivity as an Indicator

So what is the upshot of all this? I think that the anti-luck restriction objection can be easily overcome by Enoch, not because it is a bad objection, but because current anti-luck restrictions have not been refined enough to implicate all lucky or accidental beliefs in necessarily true propositions.⁶¹ But if this is correct why should Enoch worry that his account is not sensitive? Interestingly, one can still claim that Enoch's solution violates sensitivity, because it is conceptually possible that the moral truths could be different, and in the nearest conceptually possible world in which the moral truths are different our beliefs stay the same. Despite the

⁵⁹ Roland and Cogburn 2011, p. 560.

⁶⁰ For other problems with safety, and attempts to answer these problems, see Carter 2009.

⁶¹ This point, that Enoch's solution trivially satisfies the safety condition, also explains why I will not examine another argument Enoch poses in favor of his view. Enoch (2011, pp. 173-174) writes: "As already noted, then, the explanation suggested is not fully counterfactually robust. Still, it would be a mistake to suggest that it lacks *any* counterfactual robustness. For the explanation still works in a large number of fairly close possible worlds. Had the selective forces worked only somewhat differently, or had the evolutionary 'aim' been different but still of value, still the starting points of our normative beliefs would have been close enough to the truth for our normative beliefs to be (somewhat) correlated with the normative truths...Perhaps more by way of counter-factual robustness can be hoped for. But *some* significant counterfactual robustness is satisfied by the suggested explanation..." Notice that such an argument is trivially true because Enoch is discussing a metaphysically necessary proposition, and so therefore it automatically has at least some counter-factual robustness.

weaknesses in the sensitivity condition, it can still give us some sort of standard on which to measure whether beliefs in necessarily true propositions are lucky. Some metaphysically necessary propositions are not conceptually necessary, and therefore we can look at those conceptually possible worlds to see if certain beliefs in metaphysically necessary propositions can be considered lucky. So what I would like to suggest, at this point, is that the sensitivity condition appears to be better equipped to analyze lucky beliefs about necessarily true propositions and can seemingly provide us with a *prima facie* reason to believe that a belief is lucky, or not, and thus either a case of knowledge, or not.

While sensitivity has the capability to analyze lucky beliefs about necessarily true propositions effectively, it is still subject to criticism for its necessary rejection of closure. To address this worry let me turn to a paper by Lars Gundersen entitled 'Tracking, Epistemic Dispositions and the Conditional Analysis'.⁶² Gundersen's target is a dispositional reading of Nozick, in that "the Nozickian tracking conditionals offer themselves as a very natural way of expressing a dispositional account of knowledge."⁶³ Gundersen presents common counter-examples to the sensitivity condition on knowledge, and attempts to categorize them into four distinct groups: finkish and finkish-lacks dispositions, masked dispositions, and mimicked dispositions. If Gundersen is correct in his assessment I can establish that the sensitivity condition is a good indicator so long as the belief in question cannot be categorized as any of the four problematic case types.

⁶² Gundersen 2010.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 355. However, I would like to point out that nothing of importance holds on whether Gundersen's reading of Nozick is correct, since I will be able to apply the same point without relying on a dispositional analysis.

A masked disposition is one where the epistemic agent has a “genuine disposition to get things right under [circumstances where the agent implements some epistemic method M] but where the manifestation of this disposition—getting things right—would not display due to some masking mechanism.”⁶⁴ Simply put, this is a case of an agent who has an unobjectionable epistemic disposition, but where some further circumstance is present that “frustrates the usual causal chain between stimulus and response” despite the unobjectionable epistemic disposition.⁶⁵ Therefore, masking mechanisms ‘mask’ the truth from the agent, so to speak, insofar as they provide circumstance in which the agent’s unobjectionable epistemic disposition is subject to a problematic causal chain that blocks the agent from having true beliefs. Skeptical scenarios present a good example of masked dispositions. If one is a brain in a vat, then one might be a good epistemic agent, having the disposition to get things right, but this disposition is undermined due to the faulty causal chains that are inherent in being a brain in a vat; being a brain in a vat masks one from having true beliefs. It is interesting to note that agents who are affected by masked dispositions are still justified in their beliefs; it is just that their beliefs cannot be correct.

A mimicked disposition is one where the

epistemic agent comes, very luckily, to believe *p* veraciously: The procedure by which the agent comes to believe *p* is somehow inadequate, but on this particular occasion it leads to a true belief. Now add to the story that a causal link has somehow been established between the agent’s flawed method for believing *p* and *p*...⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 358.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 355.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 356-357.

An example of a mimicked disposition can be seen by analogy. Imagine an archer who shoots off arrows in completely random directions, only to always hit the target due to a computer chip placed in the arrow. One would not characteristically call such an archer a good archer, although this archer hits the target every time. The same holds for an epistemic agent who is the victim of a mimicked disposition. Such an agent is not disposed to have correct beliefs, but because of some favorable circumstances the agent ends up being correct.

An example will be helpful. Imagine that Hateful Harry hates all people who belong to race R. He hates these people because he believes they all hate him, and he has come by this belief by looking at other people's social media posts that say 'people of race R hate people named Harry.' Harry goes on a very vocal campaign across the world, decrying people of race R, and using the social media posts as evidence. As it just so happens all people of race R hate people who use social media posts as evidence for any claim whatsoever, so Harry's belief is true and all the people of race R do hate him once they come to know his belief is formed from reading social media posts. Notice we have a case here of an agent, Harry, who comes by a belief through an inadequate epistemic process, yet the flawed process through which he comes by his belief ends up making his belief true. Hateful Harry's disposition is a problematic one, as he is relying on an epistemically flawed process to form his belief, but his problematic disposition mimics a non-problematic disposition to get things right, since his belief ends up being true.

A fink is something that alters an object, or agent, with a certain disposition, in such a way that the object or agent loses that disposition just when the

disposition is triggered. A finkish disposition is one where an

epistemic agent is genuinely disposed to get things right regarding p under [circumstances where the agent implements some epistemic method M] but where some fink causes her to lose that disposition just after the [circumstances where the agent implements some epistemic method M] materialise such that the manifestation of that disposition, forming a true belief, does not display.⁶⁷

To illustrate a finkish disposition let us imagine Paul and his very happy family. Paul loves his family very much, and accurately believes that his family is alive and well due to his diligence to look after them all. However if someone who doesn't like Paul decides to murder all Paul's family, Paul will go immediately insane and part of his insanity is that he will believe his family is alive and well. Thus, Paul has a disposition to have an accurate belief F, but when not-F occurs, Paul loses his disposition to have an accurate belief.

We can contrast finkish dispositions with finkish-lacks dispositions. A finkish-lacks disposition comes about when, instead of the fink destroying a disposition, the fink gives rise to a new disposition. "We get such cases whenever the cognitive altering in question is one that far from destroying the relevant cognitive disposition rather generates one that did not previously exist."⁶⁸ Paul would display a finkish-lacks disposition if we amended the above example as follows: Paul starts off insane and believes that his family has been murdered, although his family has a good life. Someone who doesn't like Paul decides to murder his family, and this snaps Paul out of his insanity, but he comes again to correctly believe his family has been murdered. Thus, Paul had a disposition to have

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 360.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 361.

false belief F, but the murder of his family causes him to gain a new disposition: Paul is disposed to have true F-beliefs.

Now that the four types of counter-examples that are used to undermine sensitivity have been categorized my argument will be relatively straightforward. If a belief is not sensitive, this allows us to say that one's true belief relies on luck, so long as the agent's disposition has not been subject to any of the four problematic dispositional conditions mentioned above. If the agent in question has been subject to any of the four problematic dispositions, then the sensitivity requirement, which gives us *prima facie* evidence of lucky beliefs, is defeated. Notice that this then gets us around problematic cases where sensitivity is required to deny the closure principle. To show this let's take the example used above, that I can know that I am sitting on my couch in Boulder, while not knowing that I am not a Brain in a Vat. A situation where I am a Brain in a Vat would defeat the *prima facie* restriction on sensitivity, because I would be subject to a masking disposition.

Therefore, so long as an agent is not subject to any of the four problematic dispositions, sensitivity is a good indicator of knowledge, and a more accurate indication of knowledge than safety when it comes to beliefs about necessarily true propositions. For example, Big Bob's belief that murdering innocent babies is bad, while safe, is not sensitive, because in the nearest conceptually possible world where killing innocent babies is not bad, flipping a double sided fake coin will not bring him to have a true belief. Gundersen himself seems to have something of this sort in mind when he writes that the fact that one can divide counter-examples to sensitivity into four epistemic categories "provides strong evidence for the thesis

that satisfaction of the two tracking conditionals is symptomatic of knowledge..."⁶⁹

6.4 A Second Objection to Enoch's Pre-Established Harmony Model

So long as my suggestion is reasonable I think this leaves Enoch with two choices. The first choice Enoch has is to admit his belief is not sensitive, since if the moral truths were different – and in particular, if survival weren't good – we would still have the same moral beliefs. This can be seen most clearly by looking at the closest conceptually possible world where survival is not good. Evolution works in the same way in that conceptually possible world as it does in this world, and so we are pushed to believe survival is good in both worlds, although such a belief is only true in this world. More specifically, one could argue that in such a conceptually possible world, all the non-normative facts are exactly the same, it's just the normative facts that are different, and therefore we have all the same beliefs despite the fact that the normative truths are different. Consequently, since normative beliefs are not sensitive, they are at least *prima facie* too lucky to be considered as a case of knowledge.

The second choice Enoch has is to argue that his belief is exempt from such a sensitivity condition on the grounds that it fits the model of one of the problematic cases. Neither option is a good one; if sensitivity is a good indicator of knowledge, and it rules against Enoch, this seems to be problematic. However, if Enoch were to concede his belief is only true because it fits the mold of a problematic counter-example, this seems even worse, since those counter-examples are meant to show that certain beliefs that are counted as knowledge using the sensitivity condition

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 353.

shouldn't be recognized as such (think here of how Gettier cases show that certain definitions of knowledge are unacceptable).

Furthermore, once the robust realist becomes aware that her belief is *prima facie* too lucky to count as a form of knowledge, this should in some sense undermine justification. As Enoch himself says: "reliability is not necessary for initial justification, but any such justification is at the very least defeated (or perhaps even undermined) when one *knows* (or justifiably believes) that one's belief or the method that formed it is in fact unreliable."⁷⁰ Thus, justification for the realist is undermined, in the external sense because the process that brought about the belief is unreliable, and in the internal sense because the agent should be aware that such a process is unreliable due to its failure of the *prima facie* sensitivity test for lucky beliefs.

6.5 Two Objections to Sensitivity so Construed

There are two objections to my above argument that I would like to consider here. The first is that conceptually possible worlds are irrelevant, and therefore my appeal to such worlds holds no weight. The second is that my argument proves too much and makes all synthetic a priori knowledge unjustified. I believe that neither objection is especially problematic, and won't be able to vindicate Enoch's solution to the epistemological challenge.

6.5.1 Conceptual Possibilities as Irrelevant

My argument above requires there to be conceptually possible worlds where the moral truths are in fact different, in order to make use of the sensitivity

⁷⁰ Enoch 2011, p. 161.

condition. But why should Enoch countenance such conceptually possible worlds as relevant, if the worlds we are talking about are (at least) normatively impossible? A different way to put the point would be this: why worry about the conceptual possibility that the normative truths could be different when he already has the metaphysical necessity of normative truths in hand?

The answer is simply that, since Enoch is discussing metaphysically necessary propositions, and one can come to have lucky beliefs in metaphysically necessary propositions, there needs to be some way to analyze such beliefs. As we have seen safety cannot analyze beliefs in metaphysically necessary propositions, since such beliefs end up being trivially safe. Sensitivity can only analyze beliefs in metaphysically necessary propositions if we bring conceptually possible worlds into the fold. Therefore my appeal to conceptually possible worlds is necessary as a tool to examine the luckiness of beliefs in metaphysically necessary propositions. Without an appeal to conceptually possible worlds, there would be a class of beliefs in metaphysically necessary propositions that are lucky, but could never be proven to be lucky, at least under the current anti-luck restrictions (the example of Big Bob in the fake coin shop nicely illustrates and supports this point). This fact, to me, seems at least as objectionable as an appeal to conceptually possible worlds.

Ultimately, I think it is somewhat irrelevant that conceptually possible worlds are impossible. This is because all we need is a conceptually possible world to run the sensitivity test, so to speak. It gives us the tools to test Enoch's solution and Enoch's solution fails the test; this is so whether or not the world it fails in is normatively or metaphysically impossible.

6.5.2 Synthetic A Priori Knowledge

A second objection can run as follows: but the sensitivity requirement, so construed, would make true beliefs about synthetic a priori too lucky to count as knowledge, as well. After all, there is a conceptually possible world where an object could be green all over and red all over at the same time, and in such a world we may still believe that such an object is impossible. The rejection of all synthetic a priori knowledge is too much to give up, so the sensitivity requirement is not a good constraint on knowledge, even in the weakened form presented here.

The question is whether Enoch wants to use a third-factor pre-established harmony model to explain the accuracy of our beliefs about all synthetic *a priori* facts, or if he just intends to the third-factor pre-established harmony model to explain the accuracy of our beliefs about normative facts. If he does not intend his explanation to be an explanation of how we come to know all synthetic *a priori* knowledge, then the objection that my argument proves too much may not actually be true. The belief process for most of our synthetic *a priori* beliefs may in fact satisfy the sensitivity requirement, leading to *prima facie* justified beliefs, while the belief process for normative beliefs fails sensitivity, leading to *prima facie* unjustified beliefs. It is worth pointing out that it is totally unclear how Enoch could use his current pre-established harmony explanation to explain all synthetic *a priori* knowledge, since we would have to come by this knowledge by reasoning from the belief that survival is good. He may be able to offer up another third-factor belief that evolution would push us to adopt in order to explain other forms of *a priori*

knowledge besides normative knowledge, but what that (or those) other third-factor belief(s) could be is not clear at all.

If, however, Enoch decides to explain all synthetic a priori knowledge using his pre-established harmony model then I agree that beliefs in synthetic a priori propositions are not sensitive, and therefore are not instances of knowledge. This, I think, is a strike against Enoch's explanation however, and not the version of sensitivity presented above. One is only forced to deny synthetic *a priori* knowledge as *prima facie* too lucky if one adopts Enoch's account as the correct explanation of the accuracy of synthetic *a priori* beliefs; there are plenty of other theories on which beliefs about synthetic *a priori* propositions are sensitive, and therefore count as knowledge.

6.6 Review

It appears as though Enoch's proposed solution to the epistemic challenge to robust realism makes normative beliefs *prima facie* too lucky to count as a form of knowledge, and this fact undermines justification for our normative beliefs. This is a direct result of the fact that Enoch's third-factor pre-established harmony model does not seem to be allow our beliefs to be responsive if the normative facts were different. While Enoch has a potential reply to the criticism that his explanatory model violates anti-luck restrictions, it is not clear that he has a good response to the claim that sensitivity gives us *prima facie* reason to believe his explanatory model makes normative beliefs too lucky to count as a form of knowledge. Therefore we have reason to think that Enoch's third-factor pre-established harmony model explaining the correlation between normative beliefs and normative truths makes

normative beliefs unreliable.

7. Response B to the Miracle Objection: Partners-in-Guilt

Returning to the miraculous correlation objection, Enoch has one other counter-objection that we will look at.⁷¹ The counter-objection is that the fact that our normative beliefs are correlated with the normative truth is no more of a miracle than the fact that our perceptions and other intellectual faculties are accurate. Therefore, I will call this counter-objection the partners-in-guilt counter-objection. If our normative beliefs are too lucky to be considered cases of knowledge, so are our perceptual beliefs. The argument is as follows.

(B1) We are lucky that we have evolved so that our normative beliefs are accurate.

(B2) However, we are also lucky we have evolved in an environment in which having by-and-large true beliefs are conducive to survival and reproductive success.

(B3) Thus the luck involved in accurate normative beliefs is the same sort of luck involved in accurate perceptual faculties.

(B4) If the luck involved in having true normative beliefs is the same sort of luck as that involved in having true perceptual faculties then the robust realist needn't worry.

(C3) The robust realist needn't worry.

⁷¹ Enoch (2011, p. 173) does provide a third argument against the miraculous correlation argument that I will not examine. It goes as follows:

(1) Even if a miracle remains the robust realist does not need to worry about such a miracle so long as the explanation given by Enoch has made significant explanatory progress.

(2) The explanation provided by Enoch has made significant explanatory progress, considering the fact that instead of trying to explain the correlation between numerous normative truths and beliefs, he only needs to explain the correlation between evolutionary aims and one, or a few, basic normative truths.

(C) The robust realist does not need to worry about any remaining miracle.

The reason I do not address this counter-objection by Enoch is that this paper is not arguing against robust realism in general, but rather simply arguing against Enoch's solution to the epistemic problem. This counter-objection, and specifically (1), seems to rest on the considerations that his overall theory of robust realism will not lose many plausibility points even if his solution ultimately fails. Therefore an examination of this counter-objection would require that we examine the strengths and weaknesses of his theory as a whole, which would take me far beyond the scope of this paper.

I believe that premise (B3) is the problematic premise in this argument. Our perceptual beliefs are seemingly less lucky than our normative beliefs; to see this we just need to consult sensitivity condition discussed above. I am right now looking at my computer screen sitting on my couch, but if I was not sitting on my couch looking at my computer screen I would not believe I was doing so; therefore, our beliefs formed from our perceptual capabilities seemingly pass the sensitivity test, and are *prima facie* not lucky. The same cannot be said for our normative beliefs, as I have attempted to show, if one adopts Enoch's third factor pre-established harmony explanation as the solution to the epistemic problem. If our normative beliefs were false we would still believe them to be true. Thus, our normative beliefs are not as counterfactually robust as our other perceptual capabilities. Enoch, then, is wrong to assert that it is not luckier that our normative beliefs align with the normative truths than that our perceptual capabilities are accurate.

Enoch could object that he is not saying that we are equally lucky in having accurate perceptual and normative beliefs, but rather that we are equally lucky that evolution has developed us in such a way that we have faculties that give us accurate perceptual beliefs, and faculties that give us accurate normative beliefs. This won't save premise (B3), however, because it is just not true that the luck present in evolution giving us accurate perceptual faculties is the same as the luck present in evolution giving us an accurate normative faculty. It is easy to imagine the human race surviving without an accurate normative faculty. It would clearly be much more difficult for the human race to survive without accurate perceptual faculties. To see this we just need to look at the world around us. Many other

creatures, even if they do not have beliefs, tend to have accurate perceptions.⁷² But it is doubtful any other creatures that we know of have accurate normative beliefs. If most creatures display one type of accurate perception, but not another type of accurate perception, then it seems that the accurate perception commonly shared would be the less lucky one. The thought behind this is that if both forms of accurate perception are just as lucky it would be somewhat mysterious as to why one set of accurate perceptions is present almost everywhere while the other equally lucky set of accurate perceptions is present almost nowhere.

8. Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that Enoch has not adequately responded to two objections against his view. I argue that the miracle objection he considers is coherent, and that Enoch's response to the objection fails because his third-factor belief is not a fundamental normative truth. I go on to argue that even if Enoch can find a third-factor belief that is a fundamental normative truth, the fact that the normative truths are not conceptually necessary opens up his solution to the charge that it violates a weakened sensitivity restriction on knowledge regarding necessary truths.

Thus, it appears as though Enoch's proposed solution to the epistemic challenge to robust realism is, at least, *prima facie* too lucky to count as a form of knowledge and this fact undermines justification for our normative beliefs. This is a direct result of the fact that Enoch's third-factor pre-established harmony model

⁷² This is obviously somewhat contentious. There are issues with assuming that the perceptual faculties of animals are accurate, but I think it is something that most people would accept. If you throw a ball in a park a dog will track it down. If you get in the middle of a stadium with a bull the bull will charge at you.

does not seem to allow our beliefs to be responsive if the normative facts were different. Therefore the epistemic challenge still stands, and the robust realist needs a different explanation in order to plausibly to explain the correlation between normative truths and normative beliefs.

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