

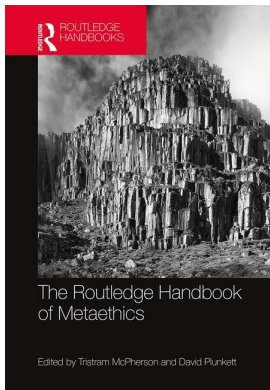
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Mind-Dependence and Moral Realism

Connie S. Rosati

Moral realism is the view that there are objective moral truths or moral facts. But what is it for moral truths to be “objective”? A common way of characterizing moral realism has it that the objectivity of moral truths consists in their being, in some sense, mind-independent. Thus, we are variously told, moral truths are independent of our attitudes, emotions, values, responses, perspectives, or judgments; they are “stance-independent” or independent of the “practical standpoint.” Derek Parfit (2011), for example, treats moral realism as response-independent, as does David Enoch (2011); and Jay Wallace (2012: 21) characterizes moral realism in terms of truths that are “prior to and independent of the will.”

The chief contrast is said to be with forms of metaethical constructivism, according to which moral truths are mind- or stance-dependent: they are dependent on our attitudes, emotions, values, responses, perspectives, or judgments; they are a matter of what is entailed from the practical standpoint. But certain forms of ethical naturalism, such as Roderick Firth’s (1952) Ideal Observer Theory and Richard Brandt’s (1979) reforming naturalism, would also count as mind-dependent. On a mind-independence characterization of moral realism, then, only nonnaturalist views, such as the classical views of G. E. Moore (1903/1993) and W. D. Ross (1930), and perhaps some forms of nonreductive naturalism, count as forms of moral realism.

This chapter explores how best to understand these claims of dependence and independence. For ease of exposition, I will use the expressions ‘mind-dependence’ and ‘mind-independence’ to cover all of the various claimed kinds of dependence and independence, except where it is necessary to distinguish between them. I shall propose that mind-independence characterizations of moral realism are best understood as excluding from the category of moral realism metaethical views according to which all moral facts are either identical to or fully grounded in nonmoral facts of a certain type. I then argue that we ought to reject mind-independence characterizations of moral realism, for at least two reasons. First, we ought to reject any characterization of moral realism that

assumes, in advance of our inquiries, a particular view about the nature of moral facts. Second, we ought to reject any characterization of moral realism that excludes as forms of realism theories that are, at least in principle, better positioned to account for the normativity of morality, as are some forms of constructivism and ethical naturalism. We therefore ought to adopt a characterization of moral realism that distinguishes realism from antirealism in ethics on grounds other than mind-independence.

UNDERSTANDING INDEPENDENCE

Not all self-described moral realists regard mind-independence as a critical feature of moral realism. For example, Terence Cuneo (2007: 45–49), a nonnaturalist, draws a distinction between what he calls “strong” and “weak” mind-independence, arguing that paradigmatic moral realism need not subscribe to either sort; and David Copp (1995), a naturalist, defends as a form of moral realism a view that treats moral facts as standpoint-dependent. As a consequence, not all metaethicists see constructivism as an alternative to moral realism (e.g., Copp 2013; Cuneo 2007: 48–49), a point to which we will return later. The more common view, however, seems to be that moral realism requires mind-independence, and in this critical respect, contrasts with constructivism (cf. Billy Dunaway’s chapter “Realism and Objectivity”).

Let’s begin, then, by considering what motivates mind-independence characterizations of moral realism. (We will consider later what would motivate philosophers to gravitate toward mind-dependent views in metaethics.) After doing so, I will present some representative claims of mind-independence and mind-dependence. The focus thereafter will be on attempting to understand what these various claims come to.

There seem to be three basic motivations for characterizing moral realism in terms of mind-independence. The first two rest on ideas about what is necessary for a view or theory in ethics to be realist. According to the first, a view isn’t realist unless it allows for the possibility that we could be quite wrong about the moral facts, much as we can be quite wrong about physical objects. But a view allows for the possibility of substantial error only if it treats moral facts as independent of our emotions, attitudes, responses, or judgments, all of which are open to normative criticism. According to the second, a view isn’t realist unless it captures the “normativity” of moral facts. But the normativity of moral facts makes them seemingly just “too different from” nonmoral facts (Enoch 2011), including facts about our attitudes, emotions, values, responses, perspectives, or judgments. The third motivation rests on considerations of theoretical unity. Here, the thought is that what makes for realism in ethics ought to be the same as what makes for realism in other domains. For example, realism about physical objects or about primary qualities, like shape, seems to be a matter of their existing independently of our conceptions of or judgments about them. Similarly, realism about moral facts would seem to be a matter of their existing independently of our conceptions of or judgments about them.

Now consider some representative characterizations of moral realism and metaethical constructivism:

[The moral realist holds that] there are moral facts (and properties) that are independent of human attitudes, conventions, and the like.

(Timmons 1996: 106)

Realism is sometimes contrasted with constructivism by invoking the claim that, for realists, morality is mind-independent ... The way I would prefer to characterize the realist position is by reference to its endorsement of the stance-independence of moral reality. Realists believe that there are moral truths that obtain independently of any preferred perspective, in the sense that *the moral standards that fix the moral facts are not made true by virtue of their ratification from within any given actual or hypothetical perspective.*

(Shafer-Landau 2003: 15)

[O]ne thing that unites almost all constructivists is the idea that normative facts are somehow dependent upon the normative judgments or values of individuals or communities.

(Schafer 2012: 2)

[I]t is ... fully in keeping with philosophical tradition to understand the “realism-anti-realism” debate as concerning ... the question of mind-dependence ... On this understanding, the key point at issue between realists and antirealists is the answer to the central question of Plato’s *Euthyphro* (in rough secular paraphrase), namely whether things are valuable ultimately because we value them (antirealism), or whether we value things ultimately because they possess a value independent of us (realism) ... Metaethical constructivism falls squarely on the antirealist side of this divide. As the slogan “no normative truth independent of the practical point of view” makes clear, metaethical constructivism asserts a counterfactual dependence of value on the attitudes of valuing creatures; it understands reason-giving status as conferred upon things by us. According to metaethical constructivism, there are no facts about what is valuable apart from facts about a certain point of view on the world and what is entailed from within that point of view. Normative truth, according to the constructivist, does not outrun what follows from within the evaluative standpoint, but rather consists in whatever is entailed from within it.

(Street 2010: 370–371)

We will return later to the *Euthyphro* question and consider whether the constructivist view that things are valuable ultimately because we value them settles where to situate it with respect to the realism-antirealism divide.

How should we understand these various independence and dependence claims? It will be helpful to have some preliminary formulation of mind-independence in front of us and to work toward a more adequate formulation. But should mind-independence be formulated as a claim about moral concepts or moral facts? As it happens, at present, mind-independence tends to be formulated in terms of moral truths, moral facts, and moral properties. As Sharon Street expresses it, “The defining claim of realism about value, as I will be understanding it, is that there are at least some *evaluative facts or truths* that hold independently of all our evaluative attitudes ...” (2006: 110–111, emphasis added). There is good reason for this. There might, after all, be a mismatch between our moral concepts and the nature of the moral properties those concepts concern. This possibility, many now think, explains why Moore’s open question argument does not defeat

forms of synthetic naturalism, according to which our moral concepts may not admit of naturalistic analysis, but moral properties are nevertheless natural properties. There might be an open question whether, say, GOOD is the same concept as *n* (where *n* is the concept of something natural), but for all that, *being good* might be the same property as *being N*. Our concepts MORALLY RIGHT and MORALLY WRONG might be concepts of mind-independent features of reality, but the nature of the properties of *being morally right* and *being morally wrong* might be mind-dependent. So, although mind-independence claims could be formulated as claims about our concepts, in keeping with the contemporary literature, I will continue to treat them as claims about the nature of moral truths, facts, and properties.

Let's begin our efforts to understand claims of mind-independence, then, with the following modal formulation, where A stands for an agent or group of agents:

Independence: At least some moral facts would have been the same even if A's [attitudes, emotions, values, responses, perspective, judgments] had been different.

Independence must be understood to concern all agents—actual and hypothetical. Thus understood, Independence expresses what Cuneo calls the strong form of the “mind-independence constraint”: “moral facts are mind-independent inasmuch as they are existentially independent of the attitudes of actual or hypothetical human moral agents” (2007: 45).

Independence seems to capture the intuitive idea behind the various independence claims, namely, that the moral facts, ultimately, are not determined by us, any more than basic facts about the natural world are determined by us. Independence is thus consistent with the side of the Euthyphro divide that says “valuable things have their value independently of us.” But it does not make clear precisely what independence and dependence come to, and in any case, it remains unclear why those moral facts that are dependent on us are any less objective or real.

Notice that many particular moral claims concern mind-dependent facts, yet moral realists would be inclined to accept these claims. As Cuneo (2007: 45–47) has stressed, it is implausible to think that particular moral truths are all (strongly) mind-independent. An example of a particular moral truth or moral fact would be that it is wrong for Smith to kill Jones, as contrasted with the general moral truth or moral fact that murder is wrong. Whether Smith murdered Jones, and so whether what he did was wrongful, depends, among other things, on whether Smith intended to kill Jones. So the moral truth that it was wrong for Smith to kill Jones is not independent of Smith's mental states. Had Smith's mental states been different, had he believed correctly, for instance, that his life was in imminent danger from Jones, then Smith's killing of Jones might not have been wrongful. Thus, had Smith's attitude been different, the moral facts might have been different. But no moral realist could plausibly think otherwise.

Likewise, some general moral claims that moral realists accept concern mind-dependent facts. After all, some general moral truths depend on facts about human psychology and its bearing on human welfare. If people's emotional capacities were such that they did not care about and so could not benefit from friendship, for example, then it would arguably be false that we ought to promote the good of friendship for their sake. People's emotions and attitudes bear on what can benefit them, and so bear on what we ought to do with respect to promoting people's welfare. But no realist could plausibly think otherwise.

The existence of some mind-dependent moral facts is thus compatible with moral realism, even when moral realism is understood as limited to nonnaturalist realism. If people's emotions or attitudes or mental states had been different, then some particular moral truths might have been otherwise. And if people's emotions or attitudes or mental states had been different, then some general moral truths might have been different.

Insofar as the mind-independence theorist's claim is only that *some* moral truths are mind-independent, the existence of some mind-dependent moral facts does not itself undercut mind-independence characterizations of moral realism. Of course, now we seem to have two sorts of moral facts, the mind-dependent ones and the mind-independent ones. Given that mind-dependent facts were supposed to be less-than-fully objective, we might wonder whether the mind-dependent moral facts are somehow less objective than those moral facts that are mind-independent. Let's allow, though, that insofar as the truth of mind-dependent moral facts ultimately depends on the truth of mind-independent moral facts, they have the sort of objectivity required for realism. The question that we need to consider, then, is whether there is a sense of objectivity on which the kinds of mind-dependent moral truths that the realist rejects are less-than-fully objective, so that moral realism ought to be characterized in terms of mind-independence. We shall consider this question along with a second question: Does it make a difference to the plausibility of mind-independence characterizations of moral realism whether claims of mind-independence concern, say, independence from emotions, desires, or responses as opposed to judgments?

Gideon Rosen (1994) has argued that extant efforts to characterize realism generally in terms of objectivity fail, whether we understand objectivity in terms of mind-independence, response-independence, or judgment-independence. "We can epitomize the realist's basic commitment by saying that for the realist as against his opponents, *the target discourse describes a domain of genuine, objective fact*. The basic foundational question is then: What is objectivity in the relevant sense, and what is the alternative?" (1994: 279). Rosen queries whether there is a "definite and debatable thesis upon whose truth the legitimacy of the rhetoric of objectivity depends"; he ultimately concludes that, "So far as I can see, it adds nothing to the claim that a certain state of affairs obtains to say that it obtains objectively" (1994: 279).

Of relevance to the present discussion is Rosen's consideration of various proposed accounts of the objectivity that is supposed to separate realism from nonrealism. He observes first that the objectivity of interest is evidently supposed to contrast with mind-dependence. "What is less-than-fully objective owes what reality it possesses to our thinking, and is to that extent something mental" (1994: 287). But the notion of mind-dependence as a mark of what is less-than-fully objective is problematic. Consider artifacts, such as chairs, soccer matches, and political and social institutions. Artifacts come into existence (and may continue in existence) partly as a result of something mental—namely, the intentions of the individuals who bring them about. Other things that exist, such as climate change, are the "unintended consequences of intentional social activity" (1994: 287). "Let us say that an item depends *causally* on the mind iff it is caused to exist or sustained in existence in part by some collection of everyday empirical mental events or states" (1994: 287). But mind-dependence in this sense clearly does not undermine the objectivity of facts about artifacts or climate change. Nor does the mind-dependence of mental states, such as pain, undermine the objectivity of facts about those states (1994: 288). So the objectivity of realism, as opposed to nonrealism, must not involve at least this sort of mind-dependence; it must be a non-causal, non-empirical sense of dependence.

An alternative way of trying to formulate the objectivity at issue, he suggests, would be in terms of the distinction between response-dependent and response-independent concepts. (Sentences employing response-dependent and response-independent concepts represent response-dependent and response-independent facts, and so we can still treat mind-independence as concerning moral facts rather than concepts.) Rosen has us consider David Lewis's (1989) response-dependent conception of value:

x is a value iff we would be disposed to value *x* under conditions of fullest possible imaginative acquaintance with it.

(Rosen 1994: 291)

As Rosen notes, this biconditional can be supported by a claim of conceptual identity:

The concept of being a value = the concept of being such as to be valued by us under conditions of fullest possible imaginative acquaintance.

(1994: 291)

It is worth mentioning some other response-dependent theories not discussed by Rosen, such as those offered by John McDowell (1997) and David Wiggins (1987). McDowell argues that we should understand value on the model of secondary qualities, like color, rather than primary qualities, like shape. Values, like (phenomenal) colors, are not "brutely there," independently of human sensibilities. But "this does not stop us supposing that they are there independently of any particular apparent experience of them" (1997: 208). A disanalogy, as McDowell emphasizes, is that whereas color is such as merely to *cause* our phenomenal experience of it, value is such as to *merit* certain responses (1997: 207). Though the comparison of values with secondary qualities might suggest values are less objective than primary qualities, McDowell contends that primary and secondary qualities are "on all fours" as concerns the objectivity of their objects (1997: 205).

Wiggins (1987) also likens value to secondary qualities. As he characterizes the position of the "sensible subjectivist," "*x* is good if and only if *x* is the sort of thing that calls forth and makes appropriate a certain sentiment of approbation *given the range of propensities we actually have to respond in this or that way*" (1987: 206). The sensible subjectivist's claim is that

for each value predicate Φ ... there is an attitude or response of subjects *belonging to a range of propensities that we actually have* such that an object has the property Φ stands for if and only if the object is fitted by its characteristics to bring down that extant attitude or response upon it and bring it down *precisely because* it has those characteristics.

(1987: 206)

Wiggins says that although he himself would not adopt the label 'realism' for this position, we must be ready for the possibility of categories of judgment that are both subjective and objective (1987: 202).

Rosen considers the following as a proposal for understanding objectivity in terms of a contrast between response-independence and response-dependence.

When the central concepts of a discourse are response-dependent, the true sentences within that discourse represent a range of subjective or mind-dependent facts. A fact is genuinely objective, then, when it is represented in a discourse whose central concepts are response-independent.

(1994: 292)

Rosen argues that this proposal is problematic. Consider the mental state of annoyance, and consider the following conceptual identity claim:

The concept of being annoying to fox terriers = the concept of being disposed to annoy statistically normal fox terriers under ordinary conditions.

(1994: 293)

Facts about what fox terriers are disposed to find annoying seem to be quite objective, even though they are response-dependent. To call a concept “response-dependent” is not, Rosen thinks, to give up thinking of corresponding facts as robustly real. On the contrary, he argues, “dispositions to bring about mental responses would seem to be on a par, metaphysically speaking, with dispositions to produce merely physical responses in inanimate things. ...” (1994: 293). For the same reason, facts about what is valuable, as Lewis characterizes value, are as objective as facts about physical responses in inanimate things. Or to make the point in more qualified terms, if these facts about value are problematic from the standpoint of realism, it is not per se because they are response-dependent. (See Billy Dunaway’s chapter “Realism and Objectivity” for further discussion of Rosen’s argument and of realism and objectivity.)

An alternative way to characterize objectivity might be in terms of judgment-independence. Following Rosen, we can say that a concept *F* is judgment-dependent if and only if

It is a priori that: *x* is *F* iff certain subjects *S* would judge that *x* is *F* under conditions *C*.

(1994: 301)

When the central concepts of a discourse are judgment-dependent, are the facts described by such discourse any less objective than facts described by a discourse that is judgment-independent? It might seem so because of the common thought that the objective obtains, regardless of our opinions about it. But we lack adequate reason to think that the former facts are any less objective than the latter. Consider one of Rosen’s examples:

It is a priori that: *x* is funny iff we would judge *x* funny under conditions of full information about *x*’s relevant extra-comedic features.

(1994: 301)

An alien anthropologist who studied us might come to reliably determine which jokes we would judge funny under the specified conditions. But, in discerning these facts about the funny, he would seem to be discerning perfectly objective facts, even if they “supervene on facts about our minds” (1994: 302). From the anthropologist’s standpoint, his investigation is aimed at facts that are objective and independent, even though they

are identical to or supervenient on facts about how we are disposed to use certain concepts (1994: 303). And this is so even if, from our standpoint as participants in a practice, our judgments might look to us to involve a kind of invention.

This highly condensed discussion of Rosen's arguments doesn't begin to cover the range of views that he considers under the headings of mind-, response-, and judgment-independence. But it does help us to begin to address our two questions. First, we still seem to lack a characterization of objectivity on which mind-dependent facts are less-than-fully objective. Second, it evidently makes no difference to the plausibility of mind-independence characterizations of moral realism whether claims of mind-independence concern, say, independence from emotions, desires, or responses, as opposed to judgments. There is much more to be said, but we should tentatively conclude that whether the dependence at issue concerns emotions, desires, responses, or judgments does not make a difference to how we ought to characterize the realist-antirealist divide.

Of course, it may make a difference to the comparative plausibility of mind-dependent theories in metaethics. Compare, for instance, Ideal Advisor analyses of welfare or Firth's Ideal Observer Theory to John Rawls' constructivism or Street's Humean constructivism. On Ideal Advisor theories, what is good for an individual is what she would want herself to want under ideal conditions of full information and rationality. (See, e.g., Railton 1986a and 1986b.) But what she would want herself to want would be a product, not simply of full information and ideal rationality, but also of her contingent motivational system. She does not reason her way to new desires; rather, what she would come to desire under ideal conditions depends on how she would respond to increasing information, given her motivational system. As a consequence, such views would seem to lack the normativity of welfare; we can reasonably wonder whether what those views say is good for us, really is good for us—really is something we have reason to pursue for ourselves—for our own motivational systems are normatively arbitrary (Rosati 1996a and 1996b; Michael Smith's [1994] moral rationalism may or may not be subject to similar difficulties). According to Firth's Ideal Observer theory, what is, say, morally right, is whatever would be approved of by any Ideal Observer, an observer who is omniscient, omniperceptive, disinterested, dispassionate, consistent, and "otherwise normal." But, again, what an Ideal Observer would approve of is not simply a matter of its idealized features but of its motivational system, which is not entirely specified on Firth's view and would be difficult (if not impossible) to specify fully without begging important normative questions.

Compare Rawlsian constructivism, according to which the correct principles of justice (at least for liberal democratic societies) are those that would be chosen by parties to the original position (Rawls 1971; cf. Rawls 1980). The motivational system of the parties involves some idealization—they are mutually disinterested, for example, but they choose principles of justice by considering arguments about which principles would best further their interests. Thus, the parties' motivational systems do not play the causal role that they play in Ideal Advisor and Ideal Observer theories. The same is true of Street's constructivism. According to Street, "the philosophical heart of [constructivism] is the notion of the practical point of view and what does or doesn't follow from within it" (2010: 364). What follows from within the practical point of view is what is entailed by the normative judgments a person already accepts. So, moral truths, on this view, are not, in the same way, a matter of a person's idiosyncratic motivational system, even if they are truths about what follows from what she contingently values.

Consider also whether the type of attitude on which moral facts might depend is the attitude of valuing as opposed to mere desire. Street (2012) argues, for example, that the attitude of valuing is more apt in formulating a viable version of constructivism. That attitude, she contends, is “characterized by a ‘discipline’ that the attitude of mere desiring lacks” (2012: 4). In contrast to mere desiring, valuing “is characterized by all the range, nuance, and depth of human emotion and feeling” (2012: 5). And it is characterized by greater “structural complexity”: whereas desire tends to be directed at “a single object or state of affairs,” valuing involves experiencing “very specific features of the world” as counting in favor of or demanding specific things (2012: 5).

Judgment- (or choice-) dependence may or may not produce a more defensible form of constructivism than emotion-, attitude-, or desire-dependence. The attitude of valuing may or may not be more apt than the attitude of desiring for developing a viable form of constructivism or of ethical naturalism. The important point, for now, is that we should not confuse the difference it may make to the comparative plausibility of mind-dependent theories whether the dependence at issue concerns emotions, desires, responses, or judgments for a difference it may make to how we ought to characterize the realist-antirealist divide. Of course, defenders of mind-independence characterizations of moral realism would think that these differences among mind-dependent theories are of no moment: any mind-dependent theory falls short. At least some moral truths are, in an important sense, yet to be specified, independent of our emotions, attitudes, desires, judgments, or perspectives.

What, then, might independence itself come to, given that even nonnaturalist moral realists accept as moral facts some mind-dependent facts, and given that we lack a characterization of objectivity on which mind-dependent facts are less-than-fully objective? Precisely what is being accepted (and rejected) by the mind-independence theorist? We might begin to get at what mind-independence comes to by considering how mind-independence and mind-dependence relate to supervenience, grounding, and identity, three important metaphysical relations in which the normative might stand to the nonnormative (see Gideon Rosen’s chapter “Metaphysical Relations in Metaethics”; McPherson 2015).

Mind-independence theorists and mind-dependence theorists alike accept supervenience. Both accept that the normative supervenes on the nonnormative in that any two metaphysically possible worlds that are alike in their nonnormative features will be alike in their normative features. So, what mind-independence theorists must be rejecting is a more intimate relation between the normative and the nonnormative than supervenience, a more intimate relation between normative facts and nonnormative facts about our emotions, desires, and responses.

Grounding is such a relation. A grounding relation between two facts is supposed to be an explanatorily tight connection, in which one fact holds *because* or *in virtue of* some other fact(s). Though the grounded fact is distinguishable from the facts that are its grounds, the grounded fact is not a part of reality over and above the facts that ground it. Thus, the fact that I am waving my hand is grounded in facts about how the sundry parts of my arm and hand are related, but while the former fact and the latter facts are distinguishable, the former fact is not some part of reality in addition to the facts that ground it (see Gideon Rosen’s chapter “Metaphysical Relations in Metaethics”).

How does this relate to constructivism? Constructivism is commonly taken to be a mind-dependent, antirealist position in opposition to nonnaturalist realism, but in fact, the metaethical status of constructivism is a matter of dispute. Among those who maintain

that constructivism is a metaethical view, rather than simply a normative view, some have interpreted it as a form of realism (nonnaturalist or naturalist), while others have argued that it is best understood as a version of expressivism (Lenman and Shemmer 2012; Lenman 2012). Although constructivists maintain that there are normative truths, they themselves reject both realism and expressivism. On one way of characterizing constructivism as a position distinct from either realism or expressivism, constructivism is committed to “hypothetical proceduralism” along with a distinctive strategy for defending certain procedures of construction as “constitutive standards of agency or the practical point of view” (see Melissa Barry’s chapter “Constructivism”). This is said to be in contrast to Humean hypothetical proceduralist accounts, like those of Firth, Brandt, or Smith, which “typically defend the applicability of the procedures with a naturalistic reduction, according to which reason is reducible to complex natural facts about how an agent with an initial set of desires would be motivated after procedural corrections of nonnormative fact and reasoning” (see Melissa Barry’s chapter “Constructivism”).

Understanding constructivism in terms of how the constitutive standards of agency structure deliberation, and understanding reasons and values as a function of the commitments of rational agents, is arguably compatible with understanding constructivism as a view about the grounding of moral and value facts. For example, Street’s constructivism might fairly be understood as the view that facts about what is valuable are grounded in facts about what is entailed from within the practical standpoint. And although this was not Rawls’ own understanding of his view (see, e.g., Rawls 1985), Rawls’ constructivism might fairly be understood as the view that the fact that a principle should govern the basic structure of society is grounded in facts about what would be agreed to by parties in the original position.

Understood in this way, constructivism treats normative truths as grounded in facts about what is constitutive of agency, how these constitutive standards structure deliberation, and what follows from the commitments of rational agents. Φ is a value for A, for example, because – or in virtue – of the fact that it follows, given the relevant hypothetical procedure, from the commitments of A. The fact that Φ is a value for A is not identical to the fact that Φ would follow from A’s commitments, given the relevant hypothetical procedures, but it is not a feature of reality over and above its grounds. Understanding constructivism in terms of grounding would commit constructivism, with respect to all moral truths, to a stronger metaphysical connection between moral facts and nonmoral facts about our emotions, attitudes, or responses than would be accepted by nonnaturalist realists. So, it would be compatible with constructivism’s rejection of nonnaturalist realism. It would also be compatible with constructivism’s rejection of expressivism. Although it would, in these ways, have the effect of aligning constructivism with some forms of naturalist realism, reductive or nonreductive, it would preserve the constructivist idea that what is explanatorily basic is our emotions, attitudes, or responses—our valuing—as corrected by the relevant hypothetical procedure. It would thus keep constructivism on the side of the Euthyphro divide that says things are valuable because we value them. Yet, as we will, see, keeping constructivism on that side of the Euthyphro divide does not settle where it stands with respect to the realism/antirealism divide.

More would need to be considered, of course, to determine whether understanding constructivism in terms of grounding fails to capture something that is truly essential to the constructivist project. And more would need to be said to address constructivists’ reasons for rejecting realism. Constructivists do, however, tend to reject moral realism, at least in

part, based on an understanding of moral realism as requiring mind-independence (Street 2010: 317; see also Korsgaard 1996 and 2003). But mind-independence characterizations of moral realism are driven, in part, by the idea that mind-dependent facts are somehow not fully objective, and as we have seen, this idea does not provide a compelling reason to accept such characterizations. What's more, as I will explain shortly, we have positive reason to reject them. This leaves open the possibility of a characterization of the divide between moral realism and antirealism in terms of something other than mind-independence, and one that places at least some versions of constructivism on the realist side of the divide.

Moving beyond constructivism, as we have already seen, there are mind-dependent forms of ethical naturalism, and these can be understood as offering either grounding or identity claims. For example, moral facts and value facts on certain naturalist views are grounded in or identical to facts about our emotions, attitudes, values, or judgments under idealized conditions. If either constructivism or some form of ethical naturalism is correct, then moral facts and facts about value could not be independent of our emotions, attitudes, responses, values, or judgments, because they are either grounded in or identical to facts about our emotions, attitudes, responses, values, or judgments.

Insofar as there is a clear claim of mind-independence that distinguishes nonnaturalist realism from constructivism and ethical naturalism, that claim may be best understood as a denial of the view that all moral facts are either grounded in or identical to mind-dependent facts. We should thus replace Independence with

Independence*: At least some moral facts are independent of facts about any agent's actual or counterfactual attitudes, emotions, values, or judgments, in the sense that at least some moral facts are neither fully grounded in nor identical to facts about any agent's actual or counterfactual attitudes, emotions, values, or judgments.

Independence* makes clear, in a way that Independence does not, what sorts of mind-dependence are being rejected.

We should be unsurprised that mind-independence is best understood as a rejection of grounding and identity claims, because both rule out the idea that at least some moral facts are facts about the instantiation of *sui generis* moral or value properties. As we have seen, realists accept the supervenience of the normative on the nonnormative. Some realists also accept the idea that moral facts are constituted by nonmoral facts, where constitution is understood as a relation other than identity or grounding (Shafer-Landau 2003: 75–76). But nonnaturalists certainly think that moral properties are not themselves natural properties (Shafer-Landau 2003: 91). Likewise, they reject the idea that all moral facts are fully grounded in the nonnormative facts, because they maintain either that some moral facts are entirely ungrounded or that moral facts lack a complete grounding in nonnormative facts (see Gideon Rosen's chapter "Metaphysical Relations in Metaethics").

REALISM AND ANTIREALISM

If the foregoing proposal is correct, then even if claims of mind-independence sharpen our understanding of the contrast between nonnaturalist realism and certain of its metaethical competitors, appeals to mind-independence do not provide us with an acceptable way of characterizing the distinction between moral realism and antirealism.

There are at least two reasons for this. We'll turn to the second reason shortly. The first is that if there are any moral facts, it is an open question what their nature is. Moral facts, and facts about value more generally, might be facts about the instantiation of *sui generis* moral or value properties. Or they might be facts identical to or grounded in nonmoral facts about our emotions, desires, attitudes, or responses. Our characterization of moral realism shouldn't presuppose that moral realism is true only if moral facts have the nature nonnaturalists claim that they have. Instead, whether a metaethical view is a form of realism should turn on such matters as how well it captures what we treat as truistic or platitudinous about morality.

We might compare mind-independence characterizations of moral realism to characterizations of free will, according to which free will is contra-causal freedom. We do not know the nature of free will, so it remains an open question whether free will is or isn't compatible with determinism. To characterize the free will/non-free will distinction in terms of contra-causal freedom presupposes that soft determinism is false. But our characterization of free will should not assume in advance an answer as to the nature of free will; it shouldn't presuppose that free will exists only if the will has contra-causal freedom, which may not be genuine freedom at all.

When we consider nonnaturalist realism, ethical naturalism, and constructivism, we face the question of how best to understand the realist/antirealist divide and where to place these types of theories with respect to that divide. Because mind-independence characterizations of moral realism presuppose that moral facts must have a certain nature, we should reject such characterizations in favor of something like Geoff Sayre-McCord's or David Copp's way of drawing the realism/antirealism distinction.

According to Sayre-McCord, "realism involves embracing just two theses: (1) the claims in question, when literally construed, are literally true or false (cognitivism), and (2) some are literally true" (1988: 5). David Copp (2007) offers a fuller characterization of moral realism. According to Copp, moral realism involves the following five claims:

1. There are moral properties (and relations). There is, for example, such a thing as wrongness.
2. Some moral properties are instantiated. For example, some actions are wrong.
3. Moral predicates are used to ascribe moral properties. When we call an action "wrong," we are ascribing to it the property wrongness.
4. Moral assertions express moral beliefs. When we call an action "wrong," we are expressing the belief that the action is wrong.
5. Moral properties, in being properties, have the metaphysical status that any other property has, whatever that is (2007: 7).

Notice that this characterization of moral realism leaves entirely open the nature of moral properties. As Copp explains, what ethical naturalism adds is a sixth claim, to the effect that moral properties are natural properties (2007: 10).

These characterizations of moral realism may or may not be fully adequate. We might, for example, have reason to add universality as a feature, so that moral realism is the view that some universal moral claims are literally true. This would have the benefit of excluding, as forms of moral realism, subjectivist and relativist views. We could then say that if a view like Street's best counts as a form of antirealism, it would not be because it involves mind- or stance-dependence, as she claims, but because it apparently rejects uni-

versality. However we might ultimately best characterize moral realism, Sayre-McCord's and Copp's characterizations have the virtue of remaining appropriately neutral as to what the moral facts might turn out to be like.

MIND-DEPENDENCE AND NORMATIVITY

The dispute about how best to characterize moral realism and the realism/antirealism distinction is not merely terminological. We have, as just explained, sound methodological reasons for rejecting mind-independence characterizations of moral realism. But there is a further reason to keep our characterization appropriately neutral (Rosati 2016).

We explored earlier the motivations for mind-independence characterizations of moral realism. What motivates some to move to mind-dependence views in metaethics? The motivations of constructivists (see Melissa Barry's chapter "Constructivism") differ in some ways from those of ethical naturalists, but two motivations seem to be held in common. The first concerns the problematic metaphysical and epistemological commitments of nonnaturalist realism. As J. L. Mackie (1977) argues, nonnaturalism is committed to the existence of "queer" properties, and it is uncertain how we would have epistemic access to facts about their instantiation. The second, and most important for present purposes, concerns the apparent inability of nonnaturalism, notwithstanding its claims to the contrary, to account for the normativity of ethics (e.g., Korsgaard 1996: 38–40).

Moral facts, if there are any, are a kind of normative fact. Just what "normativity" is and what the normativity of value and morality consists of is uncertain. What we would presumably want, if normativity is to play any role in adjudicating among rival metaethical theories, is an account of the nature of normativity that is, in principle, acceptable across a broad array of objectivist metaethical theories, even if in the end it favors one over others. (The restriction to objectivist metaethical theories is meant to exclude expressivism, on the grounds that for expressivism, normativity is ultimately a feature of normative judgments, rather than a feature of normative facts.) According to one view that has found fairly broad acceptance, normativity consists (at least) in being reason-giving. "All normative phenomena are normative in as much as, and because, they provide reasons or are partly constituted by reasons. This makes the concept of a reason key to an understanding of normativity" (Raz 2010: 5). Of course, the notion of a reason is itself normative, and a complete account of the nature of normativity would have to account for the normativity of reasons as well (Copp 1995: 33; 2007). But the basic point I want to make holds even if we come to understand normativity somewhat differently.

It is an adequacy condition on a realist metaethical theory that it account for the normativity of morality (and of value more generally); the nature of morality includes its normativity. Classical nonnaturalism might seem to have an advantage in capturing the normativity of moral facts and properties (however, see Frankena 1968). At least, a common complaint against extant forms of ethical naturalism and constructivism is that they fail to do so. But nonnaturalism arguably fares worse. It is unclear why the fact that an act has the unanalyzable nonnatural property of, say, rightness gives us a reason to perform that act. What is it about the presence of such a property that would give us a reason to act? It would seem that there must be something about the nature of the property that accounts for the reason-giving force of facts about its instantiation. But the nonnaturalist maintains that it is simply a brute fact about certain properties that facts about their

instantiation are reason-giving. This leaves the normativity of morality unexplained. Of course, the nonnaturalist might maintain that explanations must come to an end somewhere. But the fact that nonnaturalism leaves the normativity of morality unexplained suggests a way in which we might hope a realist metaethical theory would do better. Constructivism and mind-dependent forms of ethical naturalism provide accounts of the nature of moral facts and properties that allow us to begin to explain their reason-giving force; they are thus, at least in principle, equipped to explain the normativity of morality. For example, mind-dependent theories that are framed in terms of desires or other pro-attitudes can be paired with an instrumental conception of reasons to explain how moral and value facts are reason-giving (Railton 1986a). Constructivist views like Street's have the potential to explain the reason-giving force of normative truths insofar as they are truths about what follows from an agent's values or commitments.

Given that accounting for the normativity of morality is an adequacy condition on a realist metaethical theory, we have reason to keep our characterization of moral realism neutral as between objectivist metaethical theories and to reject mind-independence characterizations of moral realism. Suppose that some form of constructivism best explained the normativity of morality. If our characterization of moral realism limits it to mind-independent theories, we would then have the peculiar result that realist theories do not satisfy a basic adequacy condition on moral realism, while a form of mind-dependent antirealism does. The result would be particularly problematic, given that we have found no grounds to consider mind-dependent facts less objective than mind-independent facts, if that form of mind-dependent theory otherwise accounted for what we find truistic or platitudinous about morality.

CONCLUSION

According to the proposal offered herein, mind-independence characterizations of moral realism exclude, as forms of realism, views according to which all moral facts are grounded in or identical to facts about an agent's actual or counterfactual attitudes, emotions, values, or judgments. As we have seen, however, we have reasons to reject mind-independence characterizations of moral realism in favor of a characterization that allows forms of nonnaturalism, naturalism, and constructivism alike to count as forms of moral realism.

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