

Chapter 7

Does Analytical Moral Naturalism Rest on a Mistake?

Susana Nuccetelli and Gary Seay

I

More than a century ago, G. E. Moore famously attempted to refute all versions of moral naturalism by offering an extended inference consisting of the open question argument followed by the charge that moral naturalism commits a “naturalistic fallacy.” Although there is consensus that this extended inference fails to undermine *all* varieties of moral naturalism, the open question argument (OQA) is often vindicated as an argument against analytical moral naturalism. By contrast, the charge that analytical naturalism commits the naturalistic fallacy usually finds no takers at all. In this paper we argue that analytical naturalism of the sort recently proposed by Frank Jackson (1998, 2003) and Michael Smith (2000) does after all rest on a mistake – though perhaps not the one Moore had in mind when he made the naturalistic fallacy charge. We construe analytical moral naturalism as roughly the doctrine that some moral predicates and sentences are a priori equivalent to predicates and sentences framed in non-moral terms (Jackson 2003: 558).

Given analytical moral naturalism, it is at least possible that there are some such a priori or conceptual equivalences. But our version of the OQA challenges the claim that it is possible to reduce the moral to the natural in this way. And it does so by showing that the reductions envisaged by these analytical naturalists are open to doubt on a priori grounds. We further contend that, in the dialectical context created by our OQA, a “digging in the heels” defense of such reductions would in the end beg the question.

II

A live option, at least since Moore's day, for moral realists who wish to reduce the ethical to the natural has been the doctrine that moral terms and judgments could be replaced, without significant loss, by purely descriptive terms and judgments. Moore, of course, traced the doctrine back to Mill, Bentham, Spencer, Westermarck, and many others.¹ However, for unambiguous representatives of what we shall hereafter call 'analytical naturalism' Moore needn't have looked farther than the work of his own contemporaries -- for example, Ralph Barton Perry and F. C. Sharp. Perry (1926: 138) famously argued that 'x is valuable' is semantically equivalent to 'interest is taken in x.' And Sharp (1928: 409-11) defined 'good' as 'desired upon reflection,' and 'right' as 'desired when looked at from an impersonal point of view.' In Moore's day, then, an argument against analytical naturalism, along the lines of the OQA, amounted to neither a straw man nor flogging a dead horse.

Even so, it might reasonably be asked, what do these dinosaurs have to do with moral naturalism now? Perhaps the reductive programs of analytical naturalists have by now been discredited? Not at all -- as can be seen from the work of such formidable representatives as Jackson and Smith. In a number of works, Jackson (1998; 2003) has developed his version of the doctrine he calls "analytical descriptivism" in connection with his defense of moral functionalism.

¹ If Moore is right, Spencer took 'conduct that is more evolved' to be semantically equivalent to 'conduct that has a higher ethical sanction' (*PE* §29 and pp. 31-35) and Westermarck advocated a form of psychological naturalism according to which 'right' means 'arouses feelings of approbation' and 'wrong' means 'arouses feelings of disapprobation' (Moore 1922: 332). Whether analytical naturalism can be found in Mill, as Moore claims, is of course controversial (see e.g., Hall 1950: 51, Warnock 1960: 28-40, and West 1997). But Bentham is another story. He did after all write that words such as 'right,' 'wrong,' and 'ought' *have meaning* only when interpreted in terms of the principle of utility. Moreover, he defined 'right action' as 'an action that is conformable to the principle of utility' (1789, chapter 1, §10 ff).

Smith (2000) briefly outlines a parallel proposal in the course of suggesting what is for him the only naturalistic moral realist account of the content of moral belief that can safely dodge the bullet aimed by the OQA. Putting aside for the time being the details of their responses to the OQA, what both accounts have in common can be summarized as the conjunction of two theses:

1. Some moral properties are identical to natural properties.
2. Moral predicates and sentences could be replaced without significant loss by purely descriptive predicates and sentences.

Although the resulting analytical variety of moral naturalism has a realist gloss, it is clearly incompatible with moral realism of the sort advocated by non-naturalists and the so-called Cornell realists. Given thesis (1), analytical naturalism entails the falsity of non-naturalism, the doctrine that no moral properties and facts are reducible to the properties and facts that make up the world as described by science. Like Cornell realism, analytical naturalism is itself motivated by the success of science, considerations of ontological parsimony pointing to both the impossibility of properties and facts other than those that make up the world as conceived by science, and the conviction that the moral supervenes on the natural. Yet given its thesis (2), analytical naturalism is incompatible with the Cornell realist view that the relevant relation between the moral and the natural is not semantical but solely metaphysical (i.e., that it involves properties and facts only).

Furthermore, analytical naturalism holds that some moral predicates and sentences are a priori or conceptually equivalent to purely descriptive terms and sentences. The possibility of replacing expressions in the moral vocabulary with purely descriptive expressions is warranted a priori, which is compatible with there being an empirical matter of fact about exactly *which* descriptive predicates and sentences will turn out to be the correct replacements for certain moral

predicates and sentences. Smith (2000: 29 ff.) develops this doctrine in the course of arguing that non-analytical naturalistic moral realism cannot adequately respond to the OQA. By abandoning the project of conceptual analysis in favor of a view according to which the relevant statements of identity between moral and natural properties and facts are necessary but a posteriori, this type of moral realism becomes unable to account for the content of moral belief. At the same time, Smith notes, “even though it may well be an a posteriori truth that rightness is the property of maximizing utility, in the very argument we gave in support of this claim it is clear that we in fact appealed to another truth, but this time one which is supposed to be known a priori, about the relation between rightness and certain natural properties” (2000: 29). In a similar vein, Jackson appeals to conceptual entailments, which follow a priori from the moral functionalist account of moral properties and facts, holding that “[w]hat is a priori according to moral functionalism is not that rightness is such-and-such a descriptive property, but rather that *A* is right if and only if it has whatever property it is that plays the rightness role in mature folk morality, and it is an a posteriori matter what that property is” (1998: 151 ff.).

One attraction of analytical naturalism is that it promises to deliver a naturalistic account of the content of moral judgment that leaves no ground for objection inspired by the OQA. It attempts to accomplish this by resorting to conceptual analysis for moral predicates and sentences. Although, as we saw, for both Smith (2000: 31) and Jackson (1998: 150) there is an a priori component in the naturalistic realist response to the OQA, much of the remaining task for the analytical naturalist is empirical. After all, the analytical naturalist aims at producing an adequate account of the content of moral judgment, which in turn depends on being able to formulate correct statements of identity between expressions in both the moral and the descriptive

vocabularies. This will require determining a posteriori, by analysis and reflection on our conception of certain moral predicates and sentences, their exact semantic equivalences with descriptive predicates and sentences. Since identifying those equivalences is, on this view, an a posteriori matter, why should we think that the task will “always and genuinely” be an open question?² In response to the OQA, the analytical naturalist maintains that the correct conceptual equivalences need not be trivial or obvious, but could be quite complex, and in need of negotiation (Jackson 1998: 150) or reasoned argument (Smith 2000: 31). If this is right, then the relevant statements of identity are beyond the reach of objections inspired by the OQA, which would therefore fail to raise an objection to this version of naturalistic moral realism.

Whether or not the statements of identity between moral and non-moral predicates (and sentences) will be eventually settled a posteriori, as envisaged by Jackson and Smith, given their accounts, the possibility of such conceptual identities is settled a priori. For Jackson, there are cases in which, once a situation has been well described in non-moral terms, certain analytic identities with *how things are morally* in that situation will follow entirely a priori from that description. If so, then at least some moral sentences are “a priori equivalent to and analyzable in terms of nonmoral ones” (2003: 558). To resist objections inspired by the OQA, the analytical naturalist points out that “it is true that a sufficiently rich descriptive story leads a priori to an act’s being right; but *this will be a clear case of an unobvious a priori or conceptual entailment*, precisely because of the complexity of the moral functionalist story” (1998: 151). In Smith’s

² On Jackson’s version of analytical naturalism the equivalences between the content and reference of moral terms and those of descriptive terms will be determined a posteriori. As a result, the OQA has no force against this doctrine. For, asks Jackson, “**Error! Main Document Only.** what exactly is supposed to be always and genuinely an open question? Any and every identification of rightness, say, with some descriptive property? But this claim could be no objection to moral functionalist styles of analytical descriptivism. The identifications of ethical properties with descriptive properties offered by moral functionalism are one and all a posteriori” (1998: 150). See also Jackson 1998, n. 10, p. 145.

account, although it is an a posteriori matter *which* property plays a certain moral role, the constraints on the property that could play that role can be settled only a priori. After all, they are settled either by stipulation in the act of reference-fixing itself, or by reflection on the meaning of the word (Smith 2000: 29). In many cases coming up with the correct analysis of the relevant constraints on moral concepts would be open to “reasoned argument,” and therefore appear to be an open question. But that’s simply because the task at hand is not obvious or trivial. Smith now contends that any such conceptual analysis may be correct yet seem open to reasoned argument. If so, its correctness doesn’t depend on it’s being either open to reasoned argument or obvious. In fact, conceptual analyses of moral concepts are likely to be open to reasoned argument about “what the complex set of constraints on the use of the word being analyzed is and whether or not this complex set is entailed by the proposed analysis” (Smith 2000: 31).

Thus there appear to be good reasons, argued independently by both Jackson and Smith, to think that the OQA has no intuitive force against analytical naturalism. It seems that some a priori or conceptual equivalences obtain between the building blocks of moral and purely descriptive sentences. That is, other things being equal, some sentences ascribing moral predicates to actions, things, or states of affairs are content-equivalent to some sentences ascribing purely descriptive predicates instead.

III

We’ll now turn, for the remainder of this paper, to the question of putative conceptual equivalences between predicates in the moral and non-moral vocabularies, not sentences. Given Smith and Jackson’s account, equivalences of that sort are likely to be unobvious, and their own

argument for them therefore unaffected by Moore's OQA-- which argues, in brief, that no matter how much purely descriptive information is available about an action, it's still an open question whether that action is right or its end good, or whether we ought to perform it. But we think that a modified inference, the OQA*, in fact raises a priori doubts about whether 'good,' 'ought,' 'right,' and the like could be replaced without significant loss by predicates in a purely descriptive vocabulary. Our OQA* begins by supposing the truth of at least one such statement of equivalence. Let's suppose that the moral predicate 'right' expresses a concept that is equivalent to that expressed by the purely descriptive predicate '*N*,' where '*N*' stands for whatever naturalistic predicate will turn out to denote the natural property that plays the rightness role in the ordinary conception of rightness. As far as our OQA* is concerned, what that predicate and the naturalistic property it denotes *are* could be currently under negotiation. Furthermore, these questions could end up being determined in mature folk morality, as Jackson predicts, by the convergence of our ordinary conceptions on the relevant predicates and properties. Let's assume that now *N* stands for a complex (possibly infinite) disjunction where the moral predicate 'right' is satisfied by action A just in case A is either pleasure-maximizing, or conducive to reproductive success, or what we desire to desire, etc.³

The OQA* can, however, raise a priori doubts about the claim that 'right' can be replaced without significant loss by *N*. Given this argument, whether 'right' is content-equivalent to a naturalistic predicate (of whatever sort) is open to doubt on a priori grounds. To support this, the OQA* first invokes Moorean intuitions about some candidates for naturalistic replacements of

³ Jackson predicts that the correct conceptual equivalences will eventually be settled by convergence in the mature folk-morality's understandings of the content and reference of rightness. Smith's view is similarly optimistic since it presupposes that, at the end of day, there will be convergence on the correct, a priori constraints that govern the ordinary conception of rightness. On his view, determining the actual naturalistic property (or properties) that plays the role of rightness in that conception is also an a posteriori matter (2003: 31ff).

‘right,’ and then argues that those intuitions amount to self-ascriptive comparative judgments of content that have the epistemic privileges of self-knowledge. Once it’s shown that there are after all a priori grounds for doubting that purported naturalistic replacement for ‘right,’ the argument then maintains that its steps could be iterated for other suitable candidates for naturalistic replacement of ‘right’ – and also of ‘good,’ ‘ought,’ and the like. Per force, the OQA* can succeed only as a plausibility argument, since we should expect a great number of currently known and unknown candidates for such replacements. To support its conclusion, the argument need not run first-person semantic intuitions about *every* candidate for naturalistic replacement of a moral predicate. Simply running Moorean intuitions for a representative number of such candidates would suffice. But of course it should be only those candidates that have some plausibility as naturalistic replacements of a moral predicate that are selected. Plainly, there is no need to run first-person intuitions about a putative replacement of ‘right’ with, say, ‘being a cabbage’ (Parfit 2011), but there is a need to run the case of utilitarian ‘Hedonist,’ construed as followed:

Hedonist

The moral predicate ‘right’ can be replaced without significant loss by the purely descriptive predicate, ‘pleasure-maximizing.’

The OQA* now contends that there are a priori grounds to doubt Hedonist. For evaluating the alleged content-equivalence triggers the standard Moorean question, now construed as: Are my tokens of ‘maximizes pleasure’ content-equivalent to my tokens of ‘right’? To answer this requires a self-ascriptive, comparative judgment of the content of both predicates, which in turn generates doubt about their being equivalent. After all, the intuition elicited in response to the

Moorean question is first person, since it requires that one compare one's conceptions of the content of the predicates involved. It is therefore an epistemically privileged intuition, for under normal circumstances its warrant requires neither investigation of the environment nor inference - provided of course that one understands the moral and non-moral predicates involved, and has no reason to doubt that one is a competent user of them (or to think that one's intuitions about their contents are atypical and therefore irrelevant to the folk conception of them).

If this is right, then other Moorean questions could be deployed to generate parallel first-person doubts about other putative content-equivalences between 'right' and purely descriptive predicates. Since adequate answers to such questions would require access to the contents of one's own mind, they qualify as instances of self-knowledge. And now there is dialectical space to claim that they are warranted a priori: it is at least *prima facie* plausible to say that, under normal circumstances and in the absence of contrary evidence, such intuitions are direct (warranted without reasoned argument), generally true, and require no empirical investigation (though they may be defeasible by empirical evidence).⁴ Arguments along similar lines could be run to generate a priori doubts about other putative naturalistic equivalences of 'right,' 'good', 'ought', and the like. Since Moorean questions are likely to elicit a priori doubts for each proposed equivalence, we may conclude that for each naturalistic equivalence, there is a first-person comparative judgment of content raising doubts about whether that equivalence obtains. The burden is now on the analytical naturalist to produce reasons that overcome the a priori doubts thus generated.

⁴ Recent controversies about semantic externalism do suggest some consensus on the epistemic privileges of first-person judgments, which is often cast in terms of their being a priori warranted, in the sense of being non-inferential and non-evidential, and of enjoying first-person authority (given that they are generally true). See for instance, Boghossian 1994, Burge 1996 and 1998, and Davidson 1991.

At the same time, note that our OQA* faces no paradox of analysis, given that a priori warranted claims need not be trivial. It is therefore immune to Jackson and Smith's line of reply to Moorean arguments that starts out by observing something that Moore seems to have missed: namely, that a conceptual analysis could be correct but neither obvious nor trivial. In the case of the conceptual equivalences between moral and purely descriptive predicates countenanced by analytical naturalists, the Moorean question might appear open while being in fact closed. Does this challenge our argument? We think not, since we can concede the possibility that our self-ascriptive comparative judgments of content could on occasion be mistaken. Given resource limitations such as time and concentration-span, we could mistake for an open question one that is in fact closed. But the OQA* is not offered as a refutation of analytical naturalism: it's merely a plausibility argument against it, resting on reasons well known in the literature on self-knowledge to the effect that, under normal circumstances and in the absence of evidence to the contrary, such judgments are not mistaken. We submit that there are a priori grounds to doubt that purely descriptive candidates could replace moral predicates such as 'right,' 'good,' and 'ought' without significant loss.

Again, our OQA* is a plausibility argument against the versions of analytical naturalism favored by Jackson and Smith, rather than a refutation of them. Although the idea of reconstructing the OQA as a plausibility argument against analytical naturalism is not new, no previous attempt has been made at grounding the openness of the Moorean question on the apriority of first-person, comparative judgments of content.⁵ Our argument may be summarized as follows:

⁵ A confused move in this direction is made by Steven Ball (1988). On our view, his attempt to vindicate the OQA against analytical naturalism fails on two counts: he omits, on the one hand, to invoke privileged self-knowledge for semantic intuitions, and, on the other, fails to recognize that

OQA*

- 1 If 'right' could be replaced (without significant loss) by 'maximizes pleasure,' then whether 'maximizes pleasure' and 'right' are content-equivalent is not open to doubt on a priori grounds.
- 2 But whether 'right' and 'maximizes pleasure' are content-equivalent is open to doubt on a priori grounds.

Therefore,

- 3 It is reasonable to believe that 'right' cannot be replaced (without significant loss) by 'pleasure-maximizing.'
- 4 Steps (1) through (3) can be iterated for great number of purely descriptive replacements of 'right.'

Therefore,

- 5 It is reasonable to believe that 'right' cannot be replaced (without significant loss) by purely descriptive terms.
- 6 Steps (1) through (5) can be iterated for a great number of purely descriptive replacements of 'good,' 'ought,' and other moral terms.

Therefore,

the OQA (charitably reconstructed) is at most a plausibility argument. Charles Pigden (2007) does construe the OQA as a plausibility argument, but he thinks that an adequate OQA proceeds 'piecemeal' by invoking a posteriori grounds against each proposed semantic analysis. Thus his OQA differs from ours in its attempt to raise a posteriori doubts about naturalistic replacements for moral terms by invoking evidence from third-person intuitions about the lack of synonymy with the moral predicate. And although Terry Horgan and Mark Timmons (2009: 236) ascribe to the OQA, "considerable intuitive force," they also take it to be "closely related in spirit" to their Moral Twin Earth case, which if sound would support a stronger conclusion. Cf. Nuccetelli and Seay 2007.

- 7 It is reasonable to believe that ‘good,’ ‘ought,’ and other moral terms cannot be replaced (without significant loss) by purely descriptive terms.

We believe that the OQA* puts the burden of argument on analytical naturalism. What turns dialectical space this way is the appeal to an a priori warrant for Moorean intuitions about the failure of content-equivalence in candidates for replacement of moral terms such as Hedonist. Given that warrant, the burden of reason rests with the analytical naturalists, who must not only make a compelling case for the possibility of their reductive analyses, but also explain away a priori doubts generated by the OQA*. Merely claiming that correct but non-trivial analyses are possible is not sufficient to overcome those doubts.

IV

Whether moral predicates such as ‘right,’ ‘good,’ and ‘ought’ are a priori or conceptually equivalent to some purely descriptive predicates, then, seems open to a priori doubt. We’ll now show that, in the dialectical context created by the OQA*, the claim that such conceptual equivalences hold amounts to a pattern of dialectical failure, which we shall call ‘the analytical naturalist mistake.’ The type of error we have in mind is a dialectical phenomenon of failure that Moore would perhaps have done better to point out rather than raise the naturalistic fallacy charge. In fact, our account of what has gone wrong with the analytical naturalists’ defense of their reductive program can make sense of Moore’s confused remarks about the naturalistic

fallacy (*Principia Ethica*, Ch. 1: §12). Although his claim to have found a special type of *fallacy* identifiable as “naturalistic” may well be unjustifiable, his skepticism about certain analyses of ethical naturalists -- as well as of other analyses featuring only purely natural terms, or where one term is ethical and the other metaphysical -- might be justified on different grounds. Surely we are entitled to be suspicious of any conceptual equivalence whose proponent is unable to overcome a priori doubts about that equivalence. Interpreted in this way, Moore was clearly right in criticizing ‘*Pleasant* is the sensation of red,’ and ‘*Goodness* is what’s commanded by God.’ Likewise, we are entitled to reject attempted definitions which, in the context of a certain debate, are dialectically abusive in some sense – as in the rather obvious case where abortion is defined as ‘a form of infanticide,’ or ‘a killing of an unborn baby,’ or in any other attempt to equate such predicates. Plainly, in the context of the debate over the moral status of abortion, the claim that ‘killing fetuses’ and ‘killing babies’ are conceptually equivalent could not overcome a priori doubts raised by an OQA-inspired objector.

On our view, the analytical naturalist commits a parallel dialectical mistake. For he maintains that, once all negotiations about the content and reference of moral predicates such as ‘right,’ ‘good,’ and ‘ought’ are settled (allegedly by convergence of individual conceptions), those predicates will turn out to be equivalent to certain purely descriptive predicates. By advocating such equivalences, he presupposes that he has some evidence or reason to dismiss the a priori doubts arising from a properly construed OQA. As mentioned above, he dismisses Moore’s OQA on the grounds that a conceptual equivalence could be correct but not trivial or in need of reasoned argument. But that’s not an objection to OQA*, whose Moorean question suggests that, for all we can tell now from the first-person perspective, moral predicates do not seem

conceptually equivalent to purely descriptive predicates. Thus, the analytical dialectical mistake is simply that of begging the question against a great number of philosophers, from non-naturalists to moral nihilists, who have found some version of the OQA persuasive. In the end, analytical naturalism might turn out to be true, but analytical naturalists must first discharge the burden of reason – which involves producing evidence or reasons that have enough force to overcome OQA*-inspired a priori doubts about the possibility of the proposed reductive program.⁶ Until then, non-naturalists and moral nihilists (i.e., skeptics and non-cognitivists) confronted with this sort of tactic in metaethical debate can dismiss the analytical naturalist proposal by simply showing that it begs the question against reasoning along the lines of OQA*.

On our view, this is what Moore should have said on the question of where analytical naturalism goes wrong.⁷ Recognizing occurrences of the analytical naturalist mistake has a more modest cash value than Moore's original naturalistic fallacy charge, since we do not claim to have

⁶ Jackson (1998: 151) considers persisting doubts stemming from the OQA, but he dismisses them as remnants of an obsolete view of moral language. He writes, "It may be objected that even when all the negotiation and critical reflection is over and we have arrived at mature folk morality, it would still make perfect sense to doubt that the right is what occupies the rightness role. But now I think that we analytical descriptivists are entitled to dig in our heels and insist that the idea that what fits the bill *that* well might still fail to be rightness, is nothing more than a hangover from the platonist conception that the meaning of the term 'right' is somehow a matter of its picking out, or being somehow mysteriously attached to, the form of the right." On the view we are pressing here, such a "digging in the heels" defense of analytical naturalism is unpersuasive, since it plainly begs the question against properly construed OQAs. A different but compatible reply to the "digging in the heels" defense of analytical descriptivism is Horgan and Timmons's (2009: 236). See also Jackson's rejoinder (2009: 442 ff.).

⁷ Moore did express some reservations about the problem underlying what he called 'the naturalistic fallacy,' but he dismissed them summarily as a matter concerning how to label the mistake. "I do not care about the name," he wrote. "[W]hat I do care about is the fallacy. It does not matter what we call it, provided we recognize it when we meet with it. It is to be met with in almost every book in Ethics; and yet it is not recognized: and that is why it is necessary to multiply illustrations of it, and convenient to give it a name" *Principia Ethica* Ch. 1: §12 (1993: 65-66).

thereby refuted even the analytical variety of moral naturalism. We merely think that such recognition puts the onus on those favoring analytical naturalism to provide independent reasons that are strong enough to explain away a priori doubts about the possibility of replacing moral predicates such as ‘right,’ ‘good,’ and ‘ought’ with purely descriptive predicates without significant loss.

Our account has the consequence that, rather than it’s being Moore’s argument that begs the question (as W. K. Frankena famously alleged long ago), it is actually the reductive program of semantic naturalists that begs the question against the Moorean inference. But, then, why has that inference been thought by many to amount to nothing more than a *petitio*? For one thing, critics may have been misled by Moore’s own inflationary view about the number of reductive programs that have committed what for him is a “naturalistic fallacy.” As we have seen, he did claim to have found the fallacy in the work of many philosophers and social scientists, including controversial cases such as that of J. S. Mill. In addition, he did conflate analytical and non-analytical varieties of ethical naturalism, charging that they *all* committed the alleged fallacy.

On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that critics have not always given the most charitable reading to Moore’s inference. They have notoriously evaluated the naturalistic fallacy charge in isolation from its dialectical context, which is an OQA properly construed as a plausibility argument against analytical versions of moral naturalism.⁸ Moreover, even if it makes no sense to charge that such versions commit a naturalistic fallacy, they do seem to rest on a mistake akin to the broader dialectical phenomenon of begging the question.

Conclusion

⁸ Critics of Moore and his naturalistic fallacy who have argued in this way include, not only Frankena 1939, but also Williams 1985, Ridge 2008 and Darwall, Gibbard, and Railton 1997.

Let's now take stock of our version of Moore's extended inference. We have argued that OQA*, construed as a plausibility argument, is nonetheless strong enough to generate a priori doubts about the possibility of replacing moral predicates with purely descriptive predicates without significant loss. If we are right, then the reductive program of analytical naturalists such as Jackson and Smith does instantiate a pattern of dialectical mistake: one committed by any argumentative strategy that assumes the possibility of conceptual equivalences that are in fact open to doubt on a priori grounds. As a result, no such strategy could be cogent. A Moorean inference is thus shown to have force against attempts to reduce the moral to the non-moral by means of taking some expressions in the moral vocabulary to be conceptually equivalent to some in the purely descriptive vocabulary.

References

- Ball, S. W. "Reductionism in Ethics and Science: A Contemporary Look at G. E. Moore's Open Question Argument." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 25 (1988): 197-213.
- Bentham, J. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* [1789] (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988).
- Boghossian, P. "The Transparency of Mental Content." *Philosophical Perspectives* 8 (1994): 33-50.
- Burge, T. "Our Entitlement to Self-Knowledge." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 96 (1996): 91-116.
- "Reason and the First Person." Pp. 243-70 in *Knowing Our Own Minds*; C. Wright, B. C. Smith, and C. Macdonald eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
- Darwall, S. Gibbard, A., and Railton, P. "Toward a Fin de Siècle Ethics: Some Trends." *Philosophical Review* 101 (1992): 115-89.
- Davidson, D. "What is Present to the Mind?" *Philosophical Issues* 1 (1991): 197-213.
- Frankena, W. K. "The Naturalistic Fallacy." *Mind* 48, 192 (1939): 464-77.

- Jackson, F. *From Metaphysics to Ethics: A Defence of Conceptual Analysis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
- "Cognitivism, A Priori Deduction, and Moore." *Ethics* 3 (2003): 557-75.
- "Reply to My Critics." Pp. 387-474 in Ravenscroft 2009.
- Hall, E. "The 'Proof' of Utility in Bentham and Mill." *Ethics* 61 (1950-51): 66-68.
- Horgan, T. and Timmons, M. "Analytical Moral Functionalism Meets Moral Twin Earth." Pp. 221-36 in Ravenscroft 2009.
- Moore, G. E. *Principia Ethica* [1903], T. Baldwin, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
- "The Nature of Moral Philosophy." Pp. 310-39 in *Philosophical Studies* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922).
- Nuccetelli, S. and Seay, G. "What's Right with the Open Question Argument?" Pp. 261-82 in Nuccetelli and Seay 2007.
- Nuccetelli, S. and Seay, G., eds. *Themes from G. E. Moore: New Essays in Epistemology and Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Parfit, D. *On What Matters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming, 2011).
- Perry, R. B. *General Theory of Value* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926). [Page numbers from excerpt in *Readings in Ethical Theory*, W. Sellars and J. Hospers eds., New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970: 138-51.]
- Pigden, C. R. "Desiring To Desire: Russell, Lewis and G. E Moore." Pp. 244-60 in Nuccetelli and Seay, 2007.
- Ravenscroft, I., ed. *Minds, Ethics, and Conditionals: Themes from the Philosophy of Frank*

- Jackson* (Oxford, Clarendon Press: 2009).
- Ridge, M. "Moral Non-Naturalism." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, E. N. Zalta, ed. (2003, revised 2008). <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-non-naturalism/>
- Sharp, F. C. *Ethics* (New York: The Century, 1928).
- Smith, M. "Moral Realism." Pp. 15-37 in *The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory*, H. LaFollette, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).
- West, H. "Mill's 'Proof' of the Principle of Utility." Pp. 85-98 in *Mill's Utilitarianism: Critical Essays*, D. Lyons, ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).
- Williams, B. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).