

This paper addresses an important issue that has been commonly debated in the recent metaethical literature, namely the epistemic challenge evolutionary debunking arguments (EDAs) pose for evaluative/moral realism.

EDAs claim to undermine the justification of our evaluative beliefs by placing a special focus on their evolutionary origins. Some of such arguments are more ambitious than the others as they try to undermine the justification of *all* evaluative beliefs, while some of them are targeted only at moral beliefs, and some at a certain subset of moral beliefs.

All EDAs, however, take a common form: they all claim that knowledge of a certain subset of beliefs is improbable, since (1) such beliefs are shaped exclusively by the mechanisms of natural selection and (2) evolutionary processes aim at reproductive success and thus are insensitive to attitude-independent evaluative truths, if there are any. The former is the *empirical* premise, and the latter is the *insensitivity* premise. EDAs also have an *epistemic* premise, namely that if non-naturalist evaluative (or moral) realism, the empirical premise, and the insensitivity premise are true, then we cannot justify the beliefs in question. These three premises constitute the blueprint of any EDA.

A possible response to the challenge is to assert that ambitious EDAs are self-refuting: since ambitious EDAs take *all* of our evaluative or moral beliefs to be epistemically suspect, they cannot provide independent reason to believe that our evaluative/moral beliefs are debunked by the argument. For example, Street's EDA makes an assumption about epistemic reasons, namely that scientific evidence has the power to undermine our intuitions. But what makes us believe that scientific evidence is epistemically more reliable than our intuitions? It is perfectly possible that having this evaluative claim is also an adaptation. The idea is that if we cannot trust *any* of our evaluative beliefs, then we cannot trust our beliefs about whether our evaluative beliefs are debunked by the argument.

My aim in this paper is to show how to plausibly respond to such an objection. I argue against Katia Vavova's claim that Street's and Joyce's EDAs target too much and become self-refuting. This is because EDAs are essentially *inductive* arguments with a *probabilistic* conclusion, which allows *some* of our beliefs to be true. For example, the conclusion of Street's EDA allows the possibility that *some* of our evaluative beliefs turn out to be true, and

it follows that these true evaluative beliefs could include some of our beliefs about epistemic reasons, science, mathematics, and so on. Furthermore, the doubt that we might be mistaken in our evaluative or moral beliefs will remain, even if we think that ambitious EDAs are self-refuting. As long as one admits that our beliefs are heavily shaped by the forces of natural selection, it is natural and plausible to think that objective morality could simply be an illusion.

The level of an EDA's ambition affects the argument's strength but not because more ambition causes an internal contradiction. Rather, the more set of beliefs an EDA calls into question the more difficult it becomes to provide a complete evolutionary origins story. In other words, the level of ambition of an EDA does not affect its *epistemic* premise, but instead it affects the strength of its *empirical* premise, which is the Achilles heel of any ambitious EDA.