Michael Bergmann and Patrick Kain (eds). *Challenges to Moral and Religious Belief: Disagreement and Evolution*. New York: Oxford University Press 2014. 298 pages. $74.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780199669776).

Given the current interest in the skeptical challenges posed by the existence of widespread moral and religious disagreements and by evolutionary accounts of the origins of moral and religious beliefs, the present volume is on the whole a welcome addition to the literature. The editors' introductory chapter skillfully sets the stage for the topics addressed in the three parts into which the volume is divided: moral and religious disagreement, disagreement between religious and non-religious sources of moral belief, and evolutionary debunking of moral and religious belief.

Ralph Wedgwood opens Part I with a paper offering a response to the argument from moral disagreement among philosophers. In his view, even though philosophers, if they were perfectly rational, should not have full confidence in any specific theory about the fundamental principles of morality, they can still know a great many less fundamental moral truths. For whereas there are entrenched philosophical disagreements about the former, philosophers widely agree on the latter.

Next, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong tackles the question of moral disagreements with psychopaths. He claims that psychopaths do not believe that certain acts are morally wrong, that their moral view is not incoherent, and that at least some of them are not irrational in ways that can allow us to dismiss their moral view as irrelevant to the epistemic status of our common moral beliefs. Appealing (unfortunately in a too cursory way) to his contrastivist conception of justification, he maintains that we are not justified in believing that certain acts are morally wrong in contrast with the rational psychopath's moral nihilism, but that we are justified in so believing in contrast with all contrary moral beliefs of normal people who are not psychopaths or other moral nihilists.

Robert Audi considers disagreement in both the moral and the religious domains. As for the first domain, he contends that such disagreement can be explained even given moral objectivity, pointing out that the most important types of moral disagreement are not as deep and widespread as usually believed. As for the religious domain, he focuses on the dispute between religious and non-religious sources of moral belief, claiming that self-evident moral principles can be significant constraints in interpreting and accepting religious normative claims.

In the final chapter of Part I, John Pittard claims that, even though a conciliatory view on disagreement may generate skeptical results in other domains, this is not so in the case of religious disagreement because religions like Christianity propose non-standard and self-favoring theories of epistemic credentials. As a result, these theories make it unlikely that their proponents will have strong independent reasons for believing that those who disagree with them on religious matters are as epistemically qualified as they are. I cannot help thinking that the same kind of defense could be mounted in favor of astrological beliefs, something that religious believers are in general reluctant to accept.

As for Part II, let me briefly summarize its first three chapters. John Hare defends Kant's account of conscience, examines whether it fits with contemporary anthropological data and evolutionary accounts of the development of conscience, and relies on it in determining what can and cannot be taken to be a divine command. Charles Mathewes focuses on the conflict between one's moral intuitions and one's religious tradition concerning the problem of Hell, namely, the conflict between a perfectly good God and the endless suffering of the damned in Hell. His solution ultimately

consists in conceiving of Hell as the condition of being before God but not wanting to be there. Timothy Jackson maintains that, though there may be real conflict between reason and religion, this is not inevitable. For instance, democracy cannot endure by relying only on the moral values of justice and the dignity of rational agents, but also needs those of empathetic care and the sanctity of human life on which religion lays emphasis and which are prior (both chronologically and axiological) to the former.

The remaining two chapters of Part II deal with the argument from evil. Mark Murphy contends that God, conceived of as the absolutely perfect being, cannot be deemed to be morally good according to any familiar kind of welfare-oriented moral goodness. For this presupposes that the well-being of humans and other sentient animals give God decisive reasons to act according to that kind of moral goodness, but nothing requires that we humans share categorical reasons with the absolutely perfect being. Hence, any version of the argument from evil that takes as a premise the ascription to God of any welfare-oriented moral goodness fails. Murphy does not seem aware that his line of argument against ascribing to God welfare-oriented moral goodness can also be applied to the ascription to God of such human attributes as rationality and freedom, which Murphy regards as uncontroversial (159).

Sharon Street claims that theism leads to normative skepticism. For given that theism entails that God has good moral reasons to allow the horrendous evils that occur in the world, and given that the claim that these are good moral reasons undermines our moral common sense, we have no idea what is permitted and should then be skeptical about the reliability of our faculty of moral judgment. If we take this conclusion to be unacceptable, then we must conclude that God, as conceived by theism, does not exist.

In the first chapter of Part III, psychologist Sarah Brosnan reviews recent evolutionary work on animal behavior, arguing that "by understanding other species' behavior, we learn about the conditions that may have selected for such behaviors in humans and, concurrently, why and how these behaviors may have evolved" (199). Brosnan briefly touches upon the issue of moral skepticism (213), failing to distinguish the pragmatic justification of moral beliefs from their epistemic justification, which is the actual target of the moral skeptic.

The subsequent two chapters examine responses to Sharon Street's much-discussed evolutionary debunking argument of normative realism. Simply put, this argument claims that, given that our normative dispositions are largely products of evolution and their selection had nothing to do with their ability to track normative facts, we are led to moral skepticism. Dustin Locke considers two responses to Street's argument—the naturalist response and what he calls the 'minimalist' response but is commonly known as the 'third-factor' response—concluding that neither succeeds. William FitzPatrick proposes a new response according to which, even though the debunker presents his explanatory claims about the etiology of our moral beliefs as if they were scientific results, they are not supported by actual science unless it is supplemented with philosophical claims that are question-begging against moral realism. Science only shows that evolution has shaped some of our current moral beliefs to some extent, which leaves open the possibility that others have instead been shaped by systematic reflection that has allowed us to apprehend moral facts, and even the possibility that some of the former beliefs have also been shaped in that manner. Given FitzPatrick's recognition of our ignorance of the actual extent of the influence of evolution and his constant appeal to possibilities that cannot be ruled out, I wonder whether, instead of embracing moral realism, he should not be more cautious and adopt a moral skepticism of a Pyrrhonian stripe.

The final two chapters of the volume focus on the alleged evolutionary debunking of morality. First, anthropologists Richard Sosis and Jordan Kiper argue that the evolutionary science of religion does not undermine religious beliefs because these beliefs are not internal states of individuals with stable and widely shared propositional content. Rather, they 'typically emerge from and are sustained by interacting elements within a complex adaptive system and exhibit emergent properties as part of it', and they 'often adjust as the religious systems in which they are embedded react to changing to socio-ecological conditions' (257). Two remarks are in order. First, there is an apparent ambiguity in the purpose of this paper, for the authors seem to seek, on the one hand, to defend religious belief by proposing a different conception of it, but, on the other, to defend religion by claiming that 'religion is much more than belief' (257). The solution is perhaps that religion cannot be reduced to belief *as commonly conceived* because it comprises other elements—such as ritual performance and recitation of myths—that influence belief in a way that gives rise to a peculiar type of belief (religious belief) that is immune to evolutionary debunking. Second, I am not sure that the evolutionary religious skeptic is refuted by Sosis and Kiper's argument, for they seem to be conceding the skeptic's point when they claim that it is "pointless to evaluate religions as though they offer objective truth claims" (257).

The remaining chapter by Joshua Thurow examines various ways in which the cognitive science of religion (CSR) can cast doubt on theistic belief, focusing on whether CSR shows (*i*) that theistic belief is irrationally formed, and whether it defeats (*ii*) C. S. Lewis's argument from desire and (*iii*) the cosmological and design arguments. He argues that although CSR defeats (*ii*), it neither defeats (*iii*) nor shows that (*i*) is the case.

Though the arguments advanced in the fourteen chapters differ in philosophical merit, the present volume constitutes a valuable addition to the growing literature on the serious skeptical challenges to moral and religious belief posed by disagreement and evolution.

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