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The Prospects for Evolutionary Ethics Today

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Abstract

One reason for the widespread resistance to evolutionary accounts of the *origins* of humanity is the fear that they undermine morality: if morality is based on nothing more than evolved dispositions, it would be shown to be illusory, many people suspect. This view is shared by some philosophers who take their work on the evolutionary origins of morality to undermine moral realism. If they are right, we are faced with an unpalatable choice: to reject morality on scientific grounds, or to reject our best-confirmed scientific explanation of our origins in order to save morality. Fortunately, as I show, we have no reason to accept the deflationary claims of some evolutionary ethicists: morality, as we ordinarily understand it, is fully compatible with evolution.

Key Words: evolution, ethics, meta-ethics, Spencer, Huxley

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