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Title: A Peircean Response to the Evolutionary Debunking of Moral Knowledge
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Abstract: The evolutionary debunking argument advanced by Sharon Street, Michael Ruse, and Richard Joyce employs the logic of Paul Griffiths and John Wilkins to contend that humans cannot have knowledge of moral truths, since the evolutionary process that has produced our basic moral intuitions lacks causal connections to those (putative) truths. Yet this argument is self-defeating, because its aim is the categorical, normative claim that we should suspend our moral beliefs in light of the discoveries about their non-truth-tracking origins, when it is precisely this claim that relies upon the normativity under attack. This article cites Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914) to argue that such self-defeat can be avoided by expanding upon the basic structure of the argument put forth by Griffiths and Wilkins, provided that one embraces a version of realism that corresponds with Peirce's doctrine of final causation. So construed, final causation reconciles real generals (including real moral values) with natural selection and undergirds further speculation of moral facts within values per se.
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