Non-naturalism and Normative Necessities

Stephanie Leary

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One of the most common complaints raised against non-naturalist views about the normative is that, unlike their naturalist rivals, non-naturalists cannot provide a metaphysical explanation for why normative properties supervene on natural properties. That is, while most naturalists and non-naturalists agree that there cannot be a normative difference between two entities (e.g. states of affairs, actions, people, and so on) without there being a natural difference between them, naturalists have a ready explanation for this, whereas non-naturalists do not. After all, according to naturalists, normative properties *just are* natural properties, and so, the normative supervenes on the natural simply because everything supervenes on itself. But according to non-naturalists like Moore and his followers, the normative is distinct and significantly different in kind from the natural.[1] And many meta-ethicists argue that non-naturalists are thereby committed to claiming that there is no metaphysical explanation for the supervenience of the normative on the natural, which is a significant cost of the view.[2] This is the so-called *supervenience objection* against non-naturalism.

Most non-naturalists respond to the supervenience objection not by attempting to offer a metaphysical explanation for why the normative supervenes on the natural, but instead by arguing that one need not offer such an explanation in the first place. For example, Parfit seems to think that he need not offer a metaphysical explanation for supervenience because, on his view, non-natural normative properties exist only a weak "non-ontological" sense; alternatively, Kramer argues that the supervenience of the normative on the natural can be given a conceptual explanation, and Stratton-Lake and Hooker argue that it can be given an ethical one.[3] More radically, Fine and Rosen suggest that non-naturalists should deny that the normative metaphysically supervenes on the natural in the first place.[4]

These responses to the supervenience objection suggest that many non-naturalists agree with their naturalist opponents that non-naturalism is incompatible with any metaphysical explanation for why the normative supervenes on the natural. They only disagree insofar as they deny that this is a problematic feature of their view.

My aim in this paper, however, is to show that non-naturalists can offer a metaphysical explanation for why the normative supervenes on the natural by adopting the sort of *essentialist* metaphysics developed by Fine, Rosen, and Dasgupta.[5]

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[1] I use the term "non-naturalism" throughout this paper to refer to Moorean non-naturalism, rather than to the broader category of non-naturalist views that includes both Moorean non-naturalism and *supernaturalist non-naturalism* (e.g. the Divine Command Theory).

[2] For example, see Blackburn (1971), Dreier ((1992), (MS)), Horgan (1993), Mackie (1977), and McPherson (2012).

[3] Parfit (2011), Kramer (2009), and Stratton-Lake and Hooker (2006).

[4] Fine (2002), Rosen (ms).

[5] Fine (1994), Rosen (2010), and Dasgupta (2014).

Specifically, I argue (in §4) that the non-naturalist may claim that there are some *hybrid* normative properties whose essences involve both naturalistic sufficient conditions for their instantiation and sufficient conditions for the instantiation of other *sui generis* normative properties, and that this explains why the normative is determined by, and supervenes on, the natural. Moreover, I argue (in §5) that this non-naturalist explanation for supervenience does not covertly assume any brute metaphysically necessary connections between natural and normative properties, and thus avoids what McPherson calls "bruteness revenge".[6]

Before offering my positive proposal, though, I first specify (in §1) what exactly the explanatory demand posed by the supervenience objection amounts to and what the core commitments of non-naturalism are. Then (in §2 and §3), I argue that two alternative metaphysical explanations for supervenience fail. According to the first, the normative supervenes on the natural because there are general normative laws, which state that if something has certain natural properties, then it has a certain normative property, and these normative laws together with the contingent natural facts determine the contingent normative facts. And according to the second explanation, the normative supervenes on the natural because the contingent normative facts are fully determined by the natural facts alone. I argue that the first explanation for supervenience fails to respond to the explanatory demand posed by the supervenience objection, and that the second explanation fails to yield a metaphysical picture of the normative that is clearly non-naturalist. Seeing the problems with these alternative explanations is instructive and helps motivate my positive proposal because the essentialist explanation for supervenience I offer succeeds where these others fail.

1. NON-NATURALISM AND THE SUPERVENIENCE OBJECTION

Specifying what non-naturalism amounts to is a notoriously difficult task. This is because, even within their own camps, both naturalists and non-naturalists characterize the view in different ways. Jackson, Parfit, and Shafer-Landau describe non-naturalism as the view that normative properties are not *identical* to the sort of descriptive properties and facts that are investigated by the natural and social sciences.[7] But, more recently, Chang, Dunaway, and Schroeder seem to suggest that non-naturalism is the view that normative properties and facts are not fully *explained* by such scientific facts.[8] In order to avoid this taxonomical controversy, I will simply identify two pre-theoretical claims that seem to be the core commitments of non-naturalism and assume that a non-naturalist view is any metaphysical view about the normative that captures those claims.

The first core pre-theoretical claim is that normative properties are *of their own kind*. When naturalists insist that normative properties are *natural* properties, they are claiming that normative properties are of the same kind as paradigmatic scientific properties; and when non-naturalists claim that normative properties are *non-natural,*

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[6] McPherson (2012).
[7] Jackson (1998), Parfit (2011), and Shafer-Landau (2003).
[8] Chang (2013), Dunaway (2016), and Schroeder (2007: ch 4).

they are insisting that normative properties are distinct and significantly different in kind from paradigmatic scientific properties. But Moore and his followers claim, even further, that normative properties are *sui generis*: that they are different in kind from not just scientific properties, but also from supernatural properties and any other kinds of properties there might be. For example, Shafer-Landau states:

It appears that moral values are something very different in kind from anything else that we are familiar with. Faced with this appearance, we have three basic choices. We could take it at face value, and introduce into our ontology a *sui generis* category of values. Or we could seek to discredit the appearances…we might retain a belief in the evaluative realm, but eliminate the mystery by denying its distinctness. On this line – that of *ethical naturalism* – moral facts are a species of scientific facts… I am in the first camp. I think that moral facts are different in kind from any other.[9]

Parfit and Scanlon also insist that normative truths are "irreducibly normative", which suggests that they, like Moore and Shafer-Landau, take the normative to be something that is entirely of its own kind.[10]

The second pre-theoretical claim that I take to be a core commitment of non-naturalism is that countenancing normative properties and facts is incompatible with a purely scientific worldview. Since non-naturalists claim that normative properties are distinct and significantly different in kind from scientific properties, non-naturalists thereby take science to provide an incomplete account of reality.[11]

Both of these pre-theoretical claims are, of course, very imprecise. The first claim is especially mysterious because it's not clear what kind-talk for properties amounts to in the first place.[12] And the second claim is unclear because it's not obvious what a purely scientific worldview is.[13] Indeed, I take an important task for the non-naturalist to be to clarify these two pre-theoretical claims in more precise metaphysical terms. But there may be multiple, equally good ways of doing so, and I do not want to take a stand on this issue here. So, instead of clarifying these two pre-theoretical claims, I will simply assume that a non-naturalist view is *any* metaphysical

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[9] Shafer-Landau (2003: 55).

[10] Parfit (2011) and Scanlon (2014).

[11] When I use the term 'reality' here, I mean to refer to everything that exists in any sense of 'exist'. Parfit (2011) claims that science does provide a complete account of reality, since reality comprises only those things that exist in an "ontological sense", and on Parfit's non-naturalist view, normative properties only exist in a "non-ontological sense". But Parfit would nonetheless presumably agree that science does not provide a complete account of reality, when using 'reality' in the broadest sense, which includes everything that exists in any sense.

[12] One might think that two properties are of the same kind just in case they share a second-order property. But any two properties share a second-order property: e.g. all properties share the property *being a property*. So, in claiming that normative properties are of their own kind, non-naturalists cannot mean that normative and non-normative properties don't share any second-order properties.

[13] As Enoch (2011) and Scanlon (2014) point out, the existence of non-natural normative properties is at least *logically consistent* with our best scientific theories. So, a purely scientific worldview should not be taken to require only logical consistency with our best scientific theories. One might then take a purely scientific worldview to also require a methodological commitment to not countenance any ontology or ideology that is not involved in our best scientific theories. One might thus interpret the non-naturalist's second pre-theoretical claim as the claim that countenancing normative properties requires a further ontological or ideological commitment beyond that of our best scientific theories. Or, as I explain in §4, one may also capture this second pre-theoretical claim in terms of the *essences* of normative properties.

account of the normative that captures these pre-theoretical claims in some way, while remaining neutral about whether this uniquely identifies a particular view.

Even understanding non-naturalism in these broad strokes allows us to see why the supervenience of the normative on the natural presents a problem for non-naturalists. If there cannot be a normative difference between two entities (e.g. an action, state of affairs, or an individual) without there being some natural difference between them, then for any x that has some normative property F, there is *some* natural property G (perhaps a very complex conjunctive property) that x has such that any y in any metaphysically possible world that is G is also F. So, where A is the family of normative properties, B is the family of natural properties, and $\square_M$ is metaphysical necessity, the following seems to hold:

Strong Supervenience $(\forall F \text{ in } A)(\forall x)[Fx \rightarrow (\exists G \text{ in } B)(Gx \ \& \ \square_M(\forall y)(Gy \rightarrow Fy))]$[14]

Strong Supervenience states that, for example, if Vince is a virtuous person, then there is some natural property G that Vince has such that it's metaphysically necessary that, if someone has property G, he or she is virtuous.[15] Strong Supervenience thus requires that there are metaphysically necessary connections between normative and natural properties. And since non-naturalists take normative properties to be distinct and very different in kind from natural properties, non-naturalists must admit, given Strong Supervenience, that there are metaphysically necessary connections between distinct and very different kinds of properties.

This puts pressure on non-naturalists to give a metaphysical explanation for these metaphysically necessary connections. This is because metaphysically necessary connections between seemingly quite different kinds of properties typically do have metaphysical explanations.[16] For example, consider the properties of *being colored* and *being spatially located*. Although these seem like quite different kinds of properties, it is nonetheless metaphysically necessary that, if x is colored, then x is spatially located. And this metaphysical necessity has an obvious explanation: in order for something to be colored, it must reflect or emit light, and in order for something to reflect or emit light, it must occupy some volume in space. Or consider the seemingly quite different properties of *being an elephant* and *being identical to oneself*. Although these are very different properties, it is nonetheless metaphysically necessary that if x is an elephant, x is identical to itself. But this, too, has an explanation: this necessity holds because everything is necessarily identical to itself, and any conditional with a metaphysically necessary consequent is itself metaphysically necessary. The fact that

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[14] cf. Dreier (1992), (ms).

[15] This does not imply that *being virtuous* is necessarily coextensive with G: e.g. Vera may be a virtuous person even though she lacks G. But Strong Supervenience requires that there is some other natural property G* that Vera has such that anyone who has G* is virtuous. As Jackson (1998) argues, however, Strong Supervenience does entail that there is at least some disjunctive property that *being virtuous* is necessarily coextensive with (e.g. G ∨ G* ∨…).

[16] From now on, I use the terms 'necessity' and 'explanation' to refer to metaphysical necessity and metaphysical explanation. I assume here (contra Kramer (2009) and Stratton-Lake & Hooker (2006)) that in order to explain Strong Supervenience, the non-naturalist must give a metaphysical explanation, rather than some other kind of explanation. I do not have room to defend this assumption here, but see McPherson (2012) and Dreier (ms).

necessary connections like these have an explanation suggests that there is probably some explanation for why there are metaphysically necessary connections between the normative and the natural.

Moreover, naturalists have a ready explanation: on their view, there are necessary connections between normative and natural properties because normative properties just are natural properties. This puts additional pressure on the non-naturalist to offer an alternative explanation for these necessities. For, if non-naturalists cannot offer any explanation for why there are metaphysically necessary connections between the normative and the natural, but naturalists can, then this seems like a reason to prefer naturalism over non-naturalism.

And one might think that non-naturalists cannot, in principle, offer an explanation for why there are metaphysically necessary connections between natural and normative properties. After all, any explanation for these connections must posit some fairly intimate metaphysical connection between the natural and the normative. But positing such a connection seems to be in tension with the non-naturalist's claim that the normative is distinct and deeply different in kind from the natural. There is thus some reason to think that the very commitments of non-naturalism force non-naturalists to regard the metaphysically necessary connections between the natural and the normative as simply brute.

This way of stating the supervenience objection is more modest than the way it is typically formulated. Most take the supervenience objection to rely on some version of Hume's dictum that either prohibits brute necessary connections between distinct entities altogether or states that a commitment to such brute necessities is at least a significant cost of a view.[17] But the way that I have formulated the supervenience objection above does not rely on any version of Hume's dictum. It simply relies on a general principle about theory choice: that having explanations for the types of things that typically do have an explanation (e.g. metaphysical necessities metaphysical necessities between seemingly different kinds of properties) is a virtue of a theory. And so, if some theory has an explanation that its rival lacks, then this is a reason to prefer the former theory.

But formulating the objection in this more modest way makes it less controversial, and thus more challenging. This is because it's unclear whether there is a strong theory-neutral argument for banning brute metaphysical necessities between distinct entities, or even for thinking that a view's being committed to brute metaphysical necessities is always a significant theoretical cost.[18] But even someone who denies these Humean principles should nonetheless accept the above general principle about theory choice. Formulating the supervenience objection in this modest way thus makes it harder for non-naturalists to dismiss the supervenience objection simply by denying these Humean principles.

Now that we have a better understanding of what non-naturalism and the supervenience objection amount to, we may turn to the prominent metaphysical explanations for Strong Supervenience that non-naturalists have offered in the literature thus far. But there are two main points from this section to keep in mind

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[17] McPherson (2012) proposes the latter formulation of the Humean thesis.
[18] See Wilson (2010) for a discussion of why we should be skeptical of different versions of Hume's dictum.

while moving forward. First, since the supervenience objection is motivated by a more general worry about explaining metaphysical necessities involving the natural and the normative, the challenge for the non-naturalist is not just to explain Strong Supervenience, but to explain why there are metaphysically necessary connections between normative and natural properties, more generally. And second, the challenge is for the non-naturalist to offer an explanation for these metaphysical necessities while clearly maintaining her pre-theoretical commitments that normative properties are *of their own kind* and incompatible with a purely scientific worldview. I emphasize these two points here because, in §2 and §3, I argue that the two main ways that non-naturalists have attempted to explain supervenience thus far fail to meet at least one of these challenges.

2. FUNDAMENTALIST NON-NATURALISM

The first non-naturalist explanation for supervenience is defended by Enoch and Scanlon.[19] Enoch explains why the normative supervenes on the natural by making an analogy with drinking eligibility and age. What it is to be eligible to drink, Enoch claims, is not simply for one to be above a certain age, but drinking eligibility supervenes on age (within a jurisdiction) because the law (within that jurisdiction) states that only people above a certain age can drink. Similarly, Enoch claims that normative properties supervene on natural properties even though they are not reducible to natural properties because there are *normative laws* that specify that if something has certain natural properties, then it has certain normative properties. For example, if act utilitarianism is true, then it is a normative law that an act is right if and only if it maximizes happiness. And Enoch insists that these normative laws are brute: there is no explanation for why the normative laws are what they are.

Similarly, Scanlon distinguishes between *mixed* and *pure* normative facts. Mixed normative facts, like the fact that giving to Oxfam is morally right, are contingent normative facts that vary, depending on certain non-normative facts (e.g. that Oxfam distributes money in certain ways). But pure normative facts, Scanlon claims, are not contingent and do not depend at all on any non-normative facts: e.g. the fact that, if doing A would relieve suffering, then the fact that doing A would relieve suffering is a reason to do A. Scanlon then notes that it is the *mixed* normative facts that supervene on the natural facts, and that they do so because the mixed normative facts are determined by the contingent non-normative facts together with the non-contingent, pure normative facts.[20]

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[19] Enoch (2011: 143-5) and Scanlon (2014: 40-1).

[20] One might think that Scanlon's explanation for supervenience is not a *metaphysical* explanation, but a first-order normative one, since Scanlon insists that, on his view, the pure normative facts are "substantive normative truths" that are settled through first-order normative inquiry (Scanlon (2014: 40-1)). But he also claims that metaphysical and ontological questions are always "domain-specific" and thereby settled by that domain (Scanlon (2014: 25)). This suggests that he does take his explanation for supervenience to be a metaphysical explanation, but that it is found through reflecting on first-order normative inquiry.

In order to better understand Enoch and Scanlon's explanation for Strong Supervenience and how it differs from the other two explanations that I discuss later on, I suggest that we do so in terms of *grounding*. Many contemporary metaphysicians introduce the notion of grounding into their theorizing precisely in order to make sense of what metaphysical explanations like these amount to.[21] According to these metaphysicians, when we offer metaphysical explanations by saying that some fact y obtains *because of* or *in virtue of* some other fact x, where we do not mean that y is caused by x, we are implicitly taking there to be a non-causal kind of determination relation between x and y.

For example, one might say that the man exiting the transporter is Spock because he is psychologically continuous with Spock, where one doesn't mean that the man's being psychologically continuous with Spock causes the man exiting the transporter to be Spock, but rather, that the fact that the transported man is psychologically continuous with Spock metaphysically determines, or makes it the case, that the man is Spock. Similarly, one might take Goliath the statue to be distinct from Lumpl the lump of clay, but nonetheless claim that Goliath's bellybutton has a certain shape S because a particular region of Lumpl has a dent that is S-shaped. In saying this, one means not that Lumpl's dent causes Goliath to have an S-shaped bellybutton, but that the dent metaphysically determines, or makes it the case, that Goliath's bellybutton is S-shaped. The notion of grounding is intended to capture this non-causal determination relation.

Characterizing grounding in more detail is hard to do without stepping into controversial terrain.[22] But the idea that there is a non-causal determination relation that underwrites non-causal metaphysical explanations like those above is intuitive enough for our purposes. So, I will use the notion of grounding here to explicate the different potential metaphysical explanations for supervenience, while remaining as neutral as possible about the in-house debates amongst grounding enthusiasts.[23] It is important for understanding these explanations for supervenience, though, that we assume that grounding involves metaphysical necessitation: if x grounds y, then in any metaphysically possible world where x obtains, y obtains. But this does not suggest that, if x grounds y, then in every metaphysically possible world where y obtains, x obtains. This is because a fact may have multiple possible grounds. For example, the fact that a particular truck is red may be grounded in the fact that it is crimson, but the truck also could be red in virtue of being scarlet or cherry red. The fact that x grounds y thus does not imply that x *necessarily* grounds y.

[21] See Bennett (2011), Dasgupta (2014), DeRosset (2013), Fine (2012), Rosen (2010), and Schaffer (2009).

[22] For every formal feature that is often used to characterize the grounding relation – e.g. transitivity, irreflexivity, asymmetry, and necessitation – there are some metaphysicians who deny that grounding has that feature (e.g. Rodriguez-Pereyra (2015) argues that grounding is neither transitive, irreflexive, nor asymmetric, and Skiles (2015) argues that grounding does not always involve necessitation).

[23] For ease of exposition, though, I assume here, as Rosen (2010) does, that grounding is a relation that holds between facts. This is controversial: Schaffer (2009) argues that grounding is best understood as a relation that holds between entities of any ontological category, and Fine (2001) argues that grounding is best understood as a sentential operator on facts, rather than a relation between facts. Everything I say here, however, could be rephrased to accommodate these alternative views.

It's also important for our purposes to distinguish between *full* and *partial* grounding. If x *fully* grounds y, then x's being the case by itself determines, and thus fully explains, y's being the case: for example, the fact that the truck is crimson fully grounds the fact that the truck is red. But if x only *partially* grounds y, then x's being the case together with some other fact(s) determines y's being the case, and so, x only partially explains y. For example, the fact that the truck is red partially grounds the fact that the truck is a red Chevy (together with the fact that the truck is a Chevy).

With grounding in our theoretical toolbox, we may now offer a more precise formulation of Enoch and Scanlon's explanation for supervenience. Both Enoch and Scanlon claim that all particular contingent normative facts (e.g. the fact that Don's donating to Oxfam is right, the fact that Vince is virtuous, and so on) are partially grounded in the particular contingent natural facts (e.g. the fact that Don's donating to Oxfam maximizes happiness, the fact that Vince is functioning well, and so on) and partially grounded in general normative laws (e.g. if an act maximizes happiness, then it is right, or if a person is functioning well, then that person is virtuous, and so on). Moreover, Enoch and Scanlon both insist that these general normative laws are *fundamental*: they are not themselves grounded in any further facts. Enoch and Scanlon thus offer the following metaphysical picture of the normative, which I call *Fundamentalist Non-naturalism*:

Fundamentalist Non-naturalism
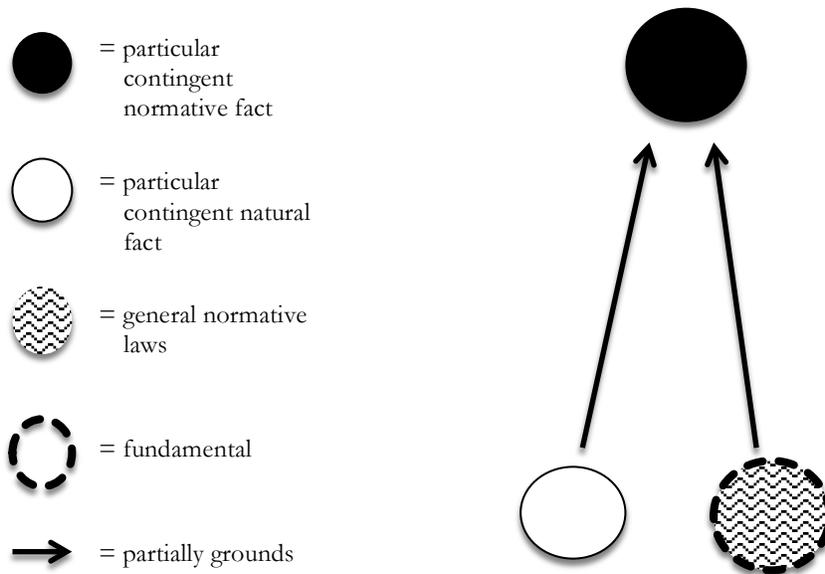
Importantly, though, Fundamentalist Non-naturalism explains Strong Supervenience only if the general normative laws are metaphysically necessary. If the normative laws vary between different metaphysically possible worlds, then there would be two metaphysically possible worlds that are different in their normative respects, but identical in their natural respects, which would violate Strong Supervenience.

Indeed, Scanlon and Enoch both insist that the normative laws are necessary. But Scanlon only claims that the normative laws are *normatively necessary*.[24] That is, he endorses Fine's view that there is a distinctively normative kind of necessity, in addition to metaphysical and nomological necessity, with which the general normative laws hold.[25] But the claim that the fundamental normative laws are normatively necessary does not suffice to explain why natural properties *metaphysically* necessitate normative properties (i.e. Strong Supervenience). Consider an analogy: suppose that the mental facts metaphysically supervene on the physical facts. One cannot explain this metaphysical supervenience simply by claiming that there are nomologically necessary laws of nature that state that if one is in a particular physical state P_1, then one is in a particular mental state M_1. This is because the laws of nature, though nomologically necessary, are not metaphysically necessary. So, even if it is a law of nature that if one is in P_1, then one is in M_1, since this law is not metaphysically necessary, it does not follow that it's metaphysically necessary that if one is in P_1, then one is in M_1. So, if normative necessity is also distinct from metaphysical necessity, normative necessities need not be metaphysically necessary either. Scanlon's claim that the normative laws are normatively necessary thus fails to explain Strong Supervenience.

Enoch, on the other hand, does claim that the general normative laws are metaphysically necessary. But recall that the general worry that motivates the supervenience objection is that the non-naturalist owes an explanation for why there are metaphysically necessary connections between natural and normative properties. Enoch's claim that there are metaphysically necessary normative laws does not explain these connections – it simply states that there are some. The problem with Fundamentalist Non-naturalism is thus that it does not respond to the general worry that motivates the supervenience objection.[26]

Enoch himself admits that his explanation for supervenience ultimately posits some unexplained metaphysical necessities involving the normative and the natural, and thus still incurs some theoretical cost.[27] But he understates the problem here. His view doesn't just face *some* theoretical cost. It faces the *very same* theoretical cost that he began with. In other words, Enoch's response to the supervenience objection does not saddle him with a new explanatory burden. It fails to address the original one.

One might think, however, that the Fundamentalist Non-naturalist's claim that the general normative laws are *fundamental* allows her to avoid the original explanatory demand. After all, the most basic principles of logic and mathematics are plausibly both fundamental and metaphysically necessary, but there seems to be no explanation for why they are metaphysically necessary. The Fundamentalist Non-naturalist may thus argue that, by claiming that the necessary normative principles are

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[24] Scanlon (2014: 41).

[25] Fine (2002).

[26] To be clear, the problem with Fundamentalist Non-naturalism is not that it takes the normative laws to be fundamental, and thus cannot explain why the normative laws are what they are. The problem is that it offers no explanation for why the fundamental normative laws are *metaphysically necessary*.

[27] Enoch (2011: 148).

fundamental, she likens them to fundamental mathematical and logical principles and thereby relieves herself of any pressure to explain why the general normative principles are metaphysically necessary in the first place.

But recall that the relevant explanatory burden for non-naturalists arises because they are committed to metaphysical necessities *between very different properties*. Fundamental mathematical and logical principles do not involve very different properties: the fundamental logical principles like $\neg(p \wedge \neg p)$ involve only variables and logical constants, and fundamental mathematical principles involve only variables and mathematical operators. So, even if there is no explanation for why the fundamental mathematical and logical truths are metaphysically necessary, this does not show that the non-naturalist need not give any explanation for why the fundamental normative principles are metaphysically necessary.

Fundamentalist Non-naturalism thus fails as a response to the supervenience objection because, although it may explain Strong Supervenience, it does not explain why there are metaphysically necessary connections between the natural and the normative, more generally.

3. GROUNDED NON-NATURALISM

The second prominent explanation for Strong Supervenience is offered by Shafer-Landau, and may also have been endorsed by Moore.[28] Shafer-Landau takes himself to be a non-naturalist, but he nonetheless seems to claim that the normative is fully grounded in the natural facts alone. He claims,

A pencil's length or weight at a time is fixed and constituted by a particular molecular composition, though the same length or weight may, at other times, be realized differently… So, too, the admirability of an action or motive may be realized by different sets of descriptive facts, but on any given occasion, the moral features are fixed by the descriptive ones that compose them at that time.[29]

Shafer-Landau's claims here suggest that he takes the contingent normative facts to be fully grounded in the contingent natural facts. After all, he claims that certain contingent normative facts are realized and constituted by certain contingent natural facts, but that those same normative facts could be realized or constituted by different natural facts. And realization and constitution are two paradigmatic examples of full grounding.

Shafer-Landau takes his view to be inspired by Moore, who makes similar claims:

I should never have thought of suggesting that goodness was 'non-natural,' unless I had supposed that it was 'derivative' in the sense that, whenever a thing is good (in the sense in question) its goodness (in Mr. Broad's words) 'depends on the presence of certain non-ethical characteristics' possessed by the thing in question: I have always supposed that it did so 'depend,' in the sense that, if a thing is good (in my sense), then that it is so *follows* from the fact that it possesses certain natural

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[28] Shafer-Landau (2003) and Moore (1903), (1942).
[29] Shafer-Landau (2003: 76-7)

properties, which are such that from the fact that it is good it does *not follow* conversely that it has those properties.[30]

Moore is claiming here that there is an asymmetric necessitation relation that holds between a thing's natural features and its normative ones. But, presumably, Moore does not mean that a thing's being good is caused by its having certain natural features, nor does he mean that a thing's being good logically follows from its having certain natural features (since he claims that it is always an open question whether something is good, given that it has certain natural features). Moore is thus best interpreted as claiming that a thing's having certain natural properties metaphysically determines that it has certain normative properties. And Moore does not claim here that it follows from the fact that a thing has certain natural properties together with some other facts that it has certain normative properties. So, it seems that Moore, too, took contingent normative facts, like the fact that x is good, to be fully grounded in the contingent natural facts.
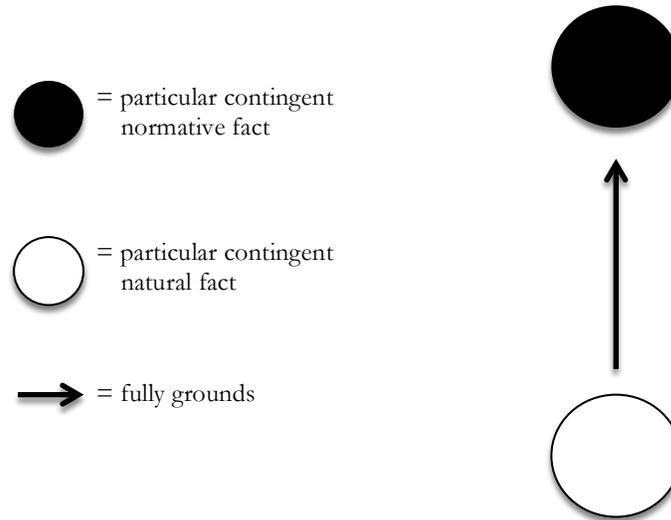
The claim that all contingent normative facts are fully grounded in the contingent natural facts suffices to explain Strong Supervenience. If for every normative property F and any x, the fact that x is F is fully grounded in some natural fact, then in every metaphysically possible world where x is F, there is some natural property G such that the fact that x is G grounds the fact that x is F. And since grounding involves necessitation, if the fact that x is G grounds the fact that x is F, then in every metaphysically possible world where x is G, x is F. So, if all normative facts are fully grounded in natural facts, for any normative property F, if something is F, then that thing has some natural property G such that, in every metaphysically possible world where something is G, then it is F (i.e. Strong Supervenience).

Shafer-Landau and Moore thus offer the following metaphysical picture of the normative, which I call *Grounded Non-naturalism*:[31]

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[30] Moore (1942: 588).

[31] This picture is silent as to what grounds general normative principles. The Grounded Non-naturalist might claim that general normative principles are grounded in the same way as universal generalizations — by their instances. But this is not plausible because general normative principles seem true independently of whether there are any actual instances of them: even if there were no instances of happiness maximization, it may still be necessarily true that, if an act maximizes happiness, it is right. (Thanks to Ernie Sosa for this point.) But the Grounded Non-naturalist may instead claim that general normative principles just are *general grounding facts*: for example, that the general principle that if an act maximizes happiness, it is right, just is the fact that an act's maximizing happiness grounds that it is right.

Grounded Non-naturalism

= particular contingent normative fact

= particular contingent natural fact

→ = fully grounds

But Grounded Non-naturalism does not respond to the general worry behind the supervenience objection any better than Fundamentalist Non-naturalism. The claim that all normative facts are fully grounded in natural facts does not explain why there are metaphysically necessary connections between natural and normative properties. It simply states that there are some – namely, grounding connections.

The Grounded Non-naturalist may turn to the grounding literature, however, for an explanation for why natural facts ground normative facts.[32] Wilsch argues that grounding facts about specific objects and properties (e.g. the fact that my firing C-fibers grounds my being in pain) are explained by more general laws about which properties give rise to which other properties (e.g. it is a law that if x has firing C-fibers, then x is in pain), just as specific causal facts (e.g. the fact that the ball's hitting the window caused the window to break) are explained by general laws about which events cause which other events (e.g. laws about fragility and force).[33] This view is a metaphysical analogue of a conception of the laws of nature according to which the laws of nature do not themselves cause later events, together with earlier events, but underlie the causal relations between particular earlier and later times. Similarly, on Wilsch's view, there are *metaphysical laws* that underlie the grounding relations between particular facts at different levels of fundamentality.
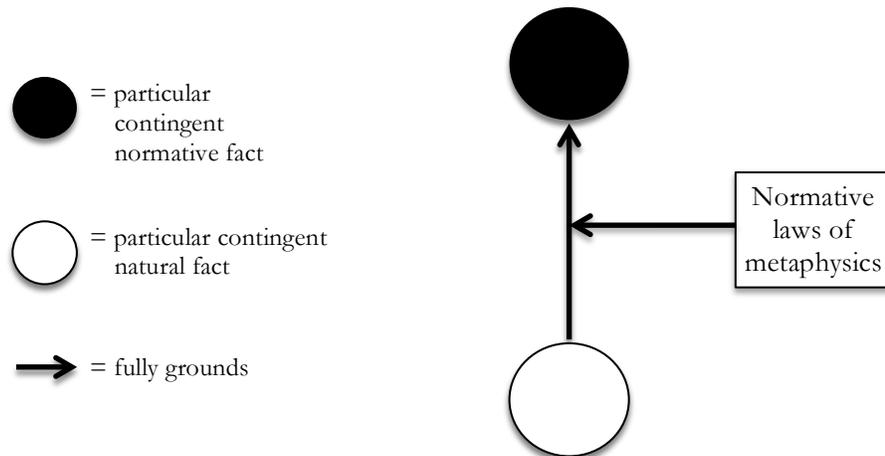
The Grounded Non-naturalist may adopt this view and claim that the particular grounding facts involving natural and normative properties are all explained by metaphysical laws. For example, the Grounded Non-naturalist may

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[32] Bennett (2011), DeRossett (2013), Dasgupta (2014), Fine (2012), Rosen (2010), and Wilsch (2015) all take grounding facts to have grounds.

[33] This oversimplifies Wilsch's (2015) view. He takes the metaphysical laws to be more general than this and to involve various "construction relations" such as composition, realization, set-formation, etc. For example, on his view, what explains the fact that my having firing C-fibers grounds that I am in pain (if physicalism is true) is (i) that it's a law that under circumstances C, *having firing C-fibers* realizes the property *being in pain,* and (ii) that it's a law that if x has F and F realizes G, then x has G.

claim that the fact that an act maximizes happiness grounds that it is right because it is a metaphysical law that if x maximizes happiness, then x is right. This view, which I call *Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalism*, offers the following metaphysical picture of the normative:

Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalism

Like Fundamentalist Non-naturalism, this view takes there to be general normative laws that ultimately explain the particular normative facts. But according to Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalism, the normative laws do not themselves ground the particular contingent normative facts directly, with the particular contingent natural facts. Instead, the normative laws underlie the grounding relations between these natural and normative facts.

One might worry, however, that Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalism, like Fundamentalist Non-naturalism offers no explanation for why the normative laws are metaphysically necessary, and thus still does not address the general worry that motivates the supervenience objection. But Wilsch offers an explanation for why any metaphysical law is metaphysically necessary. He suggests that the metaphysically possible worlds are simply the set of logically possible worlds in which the laws of metaphysics hold, just as the nomologically possible worlds are the set of logically possible worlds in which the laws of nature hold. So, if it is a metaphysical law that p, then it is a law that p in every metaphysically possible world.[34] The law that p is thus metaphysically necessary, since metaphysical necessities are simply facts that hold in every metaphysically possible world. The Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalist thus has an explanation for why the normative laws are metaphysically necessary.[35]

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[34] Wilsch (2015: 3299).

[35] Fundamentalist Non-naturalists could also claim that the fundamental normative laws are laws of metaphysics, and thus offer the same explanation for why the normative laws are metaphysically necessary. But Fundamentalist Non-naturalism would then face another problem that I bring up for Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalism below (see next footnote).

So, by adopting Wilsch's view of the grounding facts and metaphysical possibility, the Grounded Non-naturalist can explain not just Strong Supervenience, but all the metaphysical necessities involving natural and normative properties: on this view, the metaphysically necessary connections between natural and normative properties are ultimately explained by the laws of metaphysics, which themselves are metaphysically necessary because they are precisely what determine the metaphysical possibilities.

But Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalism faces a new problem. Namely, it is unclear whether this metaphysical picture provides a genuinely non-naturalist view of the normative. This is because the view implies that normative properties metaphysically relate to paradigmatic scientific properties in exactly the same way as certain derivative natural properties do. For example, consider the derivative natural property *being a mammal or a truck*. This is not a paradigmatic scientific property. But *being a mammal or a truck* is nonetheless a natural property — it's of the same kind as paradigmatic scientific properties. And facts about what things have this property are grounded in paradigmatic scientific facts: e.g. the fact that Ellie the elephant is a mammal or a truck is grounded in the fact that Ellie is a mammal. Moreover, according to the Wilschian metaphysics that Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalism relies upon, what explains why the fact that Ellie's being a mammal grounds that Ellie is a mammal or a truck is the fact that it is a metaphysical law that if x is F, then x is F or G, for any G.

According to Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalism, then, the normative facts relate to paradigmatic scientific facts in exactly the same way that mammal-or-truck-facts do: both the particular contingent normative facts and the particular contingent mammal-or-truck-facts are numerically distinct from, but fully grounded in paradigmatic scientific facts, and facts about which scientific facts ground which normative or mammal-or-truck facts are grounded in the metaphysical laws. But then it's not clear why normative properties are nonetheless significantly different in kind from paradigmatic scientific properties and why countenancing them is incompatible with a scientific worldview. After all, *being a mammal or a truck* is not significantly different in kind from scientific properties and countenancing this property is compatible with a scientific worldview. Without some explanation for why normative properties are non-natural, but *being a mammal or a truck* is natural, then, it's not clear that this is a genuinely non-naturalist view.

In other words, in order to maintain that normative properties are *sui generis*, the non-naturalist must be able to point to some way in which all derivative natural properties and facts relate to paradigmatic scientific properties and facts, which is a way that normative properties and facts do *not* relate to paradigmatic scientific properties and facts. But there seems to be no such relation for the Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalist to point to.[36]

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36 Similarly, if the Fundamentalist Non-naturalist claims that the fundamental normative laws are metaphysical laws, it's not clear how she can capture her non-naturalist commitments, since the metaphysical structure of the normative facts would be exactly the same as that of certain derivative natural facts. For example, consider facts about tables. If metaphysical laws are fundamental and ground the contingent derivative facts together with the contingent fundamental facts, then table facts are grounded in the same way as the normative facts: e.g. the fact that there is a table is grounded in the fact that there are particles arranged table-wise and the fundamental metaphysical law that if there

The Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalist might claim as Bader does (in this volume) that just as the laws of nature are a distinct set of laws from the metaphysical laws, which underlie causal relations between events, the normative laws are a distinct set of laws that underlie *normative grounding relations* between facts (where normative grounding is a normative determination relation that is distinct from metaphysical grounding). The Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalist may then claim that what makes the normative *sui generis*, while derivative natural properties like *being a mammal or a truck* are not, is that, unlike derivative natural facts, the normative facts are governed by a special set of laws, so that they are normatively grounded, but not metaphysically grounded, in the scientific facts.

But this response undermines Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalism's explanation for Strong Supervenience in a similar way as Scanlon's claim that the normative laws are only normatively necessary undermines his Fundamentalist Non-naturalist explanation for supervenience. If the normative laws, like laws of nature, are not metaphysical laws, then they need not be metaphysically necessary, just as the laws of nature are plausibly not metaphysically necessary. So, without some explanation for why the normative laws are metaphysically necessary (and not just normatively necessary), Bader's view fails to explain Strong Supervenience.

Grounded Non-naturalists thus face a dilemma. In order to fully respond to the supervenience objection, they must appeal to some general view about what grounds the grounding facts that discharges, rather than shifts, the burden of explaining the metaphysically necessary connections between natural and normative properties. But appealing to a general view about what grounds the grounding facts makes the metaphysical structure of the normative facts mirror that of certain derivative natural facts and thereby threatens her pre-theoretical claims that the normative is *sui generis* and incompatible with a scientific worldview.

In the following section, however, I argue that, by adopting the ideology of *essence*, the Grounded Non-naturalist can provide a metaphysical picture of the normative that explains all the metaphysically necessary connections between the natural and the normative, while also clearly maintaining the pre-theoretical commitments of non-naturalism. So, I show that Grounded Non-naturalists can ultimately find their way out of this dilemma, if they adopt the ideology of essence.

4. ESSENTIALLY GROUNDED NON-NATURALISM

Instead of claiming that the grounding facts are explained by metaphysical laws, one might hold as Rosen, Fine, and Dasgupta do that the grounding facts are explained by facts about the *essences* of the properties involved.[37] In this section, I first briefly explain Fine's account of essence and the essentialist view of grounding in more detail, and then I explain how the non-naturalist's pre-theoretical commitments

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are particles arranged table-wise, then there is a table. So, it's not clear on this view why table facts are of the same kind as paradigmatic scientific facts and compatible with a scientific worldview, while normative facts are not.

[37] Rosen (2010), Fine (2012), and Dasgupta (2014).

can be captured in terms of essence. I then argue that this non-naturalist view is compatible with an essentialist explanation for why the normative is grounded in, and thus supervenes on, the natural. In §5, I then explain how this essentialist explanation for Strong Supervenience explains all the metaphysically necessary connections between natural and normative properties, thereby avoiding what McPherson calls "bruteness revenge".

Fine takes the essence of an object or property to be the set of propositions that are directly definitive of that object or property, and thus state the very nature of that object or property.[38] For example, it's directly definitive of *being a bachelor* that, if x is a bachelor, then x is unmarried. So, the proposition *if x is a bachelor, then x is unmarried* is part of the essence of *being a bachelor*. Or, if it is directly definitive of you that you originated from a particular ovum and sperm pair OS, then the proposition *you originated from OS* is part of your essence. We may thus say that the essence of F *involves* G just in case G is a constituent of some proposition that is directly definitive of F. For example, the essence of *being a bachelor* involves *being unmarried* and your essence may involve *OS*.

Moreover, Fine takes essences to determine the metaphysical possibilities, and thereby explain metaphysical necessities. According to Fine, the metaphysical possibilities are the logical possibilities that are compatible with the essences of all things.[39] The metaphysically necessary truths, then, are those truths that follow from the essences of things. For example, the fact that it's essential of *being a bachelor* that if x is a bachelor, then x is unmarried, explains why it's metaphysically necessary that all bachelors are unmarried; and the fact that it's essential of you that you originated from OS explains why any metaphysically possible world where you exist is a world in which you originated from OS.

Rosen, Fine, and Dasgupta suggest, moreover, that essences explain grounding facts.[40] To illustrate, suppose event *e* is a particular rock show, played by a few different classic rock bands. The fact that *e* is a rock show is presumably grounded in the fact that *e* consists of people acting in a certain way W (e.g. playing guitars, bass, and drums in a classic rock sort of way before an audience, and so on). According to an essentialist view of grounding, what explains this grounding fact is that it is essential of *being a rock show* that an event is a rock show if it consists of people acting in way W. But since there are many different ways to rock (e.g. there's the punk rock sort of way, the celtic rock sort of way, the shoegazer rock sort of way), there are many different ways of playing different instruments that suffice for a rock show. Let's call these ways of acting $W_1, W_2 \dots$ So, the fact that e_1 is a rock show is grounded in the fact that e_1 consists of people acting in way W_1 and the fact that e_2

[38] See Fine (1994b). Fine actually distinguishes between many different kinds of essences. In this paper, I am exclusively concerned with what Fine calls *constitutive immediate* essence.

[39] See Fine (1994a).

[40] I gloss over some differences between Rosen (2010), Fine (2012), and Dasgupta (2014) here. Whereas Dasgupta takes essences to explain particular grounding facts, Fine and Rosen claim, instead, that essences explain general grounding facts. Moreover, whereas Dasgupta and Rosen take the kind of explanatory relation that holds between essences and grounding connections to be the grounding relation, Fine takes it to be a distinct explanatory relation that is unique to essence explanations. But these differences amongst their views do not matter for my purposes. So, I follow Dasgupta in taking essences to ground particular grounding facts, since it's the most straightforward version of the view.

is a rock show is grounded in the fact that e_2 consists of people acting in way W_2, and so on. On the essentialist view, all of these grounding facts are explained by the essence of *being a rock show*: it is essential of *being a rock show* that an event is a rock show if it consists of people acting in way W_1, or if it consists of people acting in way W_2, and so on.

Dasgupta suggests, moreover, that essences are *autonomous* in the sense that they are neither grounded nor fundamental, but simply not the sorts of facts that can, in principle, have a metaphysical explanation.[41] As an analogy, consider the sense in which the fact that 2+2=4 has no cause: the fact that 2+2=4 has no cause, not in the sense that the Big Bang has no cause (as the initial state of the universe), but in the sense that it is not the sort of thing that can, in principle, be caused. Similarly, Dasgupta suggests that essential facts have no grounds, not because they are fundamental, but because they are "not apt for being grounded in the first place", and so, "the question of what grounds [them] does not legitimately arise".[42]

Indeed, the question of, for example, why it is essential of you that you originated from OS seems akin to asking why H_2O and water are identical. The only response that can be given to both questions is that that's just what you and water are! The demand for any further metaphysical explanation seems inappropriate. This suggests that facts about essence, like facts about numerical identity, are just not the sorts of facts that can, in principle, have a metaphysical explanation. On the essentialist view, then, essences are facts that impose grounding structure on the world, but are not themselves part of that structure. In metaphorical terms, when God built the world, she did not need to create facts about essence – they were "already there". She only needed to create the fundamental facts, and the nature of things allowed all the derivative facts to spring forth from there.

Within this essentialist framework, non-naturalism can be specified as the following view:

> *Essentialist Non-naturalism*: the essences of some normative properties
> (i) cannot be specified entirely in non-normative terms, and
> (ii) do not specify any non-normative sufficient conditions for their instantiation.

Essentialist Non-naturalism is compatible with the claim that the essences of all (even *sui generis*) normative properties involve some non-normative properties, and even that they all specify some non-normative necessary conditions for their instantiation. This seems appropriate, since even a non-naturalist may presumably admit that, for example, it's part of the essence of *being right* that, if x is right, then x is an action. Essentialist Non-naturalism is also compatible with the claim that the essences of all (even *sui generis*) normative properties specify *normative* sufficient conditions for their instantiation. This, too, seems appropriate since a non-naturalist

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[41] Dasgupta (2014: 575-80).

[42] Dasgupta (2014: 576). To be clear, I am only claiming here that *constitutive immediate essences* are autonomous, this allows that other kinds of essences (e.g. what Fine calls *consequential* or *mediate* essences) have metaphysical explanations. Indeed, these other essences are plausibly explained by constitutive and immediate essences.

may presumably admit that it's essential of *being right*, for example, that if x produces the most good, x is right. But according to Essentialist Non-naturalism, there are some normative properties that have essences that cannot be fully specified in non-normative terms and do they specify any non-normative sufficient conditions for their instantiation.

This view suffices to capture the non-naturalist's two pre-theoretical claims. If the essences of some normative properties cannot be fully specified in non-normative terms, and their essences do not specify any non-normative sufficient conditions for their instantiation, then the very nature of those properties involves *something more* than any other kind of properties – something irreducibly normative. Essentialist non-naturalism thus seems to capture the non-naturalist's claim that normative properties are of their own kind. And if the essences of some normative properties cannot be specified entirely in non-normative terms, including natural terms, then there is something about the nature of reality that ultimately cannot be described by science. Essentialist Non-naturalism thus seems to imply that countenancing normative properties is incompatible with a scientific worldview in this sense.

Moreover, Essentialist Non-naturalism is compatible with an essentialist explanation for why all particular contingent normative facts are fully grounded in the particular contingent natural facts – or, so I will argue. Of course, the Essentialist Non-naturalist cannot claim that the essences of *sui generis* normative properties explain why the normative facts are grounded in the natural facts, since on her view the essences of those properties do not specify any natural sufficient conditions for their instantiation. But she may claim, instead, that the essences of *other* properties explain why the normative is grounded in the natural.

Fine and Dasgupta both seem to assume that, if the fact that *a* is F grounds the fact that *a* is G, this grounding fact is explained by the essence of *G* — the ground*ed* property. This seems plausible for certain canonical examples of grounding facts. For example, the fact that Socrates exists grounds the fact that the singleton set {Socrates} exists not because it's part of the essence of Socrates that, if Socrates exists, {Socrates} exists, but because it's part of the essence of {Socrates} that {Socrates} exists if and only if Socrates exists. Similarly, the fact that the ball is red grounds the fact that the ball is red or green not because it's part of the essence of redness that something is red or green, if it is red, but because it's part of the essence of disjunction that something is red or green, if it is red.

But some canonical examples of grounding facts suggest that grounding facts may be explained, instead, by the essences of the ground*ing* properties, rather than the ground*ed* properties. For example, the fact that the ball is red grounds the fact that the ball is colored, but this seems to be because what it is to be red involves being colored, rather than the other way around. And the fact that the ball is 2 kg grounds the fact that the ball has mass, but this is because what it is for something to be 2 kg involves having mass.[43]

The Essentialist Non-naturalist may thus attempt to explain why all particular contingent normative facts are grounded in and supervene on the particular

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[43] This does not imply that *being colored* and *having mass* are *sui generis* properties, though, since presumably their essences can be fully specified in natural terms.

contingent natural facts by claiming that the essences of certain *natural* properties specify sufficient conditions for the instantiation of *sui generis* normative properties. Indeed, Wedgwood presents a view along these lines: he claims that the essences of certain mental properties involve normative properties, and that this explains why the normative supervenes on the natural.[44]

But this does not actually explain why normative properties supervene on natural, non-normative properties. This is because, within an essentialist framework, we should adopt the following recursive definition for *non-natural normative properties*:

> For any property F:
> (i)   If the essence of F cannot be specified entirely in non-normative terms and does not specify non-normative sufficient conditions for its instantiation, then F is a (*sui generis*) non-natural normative property.
> (ii) If the essence of F involves a non-natural normative property N, then F is a non-natural normative property.

In other words, on the essentialist view, any property that contains some non-natural normative property in its essence is itself a non-natural normative property. So, Wedgwood's claim that certain mental properties involve non-natural normative properties in their essence implies that mental properties are non-natural normative properties. And while this explains why non-natural normative properties supervene on other non-natural normative properties, it does not explain why non-natural normative properties supervene on natural non-normative properties.[45]
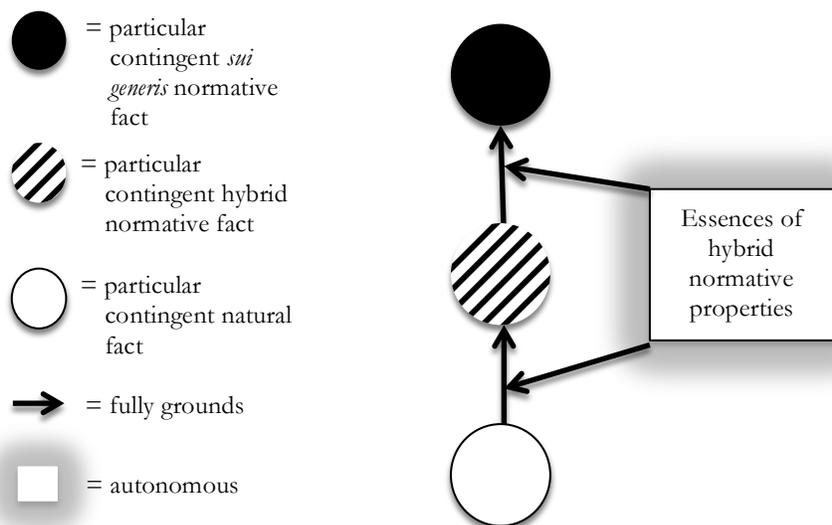
But the Essentialist Non-naturalist may claim, instead, that there are *hybrid properties* whose essences specify both natural non-normative sufficient conditions for their own instantiation and sufficient conditions for the instantiation of certain *sui generis* normative properties. For example, one might claim that *being in pain* is such a property: that it's part of the essence of *being in pain* that (a) if one's C-fibers are firing, then one is in pain, and (b) that if x is a painful experience, x is bad (where *badness* is a *sui generis* normative property). Given the essentialist view, (a) explains why pain-facts are grounded in C-fiber-firing facts, and (b) explains why badness-facts are grounded in pain-facts. And given the above definition, (b) implies that the hybrid property *being in pain* is a non-natural normative property; but (a) is compatible with the assumption that the essence of *being in a C-fibers-firing-state* does not involve any non-natural properties, and is thus a natural non-normative property. This view thus explains why non-natural normative facts are ultimately grounded in, and thus supervene on, natural non-normative facts.

More generally, then, the explanation for supervenience that I am proposing, which I call *Essentially Grounded Non-naturalism*, offers the following metaphysical picture:

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[44] Wedgwood (1999), (2007).
[45] Rosen (ms) makes this same point, but uses a slightly different definition.

Essentially Grounded Non-naturalism

The Essentially Grounded Non-naturalist takes some normative properties (e.g. *being right*, *being good*, etc.) to be *sui generis*: their essences cannot be specified entirely in non-normative terms and do not specify any non-normative sufficient conditions for their instantiation. She also takes some normative properties to be not *sui generis*, but *hybrid*: their essences specify both naturalistic sufficient conditions for their own instantiation and sufficient conditions for the *sui generis* normative properties. The Essentially Grounded Non-naturalist then claims that the essences of the hybrid normative properties thereby explain (1) why all particular contingent normative facts involving *sui generis* normative properties are fully grounded in particular contingent normative facts involving hybrid normative properties, and (2) why all particular contingent hybrid normative facts are fully grounded in particular contingent natural facts. The hybrid properties thus act as a double-sided tape that sticks the normative onto the natural.[46]

This general explanation for supervenience may be implemented in several different ways, depending on which properties one takes to be the hybrid ones. One might take them to be so-called "thick" normative properties like *being courageous*, *being a promise*, *being a friend*, and so on. For example, one might claim that it's part of the essence of *being a promise* that if certain natural conditions C obtain, then A promised B to do x, and that it's also part of the essence of *being a promise* that if A promised B to do x, then A has a reason to do x (and so on for other thick normative

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[46] Thanks to Tobias Wilsch for the double-sided tape metaphor. To be clear, though, it's not this double-sided tape grounding structure that makes the normative *sui generis*. What makes the normative *sui generis* is that the essences of the normative properties at the top of that structure (i) cannot be fully specified in non-normative terms and (ii) do not specify non-normative sufficient conditions for their instantiation. So, there may be some natural facts that have a similar double-sided tape grounding structure, but are nonetheless natural because the essences of all the properties involved are fully specifiable in terms of natural properties.

properties).[47] Alternatively, the Essentially Grounded Non-naturalist might take *being a reason* to be the single hybrid normative property: that the essence of *being a reason* specifies all the naturalistic sufficient conditions for R's being a reason for someone to do A and sufficient conditions for the *sui generis* normative properties.[48]

But any variation of the view responds to the supervenience objection in the same way. Like Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalism, Essentially Grounded Non-naturalism explains Strong Supervenience by claiming that all the normative facts are fully grounded in the natural facts, but it explains why certain normative facts are grounded in certain natural facts by appealing to essences rather than metaphysical laws. And, importantly, the essentialist can explain why essences themselves are metaphysically necessary by appealing to her account of metaphysical possibility, similar to the way in which Wilsch explains why the metaphysical laws are metaphysically necessary on his framework. According to the essentialist, the metaphysical possibilities are the logical possibilities that are compatible with the essences of all things. So, any essential truth is true in every metaphysically possible world, and thus metaphysically necessary. The Essentially Grounded Non-naturalist thus explains Strong Supervenience in a way that addresses the more general worry that motivates the supervenience objection.

But unlike Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalism, Essentially Grounded Non-naturalism does so while also clearly capturing the non-naturalist's pre-theoretical commitments. The reason why the Essentially Grounded Non-naturalist succeeds here, where the Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalist fails, is that the Essentially Grounded Non-naturalist has more fine-grained theoretical tools at her disposal —-the notion of essence — in order to make distinctions between properties that have similar grounding structures. Although she claims that normative facts are ultimately grounded in paradigmatic scientific facts, just like derivative natural facts are, the Essentially Grounded Non-naturalist has the resources to explain why some normative properties are nonetheless *sui generis* and incompatible with a scientific worldview, whereas derivative natural properties like *being a mammal or a truck* are not: it's because the essences of those normative properties cannot be fully specified in terms of scientific properties (or any other non-normative properties whatsoever), whereas the essences of derivative natural properties can be so specified.

5. AVOIDING BRUTENESS REVENGE

McPherson anticipates a similar explanation for supervenience, but he argues that such a view covertly assumes some unexplained metaphysically necessary

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[47] This view assumes that thick normative properties are more fundamental than thin normative properties, and thus requires rejecting a view of thick properties according to which they are *conjunctive* properties with natural and normative conjuncts.

[48] Which properties are the most plausible candidates for hybrid properties will require doing some substantive normative ethics.

connections between natural and normative properties – a problem that he calls "bruteness revenge".[49]

Specifically, McPherson considers a non-naturalist view that attempts to explain supervenience by claiming that some normative properties have a conjunctive *real definition* that involves both natural and irreducibly normative properties. For example, consider the view that *being a reason* is just the conjunctive property of *playing justifying role R and promoting happiness*. McPherson argues that this explanation for why *being a reason* supervenes on *promoting happiness* assumes that *playing justifying role* R is necessarily coinstantiated with *promoting happiness*: that it's metaphysically necessary that, if x plays justifying role R, x promotes happiness, and that, if x promotes happiness, x plays justifying role R. But, as McPherson points out, the constituents of conjunctive properties are not usually necessarily coinstantiated: e.g. *being unmarried* is not necessarily coinstantiated with *being male*, even though these two properties are constituents of the conjunctive property *being a bachelor*. So, McPherson claims, appealing to conjunctive properties to explain supervenience implicitly assumes unexplained metaphysically necessary connections between their natural and irreducibly normative constituents.[50]

But, importantly, hybrid properties are not conjunctive properties. To claim that, for example, *being a reason* is a hybrid property of which its essential that (a) if x is a reason, x plays justifying role R, and (b) if x is a reason, x promotes happiness, does not entail that *being a reason* is the conjunctive property of *playing justifying role R and promoting happiness*. This is because essence is a broader notion than real definition. For example, as Rosen points out, there seems to be no real definition for disjunction: there's no way to define what it is for p∨q to obtain in simpler terms. But it nonetheless seems essential of disjunction that disjunctive facts are grounded in their disjuncts.[51] This shows that not all essential truths provide real definitions.

Consequently, hybrid properties give rise to a different grounding structure than conjunctive properties. Conjunctive facts are grounded in their conjuncts. So, the conjunctive property view that McPherson considers implies that the conjunctive normative facts (e.g. the fact that x is a reason) are partially grounded in the *sui generis* normative facts (e.g. the fact that x plays justifying role R) and partially grounded in the natural facts (e.g. the fact that x promotes happiness). But on the hybrid property view, the *sui generis* normative facts (e.g. the fact that x plays justifying role R) are fully grounded by the hybrid normative facts (e.g. the fact that x is a reason), which are fully grounded by the natural facts (e.g. the fact that x promotes happiness). Because the hybrid properties give rise to this different grounding structure, they explain why it's metaphysically necessary that, if x has the constituent natural property (e.g. *promoting happiness*), it has the constituent *sui generis* normative property (e.g. *playing justifying role* R).

Moreover, the background essentialist metaphysics explains why it's metaphysically necessary that, if x has some *sui generis* normative property, x has some natural property that is involved in the essence of whatever hybrid properties ground it. On the essentialist framework, no grounding facts are fundamental – they are all

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[49] McPherson (2012: 222-3).
[50] Ibid.
[51] Rosen (2010: 131).

grounded in essences. So, no derivative property F can be instantiated by x unless x has some more fundamental property G and there is an essential connection between *being F* and *being G*. For example, nothing can have the derivative property *playing justifying role R* unless it has some more fundamental property whose essence involves *playing justifying role R*. So, if *being a reason* is the only property whose essence involves *playing justifying role R*, and its essence also involves *promoting happiness*, this explains why it's metaphysically necessary that, if x plays justifying role R, then x promotes happiness.

The Essentially Grounded Non-naturalist must ultimately assume, however, that only certain hybrid properties exist. For example, if she endorses the utilitarian view above, she must assume that there is no hybrid property *being a schmeason*, of which it is essential that (a) if x reduces happiness, x is a schmeason, and (b) if x is a schmeason, x plays justifying role R. And one might worry that, unless the Essentially Grounded Non-naturalist has some explanation for why there are only certain hybrid properties and not others, the Essentially Grounded Non-naturalist still faces a form of bruteness revenge.[52]

But the question of what metaphysically explains, for example, why there is no property of *being a schmeason* amounts to the question of why it's not essential of any F that (a) if x reduces happiness, x is F, and (b) if x is F, x plays justifying role R. And recall that facts about what is essential of what are *autonomous*: they are brute in the sense that they are simply not the sorts of facts that can, in principle, have a metaphysical explanation. So, taking it to be brute that certain hybrid properties exist and others don't is not problematic. The question of what metaphysically explains such facts does not legitimately arise.[53]

Moreover, notice that the relevant brute facts here are not metaphysical necessities, but *essential* facts – facts of the form that it is (or is not) essential of some property F that p. It is these facts, according to the essentialist, that explain why there are (or are not) metaphysically necessary connections between certain natural and certain normative properties. So, in taking it to be brute (in the autonomous sense) that only certain hybrid properties exist, the Essentially Grounded Non-naturalist is not positing any brute metaphysical necessities involving natural and normative properties.

6. CONCLUSION

The essentialist response to the supervenience objection that I have offered here thus succeeds where others fail. Unlike Fundamentalist Non-naturalism, Essentially Grounded Non-naturalism has the resources to explain not just Strong Supervenience, but *all* the metaphysically necessary connections between natural and normative properties. And unlike Lawfully Grounded Non-naturalism, it also clearly captures the non-naturalist's core pre-theoretical commitments. Essentially

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[52] Thanks to Jamie Dreier, Aaron Elliot, and Tristram McPherson for discussion of this point.
[53] One may legitimately ask the Essentially Grounded Non-naturalist to explain why we should *believe* that there are certain hybrid properties, and not others. But this is an epistemic question that she can answer (by doing substantive first-order normative ethics).

Grounded Non-naturalism thus shows that, contrary to popular opinion, the fact that the normative supervenes on the natural is not a reason to prefer naturalism over non-naturalism.[54]

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