Blackburn on the Ban on
Mixed Moral Worlds*

Kim, Shin**

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【Abstract】This is a realist response to Blackburn’s version of the explanatory inadequacy of the moral thesis based on the ban on mixed worlds, and to its possible explanatory reductionism version. First, the moral supervenience relationship is made explicit, for the ban on mixed worlds has been expressed most commonly by employing the notion of moral supervenience. This is done to clarify the implications of the ban. Second, it will be argued that the dependence relationship between the two is self-explanatory, given the dependence relationship expounded here. This will allow us to show that there is no such modal fact as the ban on mixed worlds for projectivists such as Blackburn to explain. Third, I shall consider and reject a possible rejoinder from Blackburn: explanatory reductionism. A nonreductive physicalistic type of moral realism can still fail if it can be shown that all of the explanatory power possessed by the supervening properties is reducible to the explanatory power provided by the subvening properties. This is especially so when

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the explanation is understood as closely related to causation. It will be shown that the causal power of supervening properties is irreducible to their subvening properties, while it is acknowledged that further work has to be done in establishing the falsity of the explanatory reductionism of moral facts to nonmoral facts.

We offer and accept everyday explanations that appeal to putative moral facts without ever questioning their explanatory adequacy. There are plenty of everyday examples of this moral practice. “Injustice done to people brought about pro-democracy demonstrators in and around Tiananmen Square,” “Archbishop Gilday’s sneaky and deceitful actions to swindle the Vatican Bank got himself killed,” “Sherron Watkins blew the whistle on Enron because it was the right thing to do,” and so on, and so forth. Nonetheless, moral antirealists maintain that folk moral explanations are suspect: those everyday explanations that appeal to putative moral facts, according to them, lack physicalistic respectability. They argue that such a lack of physicalistic respectability of the folk moral explanations is evidence that there are no moral facts, notwithstanding the everyday practice of offering and accepting folk moral explanations. I shall call the thesis which is the basis for the antirealist argument, the “explanatory inadequacy of moral fact thesis,” or the ‘EI’ thesis. This paper is a realist response to Simon Blackburn’s version of the EI thesis, the ban on mixed moral worlds.

1) The EI thesis comes in at least three variants: the comparative explanatory superiority of nonmoral facts over moral facts, the total lack of explanatory power of moral facts, and explanatory reductionism of moral facts to nonmoral facts.
Antirealists have focused on many different states of affairs in advancing their versions of the EI thesis. Blackburn has focused on a putative modal fact in advancing his. He argued that there are no moral facts because appeals to them fail to explain the “ban on mixed worlds.” Putatively, there cannot be the worlds that share every physical property and yet somehow fail to share all the moral property. In other words, every possible world that shares all the physical properties must also share all the moral properties. Blackburn calls the putative modal fact the “ban on mixed worlds.” He maintains that “we need to explain the ban on mixed worlds, and the argument goes that anti-realism does this better than realism” (1984, 184).

I should like to establish the falsity of all versions of the EI thesis. Nonetheless, I shall in this paper respond to Blackburn’s EI thesis about the ban on mixed worlds, given its central place in the antirealist arguments. I shall proceed as follows.

First, the moral supervenience relation is made explicit. For the ban on mixed worlds has been expressed most commonly by employing the notion of moral supervenience. This is to make clearer the implications of the ban. Second, it will be argued that the dependence relation between the two is self-explanatory, given the dependence relation expounded here. This will allow us to show

2) For instance, J. L. Mackie argued that the actual variations of mores (among different cultures and societies) are better explained by appealing to nonmoral facts than by appealing to putative moral facts. (See his 1977.) Gilbert Harman argued that “an assumption about moral facts would seem to be totally irrelevant to the explanation of your making the judgment you make” (1977, 7). And Blackburn argued that “[n]o right, duty, or value plays any explanatory role in this [evolutionary success] history…there is no such naturalistically respectable [moral] explanation” (1987, 364).
that there is no such modal fact like the ban on mixed worlds for
projectivists like Blackburn to explain. Third, I shall consider and
reject a possible rejoinder from Blackburn: explanatory reductionism.
A nonreductive physicalistic kind of moral realism could still fail if
it can be shown that all the explanatory power that the supervening
properties possess are reducible to the explanatory power that the
subvening properties provide. This is so especially when explanation
is understood as closely related to causation. It will be shown that
the causal power of supervening properties are irreducible to their
subvening properties, while it is acknowledged that a further work
has to be done in establishing the falsity of the explanatory
reductionism of moral facts to nonmoral facts.

This is a realist response to Blackburn’s comparative explanatory
inferiority of moral fact version of the EI thesis, and to its possible
explanatory reductionism version. In this paper, the truth of
physicalism is assumed, just as the critics of moral explanations
have done so.

I. Moral Supervenience

Blackburn’s version of the EI thesis is guided by a theoretical
concern, while other versions from ethicists like Mackie and
Harman focused on the explanation of everyday states of affairs.
According to Blackburn, the task of quasi-realism is to show “how
far [it can] go to capture the elements in our thinking about
morality which at first sight seem explicable only on a realist
metaphysics” while supposing the correctness of “a projectivist picture
of morality” (1981, 174). The projectivist picture of morality is an
antirealist picture of morality, according to which morality is something that we ourselves project onto the world. But, why should one accept projectivism about our morality?

In his influential work, *Spreading the Word*, Blackburn gives three reasons why projectivism must be true. One of his three reasons is as follows. As he puts it, “we need to explain the ban on mixed worlds, and the argument goes that anti-realism does this better than realism” (1984, 184). This is an unmistakable instance of the EI thesis. Blackburn’s *explanandum* here is a modal fact that there cannot be two possible worlds that share all the same nonmoral facts and yet somehow fail to share all the same moral facts. This section presents and discusses the moral supervenience relation in an attempt to better understand the so-called the ‘ban on mixed worlds.’

Every property or relation that is instantiated is, assuming physicalism, either itself a physical property or relation, or it is determined by the physical properties or relations. Moral properties

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3) Later he says of the figure he christened as the ‘quasi–realist’ that this is “a person who, starting from a recognizably anti–realist position, finds himself progressively able to mimic the intellectual practices supposedly definitive of realism” (1993a, 15).

4) In addition to the EI thesis, Blackburn cites that (1) “[projectivism] asks no more than this: a natural world, and patterns of reaction to it” (1984, 182) and that (2) “[i]t is an unnecessary loop to use those natural features to determine a belief in further moral features, and then to hop for a particular attitude to the revealed moral features” (1984, 187). Blackburn acknowledges that consideration (2) is “not quite as compelling as it looks” (1984, 188). He thinks this because on his Humean picture of human action, it becomes almost impossible to distinguish morality from “etiquette, or reputations, or selfish advantage” (1984, 189).

5) An aficionado of Cartesian substance dualism may qualify as explanationist moral realist—a moral realist position, according to which there are moral facts because they figure essentially in the best explanations of
are obviously not physical properties, and it follows that if they are instantiated, then they must be determined by physical properties. Physicalism would otherwise be false. One way of allowing both physicalism and nonphysical properties like mental properties or moral properties has typically been employing a determination or a dependency relation of nonreductive kind. It will be argued that the global supervenience relation fits the nonreductivist bill the best for the remainder of the section.

1. Varieties of Supervenience Relation

Jaegwon Kim has given some popular formulations of the supervenience relationship.\(^6\) A couple of distinctions allow for four distinguishable supervenience relations: weak vs. strong supervenience, and local vs. global supervenience.\(^7\) Perhaps the neatest way of expressing the distinction between WS and SS is provided by the contrast between the intra-world necessities and the inter-world necessities.

WS is limited to what happens within a possible world. Roughly, then, it allows for the following.

events and the states of affairs—as long as she maintains that moral facts explain some physical phenomena. It is difficult, nonetheless, for the dualist to precisely say what moral facts are like. Having to specify how the two different kinds of stuff are related is difficult enough.

6) See Kim (1984). The following formulations of are modified to fit our discussion. The modality involved is made explicit as the physical possibility, and the relationship is made explicit as between the moral and the physical.

For any $x$ and $y$ within a physically possible world, if $x$ and $y$ are physical property indiscernible within the world, then they are also moral property indiscernible within it.

Consider two individuals within a world, John Doe and Jane Shmee. If they acted in such a manner that their actions were physically indistinguishable, then both John and Jane deserve the same moral estimation. *WS* does not dictate what happens to them in other possible worlds. All that *WS* enforces is the necessity within a world. John’s and Jane’s actions may be viewed morally permitted in a world, while their actions are viewed as not permitted in others as long as their actions are judged consistently within the worlds. If *SS* is correct, then John and Jane deserve the same moral estimation if they acted physically indiscernibly. If their actions are physically indistinguishable, then they deserve exactly the same estimation whichever possible worlds within which their actions are instantiated. *SS* is captured as follows.

*(SS)* For any $x$ and $y$ within any physically possible world, if $x$ and $y$ are physical property indiscernible, then they are also moral property indiscernible.

For instance, vegetarianism may be ethically obligatory in a world. Peter Singer thinks it the case in our world. Nonetheless, even Singer would agree that in some other worlds it must not be considered obligatory even if it is physically indistinguishable from vegetarianism in our world. It might be the case that meats are the only source of protein within the other worlds. *WS* and *SS* are local versions of supervenience. The best way of expressing the

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8) See e.g., Singer 1993.
distinction between \textit{WS} and \textit{SS} on the one hand and \textit{GS} on the other is to contrast the partial-world and the whole-world indiscernibles. One of the ways to formulate \textit{GS} is as follows.

**\textbf{(GS)}** For any physically possible world $W_i$, if there are physical facts $P$ in $W_1$, then $W_2$ with $P$ shares moral facts $M$ of $W_1$.\(^9\)

Some philosophers have opted for \textit{GS} over \textit{SS} because \textit{GS} “promises as a dependency relation free of commitment to property-to-property connections that smacks of discredited reductionism of various sorts.”\(^{10}\) These are three popular varieties of supervenience, viz. a determination or dependency relation.

2. Interrelationships among \textit{WS}, \textit{SS}, and \textit{GS}

It seems quite obvious that \textit{SS} entails \textit{WS}. If John and Jane are physically indiscernible in one world, and thereby also morally indiscernible on the rest of the possible worlds, then obviously John and Jane will be morally indiscernible within the first possible world. In other words, if both John and Jane are either praiseworthy or blameworthy across all the possible worlds because they share exactly the same physical properties, then they will both be either praiseworthy or blameworthy within the possible world that they are.

Does \textit{GS} entail \textit{WS}? This can be true if \textit{GS} is equivalent to \textit{SS}, but they are not equivalent. That is, there could be cases of two physically possible worlds that satisfy \textit{GS} and yet fail to satisfy \textit{SS},

\(^9\) An alternative formulation of \textit{GS} would be this: moral facts \textit{globally supervene} on physical facts if and only if for any worlds $W_1$ and $W_2$, if $W_1$ and $W_2$ share exactly the same physical facts, then they share exactly the same moral facts.

\(^{10}\) J. Kim 1984, 167
or *vice versa*.\(^{11}\)

Consider two possible worlds, \(W_1\) and \(W_2\). In \(W_1\), John is praiseworthy and he gives to UNICEF; and, within the same world Jane is also praiseworthy, although she does not give to UNICEF.\(^{12}\) In \(W_2\), John is praiseworthy but he does not give to the UNICEF; and, within the same world Jane is not praiseworthy and she does not give to UNICEF. \(W_1\) and \(W_2\) satisfy \(GS\). John in \(W_1\) is the only one who gives to UNICEF, so the physical fact in \(W_1\) is not shared with \(W_2\). Nonetheless, \(SS\) is not satisfied above. Jane in \(W_1\) is praiseworthy, but not Jane in \(W_2\), but neither Jane in \(W_1\) and Jane in \(W_2\) give to UNICEF. That Jane in \(W_1\) and Jane in \(W_2\) differ as to their praiseworthiness while sharing the giving to UNICEF is a breach of \(SS\). As a result, \(GS\) does not entail \(SS\), and hence they are not equivalent to each other.\(^{13}\)

Now it is an interesting and controversial question if any formulation of supervenience relation may put to do a philosophical work. It is controversial whether supervenience is a substantial metaphysical doctrine. At any rate, when G. E. Moore comments on C. D. Broad’s work, it seems clear that one of \(WS\), \(SS\), and \(GS\) is intended.

\(^{11}\) In fact, these are one and the same physically possible world.

\(^{12}\) See Petrie (1987) and J. Kim’s concession to it in (1993a). See also Paull and Sider (1992) and McLaughlin (1995) for different proofs of \(GS\) not entailing \(SS\).

\(^{13}\) Another result of interest is that some application of \(SS\) turns out to be false. Brian McLaughlin appeals to what he calls ‘refutation by appeal to a false implied supervenience thesis’ in showing the falsity of “[i]f an object and a person’s experience bear the same causal connection to each other (in relevant respects) as do a second object and a second person’s experience, then the first person perceives the first object *iff* the second person perceives the second object” (1984, 571).
I should never have thought of suggesting that goodness was “nonnatural,” 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 intrinsic properties, which are such that from the fact that it is good it does not follow conversely that it has those properties (1942, 588)

3. Non-Reductionism and Physicalism

Every property or relation that is instantiated is either itself a physical property or relation, or it is determined by the physical properties or relations. It is assumed, recall, that physicalism is true in this paper. No varieties of supervenience, viz. WS, SS, and GS above, are meant to be applicable to the physically impossible worlds. Nonetheless, all three are consistent with the possibility that moral properties are realized by various physical properties when they are instantiated. Being morally praiseworthy can be

14) The beings with no physical constitution are not impossible. It is possible, for instance, that God exists. God exists in one of the physically impossible worlds. This is of course no consolation for those who consider God a necessary being. On the other hand, if God does not interact with the physical things, then the possibility of His existence does not favor substance dualism over physicalism. Such beings are independent beings. Cf. Horgan 1982, 34–35: “[w]e who claim that the microphysical facts determine all the facts want to deny that such beings [as God] exist in our actual world. However, we need not deny that there are some possible worlds in which they do exist and in which the microphysical laws of our worlds are never violated. In such worlds, the spirits would not interfere with the ordinary operations of physical laws on physical substances; they would simply coexist with the physical.”

15) The ‘multiple realizability of the moral,’ as we might call it, does not
realized, for instance, by giving to UNICEF, by volunteering to a soup kitchen, and so on, and so forth.

No varieties of supervenience just mentioned dictate that the moral properties that are instantiated determine the physical properties that are instantiated.\(^\text{16}\) A philosophical lore has it that if a property can be multiply realizable, then it cannot be identical with the property, or a set of properties that realize it. WS, SS, and GS are all compatible with the multiple realizability of moral properties, and they seem to afford some sort of non-reductionism of the moral to the physical. But are they all consistent with physicalism as we understand it?

WS does not seem consistent with physicalism. WS leaves it open as possible that two pairs of individuals, one pair residing in \(W_1\) the other in \(W_2\), instantiate different moral properties while they are all physically indiscernible. WS is not violated as long as the two pairs are morally indiscernible in pairs within the world. Physicalism on the other hand must not allow such possibility. As a result, WS falls short of physicalism. WS is too weak for physicalism.

Is SS consistent with physicalism? If SS holds, then there will be no two pairs of individuals, one pair residing in \(W_1\) and the other in \(W_2\), that instantiate different moral properties while they are all physically indiscernible. The dependency relation of WS holds necessarily, viz. it holds in every physically possible world. In other words, every instantiated moral property is determined by physical properties. This is what we would expect if physicalism is true.

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This implies ethical relativism. Ethical relativism is the view according to which, for instance, two physically indiscernible individuals within a physically possible world may still be discernible morally. In other words, the ethical relativist rejects WS.

16) See, for instance, Davidson (1967). See also Elliott Sober’s recent deployment in Sober (1999a).
It might be thought that under SS it is possible to have an instantiated “purely” moral property. Consider two physically possible worlds, \( W_1 \) and \( W_2 \). Within \( W_1 \), there is a being with no physical constitution, but within \( W_2 \) there is no such being. Suppose that John and Jane are physical property indiscernible and in both worlds moral property indiscernible just as SS requires. In these two worlds, SS may hold even if the individual without physical constitution instantiates a moral property, viz. a “purely” moral property. SS is then consistent with some sort of dualism, according to which there are two distinct kinds of instantiated properties. The two kinds would be the physical and physically determined properties, and the purely moral properties. This would be unacceptable for physicalism.\(^{17}\) It is nonetheless a mistake to think such an existence is possible in any physically possible world. No laws allow the individual to interact with other individuals with the physical constitutions. Intuitively, it seems at least possible that there are individuals with “pure” psychological properties. On the other hand, we do not even know how to begin making sense of the existence with purely moral properties. In short, no “pure” moral beings seem possible, while the “pure” spirits utterly possible.

Does GS provide the right kind of determination and dependency relation between the moral and the physical for physicalism? If GS holds, then just as SS prohibits, then there will be no two pairs of

\(^{17}\) SS could be revised to meet this ‘too weak for physicalism’ objection. For instance, SS’ could say: for any \( x \) and \( y \) within any physically possible world, if \( x \) instantiates a moral property, then \( x \) instantiates a physical property (or, a set of physical properties) such that if \( y \) instantiates the physical property (or, the set of physical properties), then \( y \) instantiates the moral property. Of course, this move renders the non-physical individuals as impossible beings in physically possible worlds.
individuals, one pair residing in $W_1$ and the other in $W_2$, instantiating different moral properties while they are all physically indiscernible. But even if $GS$ holds, unlike what $SS$ implies, no information about the pairings of individuals would be available.$^{18}$

Between $SS$ and $GS$, which supervenience should we choose for the nonreductionism? We saw earlier the following. $SS$ and $GS$ are not equivalent to each other; $GS$ and $WS$ cannot be equivalent to each other because $SS$ entails $WS$, while $GS$ does not; and, obviously $WS$ and $SS$ are not equivalent to each other. Now, does $SS$ imply $GS$? The determination and dependency relation of $SS$ holds necessarily, i.e., it holds in every physically possible world. In those worlds where no physical properties are instantiated, $SS$ holds and also $GS$. If physical properties are instantiated, then $SS$ dictates that any pair of two individuals is morally fixed by the physical properties that they instantiate. Because the determination relation holds blindly, it holds between any two physically possible worlds. That is, $GS$ holds in those worlds where physical properties are instantiated if $SS$ holds. So $SS$ does imply $GS$. Then it would seem that $GS$ will serve physicalism better than $SS$ would.$^{19}$

If $GS$ holds, then there is the “ban on mixed worlds.” There can be no two physically possible worlds that are physical fact indiscernible but moral fact discernible. To wit, Blackburn has argued for projectivism—which entitles the quasi-realist as the contemporary heir of antirealism—by citing the fact that $GS$ can be better explained if projectivism were to be true, while moral realism

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18) Again, the “purely” moral properties objection might be raised against $GS$, but the response should be the same as above.
19) This paper assumes that this is the case. It should be noted, nonetheless, that similar responses are available for the realist to the projectivist antirealist explanation of the supposed supervenience between the moral and the physical.
renders $GS$ mysterious.

II. Projectivism Reduces $GS$ to Psychophysical Supervenience

One way for the moral realist, especially for the explanatory moral realist, of gaining the physicalistic respectability for folk moral explanation without abandoning the existence of moral facts is to insist on the moral global supervenience ($GS$) between the physical and the moral as was just shown above. Blackburn’s EI thesis provides an antirealist argument from an explanatory inadequacy at this precise juncture. He maintains that moral realism renders $GS$ mysterious, while it could be better explained if projectivism were true. This section provides a criticism to Blackburn’s EI thesis on the ban, provided the moral supervenience understood as $GS$.

Projectivism is an antirealist doctrine, according to which morality is not one of the features that we discover within the world. Morality is rather those features that we project onto the world ourselves according to the projectivist. In this regard, $GS$ of the moral on the physical is exactly what we should expect if projectivism were to be true; and, those “objectified” feelings of ours, viz. the as-if-they-were-moral-facts attitude, allows the projectivist qua quasirealist mimic almost all of the realist sound bites. The quasirealist pushes the limit of the projectivist picture of morality as far as it can be pushed without it becoming a realist theory. Of course, the success of quasirealist project depends largely on how these as-if-they-were-moral-facts attitudes are to be taken.

So are these as-if attitudes a special kind of features of the
world? Or, are they merely a special kind of attitudes that we have about the features of the world? It seems that the projectivist *qua* quasi-realist finds herself caught between the rock and the hard place in answering the question. Admitting that the as-if attitudes are the features of the world, on the one hand, goes against her antirealist origin. On the other hand, rejecting that the as-if attitudes are the features of the world renders GS as the dependency relation between the physical and the attitudinal. It follows that the projectivist picture of the relation between the moral and the physical reduces itself to that of psychophysical relation, considering that attitudes are none other than an aspect of the psychological.

If GS is the relation that holds between the physical properties and the attitudinal properties just as the projectivist *qua* antirealist would be forced to endorse, then the “ban on mixed worlds” reduces to one of psychological facts about us. GS understood this way is equivalent to the following.

\[(\text{GS'})\] For any physically possible world \(W_i\), if there are physical facts \(P\) in \(W_1\), then there is an insurmountable pressure on us that \(W_2\) with \(P\) shares moral facts \(M\) of \(W_1\).

\[(\text{Analogously, } (\text{SS}')\): for any \(x\) and \(y\) within any physically possible world, if \(x\) and \(y\) are physical property indiscernible, then there is an insurmountable pressure on us that they are moral property indiscernible.]\)

20) The same can be said of SS.

21) The scope of this paper demands that GS and GS’ have a limited application to moral realm, while they could certainly have a much wider application. The point is this. The antirealist *qua* quasi-realist cannot make good sense of GS unless he/she somehow reduces GS to GS’. This is so because the antirealist rejects that there are (objective) moral facts.
In other words, if the projectivist *qua* quasi-realist were to remain faithful to her antirealist origin, she could not permit GS to say anything metaphysically robust. So the ban on mixed worlds is to be understood as the psychological pressure that we put on ourselves. What would explain the psychological pressure? Psychological causes will explain it if any cause will, and the as-if attitude is just one such cause. To this extent, then, Blackburn is right that the ban on mixed worlds can be explained with the as-if attitude. 22)

Nevertheless, GS' cannot be the whole story of moral supervenience. That there are varieties of supervenience relations suggests that there is some fundamental primitive relation of determination that holds between the two sets of properties. It seems reasonable to suppose that there is some fundamental, primitive relation of determination (and, dependency) that holds between the two sets of properties. Those different kinds of moral supervenience, of which some formulations were discussed in the previous section, allow us to just trace out the modal-covariation implications of the determination (and, dependency) relation. 23) Such determination is a metaphysical relation, and as such requires no further explanation. Seeking an explanation for “why this determination and dependency relation rather than that?” is the same thing as expecting an explanation for “why these laws of physics

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22) One might object that Blackburn’s explanation of the ban turns also on what the competent moral speakers would say about it. Nevertheless, the fact remains that neither psychological pressure nor the linguistic competency serve the projectivist’s need. They are not robust enough to be a metaphysical relation. And as a result it still is true that for the projectivist no such ban is to be explained.

23) I am not claiming, nor do I pretend to have proved that there exists the determination relation. I do claim nonetheless that it is *reasonable* to expect that there could be such basic and fundamental relation more basic and fundamental than the supervenience relations.
rather than that?” Both the determination relation and the laws of physics are just fundamental. Once the determination and dependency relation is sufficiently known—to an extent we may pose an intelligent contrastive questions—the relation could ground and explain the modal-covariation relation of supervenience.

In short, GS understood as metaphysically robust relation is explainable only by more fundamental determination relation (or, GS is self-explanatory if it is the most fundamental determination relation). Analogously, Elliott Sober puts it, “[p]hysicalism, in its zeal to assert the hegemony of physics, should not assert that every causal connection has a physical explanation; some may have no explanation at all” (1999b). This is then the realist response to Blackburn’s EI thesis that is based on the explanatory inadequacy of the ban of mixed world. The projectivist either begs the question against the moral realist, or his claim that the realist lacks any way of explaining the ban on mixed worlds is false.24)

The projectivist begs the question against the realist because there just is nothing to explain but the psychological pressure that we place on ourselves according to his picture of morality. The projectivist’s claim of the total lack of explanatory adequacy is false because the realist may appeal to a relation that is more basic than those different kinds of supervenience relation, or she may even appeal to the possibility of there being no explanation at all of the supervenience relations.

24) It could be suggested that the supervenience relation should not be understood as the relationship that holds between the two sets of properties. This is to grant too much for the antirealist, and as such it has to be motivated independently of the realism/antirealism debate.
III. A Possible Rejoinder: Explanatory Reductionism

The realist response to Blackburn’s EI thesis is that the antirealist may not help himself with the ban on mixed worlds without begging the question. It could nonetheless be suggested that supervening properties lack any sort of genuine explanatory power. If moral facts explain anything, it is essentially because of the physical facts and their explanatory power that subvene them. Accordingly, the suggestion could run, the realist response would still fail on this lack of explanatory power of moral properties, given that the realist response largely depends on GS version of moral supervenience.

Do supervening properties cause their base properties to be instantiated? More specifically, do moral properties exert causal influences on their base properties? If there were to be contrastive moral explanations of nonmoral events, then the answer has to be a ‘yes.’ There are nonetheless arguments against it. J. Kim among others has argued that supervenience causation is a myth. A recent study on supervenience and the probabilistic causation shows that they are mistaken. The following discussion summarizes the result in terms of moral supervenience.

25) In GS, \( P \) is the base property (or, the set of base properties) and \( M \) is the supervening property.
26) See J. Kim (1989b) and (1993b). For instance, he says that “it must be the case that physical facts, including causal facts about physical events and states, must determine all the facts about mental causation” (1993b, 360).
1. Physicalism and Supervenience in Probabilistic Terms

If supervenience holds between the moral property $M$ and the physical property $P$ (or set of properties $P_i$), then the following probability must hold:\(^{28)}

\[(S) \quad \Pr(M \mid P) = 1\]

If physicalism is true, then the physical phenomena are causally closed. For the supervenience thesis, $S$ entails it. What physically happens is determined by what physically happened earlier. This thesis of the causal closure of physics states that the moral property $M$ makes no difference as to the chances of the individual instantiating a behavior $B$ at a later time. The physical property $P$ at $t$ causally determines $B$ at $t + dt$.

\[(CCP) \quad \Pr(B \mid P) = \Pr(B \mid P \& M)\]

Now it can be shown that $S$ entails CCP.\(^{29)}

1. Suppose $S$, then

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28) I follow Sober (1999b) in these probabilistic formulations of the theses related to physicalism.

29) The following is the rearranged proof that Sober gives:

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\begin{align*}
\Pr(x \mid y) &= \Pr(x \& y) / \Pr(y) \\
\Pr(x \& y) &= \Pr(x \mid y) \Pr(y) \\
\Pr(B \mid P) &= \Pr(B \& P) / \Pr(P) \\
\Pr(B \mid P) &= \frac{[\Pr(B \& P \& M) + \Pr(B \& P \& \neg M)]}{\Pr(P)} \\
\Pr(B \mid P) &= \frac{[\Pr(B \mid P \& M)\Pr(P \& M) + \Pr(B \& \neg M \mid P)\Pr(P)]}{\Pr(P)} \\
\Pr(B \mid P) &= \frac{\Pr(B \mid P \& M)\Pr(P \& M)}{\Pr(P)} + \Pr(B \& \neg M \mid P) \\
\Pr(B \mid P) &= \frac{\Pr(B \mid P \& M)\Pr(M \mid P)\Pr(P)}{\Pr(P)} + \Pr(B \& \neg M \mid P) \\
\Pr(B \mid P) &= \Pr(B \mid P \& M)\Pr(M \mid P) + \Pr(B \& \neg M \mid P)
\end{align*}
\]
2. \( \Pr(B \mid P) = \Pr(B \mid P & M) + \Pr(B \mid \sim M \mid P) \) (for \( \Pr(M \mid P) = 1 \))

3. \( \Pr(B \mid P) = \Pr(B \mid P & M) \) (for \( \Pr(B \mid \sim M \mid P) = 0 \))

Therefore,

4. If \( S \), then \( CCP \) (Conditional Proof)

Supposing \( S \), the probability of a person behaving in a particular manner provided the person’s physical property equals the sum of the probabilities of the person behaving that way provided the person’s both the physical and the moral property, and of the person behaving that way provided the person’s physical property without moral property. This is so because the probability of a person having a moral property given his/her physical property is 1, according to \( S \). In fact, the probability of a person behaving in a particular manner provided the person’s physical property is the same as the probability of the person behaving in that manner provided the person’s physical property without the moral property. That is, \( \Pr(B \mid P) = \Pr(B \mid P \& \sim M) \).\(^{30}\)

\( CCP \) nonetheless does not entail \( S \).\(^{31}\) So if \( \Pr(M \mid P) = 1 \), then

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\(^{30}\) If \( CCP \) is true, then \( \Pr(B \& P) / \Pr(P) = \Pr(B \& P \& M) / \Pr(P \& M) \), for \( \Pr(X \mid Y) = \Pr(X \& Y) / \Pr(Y) \). From this, it follows that \( \Pr(B \& P) / \Pr(P) = [\Pr(B \& P) - \Pr(B \& P \& M)] / [\Pr(P) - \Pr(P \& M)] \), for if \( x / y = a / b \), then \( x / y = (x-a) / (y-b) \).

But \( [\Pr(B \& P) - \Pr(B \& P \& M)] = \Pr(B \& P \& \sim M) \), and \( [\Pr(P) - \Pr(P \& M)] = \Pr(P \& \sim M) \).

And, \( \Pr(B \& P \& \sim M) / \Pr(P \& \sim M) = \Pr(B \mid P \& \sim M) \).

So, if \( CCP \) is true then \( \Pr(B \mid P) = \Pr(B \mid P \& M) = \Pr(B \mid P \& \sim M) \).

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\(^{31}\) Here is Sober’s proof rearranged:

1. Suppose \( \sim S \), then \( 0 \leq \Pr(M \mid P) < 1 \). It allows for the following derivation:

\[
\begin{align*}
\Pr(B \mid P) & = \Pr(B \& P) / \Pr(P) \\
\Pr(B \mid P) & = [\Pr(B \& P \& M) + \Pr(B \& P \& \sim M)] / \Pr(P) \\
\Pr(B \mid P) & = [\Pr(B \mid P \& M) \Pr(P \& M) + \Pr(B \mid P \& \sim M) \Pr(P \& \sim M)] / \Pr(P)
\end{align*}
\]
Pr(B | P) = Pr(B | P & M). But even if Pr(B | P) = Pr(B | P & M), it still is possible that 0 ≤ Pr(M | P) < 1. This result is none other than that S is false. This shows that given CCP, S can be shown to be false. This establishes, then, that CCP does not entail S.

2. Supervening Causes, Not Emergent Causes

If CCP holds true, then ‘Pr(B | P) ≠ Pr(B | P & M)’ is false. For if Pr(M | P) = 1, then Pr(B | P) = Pr(B | P & M). That is, S entails CCP as proved. Does CCP together with S entail that moral properties are not causally efficacious? To put it differently: suppose that the moral property M supervenes on the physical property P (or set of properties Pi). Suppose further that the set of physical properties Pi at a time determines the individual’s behavior B at a later time. Does M at t raise the chances of B at t + dt?

Some philosophers believe in causal reductionism of the moral to the physical as follows:

(CR) If M at t causes B at t + dt, then there is always M’s base

\[
\text{Pr}(B | P) = \frac{[\text{Pr}(B | P & M)\text{Pr}(M | P)\text{Pr}(P) + \text{Pr}(B | P & \sim M)\text{Pr}(\sim M | P)] / \text{Pr}(P)}
\]

2. Suppose CCP, then \( r = \text{Pr}(B | P) = \text{Pr}(B | P & M) = \text{Pr}(B | P & \sim M) \)
3. \( r = r[\text{Pr}(M | P)] + r[\text{Pr}(\sim M | P)] \)
4. \( r = r[\text{Pr}(M | P)] + \text{Pr}(\sim M | P) \)
5. \( r = r \) (for \( [\text{Pr}(M | P) + \text{Pr}(M | P)] = 1 \))

Therefore,
6. If \( \sim S \), then CCP (Conditional Proof)

Therefore,
7. It is possible that CCP & \( \sim S \) (Implication)
physical property $P$ (or set of physical properties) such that $M$ at $t$ inherits its causal power from $P$.

If $CR$ were to be true, then appeals to moral facts could not be genuine (or non-derivative). This is so because of the following. If $CR$ were to be true, then moral properties could not be causally efficacious genuinely; and, the genuine causal efficacy of moral properties is necessary for the genuine moral explanations.\(^{32}\) Is $CR$ true? No, it is not. Recall:

\[\text{(PSR')} C \text{ is a positive causal factor for } E \text{ if and only if } \Pr(E \mid C \& Xi) \geq \Pr(E \mid \text{not}-C \& Xi) \text{ for all background contexts } Xi, \text{ with strict inequality for at least one } Xi.\(^{33}\)\]

If $M$ at $t$ is a positive causal factor for $B$ at $t + dt$, then \(\Pr(B \mid M \& Xi) \geq \Pr(B \mid \text{not}-M \& Xi)\) for at least one $Xi$ (with for no $Xi$ \(\Pr(B \mid M \& Xi) < \Pr(B \mid \text{not}-M \& Xi)\)) according to $PSR'$. If $S$, then for any $i$, $\Pr(M \mid Pi) = 1$; if $CCP$, then for any $i$, $\Pr(B \mid Pi) = \Pr(B \mid Pi \& M)$. To compare the values of $\Pr(B \mid M \& Xi)$ and $\Pr(B \mid \text{not}-M \& Xi)$, one must consider no $Pi$ as part of $Xi$, for \(\Pr(B \mid M \& Xi \& Pi) \geq \Pr(B \mid \text{not}-M \& Xi \& Pi)\) holds regardless of $Xi$ unless $Xi$ and $Pi$ are contradictory, viz. $\Pr(Xi \& Pi) = 0$. $\Pr(B \mid M \& Xi \& Pi) = \Pr(B \mid Xi \& Pi)$ while $\Pr(B \mid \text{not}-M \& Xi \& Pi) = 0$. Sober puts it, “neither $[M$ nor $Pi]$ is a part of the background contexts that have to be considered when the causal efficacy of the other is under consideration”. So $CCP$ in conjunction with $P$ does not entail $CR$. That is, moral properties are causally

\(^{32}\) There are interesting interrelations among three kinds of reductionism: property reductionism ($PR$), causal reductionism ($CR$), and causal explanatory power reductionism ($CER$). See Sungsu Kim (2000, 253).

\(^{33}\) Sober 1999
If moral properties are causally efficacious, then those moral properties could be brought to explain some events, states of affairs, or things. Not only can moral properties be appealed to, but as it turns out their explanatory power that is based on the causal nexus of things is possibly not derived from (and hence possibly irreducible to) the physical properties upon which they globally supervene.

IV. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, the global supervenience of the moral on the physical is shown to be consistent with physicalism. It is shown with an understanding of GS as moral supervenience that Blackburn’s EI thesis on the ban of mixed worlds either begs the question against the realist who espouses GS moral supervenience, or it is false. Causal reductionism of the moral to the physical on supervenience relation fails to hold on a probabilistic understanding of supervenience, viz. \( \text{pr}(M \mid P) = 1 \). This paves some way toward in showing that explanatory reductionism of the moral to the physical is false as well, while to establish the falsity of CR is admittedly no proof that explanatory reductionism is false. For to argue that on the ground that the genuine causal efficacy of moral properties is necessary for the genuine moral explanations is to argue fallaciously. It commits the fallacy of affirming the consequent. That CR is false, nevertheless, establishes that CER—i.e., the causal explanatory power reductionism—is false, for CR is necessary for CER.

34) “One cannot argue that,” Sober explains, “a property \( M \) plays no causal role in producing \( B \) by showing that \( P \) screens of \( M \) from \( B \), if in fact \( P \) is a supervenience base for \( M \)” (1999).
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국문요약

혼성도덕세계 금지에 관한 블랙번의 이론 고찰

김 신

이 글은 혼성도덕세계 금지를 그 예로 하는 블랙번의 도덕사실 설 명부적합성에 대한 도덕실재론자의 답변이다. 첫째로 도덕수반의 개념에 대하여 살펴보고, 둘째로 이 글에서 응호하는 도덕수반의 개념을 받아들이면 블랙번과 같은 투영주의자가 "설명해야하는" 그런 양상의 하나인 혼성세계금지란 투영주의에 따르면 실재하지 않으며, 실재론자의 입장에서는 그 도덕수반이 가장 근본적이거나 또는 여기서의 도덕수반 보다 더 근본적인 관계에 의거해 설명 가능함을 보인다. 마지막으로 블랙번의 입장에서 가능한 설명환원주의를 논의, 비판한다.

주요어: 도덕실재론, 도덕투영주의, 도덕사실, 도덕수반, 블랙번