Philosophy 3334 Spring 2020
Reading questions #9
Due Tue, March 31 (by 11:59pm) uploaded to Blackboard

1) Read Justin Horn's "Evolution and the Epistemological Challenge to Moral Realism". If I were you, I would also watch my discussion with Justin at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXDnwrx9k7U&t=14s

Horn assumes that at least some of the moral beliefs that you have are influenced by natural selection. Think of all of the moral beliefs that you have. Try to think about why you have the beliefs that you do. Could you be wrong about them? How could you figure this out? [These were just rhetorical questions. No answers needed yet].

Pick a moral belief that you are absolutely sure you are right about. If your parents, your friends, and your teachers all starting saying you were wrong, you would still just not believe them and stick to your own moral beliefs. (If you think you aren't sure about any of them, say this and try to explain why). Why are you so sure that you are right about this? How do you know?

Now pick a moral belief that you do genuinely think you are right about, but that you are much less sure about. For example, if a bunch of your friends tried to convince you otherwise, you might be able to be convinced. Why do you believe what you do here and why do you think you aren't so sure?

Finally, for these two beliefs, do you think it is evolutionarily advantageous for you to believe what you do? Or not advantageous? Is it actually evolutionarily bad for you? Explain why.

[No further answers required here]. The evolutionary debunking argument seems to be saying that if we tried to correct our moral beliefs, we could never really get around the influence of natural selection. So as a hypothesis, it might seem that the beliefs that we are most sure about should be the ones that are most closely tied to our survival and reproductive success. I hope to see if this is true. You should reflect on your own answer and see if it is true in your case and I will report to the class about our answers collectively.