

Intuitions, Experience, and Moral Concepts: A Critique of Kaspar's *Intuitionism*

Matthew Pianalto
Eastern Kentucky University

1. Introduction

In *Intuitionism*,¹ David Kaspar contends that if we reflect on what we really think about morality when faced with the need to make judgments in and about actual moral situations, we will discover—or perhaps re-discover—that we do indeed know what is right and what is wrong. That is, we know what is right and what is wrong at a general level, with respect to some basic kinds of actions, in a way that Kaspar admits is often difficult to apply to specific situations. Although Kaspar allows that we can have intuitive moral knowledge about particulars, he focuses on the idea that we have intuitive moral knowledge of general moral principles and of *prima facie* duties. We know in the abstract that promises are to be kept, that lying is to be avoided, and that harming others is wrong. This knowledge does not derive from any particular normative ethical principle such as the principle of utility or the Categorical Imperative. Rather, we know these things intuitively. They are self-evident, substantive moral facts—synthetic *a priori* truths—that we grasp in virtue of understanding what lying, promising, harming, and so forth are, which includes understanding the relations that are instantiated between agents when these kinds of actions are performed. They are “moral constants” that have withstood critical scrutiny and the test of time, and yet remain with us (pp. 13 and 23-24).

In this critical study, I will focus on Kaspar's contention that the moral truths we really know are substantive (synthetic) *a priori* truths (Section 2), his account of moral kinds and how we grasp them (Section 3), and his discussion of moral relations between agents (Section 4). In these sections, I will argue that Kaspar needs to pay more attention to the role of experience in our grasp of moral concepts and to the open-textured nature of the moral concepts that show up in many of his examples of self-evident moral propositions. I conclude (Section 5) by considering whether it is really a problem for intuitionism if the moral claims that we *really* know intuitively turn out to be “mere truisms,” and by again considering the relationship

¹ David Kaspar, *Intuitionism* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012). All references to the book in this symposium are by page numbers in parentheses.

between experience and “bedrock” intuitions, suggesting that our substantive basic moral certainties might be about particulars and paradigms rather than universals and essential kinds.

2. Synthetic *A Priori* Moral Knowledge?

A crucial feature of Kaspar’s intuitionist account of moral knowledge is that this knowledge is both (1) acquired *a priori* because the relevant known proposition is self-evident and (2) is substantive—or, as he puts it, is synthetic rather than analytic. This means that when we come to understand that lying is wrong, we understand something about the moral nature of lying that is not simply part of the *definition* of lying. For if its being wrong were part of the definition of lying, then “lying is wrong” would be analytic, and Kaspar appears to assume implicitly that analytic truths are never substantive but are only “mere truisms.”

Now, for some, this business about analytic and synthetic propositions will sound immediate alarms, but as I have just suggested, Kaspar seems to use the distinction to draw a line between trivial or tautological claims and substantive claims that tell us something about the world, which includes, for Kaspar, moral reality and what our moral duties are. The important idea for Kaspar, then, is really that we are able to have *a priori* knowledge of substantive moral propositions simply in virtue of understanding the meaning of those propositions and accepting them. At any rate, if there is no tenable analytic/synthetic distinction—contrary to Kaspar’s own contentions (pp. 69-70)—then it would turn out to be uninformative to hold that moral knowledge is synthetic. The real question is whether we should buy into the intuitionist idea that at least some moral propositions are known *a priori* and count as knowledge of some objective moral reality rather than as a grasp of mere conventions or our own feelings.

In order to answer that question, Kaspar has us consider whether the intuitions we have and accept about moral matters are at least sometimes the result of grasping the essential structure of what Kaspar calls a “moral kind” and understanding that certain normative and evaluative propositions are necessarily linked to that moral kind. If these moral propositions are necessary, then what we know intuitively is not reducible to convention or subjective feeling. We know how things really are with respect to the core of morality, and not just what the conventions of our society are or how we happen to feel about things. Indeed, according to Kaspar, the self-evident (hence intuitively knowable) rightness and wrongness of some kinds of acts would be well-positioned to explain the pervasiveness of many basic moral conventions and feelings (e.g., pp. 68-69), as well as to explain the many disagreements that arise about more complicated moral issues and situations (pp. 93-97). In the latter case of moral disagreement, Kaspar suggests that many moral disagreements arise because different people seize upon different and conflicting *prima facie* duties that are present in the contested case. The disagreement is thus over an issue about which we cannot have intuitive knowledge, since the intuitive moral principles do not give us all of the

answers to specific cases (pp. 16-18 and 93-97). There are limits to what we can know by intuition about morality, but there is also no single moral criterion or decision procedure to bridge the gap between fundamental moral knowledge and its application (pp. 4 and 148-69). Intuitionism holds that there is a plurality of moral principles. This means that moral theory—at least intuitionist theory—does not relieve us of the need in many cases simply to use our best judgment, given what we do know about morality and what we know about the details of the situation itself.

In his defense of intuitionist knowledge, Kaspar confronts the charge that the sort of moral propositions he puts forth as examples of self-evident knowledge are in fact little more than “mere truisms” that have this trivial status because of social and linguistic convention. He considers Richard Posner’s claim that “murder is wrong” is trivially true because “murder” is simply defined as wrongful killing—wrongness is part of the conventional definition and understanding of murder (p. 68). On this view we “know” *a priori* that murder is wrong because it is an analytic truth, but this is not substantive knowledge. Kaspar finds this conventionalist account of the wrongness of *murder* unsatisfying because it fails to explain *why* murder is taken to be wrong, that is, *why* we have this convention. Kaspar claims that “the reason why societies believe [murder is wrong] is because people understand that murder, by its very nature, is wrong. So the social convention is based on common moral knowledge” (p. 68). Even if “murder is wrong” seems trivial as a matter of convention, the convention gets its impetus, according to Kaspar, from a substantive moral fact about murder that we all intuitively grasp.

3. Grasping Moral Kinds

In order to motivate further this intuitionist account, Kaspar must provide us with reasons to accept that there are “moral kinds”—that is, general moral concepts that pick out types of actions that are inherently (*prima facie*) right or wrong, good or bad—about which we can have this intuitive knowledge. That is, there must be some forms of action that we refer to as murdering, lying, promising, harming others, helping someone in need, expressing gratitude, and so forth, about which we can achieve an *a priori* understanding, and in doing so, also come to understand their inherent moral status. To understand that murder is wrong and that promises are to be kept is to understand something about the essence of murder and of promising.

Kaspar argues that each moral kind involves a “transaction” between two “agents” that brings into existence one or more “moral relations” (pp. 101-9). Promising creates a relation between individuals A and B such that A has created an obligation for herself to keep the promise and B has a claim against A that she keep her promise. Lying creates a relation between A and B such that if B lies to A, B puts himself in the position of attempting to manipulate A to believe something that B thinks is false. Once we grasp the essential relations involved in a moral kind—something that Kaspar contends we understand *a priori*—we are able to understand the essential moral nature

of that moral kind. It becomes self-evident that promises should be kept, that lying is intrinsically bad (and so we have a *prima facie* duty not to lie), and so on.

The important thing to notice here is that Kaspar's position that we have intuitive knowledge of moral propositions is derived from the argument that we have an *a priori* grasp of moral kinds. Since moral kinds are (or correspond to) moral concepts, it appears that Kaspar's position is that our understanding of (the essence of) moral concepts is *a priori*. However, how in the world, one might ask, can we achieve an *a priori* understanding of moral concepts? How can we grasp what promising is through reason alone? Kaspar isn't claiming that these are native concepts, so there must be some process of learning involved in their acquisition. We must then ask: Exactly what is it about our understanding of promises and the other moral kinds that is not derived from experience, but rather through intellectual insight that transcends experience?

Kaspar insists that "[r]eflection on morality must begin in our moral experience" (p. 4), and "the order of our coming to understand each moral kind is by first encountering its instances in actual moral situations" (p. 114). From here, though, the conventionalist can point out that we all come to "know" that lying is wrong because our formative encounters with lies involve learning not only that a lie is telling someone else what you take to be false while intending that she believe it, but also that lying is wrong, that it hurts other people, that other people will stop trusting you if you tell lots of lies and get found out, that honest people are good, that we need to be able to trust each other in order to get along with each other, and so on. We come to associate lying with wrongness, and in this way we arrive at a thick concept of lying which seems to possess wrongness as part of its nature. As we grow and encounter various complex situations, we recognize that there might be exceptional situations in which lying is the lesser evil, but given all of the things that generally count against lying, we adopt a general position on lying that looks basically like the idea that we have a *prima facie* duty not to do it.

According to Kaspar, the problem with the conventionalist account is that we were never *taught* the *essential* structure of promising and yet we all intuitively grasp what it is and can tell the difference between a promise and similar speech-acts that are nevertheless not promises. Kaspar says, "I certainly was never taught the essential rules of promising. And I cannot imagine in what kind of teaching environment I could be taught them. So I possess the concept of the promise *a priori*" (p. 115). I am not sure what to make of this. It may be that Kaspar means that our understanding of moral kinds (universals) like promising is stimulated by our encounters with actual promises (and promise-breakings), but that the mature understanding that we have of the concept goes beyond experience in that what we come to grasp are the general features and conditions of promising as a kind of action. This would be similar to the idea that we come to have *a priori* knowledge about arithmetic by first learning to add and subtract with blocks: the blocks serve as a way of modeling abstract arithmetical ideas so that we can come to

understand general relations between numbers and the various arithmetical operations (cf. pp. 70-73).

However, if the analogy is on track, then it is unclear what sense we can make of Kaspar's claim that he "cannot imagine in what kind of teaching environment" he could be taught about the rules of promising. Although young children do not take ethics courses *per se*, they do learn about promising and lying from their parents, their school teachers and Sunday school teachers, and more broadly in the "school of life." As I mentioned above, in the process of learning about such things, we are presented with many different sorts of reasons why we should keep our promises and avoid lying, among other things.

Kaspar allows that various considerations can be ushered forth that may help someone to understand why promises are to be kept and why lying is wrong, but contends that none of these elucidations constitutes a *proof* of the moral proposition at issue (pp. 54-62). Kaspar devotes a great deal of attention to arguing that intuitive principles like "lying is (*prima facie*) wrong" and "promises are to be kept" cannot be proven to be true by deriving them from any supreme moral principle such as the principle of utility or the Categorical Imperative. This is because these supreme principles and the monism assumed by each of them are more contentious than the more specific principles about the *prima facie* moral status of particular kinds of acts. However, this is more of an argument against moral monism, and in favor of moral pluralism, than a direct argument for intuitionism. Moral pluralism (which I accept) does not entail intuitionism (though perhaps accepting pluralism will make intuitionism seem more plausible). For the intuitionist, the key question here should not be whether values are one or many, but rather why it is that certain fundamental moral principles or value claims are "beyond proof." The intuitionist answer must be that they are self-evident necessary truths. The conventionalist might counter that they are better regarded as bedrock conventions. As we have already seen, Kaspar will then ask, but *why* do we have these conventions? Why are they our bedrock?

Recall above that I suggested that there are various things we might say about why lying is wrong or why promises should be kept. For each of those considerations, a question might arise about what makes *it* a good reason, and at some point, it seems likely that we will run out of things to say. When reasons and justifications and elucidations have run out, the Wittgensteinian will say, "My spade is turned . . . 'This is simply what I do'."² However, we should not let the "simply" here mislead us. "Simply" is not necessarily a confession that one's bedrock judgments or values are merely contingent—certainly not that one could go around acting and thinking as if they are contingent. These convictions go deep in our "form of life." Ludwig Wittgenstein does not say that "This is simply what I do" is *all* that could be said in justification of his practice, for he has already offered his justifications,

² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (London: Blackwell, 2001), sec. 217.

to no avail. If the whole set, or web, of reasons and justifications he has available fail to produce understanding (or agreement) in another, then there just isn't much else to say. Claiming that we have arrived at an intuitive, self-evident, bedrock principle might in practice be little better than saying, "This is simply what I do," while reminding the other about our whole web of concepts, reasons, and practices. The person who fails to understand that lying is wrong is not simply failing to understand a free-floating moral universal, but is failing to understand how the practice of truthfulness is an inextricable part of a "form of life." Indeed, we will be tempted to say that it is an inextricable part of a *human* form of life insofar as we think that any intelligible human society requires some standard of truthfulness of its members.

Kaspar might reply that these considerations are beside the point. For if we think that any intelligible society requires some standard of truthfulness, then that means that we find it self-evident that, necessarily, lying is *prima facie* wrong. The value of truthfulness and the disvalue of lying are two sides of a single intuitive coin, and here we have found some of the basic currency of moral knowledge. However, what I have tried to indicate by alluding to Wittgenstein's upturned spade is that these moral concepts and propositions of which we are certain both constitute and are constituted by our "form of life": We are educated into the practice of thinking and acting with these moral concepts, but we also shape these practices and concepts by determining their scope and extension.

Kaspar must claim that the moral concepts about which we have intuitive knowledge have a clear shape that can be grasped. His allusions to such things as "the essential rules of promising" and the "very nature" of murder indicate that Kaspar accepts an essentialist view of whatever the fundamental moral kinds are. But trouble lurks here.

One sort of trouble involves borderline and contentious cases, where competent speakers of a language disagree about the extension of a concept. For example, some hold that abortion is murder and others don't. Some claim that "meat is murder" and others see the slaughter of other animals for food as permissible. Kaspar asserts that such cases involve "applied" issues about which we cannot have intuitive knowledge because there are "material facts" that cannot be settled *a priori* about whether a fetus is a person and whether an animal is an appropriate subject of moral concern (pp. 17-18). Then it seems, however, that one could object that if we can't settle whether abortion is murder except by appealing to non-intuitive considerations, then we can't grasp the essential nature of the concept of murder intuitively either, since there is no *a priori* rule that settles whether it extends to the case of abortion or killing animals for food. Kaspar would need to explain the difference between grasping the essential nature of a moral kind and understanding its boundaries and applications. I will return to this issue below.

Another sort of trouble is that while Kaspar says that his analysis of moral kinds will focus on "thick" moral concepts rather than on "thin" concepts (like right and good) (p. 106), he fails to take note of the various

controversies about the status of thick moral concepts. The idea was originally introduced by Bernard Williams to describe concepts that appear to have both descriptive and evaluative content that cannot be separated.³ “Courageous,” for example, describes a particular kind of character (able to face danger when necessary, etc.) and to indicate moral praiseworthiness. However, much ink has been spilled over whether the “thickness” of such concepts is essential or conventional. Although terms like “courageous” may conversationally imply moral praiseworthiness, some have doubted that this positive moral status is part of the essence of “courage.”⁴ In the analysis of virtues, some adopt the traditional approach found in the ancient Greek thinkers, who take the virtue terms to refer by definition to excellent (and thus praiseworthy) states of character, but in recent virtue theory, some have proceeded first to supply an evaluatively neutral account of character traits that leaves it an open question as to whether and to what extent traits such as courage are praiseworthy. However, if courage and the other virtues are essentially thick concepts, this latter approach seems confused. In whatever way we resolve these matters, the facts on the ground indicate that there are problems of vagueness and perhaps also ambiguity in our collective understanding of the virtues.⁵ The specific trouble for Kaspar is that if the moral kinds *can* be vindicated as thick concepts, then it may be tempting to see the moral status of those kinds as analytic or “true by definition,” just as “courage is a virtue” might seem to be true by definition for the ancients because, for them, courage picks out not just any facing of danger, but facing danger in the right way and for the right reasons. Other ways of facing danger don’t count as—and should not be called—courage.⁶

To both of these related troubles, Kaspar could respond that we should not be distracted by the difficult cases, for we all still understand *paradigm* cases of promising, lying, and courageous action, and it is our intuitions about prototypical instances of the kind that are understood *a priori*. We can apply these intuitions without difficulty, in thought, to an indefinite number of instances that involve paradigm cases of promising, lying, and so forth, while at the same time acknowledging the possibility of cases that test the limits of these concepts and produce disagreements.⁷ The difficult cases

³ Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 143ff.

⁴ See, e.g., Pekka Väyrynen, “Thick Concepts: Where’s Evaluation?” in Russ Shafer-Landau, ed., *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, vol. 7 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 235-70.

⁵ See, e.g., Gary Watson, “Virtues in Excess,” *Philosophical Studies* 46 (1984), pp. 57-74.

⁶ See, e.g., Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III, chaps. 6-9.

⁷ See Elizabeth Tropman’s account of how prototype theory might be used to provide

won't unsettle our core convictions about murder, promising, lying, and the like.⁸ However, it remains unclear whether we should chalk that up to substantive moral insight or to implicit and deep commitment to a form of life in which these moral truths are true by definition and the point and application of these "truisms" are learned through practice and visceral experience (e.g., of suffering a lie, being helped by others, etc.).

4. Relations and Agents

I suggested above that Kaspar needs to explain the difference between grasping the essential nature of a moral kind and understanding its boundaries and applications, but I also worry that there *isn't* the kind of difference that Kaspar needs. We can see this by examining one key concept in his account of moral relations and transactions.

Kaspar tells us that every moral kind, and thereby every moral duty, involves a transaction between two agents (p. 102). An immediate stumbling block is that this would imply that there are no duties to oneself, unless perhaps we think of duties to self as a transaction between one's present and future self. However, even if there is some solution to that puzzle, there are more significant questions about what Kaspar means by "agent." Sometimes he uses the term "moral agent" and sometimes the term "person," but it is well known that there are deep problems with the view that we only have duties to other moral agents, since children and individuals with significant cognitive impairments are not yet, and may never become, moral agents.⁹ Others may *lose* their moral agency with the onset of degenerative cognitive illnesses. Such individuals remain "moral patients"—who can be harmed or benefitted by us—even though they are not moral agents. Charitably, since Kaspar does not explicitly insist that moral transactions exist only between moral agents, we might take him to include moral patients within the scope of the moral. Indeed, such individuals retain many marks of intentional agency even if their grasp of moral concepts is lacking. This charitable inclusion, however, leaves us with a broad concept—"agent"—that plays an essential role in our

an empirically plausible psychological backstory to the intuitionist idea that there are, as she puts it, "independently credible moral beliefs," in Elizabeth Tropman, "Renewing Moral Intuitionism," *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 6 (2009), pp. 440-63. Prototype theory provides the intuitionist with a way of dispensing with talk of conceptual essences that can be characterized in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions.

⁸ See Judith Lichtenberg, "Moral Certainty," *Philosophy* 69, no. 268 (1994), pp. 181-204.

⁹ If it turned out that Kaspar really did mean to say that moral transactions are restricted to transactions between moral agents, then it would seem that his attempt to provide something of a general metaphysical and metaethical analysis of moral relations will have become "tainted" by substantive moral presuppositions that conflict with the moral intuitions and commitments of many people.

understanding of moral kinds, on Kaspar's view. Since many non-humans are agents in the relevant sense, it becomes clear, to me at least, that even if we cannot know intuitively that animals have a right to life (the contrary of a proposition that Kaspar says we cannot know intuitively [pp.16-18]), we can understand that we have some general *prima facie* duties to (some) animals that flow from the principle that "Harming others is wrong." This is controversial, though. Immanuel Kant and others say that we only have duties *regarding* animals, not *to* them directly. They aren't the right sort of other. Anyone who isn't a Cartesian will also allow that there is *some* sense in which we can harm sentient animals, and so "harming others is wrong" seems to apply.

Now consider this: A child takes delight in slowly dismembering a live butterfly. Is this wrong? My immediate response is that it is because I think we should respect life—which is to say that I think, in intuitionist terminology, that we have a *prima facie* duty to respect life. I have my doubts about whether a butterfly is an agent in the relevant sense, but perhaps it is. If so, then the considerations above would apply. Suppose, though, that the butterfly isn't such an agent. My own sense is that this wouldn't matter. To destroy a butterfly for mere amusement is still awful. A Kantian might say that the awfulness can be understood as a violation of a duty to self not to render oneself morally insensitive, and one who is hard in his dealings with animals (sentient or not) is more likely to be hard in his dealings with humans. This may be true, but I would still insist that the primary wrong has to do with whatever harm is done to the life that is destroyed, the life that would otherwise flourish, and which presented no threat to the child who dismembered it, and whose death did not serve some vital need. Now we could come to accept the view that all living beings are agents, since any living being can be harmed in some sense (albeit, not in a manner that thinkers like Peter Singer would accept, since he claims that harm always involves the frustration of a subjective preference). Now we are left wondering not only who counts as an "agent" and what relevant sense of agency is involved in moral transactions, but also about what "harm" is. It then becomes unclear exactly how much we know in knowing, in the abstract, that "harming others is wrong," given the contestable boundaries of these concepts. Notice, too, that our views about what counts as a harm may inform our views about who counts in the relevant sense as an other, but likewise that our views about who is to be counted as an other might inform our sense of what can be understood as a harm. Because of all of this, I am left unsure what could count as a substantive *a priori* understanding of the *essential structure* of either moral concept.¹⁰

¹⁰ One way to make sense of this lack of complete fixity would be to adopt the position that moral concepts are "family resemblance" concepts (à la Wittgenstein); another would be to hold that moral concepts are "essentially contested concepts" that have an inherently open character (see W. B. Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56 [1955-1956], pp. 167-98).

5. Intuitions, Truisms, and Experience

I will end by first asking what might come as a surprising question: *So what* if the basic moral principles are “truisms”? Would that render them entirely unimportant or uninteresting? Wittgenstein claimed, “The purpose of philosophy consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose.”¹¹ A well-placed truism may often serve that function, for example, to get someone to put aside his or her theoretical skepticism or sophomoric relativism so as to take a practically serious perspective on some live issue. Wittgenstein then added, provocatively, “If one tried to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them.”¹² Many, perhaps most, of the *prima facie* principles suggested by intuitionists seem to be such that, once we understand that they are being presented as *prima facie* principles rather than as absolutes, any person with a mature moral sensibility would accept them (cf. Kaspar, pp. 171-74). Rejecting such principles and failing to respond in certain ways to particular kinds of cases would raise questions about one’s competence as a moral agent.¹³ Whether these principles are “truisms” or not is perhaps irrelevant, if they are the basic stuff of any subsequent moral thought. The basic stuff of moral thought must be the stuff which we take to be *obvious*, and any general claim that is obvious can be labeled a “truism.”

This brings us back fairly close to the position that Kaspar endorses (a view clearly articulated by Judith Lichtenberg):

[O]ur bedrock intuitions are more than simply fixed points of which moral reasoning must not run afoul. They are in many cases the stuff out of which we reason; without them we could not find our way. Our responses to examples fix our sense of right and wrong, good and evil; in reflecting on them we discover the principles and refine the skills that guide our judgment in other cases. (p. 202)

I doubt that there is any way around what Lichtenberg says here. However, her account of our moral certainty about bedrock intuitions differs from Kaspar’s in an important way. She suggests that although moral bedrock *looks* like knowledge because these convictions can be stated as propositions, there is a sense in which our certainty about them is so deep—and so bound up with what it means to live a life with moral concepts at all—that to say “I know” them is “pointless or redundant or understated” (p. 186). She claims that these

¹¹ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, sec. 127.

¹² *Ibid.*, sec. 128.

¹³ See Lichtenberg, “Moral Certainty,” esp. pp. 186-87.

convictions are “felt as much as believed.” That is, our deepest moral convictions are not best understood simply as rational intuitions apprehended through reflection, because they also have a strong visceral element and often emerge in immediate (and non-inferential) response to a situation rather than as a result of reflection.¹⁴ Her point is not a mere endorsement of non-cognitivism or sentimentalism, but rather, an account of our actual experience in confronting paradigm cases.¹⁵ Such cases, and our responses to them, don’t seem to *require* that our moral concepts have essential structures that we grasp *a priori* as opposed to being open-textured concepts with contestable boundaries that we acquire and then refine through experience—not only through reason, but also by means of attentive and empathic imagination and feeling.

Given this, I am left with the thought that our moral experiences play a different role in moral thought—in getting us beyond abstract moral truisms—than Kaspar thinks they do. In one way, the role is more fundamental: Some of our moral bedrock concerns particular judgments and reactions to particular cases, unmediated by inference and moral abstraction. In another way, the role is more constrained: Our actual moral experiences do not put us into contact with the essences of moral kinds, but rather and more simply with paradigms and prototypes of open-textured concepts with contestable boundaries.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 186. This is in tension with Kaspar’s position that our knowledge of particular moral facts is the result of an *inference* from our more fundamental knowledge about moral kinds and general moral propositions (e.g., p. 139).

¹⁵ Lichtenberg begins her article with the following concrete cases, taken from the news: “A man has sexual intercourse with his three-year-old niece. Teenagers standing beside a highway throw large rocks through the windshields of passing cars. A woman intentionally drives her car into a child on a bicycle. Cabdrivers cut off ambulances rushing to hospitals”; see Lichtenberg, “Moral Certainty,” p. 181.

