

File 6

Where do right and wrong come from?

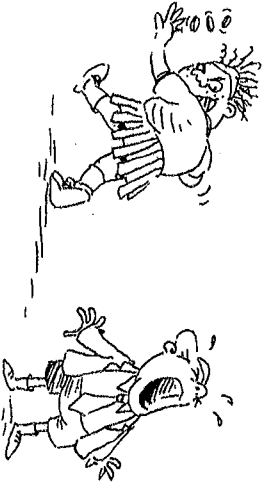
Horrible Harriet

Meet Harriet.

Harriet is a schoolgirl. But she's not a very nice schoolgirl. She hits other schoolchildren and steals their lunch money.



She tears up library books and breaks the other children's bikes. In fact, Harriet makes the other pupils' lives quite miserable.

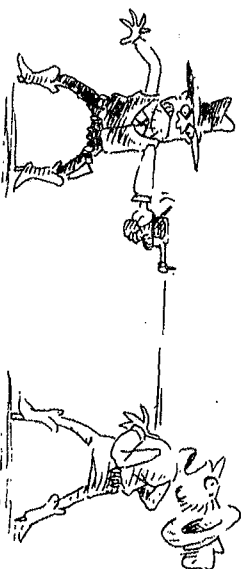


Murderous Murphy

Of course, we all do things that are wrong. Often we feel guilty about the bad things we have done. We feel that we should try to be better people than we are. Certainly there are many things that I have done that I feel pretty guilty about and that I wish I hadn't done. And I am sure the same is true of you, too. No one is perfect.

WHERE DO RIGHT AND WRONG COME FROM?

While many of the things that Harriet has done are wrong, there are things that are worse. Take Murphy, for example. Murphy is a cowboy. He is also a murderer. Murphy shoots and kills defenceless travellers so he can steal their money. Here's Murphy killing some poor unarmed cowboy who was on his way back home to his family.

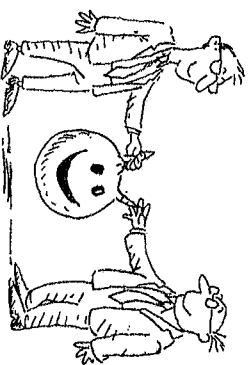


Killing another person is of course considered to be one of the very worst things that a person can do.

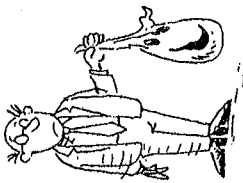
Morality

By saying that some of the things that Harriet and Murphy have done are wrong I am talking about the morality of what they did. Harriet and Murphy ought not to have done what they did.

Of course, morality is not just about what we ought not to do. It is also about what we ought to do. It is about doing the right thing. Suppose Mr Black borrows Mr Brown's Big Bouncer.



But while Mr Black is riding on the Big Bouncer, he gets a bit carried away and punctures it.



What should Mr Black do? He thinks about throwing the Big Bouncer back into Mr Brown's garden when Mr Brown isn't looking and running off before he finds out. But Mr Black does the right thing. He admits to Mr Brown that he punctured the Big Bouncer. He agrees to fix it up.



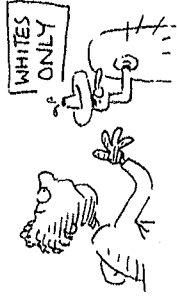
Repaying debts, helping people in trouble, telling the truth - these are other examples of doing the right thing.

When we talk about morality - about right and wrong - we are talking about how we ought to live our lives. Most of us feel that it is morally wrong to lie, cheat, steal and kill. We feel we ought to be honest and trustworthy. We feel we ought to treat other people with respect.

Morality and the law

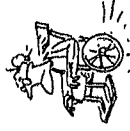
It is important not to get morality - right and wrong - muddled up with the law. Of course, morality and the law do often coincide. For example, stealing and killing are both morally wrong. They are also both against the law. But morality and the law need not coincide.

Take the apartheid laws in South Africa not so long ago. These laws separated black people from white people. They treated black people as second-class citizens. Black people weren't allowed to vote, for example. They were only allowed to live in certain poor, run-down areas. Many things in South Africa were for whites only.

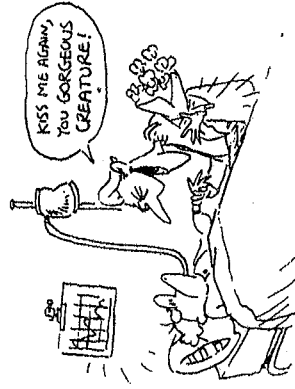


But while it might have been against the law for black people to live in certain areas or use certain things, it wasn't morally wrong for them to do so. In fact, in South Africa it was the law that was wrong. So just because something is illegal doesn't mean it is wrong.

There are also things that are morally wrong that aren't against any law. For example, suppose Toby, a handsome and greedy young man, is told by one of his friends at a party that the sick-looking woman over there is very ill and will soon die.



Toby is also told that the woman is a bit dim, but very nice and immensely rich. And she has no living relatives. So, despite actually finding the woman rather ugly and dull, Toby spends the evening pretending to find her fascinating and beautiful. Why? Because Toby wants to trick the woman into marrying him. He wants to trick her into leaving him all her money.



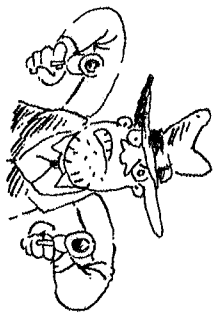
Now, most people would say that Toby's behaviour is morally very wrong indeed.

But of course, what Toby is doing isn't illegal. Even if Toby did manage to trick the woman into marrying him, he wouldn't have broken any law. So what's morally wrong isn't always illegal.

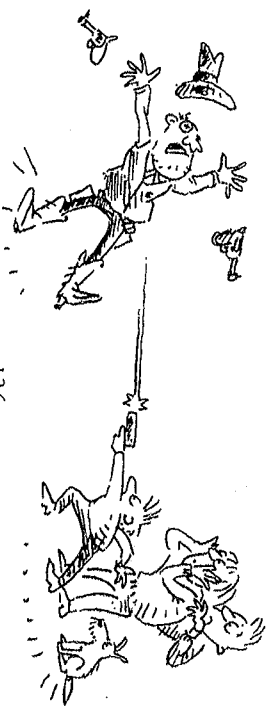
Is it always wrong to kill?

We all think that killing is wrong. But is killing *anything* wrong? What about a sheep, a flea or a blade of grass? Of course, most people would say that there's nothing wrong with killing these sorts of thing. They would say that it is only other people that we shouldn't kill.

But is it always wrong to kill another person? Think about this case. Suppose you are a rancher in the old Wild West. Murderous Murphy breaks into your house. He dusts himself down, points his two six shooters at you and your family, and says that he is going to kill the lot of you and steal all your money.



Suppose you have a gun hidden in your hand. And suppose the only way to stop Murderous Murphy killing you all is to shoot him dead. What would you do? I'm sure you would say that you would shoot Murderous Murphy dead. In fact, I'm sure you would say that that was the right thing to do.



So it seems it isn't always wrong to kill another person. While we all agree that killing another person is wrong, most of us don't mean that it is always, in every case, wrong. We mean only that generally speaking killing is wrong. There are exceptions.

It seems there are also exceptions to other moral principles. Take, for example the moral principle that it is wrong to lie. If Murphy asked you if there was anyone else worth robbing living nearby and you knew that there was, would it be wrong to lie to him? I don't think so.

Perhaps you can think of other moral principles to which there are exceptions. For example, are there cases in which it wouldn't be wrong to steal?

Where does morality come from?

We have been talking about morality, about right and wrong. Now we come to my big philosophical question. My question is: *where does morality come from?* People give a number of different answers to this question. We are going to look at three of them.

One answer is: *morality comes from us.* We are the source of morality, of right and wrong. Our description of some things as 'right' and others as 'wrong' does no more than reflect how we think or feel about them. Things aren't right or wrong independently of what we might happen to think or feel about them.

Another quite different answer to the question: *where does morality come from?* is: *morality comes from God.* It is God who lays down what is right and what is wrong. So even if none of us felt that what someone did is wrong, it would still be wrong if God says it's wrong.

A third answer to the question: *where does morality come from?* is: *things are right or wrong anyway,* whatever we might happen to think or feel about them or even what God might happen to think or feel about them.

What do you think?

Which of these three answers would you give? Do you think that morality reflects only how we think or feel about things? Or do you think that morality comes from God? Or do you think that things are right or wrong anyway, whatever we or even God might happen to think or feel about them? Let's take a closer look at these three answers to see if we can figure out which (if any) answer is correct.

Let's start with the claim that morality comes from us.

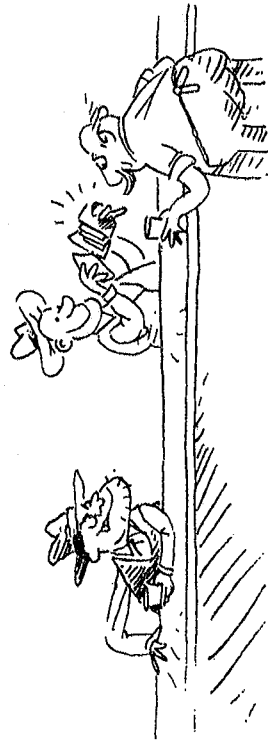
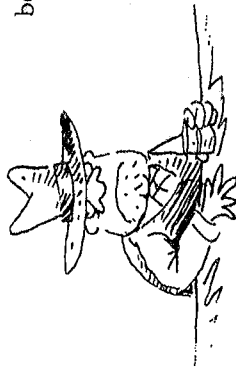
Answer number 1: morality comes from us

How could morality come from us? Here are two famous philosophical theories both of which say that morality comes from us.

Morality comes from us: the Feelings Theory

Suppose that Murderous Murphy is drinking at a bar.

Another cowboy arrives and orders a beer. Murphy notices that this other cowboy is unarmed. Murphy also notices that the other cowboy has a lot of money in his wallet.

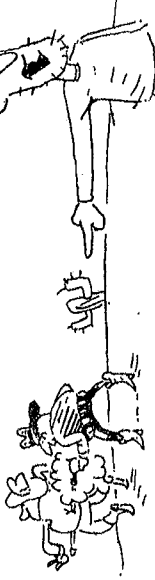
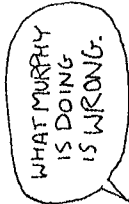


So when the other cowboy finishes his beer and rides off into the desert, Murphy secretly follows him. Then, when Murphy is quite sure no one is watching, he sneaks up behind the other cowboy and shoots him in the back.



Murphy then takes the money and rides off, leaving the cowboy to die in the sand.

Now suppose I see Murphy shooting that poor unarmed cowboy in the back. I say 'What Murphy is doing is wrong!'



According to what I shall call the Feelings Theory, when I say 'What Murphy is doing is wrong!' I am just saying that I have certain feelings about what Murphy is doing. I am making a claim about myself. I am saying that I disapprove of what Murphy is doing.

This means that if I do disapprove, then what I say is true: Murphy is doing something wrong.

Similarly, if I see someone repaying a debt and I say 'That person is doing something right', then I am saying that I approve of what they are doing.

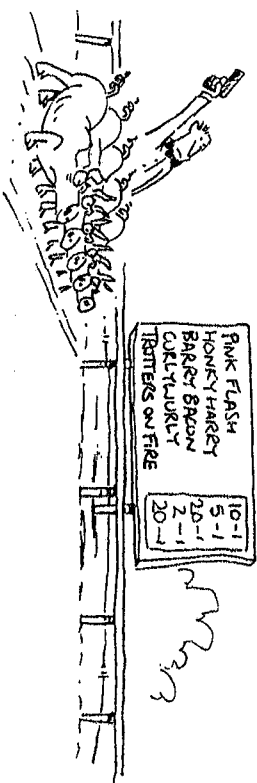
As you can see, according to the Feelings Theory, morality comes from us. We make things right or wrong by approving or disapproving of them.

Morality comes from us: the Boo-Hoorah Theory

Here's another theory that also says that morality comes from us. Philosophers often call this theory the Boo-Hoorah Theory.

As we have just seen, according to the Feelings Theory, when I say that something is wrong I make a claim, a claim about how I feel. According to the Boo-Hoorah Theory, on the other hand, I don't make a claim about how I feel. I express how I feel. Let me explain the difference.

Suppose I am about to watch a pig race.



I bet £5 on Pink Flash at 10-1. So if Pink Flash wins, I win £50.

The race begins. Pink Flash is slow to start. Then one of the other pigs - Honking Harry - pushes Pink

Flash over. I am upset about this. I yell,

'Boo to Honking Harry!' Then Pink

Flash gets up. He catches up with the

other pigs. Finally, with just metres to

go, Pink Flash noses ahead. He wins!



HOORAH
FOR
PINK FLASH!

I yell out, 'Hoorah for Pink Flash!'

Now, ask yourself, when I yell out 'Hoorah for Pink Flash!' is what I say true or false? Of course, it's neither. I am not saying something true. But neither am I saying something false. I am not making any sort of claim, not even a claim about how I feel.

So what am I doing, then, when I say 'Hoorah for Pink Flash!?' I am expressing how I feel. I am expressing my happiness. Similarly, when I yell, 'Boo to Honking Harry!' I am again expressing how I feel. I am expressing my disapproval of what Honking Harry did.

Now, according to the Boo-Hoorah Theory, something similar happens when I see Murphy shoot the other cowboy and I say 'What Murphy is doing is wrong!' When I say 'What Murphy is doing is wrong!' it's as if I yell 'Boo to what Murphy is doing!' I am expressing my disapproval of what Murphy is doing.



Similarly, when I say, 'Repaying one's debts is right', it's as if I am yelling, 'Hoorah for repaying one's debts!' I am expressing my approval of repaying one's debts. In each case I am not making a claim about how I feel. I'm just expressing how I feel.

So according to the Boo-Hoorah Theory, it's neither true nor false that what Murphy is doing is wrong. Indeed, according to the Boo-Hoorah Theory, there is no fact of the matter about whether what Murphy is doing is wrong (any more than there's a fact of the matter about whether Hoorah for Pink Flash).

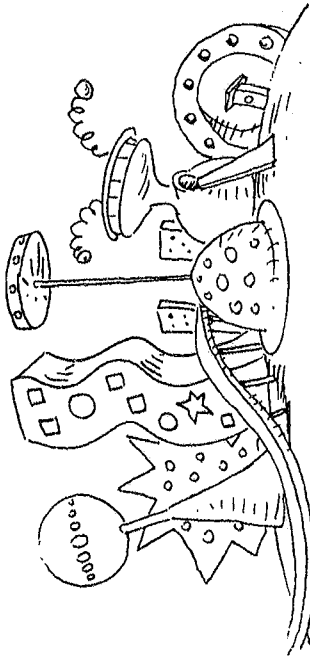
The Vargs

We have just looked at two theories both of which say that morality comes from us: morality does no more than reflect how we feel about things. What do you think about these two theories? Is either theory any good?

Like most philosophers nowadays, I have worries about both theories. In order to explain one of my worries, I shall tell you about the Vargs.

This is Planet Varg, where the Vargs live.

The Vargs are intelligent beings like ourselves. And by an amazing coincidence they also speak English. They even talk about things being 'right' and 'wrong'.

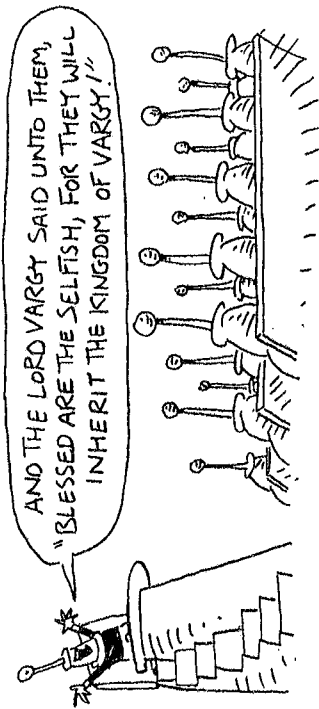


But Vargs feel quite differently about what is right and wrong. Their most basic moral principle is: always look after number one! All Vargs feel very strongly that each Varg ought, as far as possible, to try to get what it wants, even at the expense of other Vargs. So they believe it is right to steal and cheat. In fact, they even believe it is right for one Varg to kill another if by so doing it can get something it wants (this doesn't mean Vargs go round stealing, cheating and killing all the time, of course: they only cheat, steal and kill if they think they can get away with it).



Because Vargs feel that each Varg should always look after itself even at the expense of other Vargs, they feel that charity is wrong. In fact, if ever a Varg feels like being charitable it soon starts feeling guilty.

Some Vargs are even religious: they believe in a god called Vargy from whom they suppose their morality comes. On Sunday some Vargs go to Varg-church where they hear sermons on the virtues of selfishness.

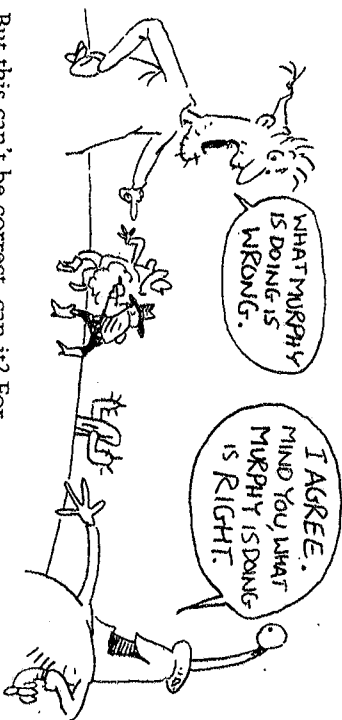


Why do I mention the Vargs? Because the possibility of creatures like the Vargs raises a problem for both the Feelings Theory and the Boo-Hoorah Theory.

A problem with the Feelings Theory

Why is the possibility of creatures like the Vargs a problem for the Feelings Theory? The Feelings Theory says that when I say 'What Murphy is doing is wrong!' I make a claim. I claim that I disapprove of what Murphy is doing. As I do disapprove, what I say is true: Murphy is doing something wrong.

But of course, a Varg would say 'What Murphy is doing is right!' According to the Feelings Theory, when a Varg says this, it claims that it approves of what Murphy is doing. So, as it does approve, what the Varg says is true too. We are both right! So we can happily agree with each other!



But this can't be correct, can it? For surely, when I say 'What Murphy is doing is wrong!' and the Varg says 'What Murphy is doing is right!' we are contradicting each other. Obviously, we can't both be right. As we are contradicting each other, the Feelings Theory must be false.

A problem with the Boo-Hoorah Theory

Why are the Vargs a problem for the Boo-Hoorah Theory?

According to the Boo-Hoorah Theory, when I say 'What Murphy is doing is wrong!' I don't make a claim. I merely express how I feel. It's as if I yell 'Boo to what Murphy is doing!' Similarly, when a Varg says 'What Murphy is doing is right!' it doesn't make a claim either. It merely expresses how it feels.

Now, according to the Boo-Hoorah Theory, which of us – the Varg or me – is right about what Murphy is doing? Neither! There is no fact of the matter as to which of us is correct! According to the Boo-Hoorah Theory, what I say is no more 'true' than is what the Varg says.

But isn't there a problem here for the Boo-Hoorah Theory? For surely, when I say 'What Murphy is doing is wrong!' I don't merely express how I feel. I do make a claim. Indeed, I suppose that what I say is true and what the Varg says is false. I suppose there is a fact of the matter about whether or not killing is wrong. Indeed, I suppose that the Varg is mistaken about this fact of the matter.

But if this is right – if when I say 'What Murphy is doing is wrong!' I do make a claim, a claim that is true – then the Boo-Hoorah Theory must be wrong too.

In fact, when you start to think about it, isn't it clear that morality can't come from us? For surely, it's a fact that killing is wrong anyway, whatever we or the Vargs might happen to feel about killing. Surely, even if we happened to agree with the Vargs that there is nothing wrong with killing, as a matter of fact killing would still be wrong, wouldn't it? But how can this be?

Answer number 2: morality comes from God

We are looking at the question: where does morality come from? So far we have looked at the answer: morality comes from us. But it seems that this answer cannot be right. So let's now turn to a different answer.

According to many people, the reason killing is wrong anyway, whatever we might have to say about it, is that God says it's wrong. Killing is wrong because God disapproves of it.

Morality comes from God.



How do we find out about right and wrong?

So how do we find out what God disapproves of? Many would say: by looking to religion and religious books such as the Bible or the Koran. For example, the Old Testament of the Bible contains the Ten Commandments, a list of ten dos and don'ts which God is supposed to have carved on to two stone tablets for Moses.



One of these Ten Commandments is, of course: Thou shalt not kill.

The Morality-Comes-From-God Argument

So does morality come from God? Are things right or wrong simply because God says so?

I heard a man talking on the radio the other day. This man laid down a challenge to people who don't believe in God. Surely, he argued, if there is no God, then there can be no real morality. If you believe in morality, then you have to believe in God too. Here's the man's argument:

IF THERE IS NO GOD TO DECIDE WHAT IS RIGHT OR WRONG, THEN WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG MUST BE DECIDED BY US. BUT REAL MORALITY ISN'T SOMETHING THAT WE CAN DECIDE. THERE'S AN INDEPENDENT FACT OF THE MATTER ABOUT WHAT'S RIGHT AND WRONG. SURELY IT'S WRONG TO KILL ANYWAY, NO MATTER WHAT LUCK HAPPENS TO SAY OR FEEL ABOUT IT. AND IF KILLING IS WRONG ANYWAY, THEN THAT CAN ONLY BE BECAUSE THERE'S A GOD WHO SAYS THAT KILLING IS WRONG. MORALITY MUST COME FROM GOD. SO IF YOU BELIEVE IN MORALITY, YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE IN GOD TOO.

Let's call this the Morality-Must-Come-From-God Argument. The Morality-Must-Come-From-God Argument is certainly a very popular argument. I have heard much the same argument from many different people. But is the argument any good?

Suppose God had said killing is right . . .

In fact, the Morality-Must-Come-From-God Argument isn't any good, as I shall now explain.

The man on the radio claimed that killing is wrong because God says it is wrong. God actually makes killing wrong by saying that it is wrong.

But this means that if God had instead said that killing is right, then it would be. But this can't be right, can it? Ask yourself: suppose God had said killing is right, would it have been right?



Surely not. Surely, even if God had said that we ought to kill, it would still be wrong to go round murdering people. Not even God can make killing other people right.

The man on the radio argued like this: morality can't come from us, for we can't make killing right just by saying so. What the man on the radio failed to notice is that exactly the same is true of God. Killing is also wrong whatever God might have to say about it. So, by the same argument, morality can't come from God either.

Answer number 3: things are right or wrong anyway

We are looking at the question: Where does morality come from? We have now looked at two different answers to this question. The first answer was: morality comes from us. The second answer was: morality comes from God. Neither of these answers seems to be correct. So let's now turn to the third of the three answers we are going to look at. The third answer is: things are right or wrong anyway, whatever we or even God might happen to say about them.

Objective moral facts

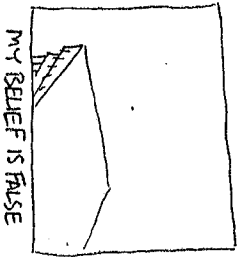
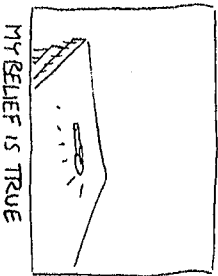
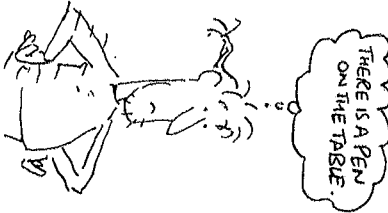
Those who say that killing is wrong anyway, whatever we or even God might have to say about it, are saying that it is an objective fact that killing is wrong.

What is an objective fact? Here's an example.

Suppose I believe that there is a pen on the table behind me.

My belief may be true or it may be false.

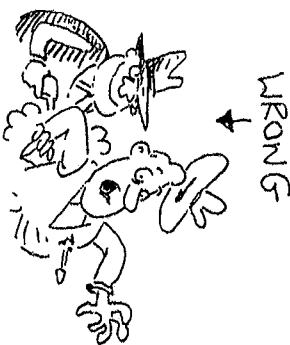
Suppose my belief is true. What makes it true is a certain corresponding fact: the fact that there is a pen back there on the table.



And this fact seems to be an objective fact. What I mean is: it's a fact that there's a pen on the table whether or not I or anyone else knows there's a pen on the table, and no matter what I or anyone else might feel about there being a pen on the table. That there's a pen on the table is a fact 'out there' in the world, a fact that is there anyway, whatever anyone might think or feel about it.



Now you might suppose that it's also an objective fact that what Murderous Murphy did is wrong.



I believe that what Murphy did is wrong. And you might suppose that my belief is made true by a corresponding fact: the fact that what Murphy did is wrong. You might also suppose that this fact is an objective fact: it's out there anyway, no matter what I or anyone else (including even God) might think or feel about it. So, even if no one thought that what Murphy did was wrong, it would still be wrong.

If there are objective moral facts, then the right answer to the question: where does morality come from? is: not from us, or from God or from anyone else for that matter. Morality is 'out there': it's independent of all of us.

And this does seem correct, doesn't it? For surely, even if we and the Vargs and God had all decided that there is nothing wrong with killing . . .



. . . as a matter of fact killing would still be wrong, wouldn't it? So it seems that there really are objective moral facts.

How do we detect wrongness?

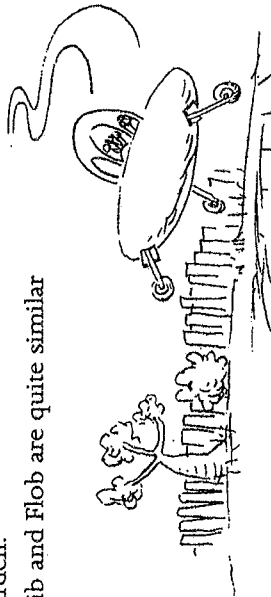
Still, there are problems with the theory that there are objective moral facts. One very famous problem is: how do we discover these facts? Or, to put it another way, how do we detect this property – wrongness – that acts of killing or stealing are supposed to have?

In order to explain this problem I shall tell you a story. The story is about two Martian visitors to the Earth.

The Martian visitors

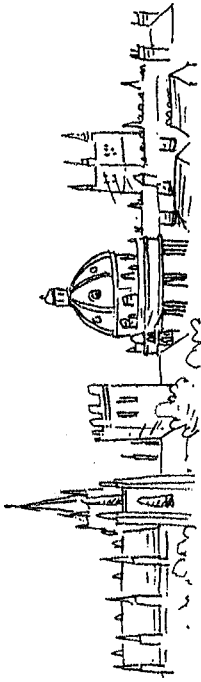
One day, two Martians – Flib and Flob – arrive in my back garden.

Flib and Flob are quite similar



to us. They also have eyes and ears, a mouth and nose, two arms and two legs.

Flib and Flob offer to give me a trip round town in their flying saucer. So we get in and take off. As we fly around we look out of the window at the town below us.



Flib and Flob make the flying saucer invisible so that no one can see us as we skim over the rooftops. We circle round the town and look at the pigeons. Then, as we pass over a narrow street on the outskirts of town, I notice something. I see a young man trying to snatch the purse of a woman who is walking home from the shops. I quickly point this out to the Martians.



'Look!' I say. 'That man is trying to steal that woman's purse. That's wrong!'

But Flib and Flob just look puzzled. Flob says: 'Ah, yes. Wrong. We do not understand your Earthling talk of right and wrong. Please show us the wrongness.'

Where is the wrongness?

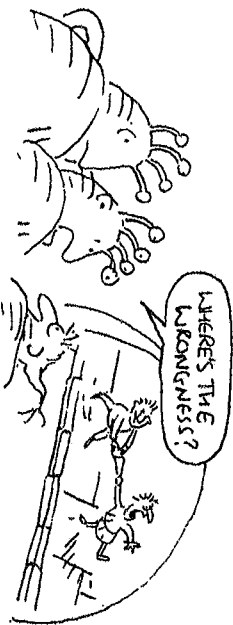
'Look!' I say, pointing down at the robber. 'Can't you see that this man is doing something wrong?'

But Flib and Flob can't see the wrongness of what he is doing.

'No,' replies Flob. 'Our eyes are just like your eyes. But we find your talk of seeing wrongness very strange. We just can't see this thing you Earth people call wrongness. Where is the wrongness, please?'

The Martians stare at me, waiting for a reply. I'm not quite sure what they are getting at. So Flob continues.

'We have five senses just like you Earthlings. We too can see and hear. We too can smell and taste things. And we have a sense of touch just like yours. But our five senses do not allow us to detect this thing you call wrongness. And we find this very mysterious. What we want to know is: where is the wrongness? Please point it out to us. Please explain to us how you humans manage to detect it. By which of your senses do you perceive it?'



Now I begin to see what Flib and Flob are getting at. Certainly, wrongness doesn't seem to be observable in the way that, say, redness is. Redness is something that you can see (you can see the redness of an apple, for example). Wrongness, on the other hand, seems to be invisible.

The DIRS scanner

I look down at the man struggling to pull the woman's purse from her hands. I have to admit, I'm not sure how I detect the wrongness of what he is doing. Still, I feel quite sure that the man is doing something wrong. So I have another go at explaining to the Martians the wrongness of what the robber is doing.

'Look! That man is stealing that woman's purse! You can see that, can't you?'

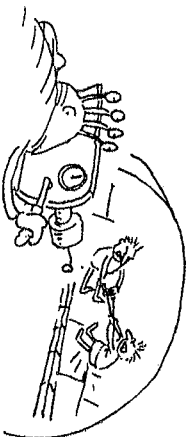
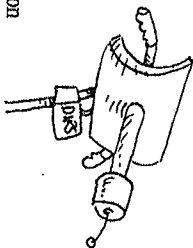
Flob says that they can certainly see that.

'Well, then, stealing is wrong, isn't it?'

Flib and Flob don't understand. Flib asks: 'But where is the wrongness? This further thing you call wrongness is not detected by us when we observe people stealing. Nor does the wrongness show up on any of our scanning equipment.'

Flib points to a huge, gun-like object in the corner of their room.

'This is the DIRS - the Detect-all Infinite Resolution Scanner. It is the most powerful and all-encompassing scanner in the whole universe. There is nothing in the natural world that the DIRS can't detect! But not even the DIRS can detect this thing you call wrongness. We will show you.'



Flib and Flob aim the DIRS towards the robbery taking place on the street.

They press a red button. There is a slight humming noise as the DIRS begins to scan what is going on down below.

'See?' says Flib, pointing at the many dials on the side of the DIRS. 'We just aren't picking up any wrongness. Not a sausage!'



'Please show us the wrongness,' continues Fib. 'We are scientists. We want knowledge. We want a complete theory of the universe. We do not want to miss anything out. But this thing you call wrongness continues to evade us.'

'But the woman is upset ...'

I decide to have another go at explaining about wrongness. 'Look. That woman down there is very upset. That purse contains all her money. If she loses her purse, then she won't be able to buy things that she needs from the shop. Can't you see how sad and afraid she is?'

'Oh, we know all about that,' says Fib. 'We already know all about those facts: the fact that the man is stealing the woman's money; the fact that that is all the money she has, the fact that the man is making her unhappy and frightened. But you seem to be able to detect an extra fact: the fact that what the man is doing is wrong. If this extra fact is out there, please point it out to us. We can find no trace of it.'

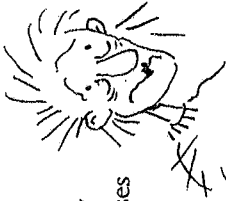
'Is' facts and 'ought' facts

I scratch my head. 'What do you mean by saying that the fact that what the man is doing is wrong is an extra fact?'

Flob explains as follows. 'Look, by saying that someone is doing something wrong, you Earthlings mean that they ought not to do it, don't you?'

'Yes, that's quite correct.'

'Well, then,' continues Flob. 'The fact that someone is doing something wrong is an entirely different sort of fact to the facts we can observe. Just like you, we can observe what is the case. We can observe that this man is stealing the purse. We can observe that the woman is upset. And so on.'



I nod. So Flob continues.

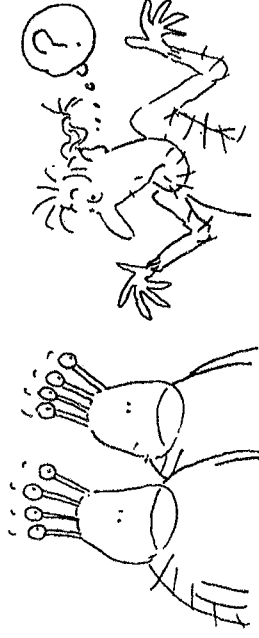
'But the fact that the man down there is doing something wrong is clearly an extra fact on top of all these facts about what is the case. For by saying that the man is doing something wrong you are clearly saying more than what he is doing. You are saying that he ought not to be doing what he is doing. So you are no longer just talking about what is the case.'

I have to agree with Flob. The fact that the man is doing something wrong does indeed seem to be an extra fact on top of all the facts about what is the case.

'So you see,' continues Flob. 'We can observe only what is the case. And all of the facts about what is the case leave entirely open the question of whether that man ought or ought not to be doing what he's doing. So please explain to us how you detect the extra fact that he ought not to be doing what he's doing. How do you detect the fact that what he is doing is wrong?'

So how do I detect the wrongness?

I look down. The man is still down there struggling to steal the woman's purse. I look at Flib and Flob. They raise their green eyebrows and look disappointed.

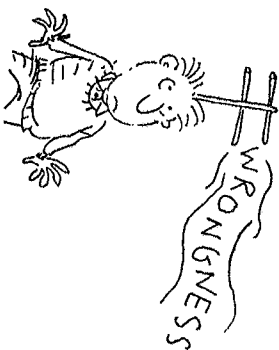


'I'm sorry,' I say. 'I just don't know how I detect the wrongness. I don't seem to be able to see it or feel it or taste it or smell it or touch it. But somehow I know it's out there.'

The wrongness detector

A famous philosopher called G.E. Moore tried to solve the problem of explaining how we detect wrongness. He supposed that we have a sort of extra sense – a sixth sense – on top of our other five. We can't see, hear, smell, touch or taste wrongness. But we can detect it using this sixth sense. I shall call this extra sense our wrongness detector.

You might think of your wrongness detector as being a bit like an antenna. Just as sailors can use a radio antenna to detect a submarine hidden beneath the waves, so your wrongness detector allows you to detect the wrongness of what someone is doing despite the fact that you can't detect the wrongness with your other senses.



So I detect the wrongness of what the thief down in the street is doing by using my wrongness detector. Why can't Flib and Flob detect the wrongness of what the man is doing? Because they don't have a wrongness detector, of course.

Has Moore solved the problem of explaining how we detect wrongness? No. Not really. Moore has simply said that by some strange mechanism – a wrongness detector – we do manage to detect wrongness. But it remains utterly mysterious how this wrongness detector is supposed to work. So we are still left with a big mystery.

Back to where we started!

We have been examining the view that there are objective moral facts. On the view that there are objective moral facts, wrongness is 'out there'. It's a property that acts of stealing have *anyway*,

whatever anyone (including even God Himself!) might happen to think or feel about stealing.

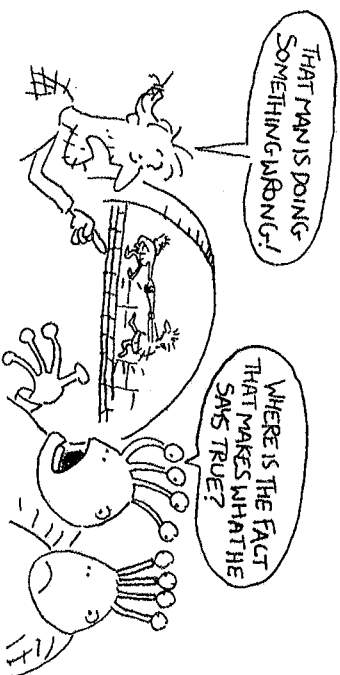
We have also seen that there's a big problem with this view. If wrongness really were 'out there', then it seems it would be a very weird, undetectable sort of property. In fact, it seems that if wrongness really were 'out there' then we wouldn't be able to know about it.

So, as I can detect when someone is doing something wrong, it seems it can't be an objective fact that what they are doing is wrong.

A big advantage of the view that morality comes from us

Indeed, it seems we are being forced back to where we started. It seems we are being forced back to the position that morality must come from us after all. For a really big advantage of the view that morality comes from us is that it very neatly explains why Flib and Flob can't detect the wrongness of what the robber is doing.

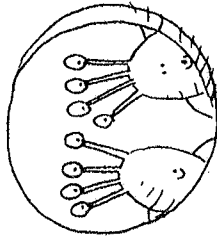
Take the Boo-Hoorah Theory, for example. It clearly explains why Flib and Flob can't find the fact that makes what I say true when I say 'That man is doing something wrong!' For according to the Boo-Hoorah Theory, I am just expressing how I feel. It's as if I were shouting 'Boo to what that man is doing!' I don't make any claim at all. So what I say is neither true or false.



But that means that Flib and Flob are on a wild goose chase. They are desperately looking for the 'fact' that makes what I say 'true'. But of course, there is no such fact.

The Feelings Theory also neatly explains why Flib and Flob can't find the fact that makes what I say true. According to the Feelings Theory, when I say to Flib and Flob: 'That man is doing something wrong!' what I say is true. Indeed, what I say is made true by a fact. But of course, what I say is *not* made true by an objective moral fact. It's not made true by a fact about how things are 'out there' on the other side of the window. Rather, the fact that makes what I say true is a fact about me — the fact that I disapprove of what the man is doing.

That's why Flib and Flob can't find the fact that makes what I say true: they are looking in the wrong place. They're looking out of the window. In order to find the fact that makes what I say true, Flib and Flob must stop looking out of the window. They must turn around and examine me.



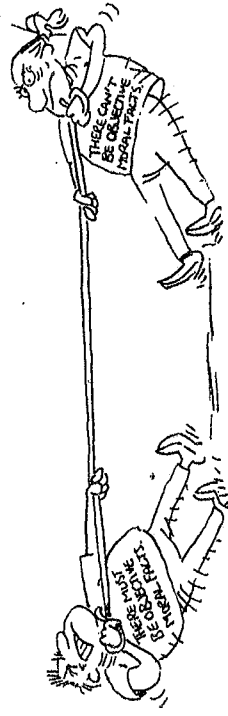
The big picture

We have taken quite a long and complicated philosophical journey. So you may now be feeling a bit lost. Let's take a step back to see where we've been. Let's get the big picture.

The big philosophical question we have been looking at is this: *where does morality come from?* Does morality come from us? Or does it come from God? Or are there *objective moral facts*? That is, are things right or wrong *anyway*, independently of whatever we or God or anyone else might have to say about it?

In trying to answer this question we have run up against a problem — a very famous philosophical problem. The problem is that we find ourselves being pulled in two directions at once. On

the one hand, it seems that there must be objective moral facts. But, on the other hand, it seems that there can't be objective moral facts.



Why must there be objective moral facts? Because it seems that when we say 'Killing is wrong', we make a claim made true by a fact; the fact that killing really is wrong. And this fact is an *objective fact*: killing is surely wrong *anyway*, whatever we or the Vargs or even God might happen to think about killing. So even if we, the Vargs and God all felt that killing was right . . .



. . . killing would still be wrong.

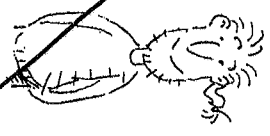
Why can't there be objective moral facts? Well, as Flib and Flob pointed out, if wrongness is 'out there' — if wrongness is a property that killing has *anyway*, whatever anyone might happen to think about killing — then it seems we come up against an

unsolvable mystery: how do we detect this property? It seems we couldn't detect it. In which case we couldn't know that killing is wrong. So, as we do know that killing is wrong, it seems it can't be an objective moral fact that killing is wrong.
How do we solve this puzzle? That is something that philosophers are still arguing about even today. I must admit, I am confused. I'm just not sure where morality comes from. What do you think?

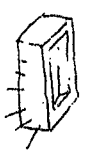
File 7

What is the mind?

My mind
This is me.



And this is a brick.



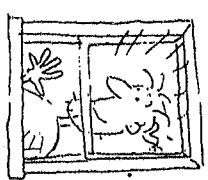
One important difference between me and the brick is this: unlike the brick, I have a mind.

So what goes on in my mind? Well, having a typical human mind means that I can have experiences. For example, I can enjoy the taste of marmalade and the smell of fresh coffee.

WARM DELICIOUS MARMALADE



I THINK I'LL GO FOR A WALK.



I can also make decisions. For example I can decide to go for a walk.

