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Elements in Ethics

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SUBJECTIVE VERSUS OBJECTIVE MORAL WRONGNESS

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-70661-2 — Subjective versus Objective Moral Wrongness
Peter A. Graham
Frontmatter
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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108706612
DOI: 10.1017/9781108588249

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First published 2021

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-70661-2 Paperback
ISSN 2516-4031 (online)
ISSN 2516-4023 (print)

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First published online: March 2021

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Abstract: Presently, there is a debate between Subjectivists and Objectivists about moral wrongness. Subjectivism is the view that the moral status of our actions, whether they are morally wrong or not, is grounded in our subjective circumstances – either our beliefs about, or our evidence concerning, the world around us. Objectivism, on the other hand, is the view that the moral status of our actions is grounded in our objective circumstances – all those facts other than those that comprise our subjective circumstances. A third view, Ecumenism, has it that the moral status of our actions is grounded both in our subjective and our objective circumstances. After outlining and evaluating the various arguments against both Subjectivism and Objectivism, the Element offers a tentative defense of Objectivism about moral wrongness.

Keywords: moral permissibility, perspectivism, subjective moral wrongness, objective moral wrongness, “ought”

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ISBNs: 9781108706612 (PB), 9781108588249 (OC)
ISSNs: 2516-4031 (online), 2516-4023 (print)

Contents

1 Subjectivism, Objectivism, and Ecumenism	1
2 The Sense-Splitting Reply	4
3 Against Objectivism	6
4 Against Subjectivism	35
5 Objectivism or Ecumenism?	54
References	57