

## MORAL FACT AND ITS EXPLANATORY ROLE: A CRITIQUE

[Ahlak Olgusu ve Açıklayıcı Rolü: Bir Eleştirisi]

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### ABSTRACT

The question whether moral facts play any role in the explanation has loomed large debate in contemporary metaethics. Moral anti-realists deny that moral facts do play an explanatory role. By contrast, the existence of moral facts is a necessary condition for explanation according to moral realists. Moreover, they believe that moral facts play an important role in the best explanation. This paper illustrates and examines both views. In particular, Harman's arguments for moral anti-realism and Sturgeon's replies to him have taken into consideration. It explores some arguments to refute the existence of moral facts and argues that moral facts do not play any explanatory role.

**Key words:** Explanation, moral facts, moral realists, moral anti-realists, moral disagreement.

### ÖZET

Ahlaki olguların, açıklamada herhangi bir rol oynayıp oynamadığı sorusunun çağdaş meta-etik tartışmalarında geniş bir yer tuttuğu görülmektedir. Anti-realist ahlak düşüncesini savunanlar, ahlaki olguların açıklayıcı bir rolü olduğunu reddederler. Bunun tersine, realist ahlakı savunanlara göre ahlaki olguların varlığı, açıklama için zorunlu bir koşuldur. Hatta en iyi açıklama için ahlaki olguların çok önemli işlevlere sahip olduğuna inanırlar. Bu çalışma her iki görüşe de ışık tutup

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irdeleyecektir. Özellikle, Harman'ın ahlaki anti-realizm tartışması ve Sturgeon'un ona karşılığı burada göz önünde tutulacaktır. Ahlaki olguların varlığını reddeden kimi argümanlar incelenip ahlaki olguların herhangi bir açıklayıcı rolü olmadığı tartışılacaktır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Açıklama, ahlaki olgular, ahlaki realistler, ahlaki anti-realistler, ahlaki fikir uyuşmazlığı.

**MORAL FACT AND ITS EXPLANATORY ROLE: A CRITIQUE****INTRODUCTION**

One of the recent metaethical debates focuses on the moral facts and their explanatory role. This issue is crucial because we very often use explanation to express our thoughts and beliefs. However, all explanations are not the same in nature. A sharp distinction between scientific explanation and moral explanation must be made. In a scientific explanation, we explain scientific facts, how scientific facts support or contradict with certain scientific theory, their causal relationship, and so forth, while in a moral explanation, we explain moral judgments about moral facts and moral beliefs. Science is based on observation whereas morality is based on moral sense or moral beliefs. Do explanations have the same role in science and morality? What is the role of moral facts in explanation? How does observation relate to ethics? Are there any moral facts at all?

These are the vital questions which metaethicists, such as Gilbert Harman, J. L. Mackie, Nicholas L. Sturgeon, and Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, have tried to answer. However, their answers are very different. Harman raises the question about the mind independent existence of moral facts, and their necessity to be existed for explanation. His main challenge is to show that we cannot justify moral explanation through observation and experiment. He is not against the existence of moral facts, but he believes that these facts are mind dependent facts. Since Harman maintains that the existence of moral facts is irrelevant to prove the rightness or wrongness of an observation, moral facts do not play an explanatory role according to him.

Sturgeon who claims that moral properties are supervenience on non-moral properties has an opposite view to Harman. He argues for the explanatory power of moral facts. According to Sturgeon, when we admit something is wrong the act itself explains why it is wrong. So, Sturgeon proposes a counterfactual test. Like the observation test in scientific explanation, the counterfactual test, as he believes, establishes that moral facts play an explanatory role in moral explanation. Thus, for Sturgeon, moral facts have explanatory power which provides the best explanation of our moral beliefs.

This influential debate between moral realists (Sturgeon) and moral anti-realists (Harman) is the focus of the paper. I will argue that moral facts do not play an explanatory role. In so doing, I will describe moral facts and scientific facts in general, and also how moral facts are related to explanatory role. Then, the two contrary views i.e. the anti-realistic view and the realistic view regarding moral facts and their explanatory power will be explored and examined. In this case, I will consider Harman and Sturgeon. Finally, I will offer some arguments in favor of my position.

## MORAL FACTS AND SCIENTIFIC FACTS

Morality is important for our social relationship. Moral facts are primarily those facts which are acceptable in all societies. When science appears and scientific knowledge develops people find a core distinction between scientific facts and moral facts. They easily realize that scientific facts are objective and we can prove these facts in the laboratory. By contrast, moral facts have no objective value. Of course, it does not imply that we do not need moral facts. Obviously, there are similar phenomena in our society which cannot be proved in the laboratory, such as religious belief, social norms, and so forth. Indeed, the influence of scientific facts on our moral beliefs seems great.

Scientific observation claims that scientific facts have an explanatory role. Consider the following example:

Observed facts are that the cloud coverage of the earth has increased 4.1% in the past 50 years. Clouds are known to reflect away sunlight and thus cool down the earth. The power rate of cooling is  $16.6 \text{ W/m}^2$  given by the ERBE satellite. Then every physics freshman can calculate the total power of cooling for a time of doubling carbon dioxide to be  $3.98 \text{ W/m}^2$  which just compensates off the *theoretical* greenhouse warming power for doubling carbon dioxide  $4 \text{ W/m}^2$ . Thus no greenhouse warming at all for the current climate condition. (Fong, 2005, p. 3)

In this case, the scientist makes a claim that there is a correlation between greenhouse warming and climate condition. He believes that there is no greenhouse warming in present climate condition. He explains this view on the basis of scientific observation and current scientific facts about greenhouse warming, emission of carbon dioxide, and cloud coverage. Thus, scientific facts play an explanatory role.

By contrast, morality does not offer any observational explanation. Even moral philosophers hold different views on moral judgments and the existence of moral facts. For example, a group of philosophers proposes that moral judgments are explanation of moral beliefs. As belief can be true or false, moral judgments can be either true or false. This view generally called 'cognitivism'. So, cognitivists hold that moral judgments have the capacity of being true or false. On the contrary,

'non-cognitivists' argue that moral judgments are the expressions of our emotions and desires. Since desires and emotions are not capable of being true or false, 'non-cognitivism' argues against the truth or falsity of moral judgments. This debate takes place in the discussion of moral facts.

How do moral properties relate to moral explanation? Darwall, Gibbard and Railton have indicated this relationship by saying:

The Cornell realists] have pursued analogies with natural and social science to argue that moral properties might be both irreducible and explanatorily efficacious. One might, for example, argue that various chemical or biological 'natural kinds'-acid, catalyst, gene, organism-are not obviously type reducible to the natural kinds of physics, and yet play a role in good scientific explanation. (1992, p. 139)

So, moral facts or moral properties are related to explanation either reducible or irreducible way. These facts may or may not be physical facts. On the one way, someone could argue that moral facts supervene upon physical facts and so they play an explanatory role. Sturgeon and Sayre-McCord are devoted to prove this claim. On the other way, she could argue that moral facts are identical to natural facts and so they do not play an explanatory role. Harman and Mackie hold this view. Harman says that the existence of moral facts or moral properties is possible only if they provide any reasonable explanation of moral observation. Mackie is also skeptical about the existence of moral facts. Nevertheless, we will analyze and examine only Harman's view.

## ANTI-REALISTS' VIEW ON THE EXPLANATORY ROLE OF MORAL FACTS: HARMAN'S ARGUMENT

In "Ethics and Observation", Harman argues that we cannot test and confirm our moral observation similarly as scientific observation. Observation plays a crucial role in science. We also use observation in constructing moral principles. But we cannot justify them. Scientists and moral philosophers both tend to use hypothesis and thought experiment. However, only scientific hypothesis and thought experiment can be tested in real experiments. We cannot observe the 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of an action.

Harman writes:

If you round a corner and see a group of young hoodlums pour gasoline on a cat and ignite it, you do not need to *conclude* that what they are doing is wrong; you do not need to figure anything out; you can *see* that it is wrong. But...it simply a reflection of your moral "sense". (Harman, 1997, p. 84)

So, Harman claims that the rightness or wrongness of an action is not observable and testable. We can only judge an action by our moral sense. Harman seems to correct in saying moral judgments are not scientific judgments because scientific judgments are testable through observation and experiment. But what is the basis of this observation? When we observe something do we observe it purely or do we perceive it by a theory?

Pure observation is not possible, says Harman. Anything which we observe involves some theories. Observation is theory-laden, and the same principle is applicable to moral observation in Harman's view. According to him, "Moral concepts-Right and Wrong, Good and Bad, Justice and Injustice-also have a place in your theory or system of beliefs and are the concepts they are because of their context". (Ibid, p. 84) Hence, Harman maintains that moral facts are theory-laden. In other words, we judge something right or wrong with reference to the theory which we believe.

Harman argues that "assumption" should be another important term for physical fact. Generally, we intend to make an assumption to explain physical facts, for example, which theory might support

our observation. But it is not *necessary* to make an assumption to explain moral facts. Harman distinguishes two cases clearly. If a physicist wants to test a scientific theory about proton he could make an assumption ‘there is a proton’ to see the vapour trail. This sort of assumption supports a scientific theory. So, this observation confirms an explanation.

Conversely, a moral observation such as, ‘some children burning a cat which is wrong’ does not require an assumption. That is, we do not need to make an assumption ‘the children’s act is wrong’ because such assumption is only psychological and we cannot justify it. As Harman says:

Indeed, an assumption about moral facts would seem to be totally irrelevant to the explanation of your making the judgment you make...It seems to be completely irrelevant to the explanation of your making the judgment you make...It seems to be completely irrelevant to our explanation whether your intuitive immediate judgment is true or false. (Ibid, p. 85)

So, assumption about moral facts is necessarily irrelevant, and the truth or falsity of moral judgment for explanation is also irrelevant according to Harman.

There are two senses of observation in Harman’s view. Scientific facts or theories can be tested in both senses while moral facts or principles can be tested only in one sense. An example will help to clear his position. Suppose that someone sees ‘a hunter killing a nice duck’. This is an observation and let’s call it first sense observation. Then he thinks ‘hunting is morally wrong’. This is also an observation and let’s call it second sense observation.

The second sense of observation is about person’s thinking. So, any moral theory which says that ‘killing animals for mere pleasure is wrong’ might be tested in the first sense. But it cannot be tested in the second sense of observation. Harman states the reason as, “...they do not appear to help explain observations in this second sense of “observation”. Moral principles do not seem to help explain your observing what you observe”. (Ibid, p. 86) Thus, Harman’s point clearly shows that we cannot test moral facts or observations as these are the “observation of what we observe”.



It might be worth noting that Harman basically argues here for an “explanatory chain” between theory or principle and observation. We find this explanatory chain in science whereas it is broken in ethics. Consider the proton example where a physical theory explains the presence of a proton. It also claims a scientific trail, and this trail explains the physicist observation. So, for science, observation itself is an explanation of a theory or principle.

Nonetheless, in the cat burning example, Harman mentions that some ethical principles may explain why the act is wrong but the observation itself is not able to explain the theory because there is no explanatory chain between observation and moral principles. In his words,

It appears to be true that there can be no explanatory chain between moral principles and particular observings in the way that there can be such a chain between scientific principles and particular observings. Conceived as an explanatory theory, morality, unlike science, seems to be cut off from observation. (Ibid, p. 87)

Therefore, Harman’s aim is not to show that there is no moral observation. But rather, he argues for the difference between scientific observation and moral observation. For science, observation constructs the best explanation. The explanatory role of scientific facts provides us reason to believe the scientific observation. In contrast, moral facts do not establish the explanatory chain. The best explanation of moral observation would be unable to include the rightness or wrongness of the act. This explanation only depends on our psychology. We cannot establish mind independent explanation of moral facts. Therefore, in Harman’s view moral facts do not play an explanatory role in our best explanation.

I agree with Harman that the explanatory chain seems to be broken in the explanation of moral properties or moral facts. We cannot explain what the wrong while burning a cat is. We also may not always have universal idea of rightness or wrongness. The very idea of rightness or wrongness which we believe develops through our social norms, culture, custom, and even religion. Every person might be able to explain what is right or wrong to him or her. But may unable to explain what rightness or wrongness universally or objectively is. For example, ‘we should not break our

promise' is a moral norm. To support this moral norm, we need a certain type of ethical theory. However, that ethical theory is only the reflection of an ethicist's observation about promise. He or she might say why breaking promise is moral or immoral. But she or he might not be able to say what the word 'should' explains in the observation. That is why Harman argues that ethical observation is problematic.

However, his position about science is too certain. In other words, Harman does not have any doubt about scientific observation. Since the vapour trail causes, he holds that there must be a proton going through the cloud chamber. This type of certainty might be arguable. Even many literatures in philosophy of science tried to challenge this view. A well established paradigm in philosophy of science is that science always does not give us objective truth because science makes progress through the trial-error method or through revolution. X-ray, Uranium, Oxygen, and many other scientific inventions were possible even though these inventions violated the dominant paradigm of that time. As Kuhn says:

But for men like Kelvin, Crookes, and Roentgen, whose research dealt with radiation theory or with cathode ray tubes, the emergence of X-rays necessarily violated one paradigm as it created another. That is why these rays could be discovered only through something's first going wrong with normal research. (Kuhn, 1963, p. 92)

Therefore, it might be possible that the scientist belief 'there is a proton' is wrong. How can we be sure that similar cause will always produce similar effect in science? If it is, then science cannot make progress because science develops through the refutation of existing paradigm. Miller points out this issue and says:

So even if Harman were allowed to assume the incorrectness of our normative moral theory as part of his argument, this would not allow him to derive any sceptical conclusions that are specifically about morality. The sceptical conclusion would also apply to scientific theory, whereas Harman wants to establish that moral theory is problematic in a way in which scientific theory is not. (Miller, 2003, p. 146)

So, Miller's claim is that we could also doubt scientific theory. I believe Harman actually tries to show that there is a sharp distinction between the methodology of science and morality. He indicates the methodology of observation in science is very different from the methodology of observation in ethics. Later in a similar way, Mackie develops a view that objective moral facts are not possible.

## REALISTS' VIEW ON THE EXPLANATORY ROLE OF MORAL FACTS: STURGEON'S ARGUMENT

In "Moral Explanations", Sturgeon responded to Harman and Mackie's skepticism. He first considered Harman's problem with ethics. As we have just noted Harman shows that the ethicists "thought experiment" cannot be tested against the world, while scientists "thought experiment" or scientific theories can be tested by observation and real experiment. That is, moral principles or moral facts cannot pass the "verificationist challenge". So, Harman concludes that moral facts are unnecessary for our explanation of moral observation.

According to Sturgeon, this argument is no more plausible. By mentioning Newton's law of gravitation and Darwin's theory of evolution he refutes Harman's view. He asks that can we observe or test these two theories in a real situation. Surely not, however, it is possible as Sturgeon believes, if we do not 'isolate' these theories from other foundational theories which already tested. In other words, these theories are based on some ground propositions that should not be isolated. Sturgeon claims, "We do of course base observational predictions on such theories and so test them against experience, but that is because we do *not* consider them in isolation". (Sturgeon, 1998, p. 182-183)

In the similar way, he argues that we cannot test moral observations when we isolate them from moral theories. For example, the utilitarian principle 'maximization of happiness' can be tested only when an act produces the maximum balance of pleasure over pain. An illustration would be helpful.

According to J. S. Mill-the founder of utilitarianism, "each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons". (Cited: West, 2010, p. 188) Now, suppose that a man, though honest, accidentally killed a very influential leader in a small town elsewhere. People demanded that the man should be hanged immediately. Otherwise, they will burn his house and kill all of his family members. In order to save the man's own family members, and preserve territorial harmony, the authority preferred to hang him immediately without proper legal procedure. Since hanging an innocent person would maximize the

aggregate happiness in this context, the authority's preference might be justified. However, the person's hanging cannot be justified if we isolate preference principle and the principle of utility. So, Sturgeon claims that moral facts are justified beliefs, and they certainly play an explanatory role. His other two famous examples for this claim is Adolf Hitler's moral character and counterfactual test of slavery. Suppose Hitler was a morally respectable person. Someone could deduce this conclusion from a sound moral theory. However, we have the historical facts that Hitler was responsible for thousands of death. So, we must have to reject either Hitler was a morally respectable person or he was responsible for thousands of death. As Sturgeon writes, "...so we must give up one of our premises; and the choice of which to abandon is neither difficult nor controversial". (Ibid, p. 184)

Therefore, Sturgeon believes that Harman is totally wrong to say that moral facts play no explanatory role. Are we not being able to justify our belief "Hitler was morally depraved" in this way? Sturgeon's answer is 'Yes', and he says, "I think so, and I shall argue concerning this and other examples that moral beliefs commonly play the explanatory role Harman denies them". (Ibid, p. 185)

In Sturgeon's view, Harman misguided us to show moral facts are not needed to explain our moral beliefs and principles though his own example proves that moral facts are needed. Recall Harman's example about a physicist who thinks 'there is a proton'. How can we explain the physicist thought? Harman says that there are two parts in the explanation of this thought.

Firstly, the physicist *ability* to think which he acquired through a certain psychological set up by working experience and training. Secondly, the physicist *believes* his thought by seeing vapour trail. So, the second part is necessary for the explanation. Sturgeon argues that if scientific facts are sufficient to play the explanatory role, then the physicist does not need the second part. However, He needs the second part for the best explanation. In a similar manner, moral facts are needed for the best explanation of our moral beliefs. As Sturgeon writes, "My suspicion, in fact, is that moral facts are needed in the sense explained, that they will turn out to belong in our best overall explanatory picture of the world, even in the long run..." (Ibid, p. 189) Thus, Sturgeon believes that

moral facts have explanatory power and moral explanation reasonably contribute to the best explanation.

Sturgeon's second example is about the wrongness in "Slavery" which he calls the "counterfactual test". We all know that slavery was an ancient tradition. But it exists few centuries back in the U.K, France, and some parts in the U.S.A. People raised their voice against slavery, as a result, there occurred a revolution against slavery. Why? Because people think that slavery is immoral. So, the word 'slavery' itself explains the wrongness behind it. Now, is the word 'wrongness' completely irrelevant for slavery? Or, does the word not explain our moral observations and moral beliefs about slavery? Sturgeon writes, "...the American antislavery movement would have grown even if slavery had not become more oppressive as the nineteenth century progressed....Here again it hardly seems 'completely irrelevant' to the explanation whether or not these moral facts obtained." (Ibid, p. 199)

This is also a counterfactual argument, and Sturgeon believes that the counterfactual test will strengthen his claim. If moral facts do not play an explanatory role, then we should be able to think Hitler was not morally wrong and slavery was not oppressive. In his words, "To assess this claim, we need to conceive a situation in which Hitler was *not* morally depraved and consider the question whether in that situation he would still have done what he did." (Ibid, p. 203)

So, Sturgeon's claim is that moral facts are completely relevant for explanation because without moral fact we cannot provide a plausible explanation. In his view, the counterfactual test satisfactorily proves that moral facts are relevant and play crucial role to explain the wrongness in Hitler's behaviour, and slavery as well. Moreover, the moral properties are supervenience on natural properties. He writes, "That is why I believe that, if Hitler hadn't been morally depraved, he wouldn't have done those things, and hence that the fact of his moral depravity is relevant to an explanation of what he did." (Ibid, p. 203)

However, I believe that Sturgeon's arguments for moral facts are not satisfactory. His concept of counterfactual test and supervenience properties are very interesting. As Railton says, "The supervenience of moral valuation helps to explain a very important fact of our moral life." (Railton, 2010, p. 300) But this idea does not successfully answer Harman's problem about ethics. The

“Hitler” example and the “slavery” example both are based on the historical data, social convention, custom, and social structure.

Another problem is that when we do not have any idea about a term, do we able to formulate our explanation? An example will clear the point. Suppose that some children throw some ‘Reneta’ to a cat. Now, we do not have any idea about what ‘Reneta’ is. It might be like as gasoline, or as dry fish, or as combination of both. Does the word ‘Reneta’ explain anything to us? In other words, can we judge whether the act is right or wrong? So, we could only observe the fact, not the morality behind it. Observation is useful because without observation (physical or logical) we cannot have the explanation.

Sturgeon’s idea of ‘supervenience’ is similar to Plato’s ideal world, though it also defined as, “a thing’s goodness is said to “supervene” on its other properties, where supervenience is a kind of necessary dependence.” (Baldwin, 2010, p. 293) How does Sturgeon know that the moral properties are supervenience properties? Do we need any special faculty to observe them? What is the ontological status of these properties? How do they differ from dependent properties? There are no answers of these questions.

**DO MORAL FACTS PLAY AN EXPLANATORY ROLE?**

Contrary to moral realists, I believe that moral facts do not play an explanatory role because their arguments for the moral facts are not entirely convincing to me. I will explore some arguments in favor of my claim.

Firstly, the origin of moral facts is not unified, and therefore, the explanation of same facts may differ from person to person, society to society, culture to culture. How do we know moral facts? We know moral facts primarily from our family. Here is a huge variation. We do not bear the same family structure. Moreover, the family values differ basically for religion, culture, social structure, and economy. Even in the same family members might have different opinion about single moral fact. Further, we have broader context, such as society, and culture. How knowledge develops in a society, the use of sophisticated technology in that particular society, etc. are also determinants of moral facts.

Consider an example. Suppose that an orphan boy grown up in a missionary society might believe 'abortion is wrong'. The explanation to him is that 'killing an innocent human being is a great sin'. As abortion is killing, it is wrong. The word 'abortion' appears to him 'wrong'. In contrast, a young girl grown up in a liberal society might believe 'abortion is right' because women have the right to take decision on their own lives. Society cannot impose its values on her own body.

It seems to me that both persons are correct in relation to the moral fact of abortion for moral facts are only the reflection of our thinking, learning, and experience. This argument is not the same as Mackie's 'argument of relativity'. Since I am not only saying moral facts are relative but also claiming that societies, cultures, and persons, are responsible for this relativity. My intention is to focus on the origin of moral facts.

Secondly, if moral facts play an explanatory role, then the advancement of moral thinking seems impossible. Moral theories were developed through moral disagreements. People clarify or even abandon their moral believe being convinced by different moral theories. Blackburn correctly



writes, “We have to filter those through our own sense of what is good or bad, right or wrong. We may defer to authority, but we retain the power to judge its deliverances.” (Blackburn, 2010, p. 254) If moral facts are objective then it will be like religious facts because religious facts are not changeable.

But I admit that a true religion would demonstrate some unchangeable moral values. However, even though these moral values are unchangeable they completely depend on the religious facts. One who does not believe in that specific religion may disagree with these values. We may call this disagreement a moral disagreement which may contribute to rectify existing moral theories.

For instance, hundreds of year ago people believed that ‘animals are created to serve the human beings’. They are like machines. We can do upon them whatever we like. Now scientists showed that animals have sentience like us. They also feel pleasure and pain. So, recently ethicists claim that animals deserve some sort of ethical treatment. We should not torture animal unnecessarily. Their argument is that if rationality is the sole criterion of morality then at least great apes deserve the same moral status as human beings. Though all ethicists are not accepting this view at present, they agreed that animals have a right not to be tortured. So, moral facts have changed due to scientific invention. The subjectivity of moral thinking is not a demerit rather than a positive thing in the sense that we can adjust our moral values. We explain moral facts, and give meaning for a certain period of time. As Rescher insightfully observes, “Morality as such consists in the pursuit, through variable and context-relative means, of invariant and objectively implementable ends that are rooted in a commitment to the best interests of people in general.” (Rescher, 2008, p. 408)

Thirdly, moral facts are completely hypothetical, therefore, if there is any explanation that would also be hypothetical. Moral facts are simply the belief of an individual, and so these are hypothetical facts. Consider Sturgeon’s example of Hitler’s immorality. Hitler was a man of war and killed many innocent people. However, one has the full right to accept or reject any hypothesis. And surely people have accepted the hypothetical explanation that Hitler’s act was wrong. Similarly, the moral facts about slavery, gay marriage, abortion, euthanasia, are hypothetical. We build our own morality and then judge whether these acts are right or wrong. I think the revolution against slavery was not

for its wrongness but most people accepted the hypothetical explanation that ‘using human beings as a means is wrong’ and they protested slavery.

Fourthly, if moral facts play an explanatory role it should be repetitive. One of the major properties of scientific explanation is that it is repetitive. Any scientific fact which is true in south part of the world should be true in north part of the world. The experiment, observation, and explanation of that fact is same anywhere. Therefore, science is repetitive. Conversely, morality is not. For example, currently the morality of euthanasia depends on the concept of ‘unbearable sufferings’. But there is no universal definition of ‘unbearable sufferings’. If the word euthanasia explains some moral facts, then it should explain unbearable sufferings in a repetitive manner. It is generally accepted that when a person suffered by very painful disease and no hope to life she is facing unbearable sufferings.

However, a healthy person without any disease might feel unbearable sufferings. For instance, consider the most famous music composer to whom the meaning of life simply refers to create excellent music. She is now unable to compose any music for some unseen reasons. Her intense depression eventually makes this world extremely painful, and she might reasonably believe that her sufferings are unbearable. In a very few countries, the conditions of unbearable sufferings have been formulated. Even though the final decision about euthanasia ultimately depends on the doctor and the person we cannot test repeatedly whether the person feels unbearable sufferings. Therefore, the moral fact related to euthanasia is not repetitive as well and the claim of its explanatory role is misleading.

Fifthly, there is an unsolutionable gap between the moral facts and the explanation. It seems to me that moral facts and their explanatory role are not embedded in. We certainly find a gap between them. Like Hume’s remarkable causal theory, Harman corrects our thinking about explanation. When we see smoke we infer there is fire because we always see smoke is the result of fire. And we then establish their relationship. In the same way, when we see someone torturing a dog we explain he is doing wrong. In this case, we try to establish moral facts as a necessary condition which explains our belief torturing the dog is wrong.

However, we just omit the gap between the moral facts and our beliefs, and impose a necessary condition by our psychological set up. Here is the problem that realists fail to solve. Consider the following explanation: “Nowadays most agree, in theory if not in practice, that, apart from special cases like self- defence, war, possibly capital punishment, and one or two other doubtful areas, it is wrong to kill human beings irrespective of their race, religion, class, or nationality.” (Singer, 1993, p. 85)

This explanation tries to establish the moral fact that ‘killing human being is wrong’. When we see a man is killing another man and the man is dying we feel strong regret for that man. Unconsciously we put ourselves in the place of dying man, and feel his suffering and pain. Our intuition or personal reasoning says us that wrongness. We could consider Fisher’s comment in this regard. He mentions, “If we grant that (“Peeling the skin off babies is morally wrong”) is true and if we grant that what *makes* things true are appropriate facts, then there must exist the moral fact that *peeling the skin off babies is wrong*.” (Fisher, 2010, p. 346) However, immediately after that comment he perfectly writes, “So, if-and ...it is a big “if”” (Ibid, p. 346) Therefore, *we* are, not moral facts, to explain the wrongness of removing babies’ skin, and our societies must not permit any such wrongness.

**CONCLUSION**

Moral facts do not play an explanatory role in our best explanation. Moral anti-realists are correct in distinguishing between observation in science and observation in ethics. Harman plausibly shows us that moral facts are not a necessary condition for explanation. We do not need to have moral facts for explanation. Although he does not reject the existence of moral facts his argument is satisfactory enough to show that the explanatory chain to be broken between the observation and moral principles. However, it seems to me, he over emphasizes the objectivity of scientific explanation. I find the realists' claim that moral facts fit our best explanation unsatisfactory. Sturgeon's argument of counterfactual test and supervinence properties are not plausible at all.

I developed some arguments to reject the objective moral facts and their role in the explanation. These are: firstly, the origins of moral facts are not unified. Secondly, objective moral facts will abandon the progress of moral thinking. Thirdly, as moral facts are hypothetical moral explanations are also hypothetical. Fourthly, moral explanations are not repetitive, and finally, there is an unsolutionable gap between the moral facts and the explanation. Therefore, I believe that moral facts do not play an explanatory role.

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