Euthyphro dilemma

I was interested to read your article on the Euthyphro dilemma. In stressing the common stance of moral realism between conflicting views, the author seeks to assert that we have a sufficient basis for 'campaigning for a better world' whatever our particular viewpoint.\(^1\) While generally true, I do not think the meta-ethical question can be avoided forever, especially when deep tensions between views obtain.

For example, I as a theist feel a moral duty to raise my children to know God, whereas a well-known atheist would consider this tantamount to child abuse.

Whose 'better world'?

In these discussions it is all too easy to confuse moral ontology (its ultimate grounding) with moral epistemology (how we come to know moral values). Do you need to believe in God to live a moral life? Of course not, the Bible says as much (Romans 2:14–15). There are many ways to become aware of morality that don't involve religion. Rather, what you actually need is a transcendent ground of morality to have any objective values whether you believe in God or not. And please, please note that the Euthyphro dilemma won't help you as a disproof of a theistic God as the ground of objective morality. It isn't a true dilemma for a start as the theist has recourse to a third option, namely that God IS the good, it is His nature, and thus neither decided arbitrarily by his will nor external to him.

Daniel Mounce, 
Sunnybank Medical Centre, Towngate, Wyke, Bradford, BD12 9NG. 
E-mail: danielmounce@doctors.org.uk

REFERENCE


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Correction

The authors' affiliations were incorrectly published in an article from the May 2013 issue of the journal: Shaw EJ, Sutcliffe D, Lacey T, Stokes T. Assessing depression severity using the UK Quality and Outcomes Framework depression indicators: a systematic review. Br J Gen Pract 2013; DOI: 10.3399/bjgp136671697. The correct affiliation is Health and Social Care Directorate, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Manchester. The address for correspondence is Tim Stokes, Primary Care Clinical Sciences, School of Health and Population Sciences, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT. We apologise for this error.

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