

## Chapter 2: Subjectivism, Relativism, and Emotivism

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### CONCEPT MAP

- I. Subject Relativism
  - A. Objectivism/Relativism
  
- II. Cultural Relativism
  - A. The Argument for Cultural Relativism
    - 1. Moral and Nonmoral Beliefs
  - B. Cultural Relativism and Tolerance
  - C. Implausible Implications of Cultural Relativism
    - 1. Moral Infallibility
    - 2. Social Reformers and Relativism
    - 3. Cultural Relativism and Disagreement
  
- III. Emotivism
  - A. Cognitivism/Noncognitivism
  - B. The Emotivist Challenge
  - C. Criticisms of Emotivism
    - 1. No Real Disagreements
    - 2. A Curious View of Reasons in Moral Discourse
    - 3. No Such Thing as Goodness or Badness

### MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Subjective relativism is the doctrine that:
  - a. an action is morally right if one approves of it.
  - b. an action is morally right if one's culture approves of it.
  - c. actions are judged by objective standards.
  - d. an action is morally right even if no one approves of it.

ANS: A                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 22                      TOP: I.A. Objectivism/Relativism  
 MSC: Factual

2. Objectivism says that:
  - a. some moral norms are universal.
  - b. all moral norms are universal.
  - c. moral norms must be applied in the same way in every culture.
  - d. universal moral norms must be applied only within a given culture.

ANS: A                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 22                      TOP: I.A. Objectivism/Relativism  
 MSC: Factual

3. Objectivism is the view that:
  - a. moral principles are rigid rules that have no exceptions.
  - b. there are no objective moral principles.
  - c. some moral principles are valid for everyone.
  - d. moral utterances are neither true nor false.

ANS: C                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 22                      TOP: I.A. Objectivism/Relativism  
 MSC: Factual

4. Subjective relativism implies that when Jane says, “I think abortion is wrong,” and John replies, “I think abortion is permissible,” Jane and John are:
- a. having a moral disagreement.
  - b. really saying the same thing.
  - c. not having a moral disagreement.
  - d. not entirely serious.

ANS: C                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 22                      TOP: I.A. Objectivism/Relativism  
MSC: Factual

5. Subjective relativism implies that in the rendering of any moral opinion, each person is:
- a. incapable of moral judgments.
  - b. incapable of being in error.
  - c. morally fallible.
  - d. infallible on some moral judgments.

ANS: B                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 24                      TOP: I.A. Objectivism/Relativism  
MSC: Factual

6. Both objectivists and cultural relativists agree that:
- a. the truth of moral judgments depends on whether one’s culture approves of them.
  - b. moral judgments differ from culture to culture.
  - c. moral judgments do not differ from culture to culture.
  - d. the truth of moral judgments does not depend on whether one’s culture approves of them.

ANS: B                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 25                      TOP: I.A. Objectivism/Relativism  
MSC: Factual

7. The conclusion of the most common argument for cultural relativism says that:
- a. people’s judgments about right and wrong differ from culture to culture.
  - b. right and wrong are relative to culture, but there are also objective moral principles.
  - c. right and wrong are relative to one’s approval or disapproval.
  - d. right and wrong are relative to culture, and there are no objective moral principles.

ANS: D                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 26  
TOP: II.A. The Argument for Cultural Relativism                      MSC: Factual

8. Some relativists think that disagreements among cultures about the morality of “female circumcision” are evidence for:
- a. cultural relativism.
  - b. cultural objectivism.
  - c. cultural emotivism.
  - d. cultural subjectivism.

ANS: A                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 26  
TOP: II.A. The Argument for Cultural Relativism                      MSC: Factual

9. According to the relativist’s main argument, if Culture X and Culture Y disagree about the morality of physician-assisted suicide, that shows that:
- a. right and wrong are not relative to cultures.
  - b. physician-assisted suicide is permissible.
  - c. either Culture X or Culture Y must be correct.
  - d. no view can be objectively correct.

ANS: D                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 27  
TOP: II.A. The Argument for Cultural Relativism                      MSC: Factual

10. Objectivists argue that the diversity of moral judgments across cultures may indicate NOT that there’s disagreement about moral beliefs, but that:
- a. the moral beliefs do not matter.
  - b. there are divergent nonmoral beliefs.
  - c. nonmoral beliefs do not differ.
  - d. disagreement is not possible.

ANS: B                    DIF: Medium            REF: 27  
TOP: II.A.1. Moral and Nonmoral Beliefs                    MSC: Factual

11. Objectivists point out there is no necessary connection between tolerance and:
- a. world peace.
  - b. intolerance.
  - c. cultural relativism.
  - d. cultural realism.

ANS: C                    DIF: Medium            REF: 28  
TOP: II.B. Cultural Relativism and Tolerance                    MSC: Factual

12. Suppose a culture approves of beheading young women for merely holding hands with a man. According to cultural relativism, the beheadings are:
- a. neither justified nor unjustified.
  - b. morally unjustified.
  - c. morally justified.
  - d. objectively justified.

ANS: D                    DIF: Easy                REF: 28  
TOP: II.C. Implausible Implications of Cultural Relativism                    MSC: Factual

13. Cultural relativism implies that the abolition of slavery:
- a. represents moral progress.
  - b. may or may not represent moral progress.
  - c. can be explained.
  - d. cannot be regarded as moral progress.

ANS: D                    DIF: Easy                REF: 28  
TOP: II.C. Implausible Implications of Cultural Relativism                    MSC: Factual

14. Suppose your culture endorses the view that all wars are wrong. It follows from cultural relativism that your culture:
- a. cannot be mistaken about the morality of war.
  - b. must disagree with other cultures about the morality of war.
  - c. is fallible in moral matters.
  - d. is rarely mistaken about moral matters.

ANS: A                    DIF: Medium            REF: 28                    TOP: II.C.1. Moral Infallibility  
MSC: Factual

15. Cultural relativism implies that the civil rights leader and social reformer Martin Luther King Jr. was:
- a. a product of his culture.
  - b. wrong about his moral reforms.
  - c. neither right nor wrong about his moral reforms.
  - d. objectively right but relativistically wrong.

ANS: B                    DIF: Medium            REF: 28                    TOP: II.C.2. Social Reformers and Relativism  
MSC: Applied

16. For a cultural relativist, when two people in the same culture disagree on a moral issue, what they are really disagreeing about is:
- a. the strength of the arguments presented.
  - b. nonmoral issues.
  - c. objective moral truth.
  - d. whether their society endorses a particular view.

ANS: D                    DIF: Difficult            REF: 29                    TOP: II.C.3. Cultural Relativism and Disagreement  
MSC: Applied

17. Cultural relativism may be nearly impossible to apply to moral issues because:
- a. we belong to just one society.

- b. it is not possible to belong to more than one society.
- c. the term *society* has no meaning.
- d. there is no way for us to choose which society we belong to.

ANS: D                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 30  
 TOP: II.C. Implausible Implications of Cultural Relativism                      MSC: Factual

18. Cognitivism is the view that moral statements:
- a. are neither true nor false.
  - b. can be true or false.
  - c. cannot be understood.
  - d. have nonmoral properties.

ANS: B                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 30  
 TOP: III.A. Cognitivism/Noncognitivism                      MSC: Factual

19. Noncognitivism is the view that:
- a. moral judgments are almost never true.
  - b. moral judgments are statements.
  - c. moral judgments are not statements that can be true or false.
  - d. moral theories can be true or false.

ANS: C                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 30  
 TOP: III.A. Cognitivism/Noncognitivism                      MSC: Factual

20. For the emotivist, the moral utterance “Lying is wrong” signifies something like:
- a. “Lying—boo, hiss!”
  - b. “Lying may be wrong.”
  - c. “Lying is immoral!”
  - d. “Lying has occurred!”

ANS: A                      DIF: Medium                      REF: 30  
 TOP: III.B. The Emotivist Challenge                      MSC: Factual

21. A common criticism of emotivism is that:
- a. the emotivist’s notion of disagreement is plausible but wrong.
  - b. the emotivist’s notion of disagreement is radically different from our ordinary view.
  - c. the emotivist’s notion of disagreement is too much like the idea of disengagement.
  - d. emotivism cannot be distinguished from other metaethical theories.

ANS: B                      DIF: Difficult                      REF: 31  
 TOP: III.C.1. No Real Disagreements                      MSC: Applied

22. According to emotivism, to offer reasons for a moral judgment is to:
- a. provide moral reasons that can influence someone’s acceptance of a moral claim.
  - b. provide reasons that have a logical or cognitive connection to a moral judgment.
  - c. provide moral facts that can influence someone’s attitude.
  - d. provide nonmoral facts that can influence someone’s attitude.

ANS: D                      DIF: Easy                      REF: 31  
 TOP: III.C.2. A Curious View of Reasons in Moral Discourse                      MSC: Applied

23. Emotivism implies that:
- a. moral goodness and badness describe real properties.
  - b. there is no such thing as moral goodness and badness.
  - c. moral goodness and badness are often a feature of pain.
  - d. moral goodness and badness are rarely a feature of pain.

ANS: B                      DIF: Medium                      REF: 31  
 TOP: III.C.3. No Such Thing as Goodness or Badness                      MSC: Applied

24. Emotivists can admit that thousands of innocent people were killed at the behest of Osama bin Laden and that Ted Bundy killed more than 100 women, but they cannot say that in these events:
- a. evil occurred.
  - b. killings took place.
  - c. people caused the events.
  - d. bin Laden and Bundy acted violently.

ANS: A                      DIF: Medium                      REF: 32

TOP: III.C.3. No Such Thing as Goodness or Badness                      MSC: Applied

25. Our commonsense moral experiences suggest that:
- a. nothing is morally good or bad in itself.
  - b. some things are morally good and some things are morally bad.
  - c. our commonsense moral intuition is always correct.
  - d. good and bad things happen for no reason.

ANS: B                      DIF: Medium                      REF: 32

TOP: III.C.3. No Such Thing as Goodness or Badness                      MSC: Applied