



## Lecture 3

Moral Relativism (and the risks of excessive tolerance)  
vs Moral Objectivism

## 第三讲

道德相对主义（以及过度宽容的风险）  
对比道德客观主义





## In 2022, Microsoft disrupted Russian cyberattacks targeting Ukraine

- “We recently observed attacks targeting Ukrainian entities from Strontium, a Russian GRU-connected actor we have tracked for years. This week, we were able to disrupt some of Strontium’s attacks on targets in Ukraine.” Microsoft (2022)
- A moral relativist may ask: “Why interfere? Isn’t it all a matter of perspective? Russia and the global South tend to support Russia or be neutral, much of the West supports Ukraine. Your view clearly depends on where you are from”



## 2022年，微软成功阻止了俄罗斯针对乌克兰的网络攻击

- “我们近期发现，一个名为‘锶’（Strontium）的俄罗斯总参谋部情报总局（GRU）关联组织正对乌克兰相关实体发起攻击；该组织我们已追踪多年。本周，我们成功阻止了‘锶’组织针对乌克兰目标的部分攻击。”——微软（2022年）
- 一位道德相对主义者可能会问：“为何要干涉？这难道不全取决于视角吗？俄罗斯及全球南方国家往往支持俄罗斯或持中立立场，而西方多数国家则支持乌克兰。你的观点显然取决于你来自何处。”





## According to the moral relativist

- Moral relativist – “It’s naïve to believe in universal moral truths!”
- From the point of view of each culture, each is right and there’s no other impartial/neutral/objective point of view”
- A: “From the point of view of Ukraine, Russia is invading, so a cyber attack on Russia is justified”
- B: “From the point of view of Russia, Ukraine is getting friendly with NATO, so a military operation and a cyber attack on Ukraine are justified”
- The moral relativist will say each claim is correct *in its own cultural environment*. To them morality is relative to one’s culture, social group, or even purely personal point of view. So for the relativist:
  - **1. Many contrasting views can all be correct without contradiction**
  - **2. We can’t judge *across* cultures.**



## 根据道德相对主义者观点

- 道德相对主义者——“认为……是天真的”坚信普世道德真理！
- 从每种文化自身的立场来看，各自都是正确的，而并不存在其他超然/中立/客观的立场。
- A: “从乌克兰的立场来看，俄罗斯正在入侵，因此对俄罗斯发动网络攻击是正当的。”
- B: “从俄罗斯的立场来看，乌克兰正日益亲近北约，因此开展军事行动并对乌克兰发动网络攻击是正当的。”
- 道德相对主义者会指出，上述两种主张在其自身的文化环境中是正确的。对他们而言，道德标准取决于个人所处的文化、社会群体，甚至纯粹基于个人的立场。因此，在相对主义者看来：
  - **1. 许多看似对立的观点实际上均可成立，且彼此并不矛盾**
  - **2. 我们无法跨文化进行评判。across**



## Relativism may affect your decision-making at work

### Example: Dark patterns in ATMs

- \$50 commission to get 200 Euro? I said no.
- After being forced to go through many screens where the CANCEL button was on the left, one last screen placed a “Go ahead / I agree” option on the left, and I must have accidentally clicked it.
- A relativist would say:
  - a) From the point of view of the user, clearly the menus should be designed to assist you in getting what you want. **Dark patterns are unethical**
  - B) From the point of view of the bank, it's the user's responsibility to read very carefully before clicking that they agree, even if they have to click through 20 menus. **Dark patterns are ethical.**
- The relativist: “See? There's no single objective/perspective-free moral truth”



## 相对主义可能影响你在职场中的决策——以ATM机中的“黑暗模式”为例

- 收取50美元手续费兑换200欧元？我拒绝了。
- 在被迫连续浏览多屏界面（其中“取消”按钮始终位于左侧）后，最后一屏却将“继续操作／我同意”选项置于左侧，我可能因此误点了该选项。
- 相对主义者会说：
  - a) 从用户视角来看，菜单显然应设计为协助用户达成其目标。 **黑暗模式是不道德的**
  - b) 从银行视角来看，用户有责任在点击前仔细阅读所有内容。

他们表示同意，哪怕必须点击穿过20个菜单。 **暗黑模式是合乎道德的。**

- 相对主义者：“看吧？并不存在唯一确定的客观的／无立场偏见的道德真理”



## Objection:

“Moral relativism sounds like a very extreme view.

Does it even exist?

Is it a strawman?”

Even though full-on moral relativists may be rare, relativist thought and speech is real and a problem

- Arguments based on moral relativism do exist and are quite common. Some examples:
  - 1. Content Moderation:**  
A global social media platform must decide whether to censor political speech. In some countries, far right speech is harmful propaganda; in others, it's seen as free expression. “Facebook is just following American values of freedom!”
  - 2. Hacking for Justice:**  
A group of ethical hackers exposes a corrupt government by leaking classified documents. They are hailed as heroes in some countries but labeled as traitors by those loyal to the regime. “It’s all a matter of point of view!”
  - 3. Algorithmic Fairness:**  
An AI system uses different data sets for job applications in two countries. In one country, race and gender-based affirmative action policies are mandated and accepted to fix generational systemic racism and sexism; in the other, considering gender and race is seen as enforcing discrimination. “Meritocracy and family values are the standard in my country!”

尽管彻底的道德相对主义者可能较为罕见，

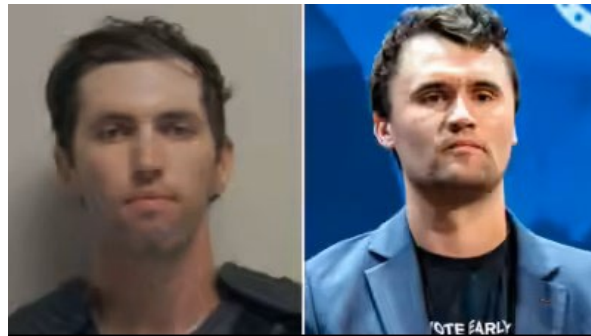
但相对主义的思维方式和言论确实存在，且构成一个问题。

- 基于道德相对主义的论证确实存在，而且相当普遍。一些例子如下：
  - 1. 内容审核:**  
一家全球性社交媒体平台必须决定是否对政治言论进行审查。在某些国家，极右翼言论被视为有害的宣传；而在另一些国家，它则被看作是言论自由的体现。 “脸书只是在遵循美国的自由价值观！”
  - 2. 为正义而黑客攻击:**  
一群道德黑客通过泄露机密文件揭露了一个腐败政府。他们在一些国家被誉为英雄，却被该政权的拥护者贴上“叛国者”的标签。 “这完全取决于观察视角！”
  - 3. 算法公平性:**  
某人工智能系统在两个国家的求职申请中使用了不同的数据集。在一个国家，基于种族和性别的平权行动政策是法律强制要求且广为接受的，旨在纠正代际累积的系统性种族主义与性别歧视；而在另一个国家，将性别和种族因素纳入考量则被视为强化歧视。 “精英主义与家庭价值观才是我国的标准！”



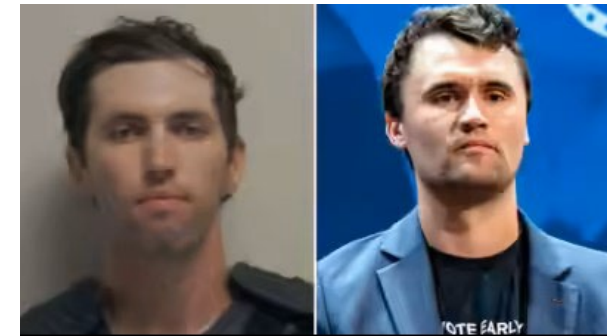
Objection: “But isn’t hypermoralism, leading to polarization, the real problem?”

- Some will argue: Isn’t relativism about having a lot of tolerance? Isn’t tolerance fantastic and precisely what we need to fix polarization? Live and let live!
- No, both **hypermoralism** (demanding purity and perfect alignment, no tolerance) and **moral relativism** (too much tolerance) are serious problems and both connect to polarization.
- We need to get tolerance *just right*
- Let’s look at some examples of both hypermoralism and relativism
- Why mention politics? Because clearly political views affect ethical views on what is fair regarding freedoms, privacy, how we treat others



反对意见：“但导致两极分化的超道德主义，难道不才是真正的症结所在吗？”

- 有些人会争辩道：“相对主义不正是强调高度的包容性吗？而包容性难道不是极好的品质，恰恰是我们化解两极分化所亟需的吗？大家各自安好、互不干涉！”
- 不，**过度道德主义**（要求绝对纯洁与完全一致，毫无包容余地）和**道德相对主义**（包容过度）都是严重问题，且二者均与两极分化密切相关。
- 我们需要将包容性把握得恰到好处
- 让我们来看一些过度道德主义与相对主义的具体实例
- 为何要提及政治？因为显而易见，政治立场会深刻影响我们在自由、隐私以及如何对待他人等议题上的伦理判断，进而左右我们对“公平”的理解



## Political views affect moral opinions

- **Hypermoralism on the left**

- **Puritanical hypermoralistic intolerance**

- “Be with us 100% now or be cancelled”. Issues: black and white views on Palestine and trans rights (genuine issues but taken to an extreme of required purity and compliance)
- Example: If you say that “Israel has a right to defend itself” I won’t talk to you again (trying to corner others into black and white positions)

- **Relativist arguments to muddy the waters:**

- 1. Russia is just doing what the US does in South America. If it’s OK for the US, it’s OK for Russia
- 2. Afghanistan is thriving under the Taliban. We may not understand but they are doing their own thing



## 政治立场影响道德判断

- **左翼的过度道德主义**

- **清教徒式的、过度道德主义的不宽容**

- “此刻必须百分之百站队，否则将被取消资格”。相关议题：巴勒斯坦问题与跨性别权利问题（本属真实而重要的议题，却被推向极端，要求绝对的道德纯洁性与无条件服从）
- 例如：若你表示“以色列有权自卫”，我便不再与你交谈（试图迫使他人接受非黑即白的立场）

- **以相对主义论点混淆视听：**

- 1. 俄罗斯在做的，不过是美国在南美洲所做的事情。如果美国这么做可以接受，那么俄罗斯这么做也同样可以接受。
- 2. 阿富汗在塔利班统治下正蓬勃发展。我们或许难以理解，但他们确实在按自己的方式行事。



- **Hypermoralism on the right**

- **Puritanical hypermoralistic *intolerance*** – “The radical left is destroying family values and eroding freedoms. Ban abortion, stop white racism, stop European cultural and racial decay. Stop the Great Replacement. Long live ICE”
- **Relativist arguments** to muddy the waters –
  - 1. Trump: there are “very fine people on both sides”
  - 2. Elon Musk stating that “The ‘Everyone is Hitler’ attack is sooo tired” in response to his alleged “Nazi salute”.
- Context: Musk supports far-right parties in Europe and several far-right political figures: Tommy Robinson (former leader of English Defence League) and Geert Wilders (Party for Freedom). Musk: “Only AfD can save Germany”



Hypermoralism and  
relativism connect

Saying: “You have no  
tolerance” is a way to  
enforce hypermoralism  
on freedom of speech

- **右翼的过度道德主义**

- **清教徒式的过度道德主义**不宽容 —— “激进左翼正在摧毁家庭价值观、侵蚀自由。禁止堕胎，遏制白人种族主义，阻止欧洲文化与种族的衰落。阻止‘大置换’。美国移民与海关执法局（ICE）万岁！”
- **相对主义论点**混淆视听——
  - 1. 特朗普称： ‘双方都有非常优秀的人士。’
  - 2. 埃隆·马斯克在回应其被指行‘纳粹礼’一事时称： ‘动辄将所有人比作希特勒的攻击方式实在令人厌倦。’
- 背景：马斯克支持欧洲多个极右翼政党及若干极右翼政治人物，包括英国国防联盟（EDL）前领导人汤米·罗宾逊（Tommy Robinson）以及荷兰自由党（PVV）领袖基尔特·威尔德斯（Geert Wilders）。马斯克表示： ‘唯有德国选择党（AfD）能够拯救德国。’





Moral relativism is a popular view sometimes summarized as: “It’s wrong to judge!” (other cultures)



- **Note:** keep in mind that most relativists can consistently judge others, just **not judge *outside their culture***. It’s only in the most extreme version of relativism (culture of one – “I live by my own rules!”) that a relativist won’t judge anyone at all.

- A few reasons individuals often invoke for refusing to judge others:

- Our judgements of others are fallible
- There is disagreement about the norms of conventional morality
- We cannot fully know someone else’s motivations for acting
- We should be tolerant
- Those who judge are not perfect themselves! So it’s hypocritical to judge

- Some conclude: “We should never judge others!”

- **This may seem like a tempting view, but it is wrong**

道德相对主义是一种广为流行的观点，有时被概括为：“评判他人是错误的！”（指其他文化）



- **注意：**需谨记，大多数相对主义者能够一贯地评判他人，只是 **无法对 自身文化之外 的人进行评判**。唯有在极端版本的相对主义（即“唯我文化”——“我只遵循自己的规则！”）下，相对主义者才完全不评判任何人。

- 人们拒绝评判他人的若干常见理由：

- 我们对他人的评判难免有误
- 人们对传统道德规范存在分歧

- 我们无法完全了解他人行为背后的动机

- 我们应当秉持宽容态度
- 那些妄加评判的人自身也并非完美无缺！因此，对他人妄加评判实属虚伪之举。

- 有些人得出结论：“我们绝不可评判他人！”

- **这种观点看似颇具吸引力，但实际上并不正确**

## Progress so far and what we'll discuss today

- Lecture 1
- Q: So is there is genuine moral action?
- **A: Yes.**
- Lecture 2
- Q: How to determine what to do, then? Convention/tradition?
- **A: No. Convention can get it wrong.**
- Lecture 3
- Q: OK, I won't assume the status quo is always correct, but there are no objective moral standards! Moral norms are always cultural. So the best we can do is not judge other cultures!
- **A: Wrong. We must reject relativism. It's our moral duty to judge (i.e. morally *evaluate* – and possibly do something about it).**
- **Crucial – the simple act of rejecting relativism (therefore concluding that at least some values are objective and apply to all in the same situation) *still* won't tell us what to do!**

截至目前的进展及  
接下来将探讨的内容

we 将探讨的内容

今天

- 第1讲
- 问：那么，是否存在真正意义上的道德行为？
- 答：是的。
- 第二讲
- 问：那么，该如何确定该做什么呢？遵循惯例或传统？
- **答：不。惯例也可能出错。**
- 第三讲
- 问：好吧，我不会假定现状永远正确，但并不存在客观的道德标准！道德规范始终具有文化属性。因此，我们所能做的最佳选择便是不对其他文化妄加评判！
- **A：错误。我们必须拒斥相对主义。评判（即在道德上评价——并可能据此采取行动）是我们的道德义务。**
- **至关重要——拒斥相对主义这一简单行为（从而得出至少某些价值是客观的且具普遍性的结论）仍然无法告诉我们该怎么做！**

“We shouldn’t judge!” – one source of this dangerous idea in Western culture – Judeo-Christian values

- Note that this is not a criticism of Judeo-Christian values as a whole! Just these points – if taken *literally*, they are wrong
- Don’t judge / Judge like you want to be judged
- “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
- Don’t judge others as you’re not perfect / Judge yourself first
- “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

- 请注意，这并非对犹太-基督教价值观整体的批评！仅针对以下几点——若按字面意义理解，这些观点是错误的。
- 勿论断他人 / 当以你希望被论断的方式论断他人
- “你们不要论断人，免得你们被论断。因为你们怎样论断人，也必怎样被论断；你们用什么量器量给人，也必用什么量器量给你们。”
- 勿论断他人，因你自己并不完美／当先省察自身
- “为什么看见你弟兄眼中有刺，却不想自己眼中有梁木呢？你自己眼中有梁木，怎能对你弟兄说‘容我帮你去掉眼中的刺’呢？你这假冒为善的人！先去掉自己眼中的梁木，然后才能看得清楚，去掉你弟兄眼中的刺。”



## Appeal to Hypocrisy/No moral high ground – fallacious arguments

- The idea that one needs **moral high ground** to acquire the authority to make true claims about morality is mistaken
- This is based on an **appeal to hypocrisy**: “You are hypocritical, therefore your claim can be ignored”
- But “appeal to hypocrisy” is a well understood *fallacy* (a logically invalid argument)
- Why? Because these are two entirely distinct and independent issues (i.e. they don’t affect each other):
- A) whether an action is morally wrong or not
- B) whether the person making a moral claim/judgement acts in accordance with their own judgement

## 诉诸虚伪／并无道德制高点——谬误性论证

- 认为一个人必须拥有**道德制高点**，才有权就道德问题作出真实主张，这种观点是错误的
- 这基于一种**诉诸虚伪**的论证方式：“你言行不一，因此你的主张可被忽视”
- 但“诉诸虚伪”是一种广为人知的逻辑谬误（即一种在逻辑上无效的论证）
- 为何如此？因为这是两个完全独立、互不关联的问题（即二者彼此之间毫无影响）：
- A) 某一行为本身是否在道德上错误
- B) 作出道德主张/判断的人是否依其自身判断行事

# The absurdity of the moral high ground argument

- Now let's **pretend** for a moment that appeal to hypocrisy is NOT a fallacy and consider the odd logical consequences (*reductio ad absurdum*)
- **Peter killed a stranger, John, to access his crypto wallet to buy a laptop**
- **Hannah comments: "It was wrong to murder someone merely for the purpose of taking their property"**
- If appeal to hypocrisy were not a fallacy, we would not be able to know whether Hannah is correct *without knowing more about her*. Has she stolen? Has she ever lied? Has she killed anyone in the past? If she is not pure of heart, then she has no right to say that murder is wrong!
- If you have lied once in your life (and everyone has!), then you can never say that lying is wrong, etc..

# 道德制高点论调的荒谬性

- 现在，让我们**暂且假设**诉诸虚伪并非逻辑谬误，并思考由此引发的种种奇特逻辑后果（**归谬法**）
- 彼得为获取约翰的加密货币钱包以购买笔记本电脑，杀害了一名素不相识的陌生人约翰。
- **汉娜评论道：“仅仅为了侵占他人财产而杀人，这种行为是错误的。”**
- 倘若诉诸虚伪并非逻辑谬误，那么我们便无法判断汉娜的观点是否正确<code>，除非进一步了解她本人</code>：她是否曾行窃？是否曾撒谎？过去是否杀过人？倘若她内心并非毫无瑕疵，那她便无权断言杀人是错误的！
- 如果你一生中曾撒过一次谎（而每个人其实都撒过！），那么你就永远无法断言说撒谎是错误的，等等。

## Why we should judge

- If by criticizing “judgement” it is meant that **harsh judgement and/or hypocritical judgement is problematic**, it’s a good point in one sense – it could be said it’s unfair to 1. criticize others *too harshly* and 2. you should look at your own behaviour **too**.
- But **the presence of hypocrisy doesn’t by itself undermine judgement** (i.e. moral evaluation of actions).
- Yes, there is a contradiction if Hannah both:
- A) steals money and murders people
- B) judges that stealing is wrong and murder is horrible
- The solution, however, is not to say that Hannah must stop judging! The judging is the part she is doing **right**!

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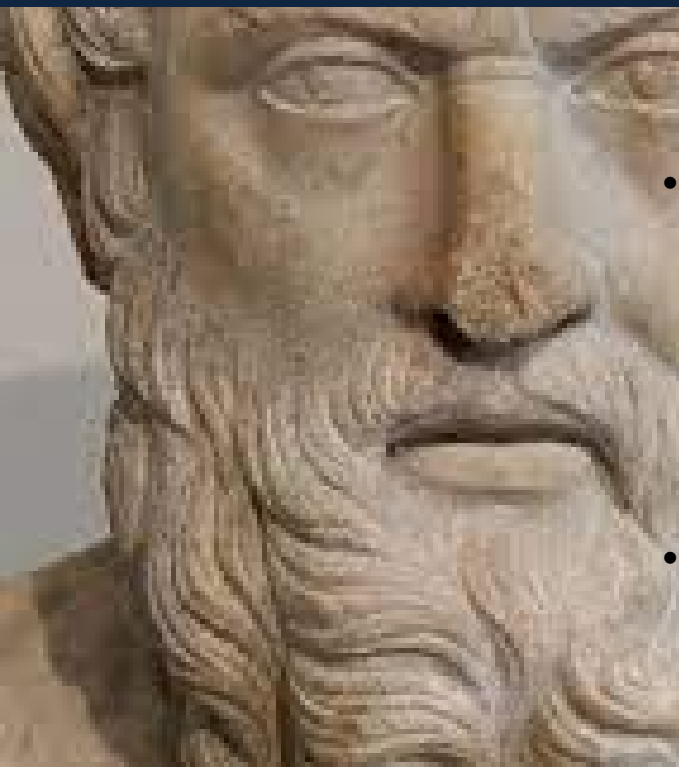
## 我们为何应当作出评判

- 如果所谓批评“评判”是指批评 严苛的**评判和/或虚伪的评判存在问题**，那么从某种意义上讲，这是一个很好的观点——可以说，以下两点确有失公允：1. 对他人 过于严苛地加以批评；2. 你也应 同样审视自身的行为。
- **但虚伪现象的存在本身并不会削弱评判的正当性**（即对行为进行道德评价）。
- 是的，倘若汉娜同时满足以下两点，则存在矛盾：
- A) 窃取钱财并杀人
- B) 认为偷窃是错误的，谋杀是极其恶劣的行为
- 然而，解决问题的方法并非要求汉娜停止评判！恰恰是这种评判，才是她做得正确的地方！

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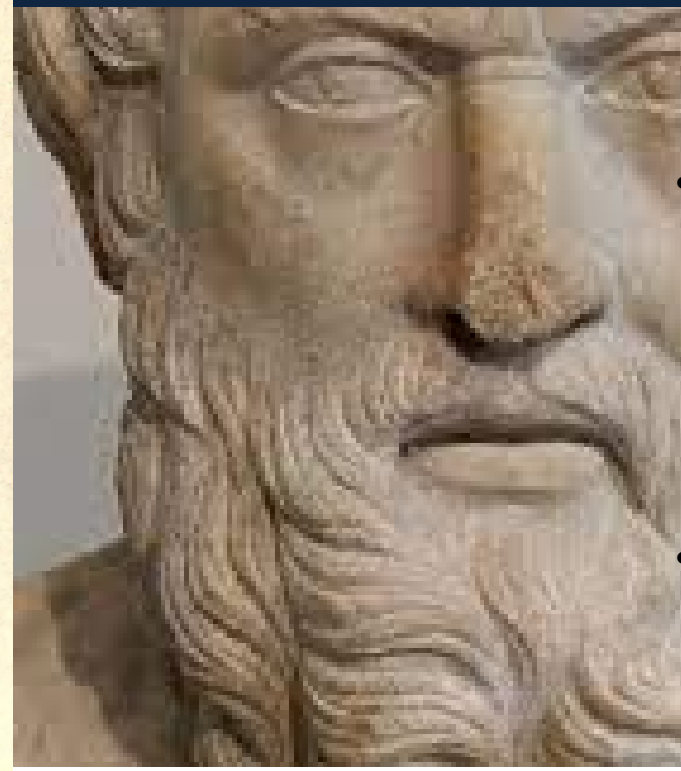
## The challenge of cultural relativism — James Rachels



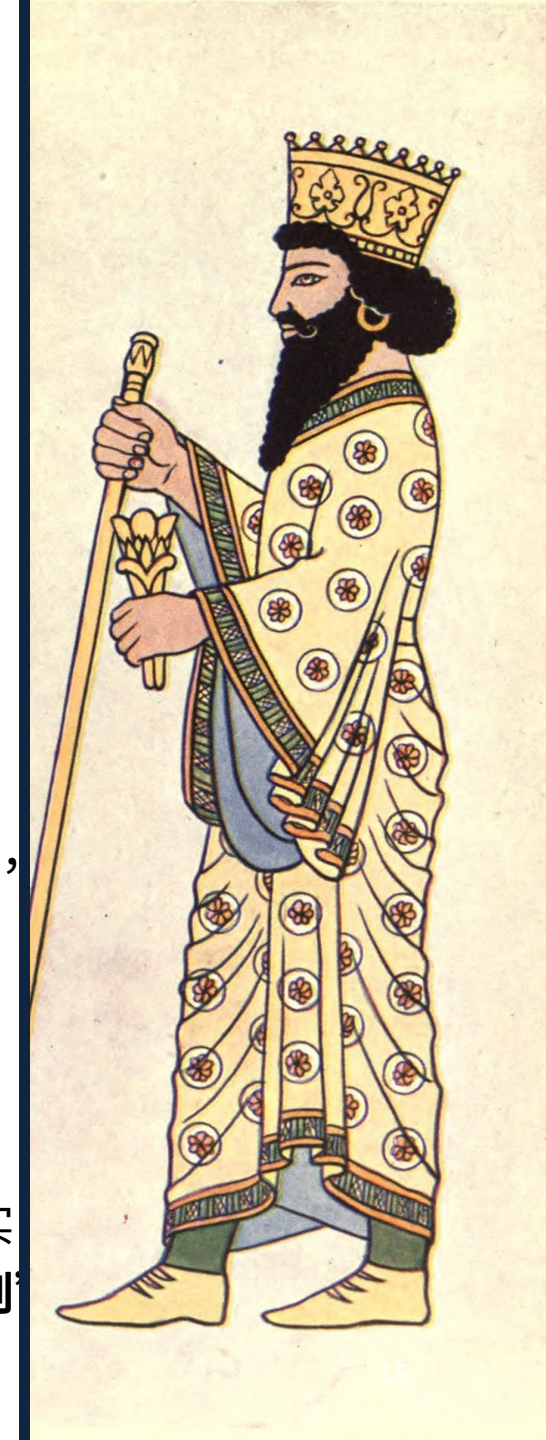
- 2.1 It's an empirical [and undisputed] fact that different cultures have different moral codes
- Historian Herodotus noted that Darius, a king of ancient Persia, was intrigued by the fact that the Callatians ate the bodies of their dead, while the Greeks practiced cremation and saw this was the natural way to dispose of the dead.
- Darius invited people from each group and asked what would it take for them to do what the others did. Both were shocked by the cultural practices of the other and didn't even want to hear about it.
- This is an obvious *empirical* fact: **"Different cultures have different moral codes"**



## 文化相对主义的挑战——詹姆斯·拉赫尔斯



- 2.1 这是一个经验性的[且无可争议的]事实：不同文化拥有不同的道德准则。
- 历史学家希罗多德曾指出，古代波斯国王大流士对卡鲁提亚人将逝者遗体作为食物食用这一习俗深感好奇；而希腊人则实行火葬，并视之为处理死者遗体的自然方式。
- 大流士邀请了两族的代表，询问他们各自需满足何种条件才会采纳对方的习俗。双方均对彼此的文化实践感到震惊，甚至不愿听闻相关介绍。
- 这是一个显而易见的经验性事实：**“不同文化拥有不同的道德准则”**



## Cultural relativism (i.e. normative moral relativism)

- 2.2 Cultural Relativism
- What can we conclude from this claim: “Different cultures have different moral codes”?
- According to some, knowing this is all we need to understand morality. The idea of universal truth in morality is therefore a myth.
- Sociologist William Graham Sumner wrote in 1906: “The “right” way is the way which the ancestors used and which has been handed down. The tradition is its own warrant. It is not held subject to verification by experience. The notion of right is in the folkways. [...] When we come to the folkways we are at the end of our analysis”
- Right: Graham Sumner



## 文化相对主义（即规范性道德相对主义）

- 2.2 文化相对主义
- 从这一论断——“不同文化拥有不同的道德准则”——我们能得出什么结论？
- 在某些人看来，了解这一点便足以理解道德。因此，道德领域中存在普遍真理这一观念纯属神话。
- 社会学家威廉·格雷厄姆·萨姆纳于1906年写道：“‘正确’的方式，就是祖先所采用并传承下来的方式。传统自身即为其正当性之依据，无须经由经验加以验证。‘正确’的观念就存在于民俗之中。[……] 当我们追溯至民俗时，我们的分析便已抵达终点。”
- 引文出处：格雷厄姆·萨姆纳





## Rachels identifies six separate claims

- 1. Different societies have different moral codes (an empirical fact we can observe)
  - 2. There is no objective standard that can be used to judge one societal code better than another
  - 3. The moral code of our own society has no special status, it is merely one among many
  - 4. There is no universal truth in ethics – there are no moral truths that hold for all peoples at all times
  - 5. The moral code of a society determines what is right in that society
  - 6. It is arrogance to try to judge the conduct of other peoples. We should be tolerant.
- 
- 1 – **Descriptive moral relativism – True. It's empirically verifiable. Not all cultures have the exact same values**
  - 2-6 – **Normative moral relativism – A mistake with serious consequences**

## 拉切尔（Rachels）归纳出六项独立主张

- 1. 不同社会拥有不同的道德规范（这是一个我们可观察到的经验性事实）
  - 2. 不存在一种客观标准，可用于评判某一社会的道德规范优于另一社会的道德规范
  - 3. 我们自身社会的道德规范并不具有特殊地位，它不过是众多道德规范中的一种
  - 4. 伦理学中不存在普遍真理——即并不存在适用于所有民族、所有时代的道德真理
  - 5. 一个社会的道德规范决定了该社会中何为正确
  - 6. 试图评判其他民族的行为，实属傲慢。我们应当秉持宽容态度。
- 
- 1 – **描述性道德相对主义——正确。其经验可验证性确凿无疑。并非所有文化都拥有完全相同的价值观。**
  - 2-6 – **规范性道德相对主义——一种后果严重的错误。**



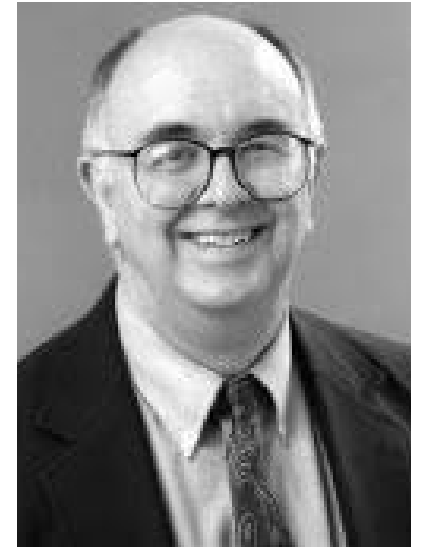
## 2.3 The cultural differences argument

- Consider the following argument – Rachels calls it the **cultural differences argument**
- Premise: It's an obvious empirical fact that different societies have different moral codes
- Conclusion: Therefore, there is no objective truth in morality. Moral codes are a matter of opinion, and opinions vary!
- Rachels: the argument is not valid!
- Why? There is a move from “is” to “ought”. **“No ought from is!”**. It is not because people do believe it that they ought to believe it (e.g. it is not because some people do believe the Earth is flat that it follows that they should believe it)
- Right: James Rachels



## 2.3 文化差异论

- 请考虑如下论证——拉赫尔斯称其为**文化差异论**。
- 前提：不同社会拥有不同的道德准则，这显然是一个经验事实。
- 结论：因此，道德领域并不存在客观真理。道德准则纯属主观意见，而意见因人而异！
- 拉赫尔斯指出：该论证并不成立！
- 为何如此？该论证犯了从“是”（实然）推出“应当”（应然）的错误。**“无法从‘是’推出‘应当’！”**人们实际相信某事，并不意味着他们就应当相信此事（例如，某些人确实相信地球是平的，但这并不意味着他们就理应持有这种信念）。
- 右：詹姆斯·雷切尔



## 2.4 The consequences of taking cultural relativism seriously

- Rachels: Even though the cultural differences argument is invalid, it is logically possible that the conclusion - cultural relativism - might still be true, for other reasons.
- Rachels: So let's see - what would it be like if cultural relativism *were* true? (*reductio ad absurdum*)
- 1. We could not criticize the customs of other societies (including slavery, stoning, sexism, racism, FGM, any form of oppression)
- 2. We could know whether actions are right or wrong by merely consulting the standards of our own society (so when apartheid was considered right in South Africa, it was right)
- 3. **There could be no moral progress**, as every moral value is fine as long as supported by the dominant social view
- Relativist: “Was apartheid considered ethical in South Africa? Yes, so racial segregation was ethical back then. Now it isn't, but it may be ethical again one day – all it takes is for people to believe it's ethical”

## 2.4 认真对待文化相对主义所带来的后果

- 雷切尔：尽管文化差异论证是无效的，但文化相对主义这一结论仍有可能因其他原因而成立，这在逻辑上是可能的。
- 拉赫尔斯：那么，让我们来看一看——倘若文化相对主义属实，情况会如何？(归谬法)
- 1. 我们将无法批评其他社会的风俗习惯（包括奴隶制、石刑、性别歧视、种族主义、女性割礼，以及任何形式的压迫）
- 2. 我们只需参照自身社会所确立的标准，即可判定行为的是非对错（因此，当南非曾认为种族隔离制度是正当的，它当时便是正当的）
- 3. **道德进步将不复存在**，因为只要某种道德价值得到主流社会观念的支持，它便被视为合理
- 相对主义者：“种族隔离制度在南非曾被视为合乎伦理吗？是的。因此，当时实行种族隔离是合乎伦理的。如今它已不再合乎伦理，但未来或许又会变得合乎伦理。”终有一日——人们只需相信此举合乎道德，便已足够。

## 2.5 There is less disagreement than it seems

- It seems strange that Hindus in India don't eat cows. But why don't they eat cows? Because they believe in reincarnation, so the cow could be someone's dead grandmother. Would you eat your grandmother?
- It sounds like we just disagree whether the cow can be someone's grandmother (note this now becomes just a disagreement about empirical claims, rather than one that is truly about moral values)
- Rachels' conclusion: moral disagreement is often for the most part superficial – about empirical fact only



## 2.5 表面看来的分歧，实际上并没有那么大

- 印度的印度教徒不吃牛肉，这看似奇怪。但他们为何不吃牛肉呢？因为他们信奉轮回转世，认为牛可能是某人已故祖母的化身。你会吃自己的祖母吗？
- 这听起来似乎只是我们在争论奶牛能否成为某人的祖母（请注意，这一争论如今已纯粹变成关于经验事实的分歧，而非真正关乎道德价值的分歧）
- 拉赫尔斯的结论：道德分歧往往在很大程度上只是表面性的——仅限于经验事实层面。





## 2.6 All cultures have some values in common

- Rachels: for instance, we should expect that all cultural groups will protect their infants because:
  - 1. Infants are helpless and cannot survive
  - 2. If a group did not take care of their young, the group would die out
  - 3. Therefore, any existing group will be found to take care of their young.
- Other examples supporting Rachels' view:
  - Imagine a society where no value is placed on truth-telling.
  - Imagine a society in which there is no loyalty to friends.
  - Imagine a society in which there is no prohibition of murder.
- Unlikely! If it did happen, would it be a good society?
- **This suggests moral values are connected to correct solutions to social problems. This grounds the values in objective fact.**

## 2.6 所有文化都拥有一些共同的价值观

- 拉赫尔斯指出：例如，我们理应预期所有文化群体都会保护其婴儿，原因如下：
  - 1. 婴儿毫无自理能力，无法独自生存。
  - 2. 若某一族群不照顾其幼小成员，该族群终将灭绝。
  - 3. 因此，任何现存的族群必然被发现会悉心照料其后代。
- 支持拉赫尔斯观点的其他例证：
  - 试想一个完全不重视讲真话的社会。
  - 试想一个朋友之间毫无忠诚可言的社会。
  - 试想一个对谋杀行为毫无禁止的社会。
- 这不太可能！倘若真发生了，这样的社会会是良善的吗？
- **这一主张道德价值观与社会问题的正确解决方案密切相关问题。这使价值观得以植根于客观事实。**

## 2.7 Judging a cultural practice to be undesirable

- Rachels on female genital mutilation: “We may ask whether the practice promotes or hinders the welfare of the people whose lives are affected by it”
- Rachels: This question may have an answer that could be objectively right or wrong, and not just a matter of personal opinion.
- Note: this conclusion is commonly misinterpreted by students. Getting your values right is not just a matter of carefully considering the facts objectively:
- A) We don't necessarily share the *same* definition of “welfare”. Welfare is a complex concept including both empirical and value components
- B) Someone could potentially accept the objective medical (empirical) facts but insist that FGM is physically harmful but still promotes moral welfare
- Note that Rachels correctly points out that welfare is not just an empirical concept: “the welfare of its members is a value internal to all viable cultures.” (good job from Rachels trying to argue he's not building an invalid **ought from is** argument)

## 2.7 判定某项文化实践为不可取

- 拉赫尔斯论女性生殖器切割：“我们或许可以追问，这一做法究竟是促进还是损害了受其影响者的生活福祉。”
  - 拉赫尔：这一问题或许存在一个客观上正确或错误的答案，而不仅仅取决于个人意见。
  - 注意：学生常常误解这一结论。正确把握自身价值观，不仅仅在于审慎考量事实。
- 客观性：
- A) 我们未必共享对“福祉”的同一定义。福祉是一个复杂概念，既包含经验性成分，也包含价值性成分。
  - B) 某人可能接受客观的医学（经验性）事实，同时坚持认为女性生殖器切割虽在生理上造成伤害，却仍有助于促进道德福祉。
  - 请注意，拉赫尔正确地指出，福祉并不仅仅是一个经验性概念：“其成员的福祉是所有可行文化内在固有的价值。”（拉赫尔在此成功避免了从“是”推出“应当”的无效论证，值得肯定）

Objectivism  
Belief in universal values

Paul

$$A + B$$

Sarah

$$B + E$$

Michael



Who is objective vs biased?  
Who is right about their values?

We don't know. We just know that Paul and Sarah are objectivists, Michael is a relativist

客观主义  
对普世价值的信念

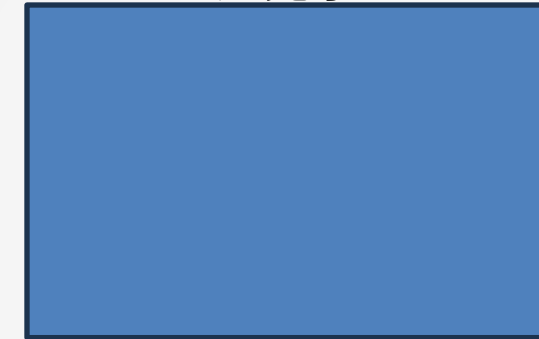
Paul

$$\overline{A} + B$$

莎拉

$$B + E$$

迈克尔



谁是客观的，谁是有偏见的？谁关于自身价值观的看法才是正确的？

我们并不清楚。我们只知道保罗和莎拉是道德客观主义者，而迈克尔是道德相对主义者。

## Mythbusting

### Being a moral objectivist ≠ being objective

- To be a moral objectivist is to subscribe to a philosophical position – moral objectivism = to say that moral relativism is wrong
- To say that someone is “objective” is instead to describe their psychology – they are impartial, unbiased (e.g. like a good judge, referee). That says nothing about their position on the universality of moral values.
- **Moral objectivists** can be biased, and they often are influenced by their culture or group. For instance, UAW accused Tesla of using digital surveillance in a way that is coercive, and the company is accused of discouraging unionization (Elon Musk is against all unions everywhere). Both seem to be objectivists, but are these unbiased/objective parties? Probably not.
- **Moral objectivists** don't necessarily know what is right. They are correct about objectivism itself (i.e. relativism is wrong). Objectivism tells us nothing about someone's actual values. Both Hitler and Gandhi were moral objectivists.

## 破除迷思：道德客观主义 ≠ 客观性

- 成为道德客观主义者，意味着信奉一种哲学立场——即道德客观主义；= 也就是说，认为道德相对主义是错误的。
- 所谓某人“客观”，实则是对其心理状态的描述——即此人秉持中立、不带偏见（例如，如同一位称职的法官或裁判）。但这与其对道德价值普遍性的立场毫无关联。
- **道德客观主义者**也可能带有偏见，且往往深受其文化背景或所属群体的影响。例如，美国汽车工人联合会（UAW）指控特斯拉采用数字监控手段实施胁迫，并指该公司阻挠工会组建（埃隆·马斯克在全球范围内反对一切工会）。双方看似均为道德客观主义者，但它们真的是中立/客观的当事方吗？答案很可能是否定的。
- **道德客观主义者**未必知道何为正确。他们关于客观主义本身（即相对主义是错误的）的观点是正确的。客观主义并未告诉我们某个人实际秉持的价值观。希特勒与甘地都是道德客观主义者。



## Rachels - Many are *still* reluctant to criticize...

- They might say:
  - 1. We should not interfere with the cultural customs of others (post-colonial guilt)
  - 2. We should be tolerant
  - 3. We should not express contempt for another culture
- Objections to the above:
  - 1. It is possible to judge without interfering (e.g. enforcing laws, enacting sanctions)
  - 2. We should be tolerant, but should we be tolerant of all religions and all cultures equally?
  - 3. We don't have to reject a religion or culture as a whole - just individual practices that should be changed (thoughtful members of religions and cultures actually do this themselves)

## 瑞秋斯——许多人仍然不愿批评……

- 他们可能会说：
  - 1. 我们不应干涉他人的文化习俗（后殖民负罪感）
  - 2. 我们应秉持宽容态度
  - 3. 我们不应蔑视其他文化
- 对上述观点的异议：
  - 1. 人们可以在不进行干预（例如强制执行法律、实施制裁）的情况下作出判断。
  - 2. 我们应当保持宽容，但是否应对所有宗教和所有文化一视同仁地宽容？
- 3. 我们无需全盘否定某种宗教或文化——只需针对其中某些应予改变的具体实践提出质疑（事实上，许多该宗教或文化中富有思辨精神的成员自身也在这样做）。

Revisions +  
absolutism  
Three Important  
distinctions for  
today  
(handout in  
lecture 3 folder)

- Descriptive Ethical Relativism vs. Normative Ethical Relativism
- (Normative) Ethical Relativism vs. (Normative) Ethical Objectivism
- Ethical Objectivism vs. Ethical Absolutism
- Note: in this as in most contexts in this course, “ethical”=“moral”
- Ethical Relativism means the same as Moral Relativism

修订版+绝  
对主义

- 描述性道德相对主义 vs. 规范性道德相对主义
- (规范性) 道德相对主义 vs. (规范性) 道德客观主义
- 道德客观主义 vs. 道德绝对主义
- 注意：在本课程的大多数语境中，“伦理的” = “道德的” 含义相同。
- 伦理相对主义与道德相对主义含义相同。

We must distinguish **empirical claims about norms** vs. **normative claims about what norms *should* be**

- Out of the two arguments, which is **an empirical claim about norms**, which is a **normative claim about norms**?
- “*I personally consider* hacking wrong, as I’m Canadian, but if you don’t live in Canada do whatever your culture says is right”
- “Europeans consider that earning money from phishing and hacking is morally OK”
- **Q: Is it consistent with objectivism to be *influenced* by their culture or are objectivists impartial?**
- A: Someone being an objectivist says nothing of their impartiality. They may or may not be impartial.
- Example – A son of two members of the KKK says: “Racism is fun and everyone around the world should be as racist as possible”

我们必须加以区分：**关于规范的经验性主张**与**关于规范应然性的规范性主张**。

- 在两个论点中，哪一个**是对规范的经验性主张**，哪一个**是对规范的规范性主张**？
- “我个人认为黑客行为是错误的，因为我是加拿大人；但如果你不住在加拿大，那就按你所在文化所认定的正确方式行事吧”
- “欧洲人认为通过网络钓鱼和黑客行为赚钱是  
在道德上可以接受的”
- **问题：受自身文化影响是否与客观主义相容？这种影响是否符合客观主义，抑或客观主义者应当保持公正无私？**
- A：某人信奉客观主义，并不能说明其是否公正无私。此人可能公正无私，也可能并非如此。
- 示例——一名三K党（KKK）成员之子说道：“种族主义很有趣，全世界每个人都应尽可能地秉持种族主义。”



## A further distinction: Objectivism vs Absolutism

- **Myth – Objectivists are those who follow hard rules/principles – e.g. “Don’t lie”**
- **Not true, because objectivists can be absolutist (Kantians) and non-absolutist (e.g. utilitarians, Aristotelians)**
- Pojman: "Moral objectivism: There is a fact of the matter as to whether any given action is morally permissible or impermissible: a fact of the matter that does not depend solely on social custom or individual acceptance."
- Pojman on Moral absolutism: There is at least one principle that ought never to be violated."
- **Objectivism of the absolutist type is then** – What is right and wrong is objectively so **AND** can be captured in principles (e.g. sentence-like commandments such as “It is wrong to lie”)

## 进一步区分：客观主义 vs 绝对主义

- **误解——客观主义者是那些恪守严格规则或原则的人，例如 “不可说谎”**
- **此说法不成立，因为客观主义者既可以是绝对主义者（如康德主义者），也可以是非绝对主义者（例如功利主义者、亚里士多德主义者）**
- 波伊曼：“道德客观主义：任何特定行为在道德上是否允许，都存在于一个客观事实；这一事实并不单纯取决于社会习俗或个人认同。”
- 波伊曼论道德绝对主义：“至少存在一条原则，其绝不可被违背。”
- **因此，属于绝对主义类型的客观主义即指：对与错具有客观性，且可通过原则予以表述（例如以命题形式诸如“说谎是错误的”之类的诫命）**

## Objectivist or relativist? Objective or biased?

- Michael is a white supremacist and believes all programmers should be white
- Michael is probably a moral objectivist (universalist claim). We may find out he was influenced by his racist friends - so he is not (psychologically) objective despite being an objectivist
- Helen's father worked hard for Nintendo writing valuable copy for their site during an unpaid internship. He signed an NDA, so he could never put this on his resume. Helen says that this is unfair and should happen to no one anywhere
- It's philosophically an objectivist position, although perhaps Helen is not (psychologically) objective, since it's her father...

## 客观主义还是相对主义？客观的还是带有偏见的？

- 迈克尔是一名白人至上主义者，他相信所有程序员都必须是白人
- 迈克尔很可能是一位道德客观主义者（主张普遍性）。我们或许会发现，他受到了那些种族主义朋友的影响——因此，尽管他持客观主义立场，但在心理层面却并非真正客观。
- 海伦的父亲曾在任天堂公司实习，期间无偿为该公司网站撰写极具价值的文案。他签署了保密协议（NDA），因此无法将这段经历写入自己的简历。海伦认为这种做法有失公允，任何人、在任何地方都不应遭遇此类情况。
- 从哲学角度看，这是一种客观主义立场，尽管海伦本人（在心理层面）或许并不客观，因为这是她父亲……

## Objectivist or relativist? Objective or biased?

- Riley has always worked for Amazon: “If you work for Amazon, you need to fully support whatever it does”
- Likely relativist and probably psychologically biased/not objective.
- Note:
  1. Don't assume that loyalty is intrinsically wrong/relativist
  2. Blind loyalty turns out to be a form of relativism (blind loyalty to gang/Mafia family/company/co-workers).
- Video game workers in Edmonton voted to unionize for the first time in Canada (2022). “This is essential to resist an exploitative industry and matches Canadian values”
- Probably relativist. Is it OK to exploit as long as you don't do it in Canada?

## 客观主义还是相对主义？客观的还是带有偏见的？

- 莱利一直为亚马逊工作：“如果你为亚马逊工作，就必须全力支持它所做的一切。”
- 很可能持相对主义立场，且可能在心理上存在偏见/缺乏客观性。
- 注：
  1. 切勿假定忠诚本身即为错误或属于相对主义。
  2. 盲目的忠诚实则是一种相对主义（例如对帮派/黑手党家族/公司/同事的盲目效忠）。
- 加拿大埃德蒙顿的电子游戏从业者于2022年首次投票决定组建工会。“此举对于抵制剥削性行业至关重要，也契合加拿大的价值观。”
- 这很可能属于相对主义立场：只要不在加拿大境内实施剥削，这样做就可以接受吗？



## Objectivist claim? Right or Wrong?

- **No matter where you work and where you are from, it's always OK to steal from a big rich company, but wrong if it's a small startup**
- Objectivist claim that responds to circumstances. Wrong
- **If a client lends you his laptop and there's personal information there, it's ethical to see it and share it if your company says they don't care.**
- Relativist insofar as what's right seems to depend on the company's views. Wrong
- **I can plant a virus in a client's computer to get information on a competitor, as I'm serving my company and therefore I'm being loyal. Any programmer should be willing to do this for their company.**
- Primarily objectivist on the surface, but *blind* loyalty *at all costs* ends up collapsing into relativism. Wrong.

## 客观主义主张？正确还是错误？

- 无论你在哪里工作、来自何地，从一家大型富有的公司窃取东西总是可以接受的，但从一家小型初创企业窃取则属错误。
- 客观主义主张：应根据具体情况作出回应。错误
- 如果客户将他的笔记本电脑借给你，而其中存有其个人隐私信息，那么只要公司表示对此毫不在意，你查看并分享这些信息便是合乎伦理的。
- 相对主义立场——即何为正确似乎取决于公司的观点。错误
- 我可以在客户的计算机中植入病毒，以获取其竞争对手的信息；因为我是在为本公司服务，所以这体现了我的忠诚。任何程序员都应乐于为公司执行此类行为。
- 表面上以客观主义为主，但盲目的忠诚不计一切代价，最终反而会沦陷为相对主义。这种观点是错误的。

## “Circumstantialism” is not relativism

- Don't confuse a resistance to absolutism (therefore stating that context/circumstances do matter) with normative relativism (cultural context is *all* that matters).
- The engineer who uses different bridge designs in different situations is rejecting absolutism, but he's not a relativist about physics. Physics is universal and objective, but implementation depends on circumstances
- Circumstantialism in ethics (example): in some circumstances it's moral to lie



## “情境主义”并非相对主义

- 切勿将对绝对主义的抵制（因而主张）即具体情境或环境确实具有影响作用）与规范性相对主义（文化背景才是唯一决定因素）混为一谈。
- 在不同情境下采用不同桥梁设计方案的工程师，是在拒斥绝对主义，但他并非物理学上的相对主义者。物理学具有普适性且客观有效，but 具体实施则取决于具体情境
- 伦理学中的情境主义（例如）：在某些情境下，说谎是合乎道德的



## Should Microsoft have disrupted cyberattacks against Ukraine?

- A: “Russia cannot accept NATO to encroach on Ukraine, in its sphere of influence, just like the US didn’t accept soviet ICBMs in Cuba either! Therefore, to be ethical Microsoft should have also stopped all cyberattacks, rather than side with the West”
- B: “Microsoft was right to protect the West but we should understand that Kaspersky labs also has the right to protect Russia, and possibly attack Ukraine. Each must protect their own, as a matter of loyalty.”
- C: “I’m Canadian, so of course I support Microsoft’s actions. If I were Russian I would think differently.”
- D: “Every cyber attack is wrong, regardless of who does it, or why”
- Which of these positions is relativist, objectivist, absolutist? (or a mix) Why?

## 微软是否应当阻断针对乌克兰的网络攻击？

- A: “俄罗斯无法接受北约侵入其势力范围内的乌克兰，正如美国当年无法接受苏联在古巴部署洲际弹道导弹一样！因此，从伦理角度出发，微软本应同样阻止所有网络攻击，而非一味偏袒西方。”
- B: “微软保护西方是正确的，但我们亦应理解卡巴斯基实验室同样有权保护俄罗斯，甚至可能对乌克兰发起网络攻击。各方均须捍卫自身利益，这是忠诚使然。”
- C: “我是加拿大人，因此自然支持微软的行动；倘若我是俄罗斯人，看法便会不同。”
- D: “任何网络攻击都是错误的，无论实施者是谁、动机为何。”
- 以下这些立场中，哪些属于相对主义、客观主义或绝对主义？（或兼而有之）为什么？



Can I be an objectivist *and* still value tolerance?  
Yes!

- Many who claim to be normative ethical relativists *falsely* believe that relativism is a logical consequence of the value of **tolerance**.
- It's not. Should we be tolerant of **everything**? No.
- Each objectivist seems to commit to some core group of values (not necessarily the right ones, and they may or may not be shared with others) where tolerance seems inappropriate (e.g. sexual harassment, fraud, corruption, murder). Only outside this core tolerance is meaningful.
- In practice, those who claim to be normative ethical relativists are not consistent. They will probably judge the actions of Hitler or Jeffrey Dahmer



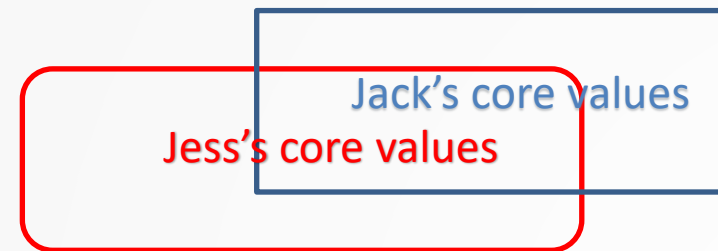
我能否成为一名客观主义者 同时 仍珍视宽容？当然  
可以！

- 许多自称规范伦理相对主义者的人 错误地 认为，相对主义是珍视 **宽容** 这一价值的逻辑必然结果。
- 事实并非如此。我们是否应对 一切 都保持宽容？不。
- 每位客观主义者似乎都认同某些核心价值（这些价值未必正确，且未必与他人共享），而在这些核心价值所涉领域，宽容显得不合时宜（例如性骚扰、欺诈、腐败、谋杀）。唯有在这一核心范围之外，宽容才具有意义。
- 在实践中，那些自称规范伦理相对主义者的人往往并不自治。他们很可能对希特勒或杰弗里·达默的行为作出道德评判。



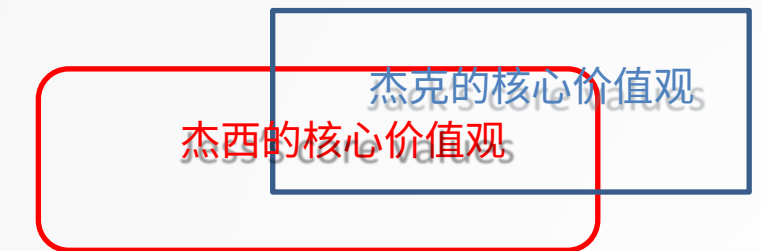
## Final clarification on objectivism and core values

- **Some students mistakenly say, after reading Rachels' paper, that we all share the same "core values", or that all objectivists share the same "core values". This is not what he means.** People often disagree about what is ethical, and objectivists disagree too.
- 1. The concept of "core values" is primarily meant to show that tolerance is only fully meaningful in the context of objectivism and outside of *some* set of values **each** objectivist considers non-negotiable – each person has their own core values.
- 2. We can then also add that for the most part we even tend to agree on many of what these non-negotiable core values are (even most relativists are in practice not as flexible as they claim to be)

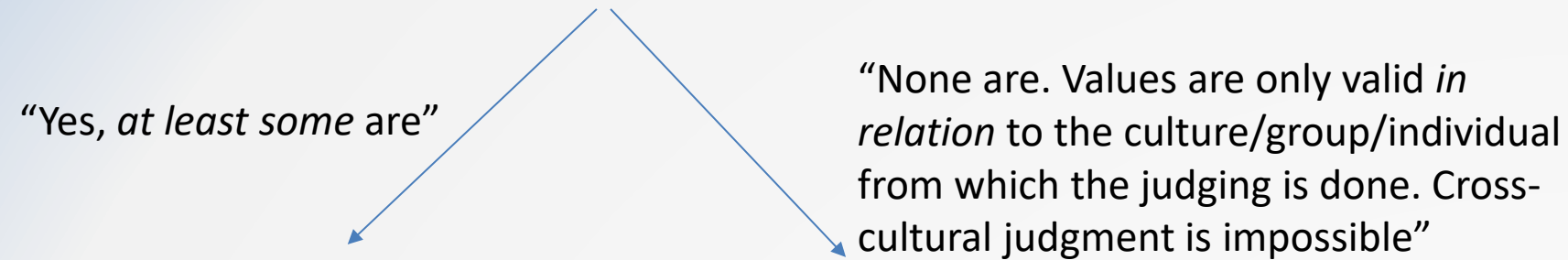


## 关于客观主义与核心价值观的最终澄清

- 部分学生在阅读拉赫尔斯（Rachels）的论文后，错误地认为我们所有人都共享相同的“核心价值观”，或认为所有客观主义者都共享相同的“核心价值观”。这并非他的本意。人们常常就何为道德问题存在分歧，而客观主义者之间也同样存在分歧。
- 1. “核心价值观”这一概念主要旨在表明：宽容唯有在客观主义框架内、且处于某些 价值集合之外时，才具有充分意义——即每位客观主义者均视其为不可妥协的价值集合；每个人都有自己的一套核心价值观。
- 2. 我们还可进一步指出：在大多数情况下，我们甚至往往就诸多此类不可妥协的核心价值观达成共识（事实上，绝大多数相对主义者所表现出的灵活性，远低于其理论主张）



# Are moral values objectively/universally valid?



OBJ

REL

ABS NON-ABS

ABS NON-ABS

e.g. Kant  
“Don’t lie”  
(not responsive to circumstances)

e.g. Utilitarians  
“Lie if it maximizes utility”  
(responsive to circumstances)

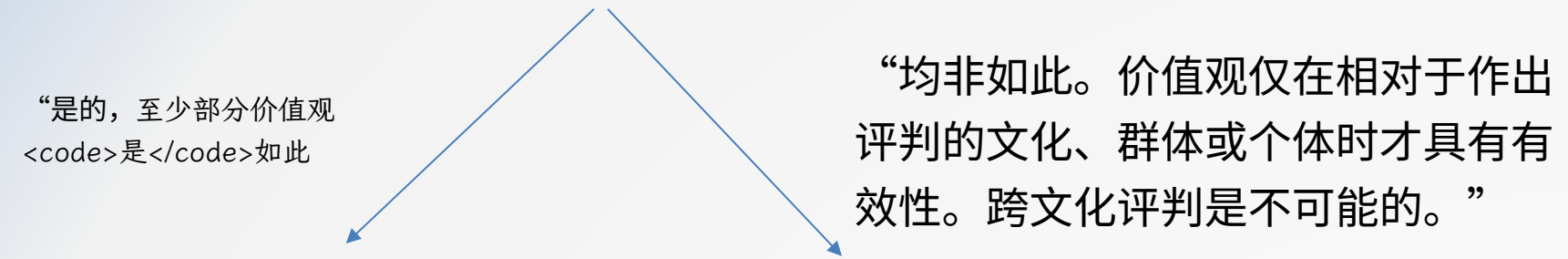
“Canadians should never lie”  
(not responsive to circumstances)

“Canadians value honesty but consider other values”  
(responsive to circumstances)

Non-absolutists – respond to the circumstances of the action

Relativists – respond to the cultural context of who is doing the judging

# 道德价值观是否具有客观性/普适性?



OBJ

REL

绝对主义 非绝对主义

绝对主义 非绝对主义

例如：康德  
“不可说谎”  
(不响应)  
(不随具体情境而变化)

例如：功利主义者  
“若能最大化效用，便可说谎”  
(视具体情况而定)

“加拿大人绝不可说谎”  
(不响应)  
(取决于具体情境)

“加拿大人重视诚实，但也会考虑其他价值观”  
(视具体情况而定)

非绝对主义者——根据行为所处的具体情境作出回应  
根据进行评判者的文化背景作出回应