

Ethics 9-3-21

Moral Relativism, Isolationism, Absolutism

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Moral Relativism and Isolationism

We cannot critic other cultures because we will never understand them well enough to make judgments about them *and* the values of respect and tolerance forbids us to take up a critical position to any other culture.

1. We can understand other cultures.
2. Relativism is not a respectful attitude towards other cultures
3. Others can criticize our own culture
4. Moral relativism allows us to praise other cultures so why not criticize?

Six More Problems with Ethical Relativism

1. No criticism or praise of other cultures
2. Majority Rule
3. Professed or Actual Morality?
4. What is a Majority?
5. How do we define a culture?
6. Can tolerance be a universal value?

1. cultural relativism
2. ethical relativism

One is making an observation while the declaring a norm. "Ethical relativism is a *normative* theory that states there is no universal moral code." (123). As such, practices cannot be criticized because there is not universal standard with which to criticize them by.

[1] ""

Absolutism

The idea of something's being good, not according to some standard but just by possessing a property of goodness, does not even make much sense. If some standard were special, were the right one, then something could be good absolutely by being good relative to that standard.

[1] "Dreier [Dre06]"

Context, Standard and Non-Standard

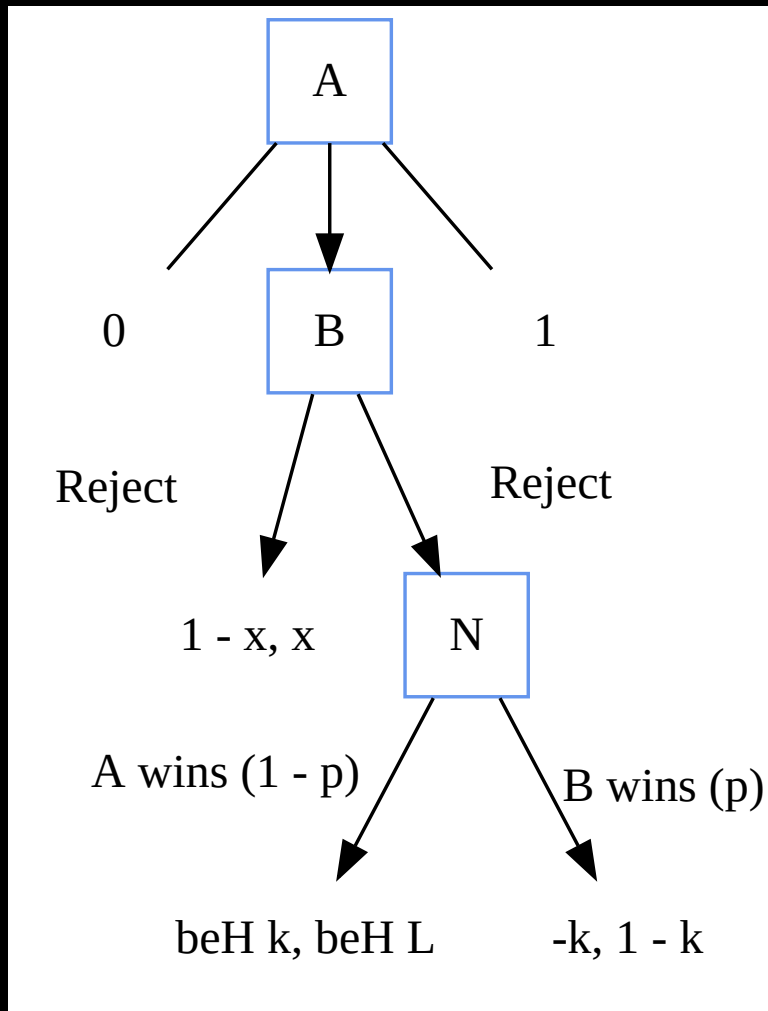
- A good clock tells time accurately.
- Astronomers?
- Shepherds?

1. Standards come in contexts, their goodness is good relative to some function.

Example of Function

An adult shaped to the drives and standards of either of these cultures, if he were transported into our civilization, would fall into our categories of abnormality.

1. No societal mores can be used across the whole potential range of human behavior.
2. Just like language, there is innumerable phonetic possibility, articulations and the possibility of language depends on a selection and standardization of a few of these.
3. Similarly, organized behavior too, depends on a similar selection among possible behavior traits.



But normality is synonymous with good

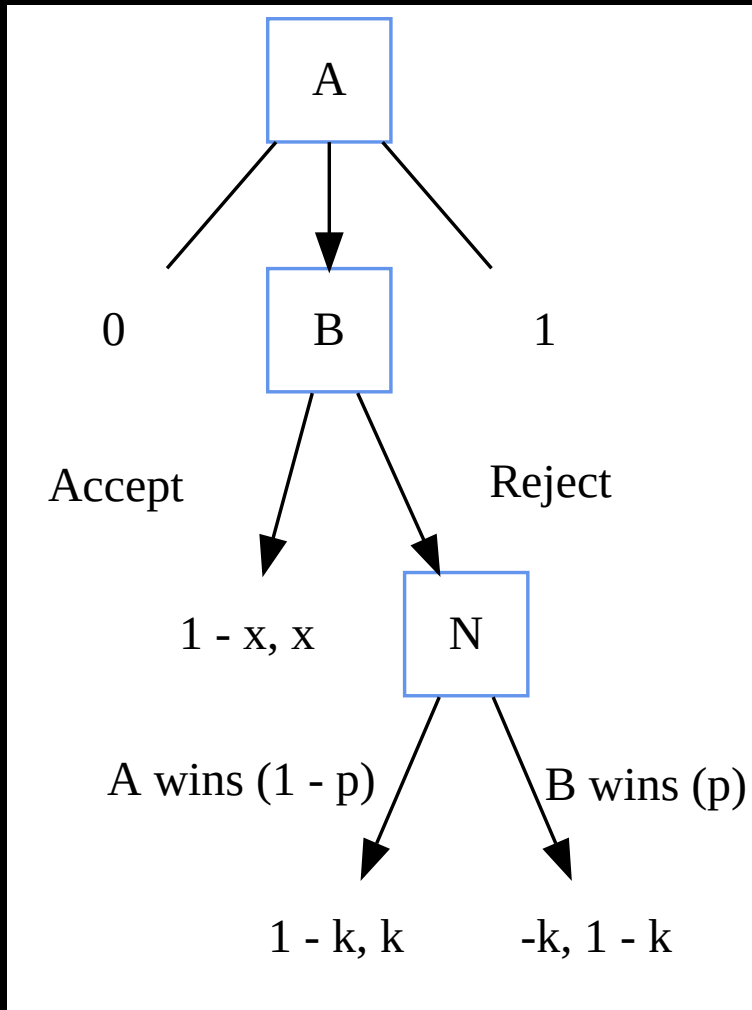
	Sheena Easton Stays Home	Sheena Easton Goes to Baby's Work
Baby Home Again	-100, 100	100 , 0
Baby Stays at Work	50 , 0	-100, 100

Notice we have no pure strategies, and no Nash equilibrium.

- Sheena Easton wants to proverbially "match pennies."
- Her baby has diametrically opposed preferences, fearing for his safety.

Solution: mixed strategy.

Here's behavioral selection chart.



```
## # A tibble: 6 × 6
##   LocationType Location      Race      TimeFrame DataFormat Data
##   <chr>          <chr>      <chr>      <chr>      <chr>      <chr>
## 1 Nation        United States American Indian 2005      Percent 0.49
## 2 Nation        United States Asian and Pacific... 2005      Percent 0.17
## 3 Nation        United States Black or African ... 2005      Percent 0.65
## 4 Nation        United States Hispanic or Latino 2005      Percent 0.36
## 5 Nation        United States Non-Hispanic White 2005      Percent 0.23
## 6 Nation        United States Two or more races 2005      Percent 0.39
```

References

Dreier, J. (2006). "Moral Relativism and Moral Nihilism". In: *Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*. Ed. by D. Copp. Oxford University Press.

Dreier, J. (2007). *Moral Relativism and Moral Nihilism*. Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195325911.003.0010.

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