

The Metaphysics of Value: Subjective/Objective

Subjectivism: Mackie's 'scepticism' and error theory:

J.L.Mackie: *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, ch.1; reprinted as 'The Subjectivity of Values' in Sayre-McCord ed. *Essays on Moral Realism*

Bernard Williams: 'Ethics and the Fabric of the World' in Ted Honderich ed. *Morality and Objectivity*; reprinted in Williams' *Making Sense of Humanity*

Peter Railton: 'Subject-ive and Objective' in B. Hooker ed. *Truth in Ethics* (1996)

Piers Benn: *Ethics*, ch.2, esp. pp.40-42

Simon Blackburn: 'Error and the phenomenology of value' in Ted Honderich ed., *Morality and Objectivity*

David Wiggins: 'A Sensible Subjectivism?', in *Needs, Values, Truth*

Stephen Darwall: *Philosophical Ethics* ch.7, first section only (v.introductory; and beware his false equation of error theory with 'nihilism')

Emotivism [just for background on another type of subjectivism]:

A.J.Ayer: *Language, Truth, and Logic* ch.6 'Critique of Ethics and Theology'; reprinted in Sayre-McCord ed.; extracted as 'Ethics for Logical Positivists' pp.147-52 in *Ethics* ed. P.Singer

Judith Jarvis Thomson: 'Emotivism', ch.7 of Harman and Thomson, *Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity* (1996)

James Rachels: *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* ch.3 §§3.1 - 3.5

Sample Questions

1. Are there moral properties 'out there'?
2. On what does the issue of moral objectivity turn? (1994)
3. What is moral realism? Is it true?
4. Are moral values objective?
5. Does it matter whether realism is true or not?
6. What is an 'error theory'?

M.F.

Values as Analogous with Secondary Qualities?

John McDowell: 'Values and Secondary Qualities' in T.Honderich ed. *Morality and Objectivity*; reprinted in ed.G.Sayre-McCord, *Essays on Moral Realism* and essay 7. in McDowell's collected papers *Mind, Value, and Reality* (1998)

John McDowell: 'Aesthetic Value, Objectivity, and the Fabric of the World', essay 6. in *Mind, Value, and Reality* (1998)

Crispin Wright: 'Moral Values, Projection and Secondary Qualities', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, supp. Vol. 62; also ch.5 *Truth and Objectivity* (1992) esp. pp.96 onward.

Piers Benn: *Ethics*, ch.2 esp. pp.42-45

David McNaughton: *Moral Vision*, ch.4

David Wiggins: 'Truth, Invention, and the Meaning of Life' (esp. sects. 6-8, and N.B. pp.106-7) in *Needs, Values, Truth*; reprinted in Sayre-McCord ed.

Colin McGinn: *The Subjective View* ch.8, 'Values and secondary qualities'

Bernard Williams: 'Knowledge, Science, Convergence', ch.8 in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, esp. pp.135-7, and pp.149-.

Sample Questions

1. In what respects, if any, are moral properties like secondary qualities? Explain the significance of your answer for meta-ethics.
2. 'Moral properties cannot share metaphysical status with colour properties, since there is room for rational disagreement about morality.' Discuss.
3. 'If there is an analogy between secondary qualities and moral properties, this only makes it harder to argue for ethical cognitivism.' Does it?

M.F.

Moral Relativism

Bernard Williams: 'Interlude: Relativism' in *Morality*

Bernard Williams: 'The truth in relativism' in *Moral Luck* ch.11 (reprinted from *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (PAS) 75 1974-5)

B. Williams: *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* ch 9

Mind 1979

Gilbert Harman: 'Moral Relativism', Part I in Gilbert Harman and Judith Jarvis Thomson,
Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity (1996)

Gilbert Harman: *Explaining Value* (2000), Part I. Moral Relativism. [This includes reprints of various papers, including 'Moral Relativism Defended' originally from *Philosophical Review* 1975, but also reprinted in Meiland and Krausz (eds.) *Relativism: Cognitive and Moral*; and 'Is there a single true morality?' from D. Copp and D. Zimmerman eds., *Morality, Reason and Truth* (1985), also reprinted in M. Krausz (ed.) *Relativism: interpretation and confrontation*.]

G. Harman: *The Nature of Morality* ch.8 (1977)

P. Foot: 'Moral Relativism' in Meiland & Krausz (eds.) *Relativism: Cognitive and Moral*

Tim Scanlon: 'Fear of Relativism' ch.9 in Rosalind Hursthouse, Gavin Lawrence and Warren Quinn eds., *Virtues and Reasons: Philippa Foot and Moral Theory* (1995)

R. Norman: *Reasons for Action* ch.5 'Varieties of ethical relativism'

D. Z. Phillips & H. O. Mounce: *Moral Practices* ch.7

D. Cooper: 'Moral Relativism' in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* III

Robert Arrington: 'Relativism', ch.5 in *Rationalism, Realism, and Relativism* (1989)

James Rachels: *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* ch.2 (1986)

David Wong: 'Relativism' Section 39, in Part VI of Peter Singer ed. *A Companion to Ethics* (Blackwell)

David Wong: *Moral Relativity* (1984)

Sample questions:

1. Is it wrong for people in one society to condemn the values of another society?
2. 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do.' Could this be coherently adopted by someone as an ethical principle?
3. Is morality a matter of social convention?
4. Can relativism be defended against the charge that it is 'possibly the most absurd view to have been advanced even in moral philosophy' (Williams)?
5. To what problem is cultural relativism supposed to be a solution? Is it a solution?

Objectivity *Within* an Ethical Outlook?

Truth and Ethical Knowledge

Philippa Foot: 'Moral Arguments', MIND 67 (1958); reprinted in M. Warnock ed., *Women Philosophers*

David Wiggins: 'Truth, Invention, and the Meaning of Life' in *Needs Values, Truth*, reprinted in Sayre-McCord ed., *Essays on Moral Realism* (1988); and 'Truth as Predicated of Moral Judgments', in *Needs, Values, Truth*

Brad Hooker: Introduction to *Truth in Ethics*, ed. B. Hooker (1996)

Crispin Wright: 'Truth in Ethics' in B. Hooker ed.

Peter Railton: 'Subject-ive and Objective' in B. Hooker ed.

History, Reflection, and 'Confidence'

Alasdair MacIntyre: *After Virtue*, esp. ch.15

Bernard Williams: *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, chs.8-10 (re relativism, reflection's destruction of ethical knowledge, 'the morality system', and confidence).

Bernard Williams: 'Who Needs Ethical Knowledge?' in Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement 35, *Ethics*, ed. A. Phillips Griffiths 1993

Adrian Moore: 'Can Reflection Destroy Knowledge?', *Ratio* (New Series) IV Dec. 1991

J.E.J. Altham: 'Reflection and Confidence', in J. Altham and R. Harrison eds., *World, Mind, and Ethics*, and Williams' reply.

Charles Taylor: 'A Most Peculiar Institution', in J. Altham and R. Harrison eds., *World, Mind, and Ethics*

Sample Questions

1. What is ethical 'confidence'? Is more important than ethical knowledge?
2. Are moral statements true or false? (1995)
3. Must the moral cognitivist be a moral realist?
4. Should we be disappointed if morality is not founded upon anything objective?
5. Is the idea of reflection's destroying ethical knowledge a coherent idea?