

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect.

Moral Theories

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Moral theories: theories about the nature of moral judgments (meta-ethical theories) or giving criteria for right and wrong (normative ethics).

meta-ethical theory

example: error theory: all moral statements are false.

normative theory:

example: something is wrong only if it causes pain.

Moral Theories

Meta-ethical theories:

- emotivism
- relativism
- error theory
- realism

Normative theories:

- consequentialism
- deontology
- virtue theory

Moral Theories

Emotivism: moral value judgments are not true or false but merely expressions of our attitudes or emotions

Murder - boo!

Kindness - yay!

Moral Theories

Objection to emotivism:

People disagree about morality. One says killing is wrong and the other says it's okay. For the emotivist, this boils down to an expression of emotion (killing - boo!; killing - yay!). But this is not genuine disagreement.

Disagreement: You say A and I say \sim A.

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Relativism: 1. all moral value judgments are determined by a society's beliefs toward actions or behavior. 2. There are no objective or universal moral value judgments.

- the community disapproves of stealing, so stealing is wrong.
- the community disapproves of lying, so lying is wrong.

Moral Theories

What arguments are there for relativism? The *cultural differences argument*:

(1) Different cultures have different moral codes (different opinions concerning what is right and what is wrong).

Therefore,

(2) Therefore, there is no objective “truth” in morality. Right and wrong are only matters of opinion, and opinions vary from culture to culture.

What do you think of this argument?

A. Good B. Bad

Moral Theories

Objections to relativism:

1. No society is superior or inferior to another.
2. Every society's laws are morally infallible.
3. There is no moral progress.
4. Moral revolutionaries are immoral.
5. Tolerance is only valuable if a society holds to it.