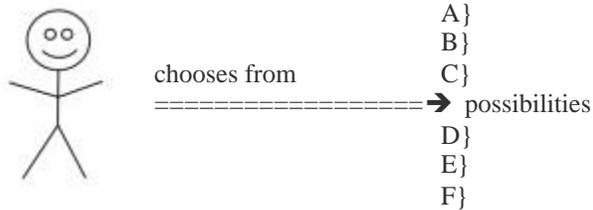


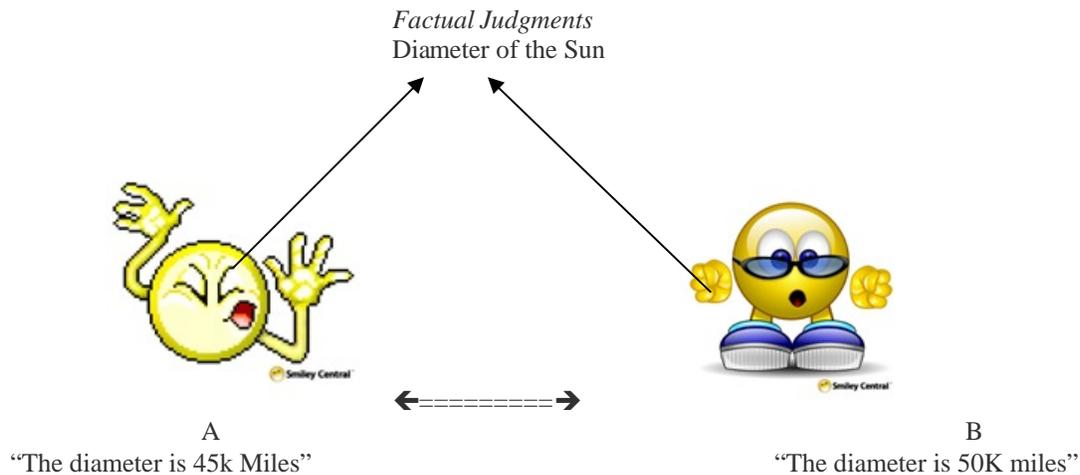
1. **The basic character of moral judgments.**

““Smith ought (ought not) do B.”



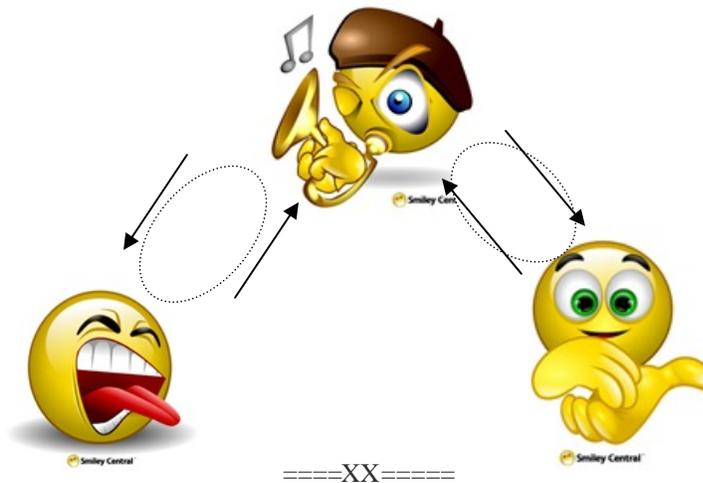
Moral judgment, e.g., “Smith ought do B,” claim to provide directions or rules for how we should make choices. Moral judgments only apply to actions that are under our control. Moral judgments typically tell us to choose certain things or avoid others. Moral judgments must refer to some standard or norm in terms of which they are justified. A key issue of moral theory is what those standards might be, how we can know them, and makes choices in light of them.

2. **Kinds of judgments:**



(In ‘factual judgments’ people refer to the thing under discussion. A and B can have a disagreement with each other because they are talking about a feature of the sun. Both of their statements cannot be true simultaneously. A statement is true if it accurately describes what it signifies.)

Aesthetic Judgments

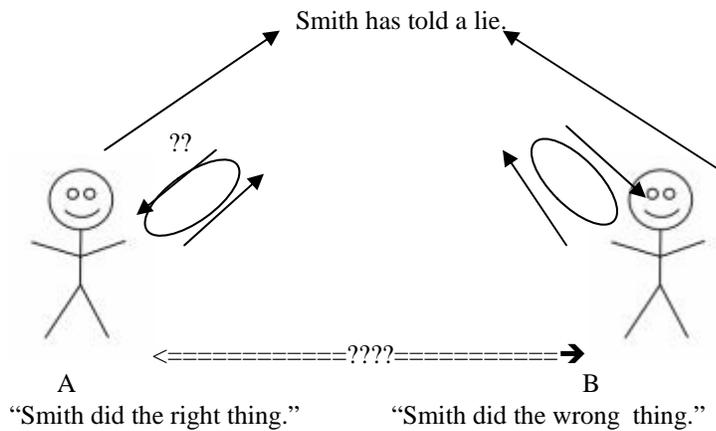


A
 “Man, that was ugly. Sounded like he was having a root canal”

B
 “Really beautiful”

(In ‘aesthetic judgments’ people seem to refer to the thing under discussion but perhaps are only talking about they like or dislike something. This is a common interpretation of what is involved in aesthetic judgments. A and B can not have a disagreement with each other because they are not talking about the same thing but about their respective likes or dislikes for something.. The statements are true only if they accurately convey what they are feeling.)

Moral Judgments



Whether there is a legitimate disagreement between A and B in moral judgments depends upon the status of the standards that underlie moral judgments.

INVENTED STANDARDS: If we adopt the subjectivist or cultural relativist positions, then we reduce the moral standards to personal or social preferences respectively. In either case there really is no disagreement between A and B except, in the case of cultural relativism, the cultural norms to which the judgments might refer. For the subjectivist, there really aren’t any moral standards. Moral judgments are true for an individual only if they convey

his or her preferences when the statement is made. Statements are true on the CR view only if they accurately convey or conform to the customs of the particular society in which the statements are made,

DISCOVERABLE STANDARDS: In this case, the moral standards are not a function of personal or collective preferences. Various philosophers have offered different candidates for such standards: God's will; universal duties, good consequences, etc.. If there are such standards, then there can be legitimate disagreements between A and B with reference to those standards. The statements above of A and B cannot both be true with reference to the same discoverable standards.

3. Psychological Egoism:

A descriptive theory about human motivations for actions

1. Strong version – human always/necessarily act in a self-regarding manner (metaphysical determinism – about how we are 'hard wired.')

2. Weak version – humans generally so act but not necessarily. (Bond doesn't acknowledge this version, but it commonly mentioned in discussions of PE.)

PE – is a descriptive and not a normative/moral theory. PE in either version is a theory of human motivation – what prompts to act in certain ways.

Self-regarding means to act with our own interest in mind and not the interest of others.

For, Bond 'selfish' usually suggests something that is morally wrong. since 'selfish' is often used to describe an action in which one person harms another. (pejorative term). So Bond prefers 'self-regarding' for 'selfish.' But most discussions of PE use 'selfish' since this terms need not have this pejorative connotation. This is a terminological matter, not a substantive one.

In either case, self-regarding or selfish motivations are compatible with actions that help others, are indifferent to others or harm them. In each case, the person is focused on what is in his or her interest not the interest of the other person. So, the strong version of PE is incompatible with a claim that we can respect others: that is, treat them as valuable in themselves independently of our interests.

Strong PE is a deterministic theory: we are hard wired only to be self-regarding/selfish.

Strong PE is really a theory of human nature – it's a metaphysical theory or an a priori claim about human nature.

A priori – independent of sense experience (non-empirical)

A posteriori – dependent upon sense experience (empirical)

It is for this reason that it is very difficult to provide counter examples to the strong PE. Regardless of what one proposes as a non self-regarding action, the proponent of strong PE will always posit some self-regarding motive, even if it is an unconscious motive. Effectively the proponent of strong PE claims to have a theory which is empirically irrefutable. OTOH, one cannot determine motives merely by observing actions so the question arises as to what justifies strong PE. According to Bond, the strong PE effectively argues that since every desire that underlies my actions is my desire, the content of the desire must be self-regarding. That is, the strong PE confuses the owner of my desires (which is me) with the object of my desires (which need not be me).

If SPE is true, then normative morality is meaningless. At least many critics argue this. Bond holds that only a type of ethical egoism is consistent with strong PE. But that can be true only in the sense that I might be morally directed

to act on these desire that maximize or are really in my self interest. Ethical egoism normally assumes however that we can perform other-regarding actions, but that we shouldn't do so.

Weak PE – doesn't entail any ethical theory. Because people are generally selfish, it doesn't follow that people should be selfish.

4. **Cultural Relativism** – moral standards are a function of the collective tastes and preferences of a society. MS are socially and culturally dependent.

What is moral for a person to do is dictated by what the person should do in the society in which he or she lives. “When in Rome, one ought do as the Romans do.”

Bond presents this argument for ‘simple CR:’

P 1 Accepted norms of conduct vary from culture to culture

[P2 – morality consists in following accepted norms of culture: one ought to follow the moral principles of the culture in which one lives.]

C Therefore, morality varies from culture to culture (moral standards are a function of a particular culture).

P2 is the unstated premise in simple CR. Either it has to be true by definition but it's not clear why this should be the case. Or, it is a substantive moral principle that amounts to saying “When in Rome one ought do as the Romans do.” But this turns out to be a universal moral norm that contradicts what the CR says about moral norms: namely, that are culturally relative.

Note that if CR is true, there is no basis for people from one culture morally criticizing the moral norms or practices of another culture. The reason is that the preferences of one culture can't be binding on the collective preferences of another culture. Despite the claim that when in Rome, one should do as the Romans do, nevertheless, it is not possible for the people in a culture to criticize the moral practices of the same culture at an earlier time for the simple reason that the practices and preferences of a culture at one historical moments are not binding on the same culture at earlier periods. Note that for the proponent of CR: while cultures and societies might attempt to justify their moral practices by appeals to discoverable norms -- divine will or inalienable rights -- all such appeals are illegitimate.

CR ends of collapsing into moral subjectivism. For once we see that the moral beliefs of a particular culture and society are grounded on collectives preferences, then the people in a society really have no legitimate basis for criticizing the moral beliefs of those who disagree with those held by the society. The reason is this: the fact that N number of people collectively prefer the same thing as good still means that the claim about the goodness of the things is based upon preferences. But 100 preferences in favor of X aren't any more ‘objective’ than 1 preference opposed to X. Hence, the clever person will see that the injunction to do in Rome what the Romans do is really unwarranted. If I reject the moral norms of my culture there is really no moral reason to follow them. I may because society has the power to punish me for not following moral customs, but if I think I can break the moral rules of society and not get caught, there is no reason for me not to do so.