

Moral Relativity

The glaring inconsistency of the times is revealed when a President of the United States proclaims methods of torture (e.g., water boarding) are against the rule of law and decency while, at the same time, proclaims that infanticide and the methods of abortion are not. To this President, the rule of law is neither rule nor law; it is convenience and expediency.

James Nickel

Postmodern, relativistic culture (including some branches of “Christianity”) does assert absolutes; e.g., it is socially unacceptable to say that something is socially unacceptable and it is heretical to say that something is heretical.

James Nickel

At the heart of the opposition to adoptions, or anything that would tend to discourage abortions, is the notion that children are expendable when they inconvenience adults. Anyone who has ever raised children knows that inconvenience is their middle name - and anyone who can look back on his own childhood honestly knows that he was at least an inconvenience, if not a real pain, to his parents on many occasions.

Thomas Sowell

Pro-choice is a politically correct term that hides a stark reality: the prevalence of childish behavior in the lives of many adults.

James Nickel

Where everyone’s opinion is equal to everyone else’s opinion, no one’s opinion matters. Where all truths share equal billing on the public stage, no truths can emerge with meaning.

Michael Shermer & Alex Grobman, *Denying History*, p. 5

The philosophical bestsellers of our times ... are at one in claiming that there are only behavioral patterns. There are few things as tempting as to fall in with that fallacy as long as the great majority behaves in terms of old-fashioned norms. But when the fallacy strikes home? Of the innumerable cases let me recall that of a Princeton Senior, a sociology major. A year ago he told me with great persuasion and superior assurance that sociology has disproved the validity of absolute ethical norms. There are no norms, he said, only patterns of behavior. Around Christmas we met again. He told me in a tone of outrage that pilferage has reached epidemic proportion in the campus dormitories. Nothing was safe in one’s room any longer. Anything valuable one owned had to be locked up in a foot locker whenever one left one’s room. I took the story in my stride. I had heard similar stories about Stanford and elsewhere, and was not surprised. My calm has visibly irritated my young friend. Are you not outraged? he asked me. No, I said to him. But don’t you think you should be? he asked again with indignation. Well, perhaps I should be outraged, but you certainly should not, I told him. This threw him into a frenzy. Why should I not be outraged, he asked, when they have just stolen my wristwatch and my cassette recorder?

I knew whom he meant by the word “they.” Some of his classmates. Well, I said to him, you remember our conversation a year ago? You remember your claim that there were no ethical norms but only behavioral patterns? He did remember though not too readily. Well, I went on, if such is indeed the case, then what forbids some students from taking on behavioral characteristics of thieves? My friend got the point. It now dawned on him that those who ridicule ethical norms in the classrooms should not cry over their absence in the dormitories.

Stanley L. Jaki, *The Absolute beneath the Relative and Other Essays* (1988) pp. 132-133