

Are There Any Moral Absolutes?

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Society runs on morality. The sanity of individuals is heavily pegged on the moral thresholds that, loosely, define what is right and wrong. These thresholds go as far as, significantly, defining the finer aspects of rationality. As such, humanity depends on morality. However, the applicability of morality to different situations is severely tested by the concept of moral absolutism. According to Sagar (2015), moral absolutism is the ethical perception that varied actions are intrinsically wrong or right. Notably, though, classifying actions as strictly wrong or right, on the basis of morality, challenges the overall nature of human behavior. Therefore, this paper seeks to advance the argument that there are no moral absolutes; that instead of moral absolutism, society hinges on moral relativism.

Primarily, human behavior cannot be entirely explicable on the basis of defined moral laws or codes. Moral absolutism would suggest that such issues as theft, lying, and murder are strictly wrong. However, this rigid standpoint can be directly challenged by the circumstances underlying the occurrence of any of the aforementioned factors. For instance, suppose a teenage girl has been repeatedly abused her father for as long as she can remember. On a fateful night; as the father creeps into her bed and commences his heinous act, she grabs a table lamp and smashes his head. If the father dies, moral absolutism would conclude that the girl was wrong, and is guilty of murder. Conversely, moral relativism would consider the circumstances and conclude that the girl acted in self-defense. A logical line of thought concurs with the latter. This particular example asserts that moral absolutism is inapplicable.

Further, moral absolutes could be founded on laws that no longer hold in modern society. For example, intimate partner violence may have been considered to be right among a few earlier cultures. Vecina, Chacón, and Pérez-Viejo (2016) observe that violence against women was/is

propagated by men, who faced no moral consequences of their actions. A given religious or cultural absolutist view would hold that it is morally right for a rebellious or non-submissive wife to be slapped and reminded of her place in the home. However, this perception is not consistent with the modern way of life, where violence against intimate partners is prohibited. This situation illuminates the fact that some moral absolutes are founded on obsolete cultural inclinations, and are; therefore, not applicable to modern society.

Equally important is the fact that the laws that govern human behavior and morality are subject to continuous change; therefore, absolutism cannot be accommodated. Take, for instance, the thunderous discussions that have surrounded sexual orientation in the recent past. Several decades ago, it was strictly immoral/wrong for people of the same gender to have sexual relationships. There were laws to prohibit it. Today, numerous countries have passed laws to legalize this very concept. It substantiates the proposition that moral absolutism cannot be accommodated because of the regular change being experienced. Notably, proponents of absolutism suggest that a universal moral code of behavior can be established to keep in place various moral absolutes (McDonald, 2010). However, the fact that various countries can barely agree on acceptable tenets of human behavior is sufficient evidence that moral absolutism cannot be accommodated.

Conclusively, it is undeniable that change is inevitable. Moral absolutism is rooted in past laws, a one-dimensional line of thought, and a blatant refusal to accept that multitudes of actions are premised on circumstance. The abovementioned points solidify the argument that there are no moral absolutes in society. Besides, this discussion has made clear the assertion that moral relativism plays a prominent role in modern society. Therefore, the argument that there are no moral absolutes is upheld.

References

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