

# Insiders, Outsiders

Reason, Relativism, and Reality

Spring 2005

# Insiders

- People we must make joint decisions with, so...
- People we've been bargaining with, so...
- People party to the same moral conventions

# Outsiders

- People we don't make joint decisions with, so....
- People we haven't been bargaining with, so...
- People not party to our moral conventions

# Critical Engagement

- This is an umbrella term covering things like disputation, condemnation, bargaining, intervention
- A main challenge for relativists is to explain how critical engagement is possible
- This breaks into two challenges, depending whether the engagement is with insiders or outsiders

# Insider challenge

Critical engagement with "insiders" -- those presumed to be working in the same framework -- is easier to understand

- *Disagree* about what the framework permits
- *Condemn* the behavior it forbids
- *Bargain* about how the framework should evolve
- *Intervene* if they don't keep up their end of the bargain

# Outsider challenge

- *Disagree* about what the framework permits -- which framework?
- *Condemn* the behavior it forbids -- how can they be blamed for breaking our rules?
- *Bargain* about how the framework should evolve -- why, when they evolve separately?
- *Intervene* if they don't keep up their end of the bargain -- why, when they aren't party to our bargain?

# Disengage and Tolerate

- Justification Principle (JP): Don't interfere with the ends of others unless one can *justify* the interference as acceptable to them were they fully rational and informed.
- Vegetarians have to tolerate meat-eaters unless they can find a "mistake;" pro-choicers expect to be tolerated by pro-lifers.
- Outsiders are not guilty of any objective mistake
- So it seems we have to tolerate their behavior however repugnant

# Limits to Toleration

- Interference is avoided *other things equal*; but other things might not be equal
- There might be self-interested *reasons* to interfere which override the JP
  - It's OK to use force on law-breakers but not on meat-eaters, since they're not "hurting anyone"
- The majority might be able to *get away* with interfering
  - The majority enforces its will on bigamists etc. but not (any longer) on mixed-race couples
  - This is reconciled with the JP by treating (e.g.) single-sex couples as *mistaken* (?) about what marriage *is*

# Two Kinds of Relativity

- Joylene says, "Raylene shouldn't eat meat."
- This could be relativized to Joylene's framework; that's critic relativism
- It could also be relativized to Raylene's framework; that's agent relativism
- Agent relativism provides for a limited sort of critical engagement with outsiders
- One can say *their own framework* provides them with reasons not to behave that way

# Is that enough?

- Seems like we want to come down harder on Hitler than agent relativity allows
- He was doing the right thing for a Nazi!(!?)
- Only two options open to us

*Agent-relative option* Suppose or pretend that even his framework condemns his behavior; he's misapplying his own rules, maybe because under a factual misapprehension about Jews

*Critic-relative option* Condemn him using our values while conceding this gives *him* no reason to change; we have self-interested reasons to stop him nevertheless, just as with a marauding tiger

# Coming up

- Debate Wednesday
- Next week begin relativism about "the world"
- Read "The World" (!), chapter 7 of Simon Blackburn's excellent intro text, *Think*
- That's for Monday; further pre-Kuhnian readings will be distributed then
- Monday after that start Kuhn's masterpiece, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*