

Paperling 2 We Constructed in Class

In this section, Pojman discusses conventional ethical relativism (conventionalism for short) which says that moral rightness and wrongness is relative to culture. He doesn't like the view because he thinks some of its consequences are disturbing, although he notes that just because a view has disturbing consequences, that doesn't necessarily mean it's false — the truth can be disturbing. One criticism of the view he gives is that it's hard to define "culture" because each person seems to belong to multiple groups and it's hard to decide which groups should count as cultures and which shouldn't. A second criticism he gives is that the view says that people who are rebelling against their own culture are always wrong, but standardly we think that such people can sometimes be in the right. A third criticism he gives is that anyone can find a culture that supports their view, so conventionalism seems to make it very easy to act morally rightly. In addition, he says you might think conventionalism is attractive because it implies that we should be tolerant of other cultures, but in fact, conventionalism says that if your culture says you should be intolerant, then you should, so it doesn't imply that everyone should be tolerant.