



When In Rome...



Important Concepts

Arguments

An **argument** is a set of sentences given in support of another sentence, i.e., the conclusion.

A **premise** is a member of the set of sentences that supports the conclusion.

The **conclusion** is the sentence being argued for.

An argument...

...is **valid** when the premises necessitate the conclusion; i.e., when if the premises are true, the conclusion **MUST** be true; i.e., when the premises force the conclusion upon you.

...is **sound** when it is a. valid, and b. has true premises.

P1: Every painting ever made is in The Library of Babel.

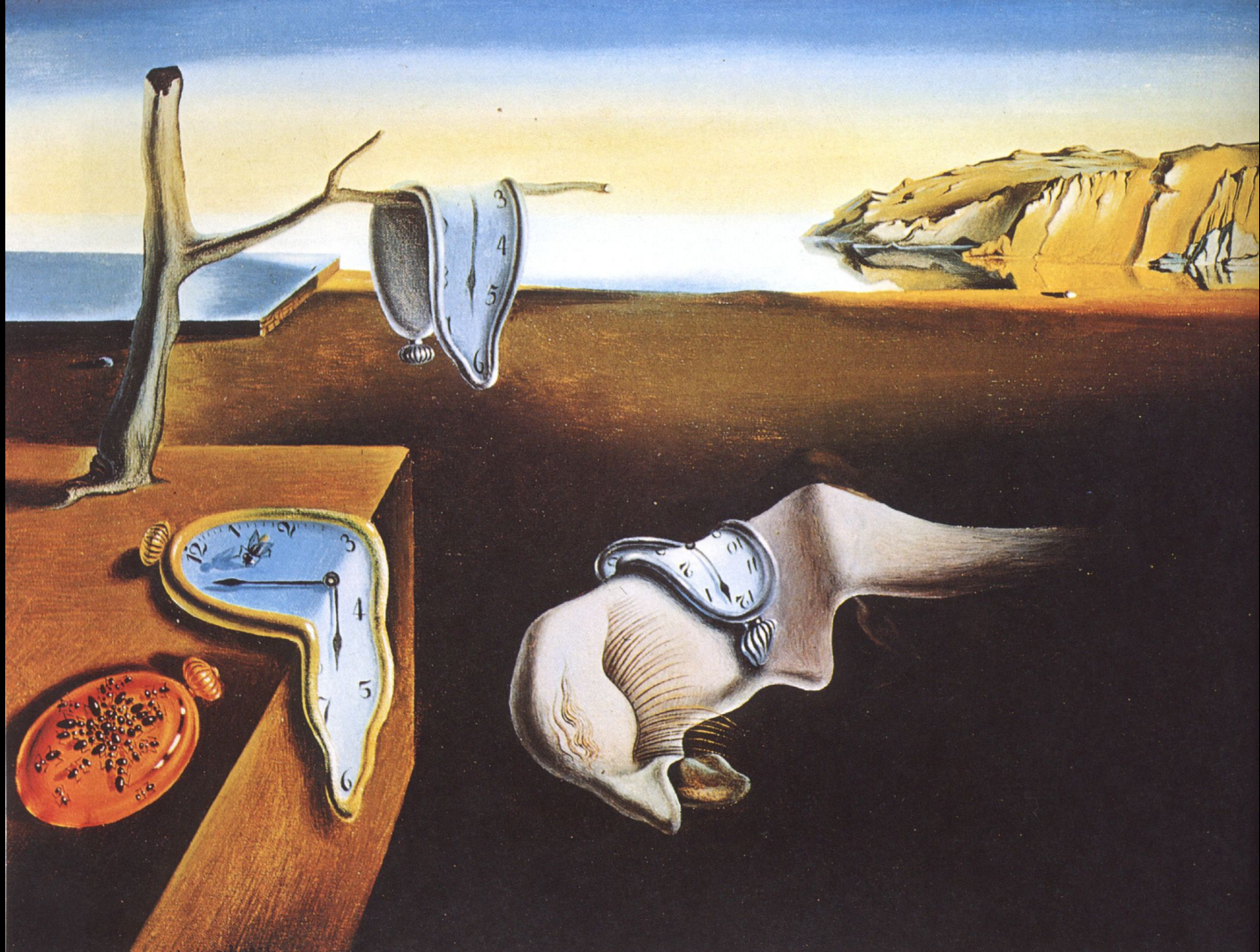
P2: “La Persistencia de la Memoria” is a painting by Salvador Dalí.

Therefore “La Persistencia de la Memoria” is in The Library of Babel.

P1: All lawyers are liars.

P2: Jim is a lawyer.

Therefore Jim is a liar.



P1: All students are drivers.

P2: Some drivers are not students.

Therefore some students are not drivers.

P1: All the dogs in Athens are either pure-breeds or mixed-breeds.

P2: Milo is a dog in Athens.

Therefore Milo is either a pure-breed or a mixed-breed.

Is/Ought Distinction

The **Is/Ought Distinction** is an argument made by David Hume in the 18th century that claims that no matter how many factual (is) statements one makes, one cannot reach a normative (ought) statement.



Oh I see Mr.Hume

You assume we all want to eat meat in the first place Mr.Arkwright

MEAT IS MURDER!

Mary Shelley Vegetarian

Holmes

HT

ES

For example...

INVALID

1. It **is** the case that Nicole borrowed \$100 from Jac.
2. It **is** the case that Nicole promised to pay back Jac.
3. It **is** the case that Nicole has \$100 to spare right now.
4. It **is** the case that Nicole will see Jac later today.
-
5. Therefore, Nicole **should** pay back Jac.

As it stands this argument has a **missing premise...**

For example...

VALID



1. It **is** the case that Nicole borrowed \$100 from Jac.
2. It **is** the case that Nicole promised to pay back Jac.
3. It **is** the case that Nicole has \$100 to spare right now.
4. It **is** the case that Nicole will see Jac later today.
5. If you borrow money, you **should** pay it back.
6. Therefore, Nicole **should** pay back Jac.

For example...



1. It **is** the case that we have innate differences.

...

2. Therefore, we should treat each other differently.

For example...

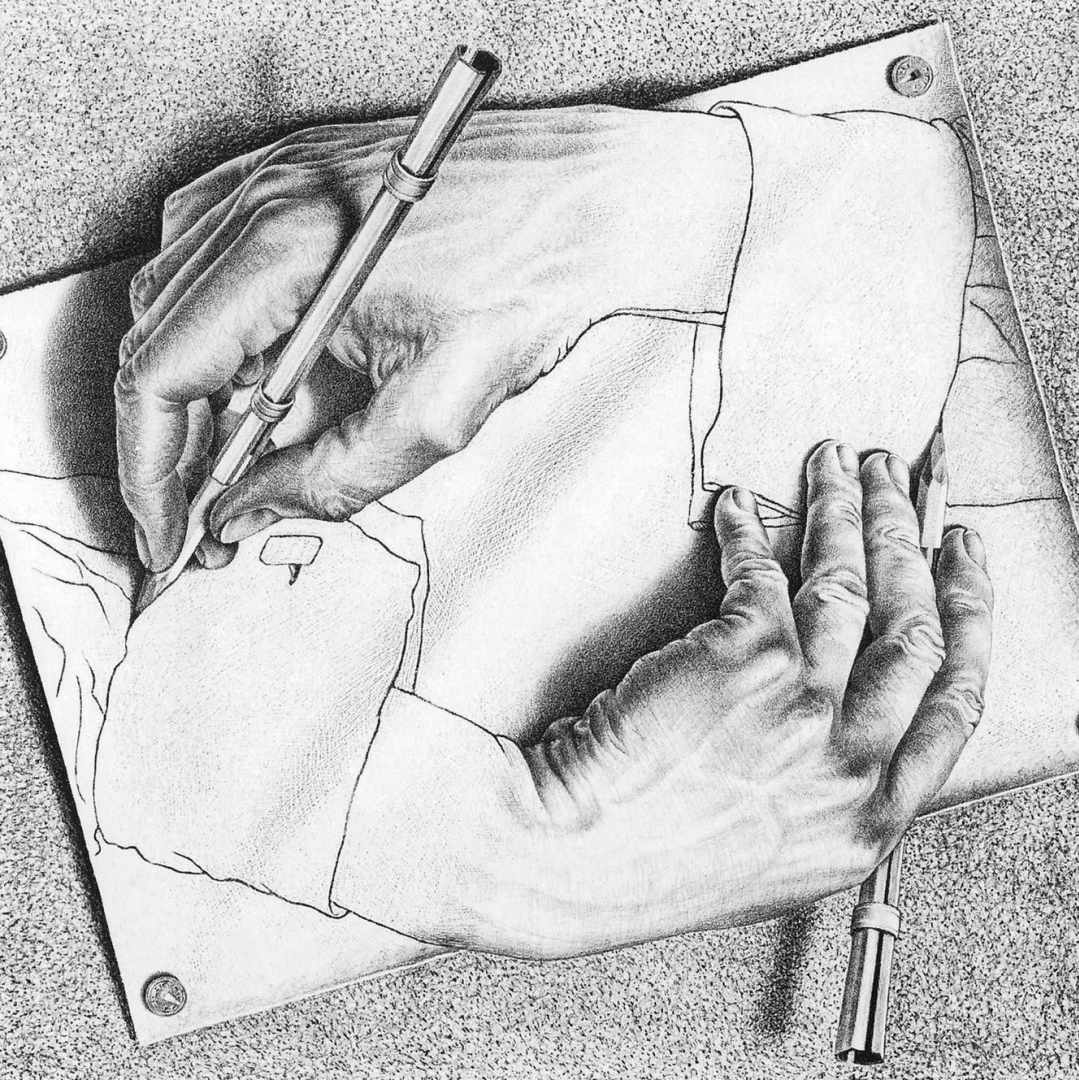
1. It **is** the case that we have innate differences.

Missing premise: If people have innate differences, you should treat them differently.

2. Therefore, we should treat each other differently.



FALSE(?)

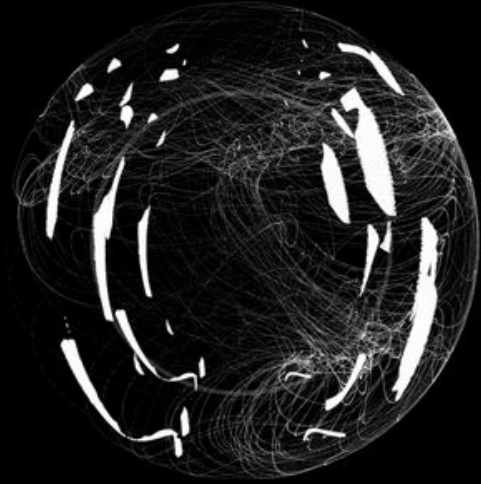


The Lesson:

Valid arguments can come easily once you provide the missing premise.

The more important matter is whether or not the argument is **sound**. That is to say what matters is whether the premises are true.





Cultural relativism is the view that:

- a. there is no objective way to establish that a particular morality is the correct morality;
- b. there is no reason to believe in a single true morality; even though
- c. there may be certain moral universals.





Note:

Moral relativists might take the judgments to be true **if they are true in relation to some salient moral framework, as opposed to something like moral fictionalism, e.g., Hobbes.**

The main argument is...

There are major differences in the moralities that people accept and these differences do not seem to rest on actual differences in situation or disagreements about the facts (see Harman's Moral Relativism Explained, sec. 7).



Argument for Cultural Relativism

1. There are major differences in the moralities that cultures accept.
2. Missing premise: If different cultures accept different moralities, then each culture's morality is true **for them**.
3. Therefore, each culture's morality is true **for them**.

Question:

Is premise 2 true? Does the fact that a culture has its own moral code make it true for them?

HORNS

OF A

DILEMMA



EITHER WE SIDE WITH CULTURAL
RELATIVISM AND ADMIT THAT MORAL
JUDGMENTS ARE **TRUE** RELATIVE TO SOME
CULTURE

OR...





...WE SIDE WITH MORAL SKEPTICISM AND
MERELY AGREE THAT THE MORAL
JUDGMENTS OF THE MEMBERS OF SOME
CULTURE **FEEL** TRUE (TO THEM) BUT IT IS
ACTUALLY ALL A **MORAL FICTION**.



Empirical Claims of Cultural Relativism

- ❑ Differences in value do not seem to rest on disagreement about the facts.



EMPIRICAL

DATA

TIME

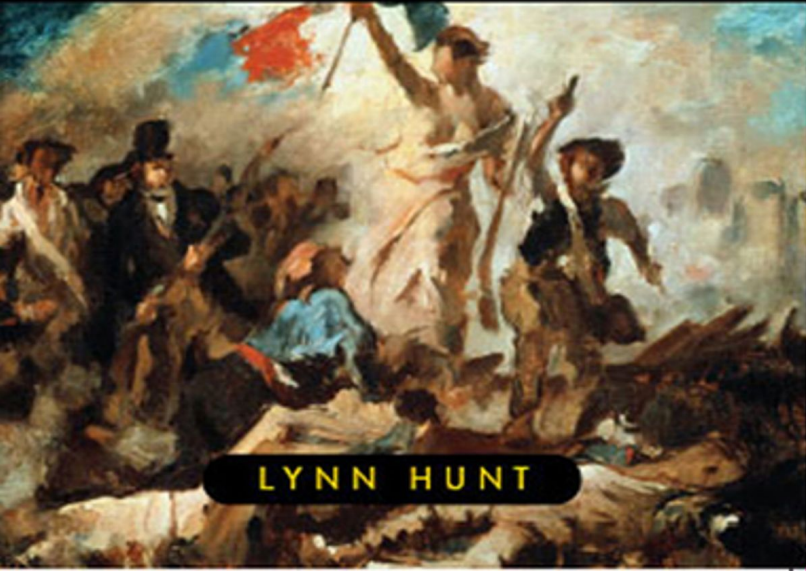


“Opponents of women’s suffrage commonly argued married women did not need the vote because they would be best represented by their husbands” ([Ingram 2015: 239](#))

"Remarkable . . . a tour de force."—Gordon S. Wood, *New York Times Book Review*

INVENTING HUMAN RIGHTS

A HISTORY



LYNN HUNT

Lynn Hunt argues that the notion of human rights was invented in the 18th century, a notion that seemed to apply to all propertied men, and even to propertyless men, children, and the insane (since they might one day acquire reason and moral autonomy).

"Remarkable . . . a tour de force."—Gordon S. Wood, *New York Times Book Review*

INVENTING HUMAN RIGHTS

A HISTORY



LYNN HUNT

“Women alone seemed not to have any of these options; they were defined as **inherently dependent** on either their fathers or husbands. If the proponents of universal, equal, and natural human rights automatically excluded some categories of people..., it was primarily because they viewed them as **less than fully capable of moral autonomy**” (Hunt 2007: 28; emphasis added).

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE CLASSIC HISTORY

THE MAKING OF THE ATOMIC BOMB

WITH A NEW FOREWORD

RICHARD RHODES

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE, THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARD,
AND THE NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD

Up until the dawn of **digital** computers,
the task of computation was given to
humans mostly women.

“It was thought that not only did women
have better eyes than men, but they were
less likely to be distracted by thinking
while counting” (Rhodes 2012: 157).

Philosophical objections...



Rachels ([1986](#)) argues that accepting Cultural Relativism has some counterintuitive implications:

1. We could no longer say that the customs of other societies are morally inferior to our own.

Bride Kidnapping (Kyrgyzstan)





Rachels ([1986](#)) argues that accepting Cultural Relativism has some counterintuitive implications:

1. We could no longer say that the customs of other societies are morally inferior to our own.
2. We could decide whether actions are right or wrong just by consulting the standards of our society.

Segregation (American South)





Rachels ([1986](#)) argues that accepting Cultural Relativism has some counterintuitive implications:

1. We could no longer say that the customs of other societies are morally inferior to our own.
2. We could decide whether actions are right or wrong just by consulting the standards of our society.
3. The idea of moral progress is called into doubt.

Ban on Female Driving (Saudi Arabia)



“If only one person in the world held down a terrified, struggling screaming little girl, cut off her genitals with a septic blade, and sowed her back up, leaving only a tiny hole for urine and menstrual flow, the only question would be how severely that person should be punished and whether the death penalty would be a sufficiently severe sanction.

But when millions of people do this, instead of the enormity of being magnified millions fold, suddenly it becomes culture and thereby magically becomes less rather than more horrible and is even defended by some Western moral thinkers including feminists” (Pinker 2003: 273).



Romans and their subject peoples would gather to watch:

- executions

- including *damnatio ad bestias* (Latin for "condemnation to beasts")

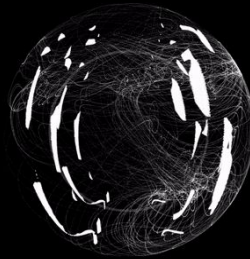
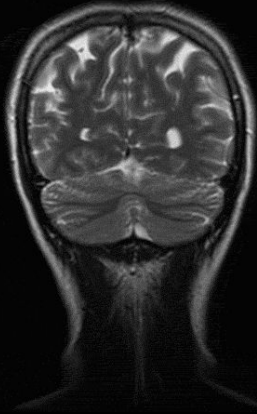
- floggings

- gladiatorial combat (sometimes but not always resulting in death)

- animal-baiting and animal battles

- fatal charades

See Fagan (2011).



To be continued...