Ima
Subjectivist

Subjectivism (SB): "X is good" means "I like X."

Pick out your moral principles by following your feelings.

Subjectivism

- preserves our moral freedom,

- solves CR's subgroup problem,

- fits how we form moral beliefs,

- fits how we speak ("I like smoking but it isn't good" means "I like *the enjoyment of* smoking but I don't like *the consequences of* smoking"),

- avoids the illusion of moral objectivity.

A problem with SB

SB can make goodness depend totally
on irrational feelings. If "X is good" means
"I like X," then this reasoning is valid:

I like hurting people.
∴ Hurting people *is good*.

This is bad logic (what I like needn't be good)
and a crude way to think about values (feelings
may be selfish or based on false beliefs).

Apply subjectivism to

racism

global
warming

moral
education

Ima
Idealist

Ideal Observer View (IO): "X is good" means "We'd desire X if we were fully informed and had impartial concern for everyone."

Pick out your moral principles by trying to become as informed and impartial as possible – and then seeing what you desire.

How would IO criticize these?

I like smoking.
∴ Smoking is good.

I like hurting people.
∴ Hurting people is good.

Problems with ideal observer view

- Ideal observers might not always agree.

- It's impossible for us to be *fully informed*.

- "Impartial" is vague. Does it require us to have equal concern for everyone (the same for our child and for a complete stranger)?

- Moral rationality may require other factors besides *knowledge* and *impartial concern*.

Early Greek ethics

- Socrates started moral philosophy by asking "What is virtue?" He taught the life of reason but didn't give a systematic moral theory.

- Plato saw wisdom, courage, self-control, and justice as the main moral virtues; we need to control our "divided self" by reason.

- Aristotle saw virtues as character traits midway between "too little" and "too much," as judged by a person of practical reason (somewhat like an "ideal observer").

David Hume

Hume was a Scottish enlightenment philosopher whose ethical thinking had two phases, roughly like subjectivism (morality is based on emotion) and the ideal observer theory (morality needs both emotion and reason).

Early Hume argued against moral realism: (1) that facts can't motivate us, but moral beliefs can; and (2) that moral beliefs, being about neither sensations nor the relation of ideas, can't be truths.

The farmer's dilemma

Each rival family can gain more by stealing from the other. But both lose if both do this; then egoism hurts both sides. So promoting our own interests may require getting everyone to cooperate and reject egoism.

Hatfields	McCoys	Hatfields	McCoys
honest	honest	$6000	$6000
steal	honest	$9000	$2000
honest	steal	$2000	$9000
steal	steal	$3000	$3000