

# james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism

**\*\*Understanding James Rachels: The Challenge of Cultural Relativism\*\***

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism** is a pivotal concept in the field of ethics and moral philosophy. It invites us to reconsider how we perceive moral judgments across different cultures and challenges the notion that moral truths are always relative to cultural norms. James Rachels, a renowned philosopher, critically examines cultural relativism and offers compelling arguments that reveal its strengths and weaknesses. If you've ever wondered whether what's "right" or "wrong" truly depends on cultural context, then exploring Rachels' insights will provide a deeper understanding of this complex debate.

## What is Cultural Relativism?

At its core, cultural relativism is the idea that moral codes and ethical standards vary from culture to culture and that no one set of morals is superior to another. This perspective encourages tolerance and open-mindedness by suggesting that one should not judge the practices of another society using the standards of one's own. For example, practices seen as acceptable in one culture might be taboo in another, and cultural relativism promotes respecting these differences instead of condemning them.

## The Appeal of Cultural Relativism

Cultural relativism appeals to many because it seems to promote harmony and mutual respect among diverse groups. By acknowledging that moral beliefs are shaped by cultural contexts, it discourages ethnocentrism—the tendency to view one's own culture as the standard or the best. This approach is particularly relevant in a globalized world where cross-cultural interactions are frequent and complex.

## James Rachels' Critical Perspective

James Rachels appreciates the motivations behind cultural relativism but argues that it faces significant philosophical challenges. He identifies several problems with accepting cultural relativism as the ultimate guide to morality. Rachels' critique is not about dismissing cultural diversity but about questioning whether cultural relativism can provide a solid foundation for ethical reasoning.

# **Key Arguments in James Rachels' The Challenge of Cultural Relativism**

One of the most important contributions of James Rachels to the discussion on cultural relativism is his clear outline of the theory's limitations and contradictions. His essay, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism," is often used in philosophy courses because it breaks down complex ideas into accessible arguments.

## **The Problem of Moral Progress**

Rachels points out that if cultural relativism were true, the very idea of moral progress would be meaningless. Moral progress implies that a society can improve its ethical standards over time. However, if morality is entirely relative to culture, then there is no objective basis for saying one set of moral beliefs is better than another. For instance, if a society abolishes slavery, cultural relativism would have to argue that this is not moral progress, just a change in cultural norms.

## **The Issue of Disagreement Across Cultures**

Cultural relativism uses the fact that different societies have different moral codes as evidence that there is no absolute moral truth. While it is true that cultures disagree, Rachels challenges the conclusion that this disagreement means all moral viewpoints are equally valid. He suggests that some moral principles, such as prohibitions against murder or theft, are nearly universal, indicating that there may be some objective moral standards beneath cultural differences.

## **Distinguishing Between Observations and Moral Judgments**

Another crucial insight from Rachels' critique is the distinction between descriptive and normative claims. Descriptive claims explain what people believe or do in a culture, while normative claims suggest what people ought to do. Cultural relativism often conflates the two, assuming that because a culture believes something, it must be morally right. Rachels argues this is a logical error, and just because a belief is widespread doesn't make it ethically justified.

# **Implications of James Rachels' Critique for Ethics**

Understanding Rachels' arguments helps in navigating the complex relationship between cultural diversity and universal moral principles. His challenge to cultural relativism encourages a more nuanced approach to ethical issues.

## **Finding Common Ground Without Ethnocentrism**

One takeaway from Rachels' work is that it is possible to recognize cultural differences without falling into the trap of ethnocentrism. While some moral standards may be universal, respecting cultural practices and seeking to understand their contexts remains important. This balance is vital in international relations, human rights discussions, and multicultural societies.

## **The Role of Critical Thinking in Moral Judgments**

James Rachels emphasizes the importance of critical thinking when evaluating moral beliefs. Rather than blindly accepting cultural norms or dismissing other cultures' practices, individuals should analyze the reasons behind moral codes and consider their consequences. This approach fosters ethical reflection that goes beyond cultural boundaries.

## **Ethical Relativism vs. Moral Objectivism**

Rachels' critique also clarifies the ongoing debate between ethical relativism (the idea that moral truths are relative) and moral objectivism (the belief in universal moral truths). His work does not dismiss cultural diversity but suggests that some ethical principles might be universally valid, providing a basis for cross-cultural dialogue and moral criticism.

## **Practical Examples That Illustrate the Challenge of Cultural Relativism**

To better grasp the complexity of James Rachels' challenge, consider real-world examples that highlight the tension between respecting culture and maintaining ethical standards.

## **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is practiced in some cultures and is often defended as a traditional rite. Cultural relativism would argue that outsiders should not judge this practice. However, from a human rights perspective, FGM is harmful and violates individual autonomy. Rachels' critique supports the idea that certain practices can be ethically challenged even when culturally ingrained.

## **Capital Punishment**

Different countries have varying stances on the death penalty. Cultural relativism might suggest that these differences are equally valid moral positions. Yet, debates about the morality and justice of capital punishment show that societies engage in moral reasoning beyond mere cultural acceptance, reflecting deeper ethical concerns.

## **Marriage Customs**

Marriage practices vary widely—some cultures practice polygamy, others monogamy. While cultural relativism encourages tolerance, it also raises questions about individual rights, gender equality, and consent. Rachels' challenge pushes us to consider how to respect cultural traditions while advocating for ethical principles that protect individuals.

## **Why James Rachels' Challenge Matters Today**

In a world increasingly interconnected by technology, migration, and globalization, understanding the challenge of cultural relativism is more relevant than ever. James Rachels' arguments help us navigate this complex terrain by encouraging respect for cultural diversity without abandoning critical ethical reflection.

## **Promoting Cross-Cultural Dialogue**

Engaging with Rachels' insights fosters meaningful conversations between cultures. It equips us to question our assumptions, avoid simplistic judgments, and seek common moral ground. This is crucial for addressing global issues such as human rights, environmental ethics, and international law.

## **Encouraging Ethical Awareness**

Rachels' work reminds us that ethics is not static. It challenges us to consider the reasons behind cultural practices and encourages ongoing reflection about what it means to live a good life in a diverse world. This awareness is essential for educators, policymakers, and individuals alike.

James Rachels' examination of the challenge of cultural relativism continues to inspire and provoke thought in philosophy and beyond. His balanced critique offers a pathway to appreciate cultural differences while maintaining a commitment to ethical inquiry—a valuable lesson for anyone interested in understanding morality in a global context.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the central thesis of James Rachels' 'The Challenge of Cultural Relativism'?**

The central thesis is that while cultural relativism highlights the importance of understanding moral diversity, it is flawed because it implies that there are no objective moral truths and that all cultural practices are equally valid, which can prevent moral criticism of harmful customs.

### **How does James Rachels define cultural relativism in his work?**

Rachels defines cultural relativism as the view that moral codes are culture-specific and that no universal standard exists to judge one culture's ethics as superior to another's.

### **What are some problems with cultural relativism identified by James Rachels?**

Rachels points out that cultural relativism forbids moral criticism of other cultures, implies moral infallibility within one's own culture, and makes moral progress impossible, as it denies universal moral standards.

### **How does James Rachels argue against the idea that cultural differences prove there is no objective truth in ethics?**

Rachels argues that disagreement about customs does not necessarily mean disagreement about underlying moral principles, and some moral rules, such as prohibitions against murder, are nearly universal, suggesting objective moral truths.

## **What examples does James Rachels use to illustrate the challenges of cultural relativism?**

Rachels discusses examples like the Eskimos' different treatment of the dead and varying cultural attitudes toward truth-telling to show that while customs differ, the underlying moral concerns may be similar.

## **According to James Rachels, what is the value of cultural relativism despite its flaws?**

Rachels acknowledges that cultural relativism is valuable for promoting tolerance and encouraging the understanding of different cultural practices, but it should not be accepted as a comprehensive moral theory.

## **Additional Resources**

James Rachels and the Challenge of Cultural Relativism

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism** stands as a seminal critique in the field of ethics, interrogating the boundaries and implications of cultural relativism as a moral philosophy. Cultural relativism, broadly defined, posits that moral codes and ethical truths are not universal but rather contingent upon cultural contexts. James Rachels, a renowned philosopher and ethicist, challenges this perspective by dissecting its logical foundations and practical consequences. His analysis invites a critical reconsideration of how societies understand morality, tolerance, and ethical judgment across diverse cultures.

## **Understanding Cultural Relativism**

Cultural relativism emerged as an anthropological and philosophical stance emphasizing respect for cultural differences. It discourages imposing one culture's moral standards upon another, advocating instead for cultural sensitivity. This approach is often praised for promoting tolerance and reducing ethnocentrism. However, it also raises complex questions about moral objectivity and the possibility of universal ethical principles.

At its core, cultural relativism asserts two main claims:

1. Different cultures have different moral codes.
2. There is no objective standard to judge one culture's ethics as superior to another's.

These tenets challenge the notion of absolute moral truths, suggesting that what is deemed “right” or “wrong” varies according to societal norms and historical contexts.

## **James Rachels’ Critique: The Core Arguments**

James Rachels confronts cultural relativism by highlighting several philosophical and practical shortcomings. His critique revolves around the idea that cultural relativism, while appealing in promoting tolerance, fails to provide a consistent framework for moral reasoning.

### **The Problem of Moral Infallibility**

One of Rachels’ primary observations is that cultural relativism implies moral infallibility of cultures. If each culture’s moral code is correct by definition, then no culture can be morally wrong. This reasoning leads to problematic conclusions, such as justifying practices that many consider unethical, including discrimination, oppression, or even human rights violations, merely because they are culturally sanctioned.

### **Limits on Moral Progress**

Rachels also argues that cultural relativism undermines the concept of moral progress. If cultures cannot be judged by any external standard, then the idea of improvement or reform within a society loses meaning. Historical movements against slavery, sexism, or racial discrimination would be impossible to frame as moral progress, as cultural relativism holds that these practices were simply part of a culture’s moral fabric at the time.

### **Contradictions in Cross-Cultural Criticism**

Another challenge Rachels identifies lies in the inconsistencies that arise when individuals or societies criticize other cultures. Cultural relativism ostensibly forbids condemning other cultures’ moral codes. Yet, in practice, people often do criticize harmful practices elsewhere, such as female genital mutilation or honor killings. This contradiction suggests that cultural relativism may not be a fully coherent or practical ethical theory.

## **Implications for Ethical Theory and Practice**

James Rachels’ challenge to cultural relativism extends beyond academic

debate, touching on real-world ethical dilemmas and policy decisions. His critique encourages a nuanced approach that balances respect for cultural diversity with the pursuit of universal moral principles.

## **The Search for Universal Morality**

Rachels advocates for the possibility of some universal moral standards, grounded in common human interests and needs. For example, prohibitions against murder or theft can be found across many, if not all, cultures, suggesting a shared ethical foundation. This perspective opens the door for cross-cultural dialogue and the establishment of international human rights standards.

## **Respect without Relativism**

While opposing extreme cultural relativism, Rachels emphasizes the importance of cultural understanding. His position encourages critical engagement with cultural practices rather than blanket acceptance or rejection. It calls for ethical evaluation informed by empathy, context, and reasoned argument—an approach that respects diversity without abandoning moral scrutiny.

## **Comparative Perspectives: Cultural Relativism vs. Ethical Universalism**

To fully appreciate James Rachels' challenge, it is instructive to compare cultural relativism with ethical universalism, which asserts that some moral principles apply to all humans regardless of culture.

- **Cultural Relativism:** Morality is culture-dependent; no universal truths.
- **Ethical Universalism:** Certain moral principles are universally valid.

Rachels' critique aligns more closely with universalism, arguing that some moral claims transcend cultural boundaries. However, unlike rigid universalists, he acknowledges the role of cultural context in shaping ethical understanding, advocating a middle path that recognizes both universal values and cultural particularities.



# **The Role of Dialogue and Ethical Pluralism**

Rachels' analysis implicitly supports ethical pluralism—the idea that multiple moral frameworks can coexist and that dialogue between cultures is essential for ethical growth. This approach allows for mutual learning and adaptation rather than cultural imperialism or moral relativism.

## **Contemporary Relevance of Rachels' Critique**

In today's globally interconnected world, the challenge posed by James Rachels remains highly relevant. Issues such as global human rights enforcement, multicultural policies, and international law continue to grapple with questions of cultural relativism and universal morality.

## **Human Rights and Cultural Relativism**

The debate over the universality of human rights illustrates the tension Rachels highlights. Critics of universal human rights often invoke cultural relativism to argue that rights frameworks reflect Western values and may not be applicable globally. Rachels' critique suggests that while cultural sensitivity is crucial, it should not prevent condemnation of practices that violate fundamental human dignity.

## **Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion**

Within diverse societies, policymakers face the challenge of respecting cultural differences while maintaining social cohesion and protecting individual rights. Rachels' insights encourage approaches that avoid both cultural dogmatism and moral relativism, promoting policies grounded in shared human values and reasoned debate.

## **Key Takeaways from James Rachels' Challenge**

- Cultural relativism, while fostering tolerance, can lead to moral paralysis or inconsistency.
- The idea that all cultural practices are equally valid is philosophically and practically problematic.
- Some moral principles may be universal, reflecting common human needs and interests.

- Respect for culture does not require abandoning critical moral evaluation.
- Ethical discourse benefits from balancing cultural understanding with universal ethical standards.

James Rachels' exploration of cultural relativism remains a cornerstone in philosophical ethics, urging a thoughtful reconsideration of how societies negotiate the complex interplay between cultural diversity and moral judgment. His challenge invites ongoing inquiry into the foundations of morality in an increasingly pluralistic world.

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**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: Bioethics** Nancy S. Jecker, Professor Nancy S Jecker, Ph.D., Albert R. Jonsen, Robert A. Pearlman, 2011-02-15 Bioethics: An Introduction to the History, Methods, and Practice, Third Edition provides readers with a modern and diverse look at bioethics while also looking back at early bioethics cases that set ethical standards in healthcare. It is well suited for advanced undergraduate and graduate students who plan to pursue careers in nursing, allied health, or medicine, as well as professionals seeking a comprehensive reference in the field. The authors retain the unique three-pronged approach, discussing the history, the methods, and the practice of bioethics. This approach provides students with a breadth of information, focusing on all sides of the issue, which will allow them to think critically about current bioethical topics. The third edition is updated throughout with new information and cases including, the latest on genetics and reproductive technology, physician-assisted suicide, as well as numerous new cases.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: Moral Relativism** J. Kellenberger, 2008-03-20 From the New York Times bestselling author of The Year We Left Home, a dazzling new novel already being hailed as an "instantly addictive...tale of yearning, paradox, and hope." (Booklist) After surviving a shooting at her high school, Linnea is packed off to live with her estranged father, Art, who doesn't quite understand how he has suddenly become responsible for raising a sullen adolescent girl. Art's neighbor, Christie, is a nurse distracted by an eccentric patient, Mrs. Foster, who has given Christie the reins to her Humanity Project, a bizarre and well-endowed charity fund. Just as mysteriously, no one seems to know where Conner, the Fosters' handyman, goes after work, but he has become the one person Linnea can confide in, perhaps because his own home life is a war zone: his father has suffered an injury and become addicted to painkillers. As these characters and many more hurtle toward their fates, the Humanity Project is born: Can you indeed pay someone to be good? At what price? Thompson proves herself at the height of her powers in The Humanity Project, crafting emotionally suspenseful and thoroughly entertaining characters, in which we inevitably see ourselves. Set against the backdrop of current events and cultural calamity, it is at once a multifaceted ensemble drama and a deftly observant

story of our twenty-first-century society.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: Bioethics** Nancy Ann Silbergeld Jecker, Albert R. Jonsen, Robert A. Pearlman, 2007 Legal/Ethics

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: What Is the Argument?** Maralee Harrell, 2016-10-14 Exploring philosophy through detailed argument analyses of texts by philosophers from Plato to Strawson using a novel and transparent method of analysis. The best way to introduce students to philosophy and philosophical discourse is to have them read and wrestle with original sources. This textbook explores philosophy through detailed argument analyses of texts by philosophers from Plato to Strawson. It presents a novel and transparent method of analysis that will teach students not only how to understand and evaluate philosophers' arguments but also how to construct such arguments themselves. Students will learn to read a text and discover what the philosopher thinks, why the philosopher thinks it, and whether the supporting argument is good. Students learn argument analysis through argument diagrams, with color-coding of the argument's various elements—conclusion, claims, and “indicator phrases.” (An online “mini-course” in argument diagramming and argument diagramming software are both freely available online.) Each chapter ends with exercises and reading questions. After a general introduction to philosophy and logic and an explanation of argument analysis, the book presents selections from primary sources, arranged by topics that correspond to contemporary debates, with detailed analysis and evaluation. These topics include philosophy of religion, epistemology, theory of mind, free will and determinism, and ethics; authors include Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Ryle, Fodor, Dennett, Searle, and others. What Is the Argument? not only introduces students to great philosophical thinkers, it also teaches them the essential skill of critical thinking.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: Force Short of War in Modern Conflict** Galliot Jai Galliot, 2019-03-21 Jai Galliot explores the overarching phenomenon of how force short of war is being used in modern conflict, and how it impacts just war theory. He shows that we need to bring the rules of war into alignment with increasingly digital means of conducting kinetic warfare through the force short of war paradigm. The use of force short of war is now commonplace, in large part owing to casualty averseness and the explosion of emerging technologies, most notably drones, autonomous robotics and cyberwarfare. It often involves the selective or limited use of military force to achieve political objectives and assumes many forms. These include targeted killing, assassination, special-forces raids, limited duration bombing campaigns or missile strikes, and 'low intensity' counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: Spoiler Alert!** Richard Greene, 2019-05-21 Spoilers get folks upset—really upset. One thing that follows from this is that if you pick up a book that's all about spoilers, it may seriously disturb you. So anyone reading this book—or even dipping into it—does so at their peril. Spoilers have a long history, going back to the time when some Greek theater-goer shouted “That's Oedipus's mom!” But spoilers didn't use to be so intensely despised as they are today. The new, fierce hatred of spoilers is associated with the Golden Age of television and the ubiquity of DVR/Netflix/Hulu, and the like. Today, most people have their own personal “horror story” about the time when they were subject to the most unfair, unjust, outrageous, and unforgivable spoiler. A first definition of spoiler might be revealing any information about a work of fiction (in any form, such as a book, TV show, or movie) to someone who hasn't encountered it. But this isn't quite good enough. It wouldn't be a spoiler to say “The next Star Trek movie will include a Vulcan.” Nor would it be a spoiler to say, “The story of Shawshank Redemption comes from a short story by Stephen King.” There has to be something at least a bit unexpected or unpredictable about the information, and it has to be important to the content of the work. And you could perpetrate a spoiler by divulging information about something other than a work of fiction, for example details of a sports game, to someone who has tivoed the game but not yet watched it. Timing and other matters of context may make the difference between a spoiler and a non-spoiler. It could be a spoiler to say “There's a Vulcan in the next Star Trek movie” if spoken to someone raised in North Korea and knowing absolutely nothing about Star Trek. It can also be a spoiler to say

something about a movie or TV show when it's new, and not a spoiler when it has been around for some years. This raises the distinction between "personal spoilers" and "impersonal spoilers." Personal spoilers are spoilers for some particular individual, because of their circumstances. You should never give personal spoilers (such as when someone says that they have never seen a particular movie, even though the plot is common knowledge. You can't tell them the plot). Sometimes facts other than facts about a story can be spoilers, because they allow people to deduce something about the story. To reveal that a certain actor is not taking part in shooting the next episode may allow someone to jump to conclusions about the story. Spoilers need not be specific; they can be very vague. If you told someone there was a big surprise ending to *The Sixth Sense* or *Fight Club*, that might spoil these movies for people who haven't seen them. You can spoil by mentioning things that are common knowledge, if someone has missed out on that knowledge ("Luke and Darth Vader are related"), but you usually can't be blamed for this. People have some obligation to keep up. This means that in general you can't be blamed for spoilers about stories that are old. "Both Romeo and Juliet are dead at the end" could be a spoiler for someone, but you can't be blamed for it. This is a rule that's often observed: many publications have regulations forbidding the release of some types of spoilers for a precisely fixed time after a movie release. However, some spoilers never expire, either because the plot twist is so vital or the work is so significant. So, if you're talking to young kids, you probably should never say "Darth Vader is Luke's father," "Norman Bates is Mother," "Dorothy's trip to Oz was all a dream," "All the passengers on the Orient Express collaborated in the murder," "in *The Murder of Roger Akroyd*, the narrator did it," "Soylent Green is people," "To Serve Man is a cookbook," and finally, what many consider to be the greatest and worst spoiler of them all, "The Planet of the Apes is really Earth." Some famous "spoilers" are not true spoilers. It's not going to spoil *Citizen Kane* for anyone to say "Rosebud is his sled." This piece of information is not truly significant. It's more of a McGuffin than a plot twist. A paradox about spoiling is that people often enjoy a work of fiction such as a Sherlock Holmes story over and over again. They remember the outline of the story, and who did the murder, but this doesn't stop them re-reading. This demonstrates that the spoilage generated by spoilers is less than we might imagine. It's bad to spoil, but how bad? People do seem to exaggerate the dreadfulness of spoiling, compared with other examples of inconsiderateness or rudeness. Are there occasions when it's morally required to spoil? Yes, you might want to dissuade someone from watching or reading something you believed might harm them somehow. Also, you might issue a spoiler in order to save the world from a terrorist attack (Yes, this is a philosophy book, so it has to include at least one totally absurd example). A more doubtful case is deliberate spoiling as a protest, as occurred with *Basic Instinct*. The book ends with three spoiler lists: the Most Outrageous Spoiler "Horror Stories"; the Greatest Spoilers of All Time; and the Greatest Spoilers in Philosophy.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism:** Global Capitalism, Culture, and Ethics Richard A. Spinello, 2014-04-24 Selected as an Outstanding Academic Title by Choice Magazine in 2014! This book aims to deepen the student's understanding of the complex ethical challenges that businesses face in an increasingly globalized world. As the world moves towards greater interdependence, it has been demonstrated that globalization is linked to economic growth. This raises a critical question: as a key player in fostering economic growth, how does the multinational corporation function as a moral agent? *Global Capitalism, Culture, and Ethics* offers a sophisticated analysis of theoretical ethical issues such as universalism versus pluralism; the connection between law and morality; the validity of a corporate social agenda; and the general parameters of moral responsibilities for multinational corporations. With these foundational issues addressed, the book proceeds to analyze a number of specific controversies such as the proper scope of political activism, disinvestment, environmental sustainability, and responsible sourcing from low wage countries. The analysis of globalization is not confined to a treatment of the moral obligations of multinational corporations, but also reviews the history of global capitalism, the interdependence between governments and multinational corporations, and the beneficial and harmful effects of globalization on social welfare. Weaving together themes from economics, history, philosophy, and law, this book

allows the reader to appreciate globalization from multiple perspectives. Its theoretical cogency and uncompromising clarity make it a rewarding read for students interested in issues of ethics and globalization.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: *An Ethics of Improvisation*** Tracey Nicholls, 2012-01-01 This book explores the intersection of improvised music-making and political community-building, with particular attention to creative ways to redress historic injustices and to constitute responsive, democratic societies.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: *Anthropocentrism*** Rob Boddice, 2011-07-14 This collection explores assumptions behind the label 'anthropocentrism', critically enquiring into the meaning of 'human'. It addresses epistemological and ontological problems in charges of anthropocentrism, questioning the inherent anthropocentrism of all human perspectives, while seeking 'other' views that trump anthropocentrism.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: *How Canadians Communicate V*** David Taras, Christopher Waddell, 2016-03-15 Fewer Canadians than ever are lacing up skates, swimming lengths at the pool, practicing their curve ball, and experiencing the thrill of competition. However, despite a decline in active participation, Canadians spend enormous amounts of time and money on sports, as fans and followers of sporting events and sports culture. Never has media coverage of sports been more exhaustive, and never has it been more driven by commercial interests and the need to fuel consumerism, on which corporate profits depend. But the power plays now occurring in the arena of sports are by no means solely a matter of money. At issue as well in the media capture of sports are the values that inform our daily lives, the physical and emotional health of the population, and the symbols so long central to a sense of Canadian identity. Writing from a variety of perspectives, the contributors to this collection set out to explore the impact of the media on our reception of, and attitudes toward, sports—to unpack the meanings that sports have for us as citizens and consumers. Some contributors probe the function of sports as spectacle—the escalation of violence, controversies over drug use, and the media's coverage of tragic deaths—while others shed light on the way in which the media serve to transform sports into a vehicle for the expression of identity and nationalism. The goal is not to score points but to prompt critical discussion of why sports matter in Canadian life and culture and how they contribute to the construction of identity.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: *The Ethics of Creativity*** Brian G. Henning, 2011-12-09 Foreword by Daniel A. Dombrowski. A central concern of nearly every environmental ethic is its desire to extend the scope of direct moral concern beyond human beings to plants, nonhuman animals, and the systems of which they are a part. Although nearly all environmental philosophies have long since rejected modernity's conception of individuals as isolated and independent substances, few have replaced this worldview with an alternative that is adequate to the organic, processive world in which we find ourselves. In this context, Brian G. Henning argues that the often overlooked work of Alfred North Whitehead has the potential to make a significant contribution to environmental ethics. Additionally inspired by classical American philosophers such as William James, John Dewey and Charles Sanders Pierce and environmental philosophers such as Aldo Leopold, Peter Singer, Albert Schweitzer, and Arne Naess, Henning develops an ethical theory of which the seminal insight is called *The Ethics of Creativity*. By systematically examining and developing a conception of individuality that is equally at home with the microscopic world of subatomic events and the macroscopic world of ecosystems, *The Ethics of Creativity* correctly emphasizes the well-being of wholes, while not losing sight of the importance of the unique centers of value that constitute these wholes. In this way, *The Ethics of Creativity* has the potential to be a unique voice in contemporary moral philosophy.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: *Ethics: Essential Readings in Moral Theory*** George Sher, 2012-11-27 *Ethics: Essential Readings in Moral Theory* is an outstanding anthology of the most important topics, theories and debates in ethics, compiled by one of the leading experts in the field. It includes sixty-six extracts covering the central domains of ethics: why be moral? the meaning of moral language morality and objectivity consequentialism deontology

virtue and character value and well-being moral psychology applications: including abortion, famine relief and consent. Included are both classical extracts from Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kant and Mill, as well as contemporary classics from philosophers such as Thomas Nagel, Thomas Scanlon, Martha Nussbaum, Derek Parfit, and Peter Singer. A key feature of the anthology is that it covers the perennial topics in ethics as well as very recent ones, such as moral psychology, responsibility and experimental philosophy. Each section is introduced and placed in context by the editor, making this an ideal anthology for anyone studying ethics or ethical theory.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: Moral Emotions and Intuitions** S. Roeser, 2010-11-30 The author presents a new philosophical theory according to which we need intuitions and emotions in order to have objective moral knowledge, which is called affectual intuitionism. Affectual Intuitionism combines ethical intuitionism with a cognitive theory of emotions.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: God's Goodness and God's Evil** James Kellenberger, 2017-06-16 Religious thinkers in the Christian theistic tradition have tried to resolve the problem of evil—how a wholly good and omnipotent God could allow there to be evil—by offering a theodicy. This book considers three traditional theodicies and the objections they have elicited: Leibniz's best of all possible worlds theodicy, the free will theodicy, and an Irenaean type of theodicy. It also considers metatheodicies and limited theodicies. However, this book departs from traditional religious thinking by presenting and treating religious approaches to evil that do not confront evil through the religious problem of evil. Primary among the three religious approaches to evil that are presented is the approach of Job-like belief. Such an approach embodies Job's acceptance of evil as what God has given, expressed in his rhetorical "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2.10). The various elements of Job-like belief that are internally required for its approach to evil are critically examined, and it is seen how a Job-like approach to evil neither seeks nor requires a resolution to the problem of evil. The other two religious approaches to evil, as opposed to the problem of evil, are the effort to lessen evil in the world and the practice of forgiveness, both of which are compatible with each other and with a Job-like acceptance of evil, with which they can be combined. Also treated in this book are mystery and God's goodness. Accompanying every theodicy is mystery (in its religious sense as that which is beyond human understanding), and the experience of the mystery of God's goodness shining through the world and through evil is embodied in Job-like belief.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: Dewey** Steven Fesmire, 2014-11-27 John Dewey (1859 - 1952) was the dominant voice in American philosophy through the World Wars, the Great Depression, and the nascent years of the Cold War. With a professional career spanning three generations and a profile that no public intellectual has operated on in the U.S. since, Dewey's biographer Robert Westbrook accurately describes him as the most important philosopher in modern American history. In this superb and engaging introduction, Steven Fesmire begins with a chapter on Dewey's life and works, before discussing and assessing Dewey's key ideas across the major disciplines in philosophy; including metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics, ethics, educational philosophy, social-political philosophy, and religious philosophy. This is an invaluable introduction and guide to this deeply influential philosopher and his legacy, and essential reading for anyone coming to Dewey's work for the first time.

**james rachels the challenge of cultural relativism: Moral Philosophy Through the Ages** James Fieser, 2000 Takes a middle ground between the topical and historical approaches to Western ethics. This book explains the historical development of the topic under consideration, and most chapters focus on a specific famous philosopher who championed a particular tradition, such as Aristotle, Locke, or Kant, and the chapters are chronologically ordered.

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