

1) We should freely choose to treat reality as it is. This statement is a true standard of behavior if it requires us to make accurate observations of reality and if it contains consistent deductions therefrom. Making accurate observations means that to the best of our ability we should treat reality as it is; we cannot observe accurately otherwise. And consistency requires that our beliefs should be consistent with our actions, but this can only be if we treat reality as it is. For instance, by treating the Eiffel Tower as if it were elsewhere than in Paris, we are acting on the belief that it is elsewhere - we look for it in Florence, for example, expecting to find it there - although in another set of thought we know full well that in fact it is in Paris. By treating reality as it is not, we have set up a simultaneous contradiction in our beliefs which we can only avoid by treating reality as it is.

To treat reality as it is not is quite obviously false as well as being irrational (self-delusional).

Some object that we don't always know what objective reality is. This is quite true - but it is irrelevant to the question of whether or not we should treat reality as it is; either we should make the effort or not, and the difficulty in so doing is another question entirely.

2) Thus, we should be free limited only by the duty to treat reality as it is.

3) We have the right to be free limited only by the duty to treat reality as it is, since we obviously have a right to do what we should do.

4) As for dealing with others, we have a right to be free to do whatever we wish limited only by the duty to treat others as they are; but since they have a right to be free (we all do), then our right to be free is limited by the duty to treat others as having the same right to be free.

5) Put more simply, our right to be free is limited by the equal rights of others. Q.E.D.

6) Each person has a right to his life if each of us has the right to be free. If you kill a person, you take away his freedom, all of it. Respect his right to be free and you must automatically accord him the right to his life.

7) The right to property also arises from the right to be free, for if he has the right to be free, he has the right to freely exchange his labor for the goods and services of others, which is to say that he has the right to property in those things (but since slaves and untaxed land are not the product of labor, they cannot be justly exchanged or owned).

Problems of Application -

8) When the rights of different people conflict, the order of precedence is life, liberty, property - because life is the sum total of all our liberties and property is only one of our liberties.

9) Means vs. ends: it may sometimes be just to violate another person's life, liberty or property in order to protect even more rights in the foreseeable future, as when we forcibly restrain an invader or dictator. Certainly the end can justify the means - that's what ends are for. The one true goal or end in human relations should always be equal rights, but depending on particular circumstances we should use different means to attain that end.

Why Cultural Relativism Is Not True -

Any one of these arguments could disprove cultural relativism:

A) Why is the culture always right? Where is the proof? In fact, some cultures hold obviously false beliefs - e.g., they believe the world is flat. What then? To argue that moral views cannot be proven true or false is to beg the question - prove it.

B) Why are counter-culturalists always wrong? Why are other people always right but not any one individual; why should we always conform? It is inconsistent to say that the cultural group is always right but never any of the people in it. Or if it is asserted that whatever is becoming is right, how can that be proved? The truth of an idea is not measured by its popularity; truth is agreement with reality, not with other people.

C) Which culture should one choose? We cannot avoid individual responsibility by saying that my culture approves of what we do. The real question is, which cultural beliefs are true and therefore correct for us to adopt?