**Sample Big Questions Negative Constructive 2019-2020**

There are close to eight billion people living on this planet. They live in the farthest reaches of the world. From the dense forests of the Amazon to the icy tundra of the Arctic, culture has evolved and developed largely independent of one another for thousands of years. In all of this time, humans have looked to one another as cultures met and exchanged knowledge for a universal principal that unites each other. Modern philosophers believe that they have discovered the key, after all of these years. The concept of a universal and objective morality, or a set of moral goods that connects all people on Earth has taken a popular lead. To many religious figures, this concept is proof in the existence of a God or supreme being. However, today, I negate the resolution Resolved: Objective morality exists. I do so not to disprove the existence of this being but to prove that at it’s core, human nature develops on its own accord and that good can exist organically.

For the debate today, I will offer the following the definitions.

**Objective morality** is defined by philosopher and professor Justin McBryer as a fundamentally universal and true ethical good that transcends all people. This differs from the subjective morality that many of us experience as it requires a set reference point for which we know there to be a right and wrong, generally seen as a divine command. Justin P. Mcbrayer, 3-2-2015, "Why Our Children Don't Think There Are Moral Facts," Opinionator, <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/03/02/why-our-children-dont-think-there-are-moral-facts\>

**To exist** is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as to be; have the ability to be known, recognized, or understood. "EXIST," Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/exist>

First, an observation about objectivity. Jerry Coyne writes that an objective morality is something that can be “morally wrong” thought reasoning and facts and observations about the world rather than a reference to the human question or religion. If morality were truly objective, then moral statements like the “Jenny’s actions were wrong and she deserves to be punished,” would be true even if the majority believed “Jenny’s actions were good and just.” Likewise, interpretations of what is moral and what isn’t based on the will of a divine command can be multiplied by any number of given humans. To some, gay marriage is a perfectly acceptable action in line with any other union based in love while to others, it is an abomination that must be wiped from the face of the Earth. So, between rule of the majority and interpretations of religious texts make it hard to determine the end point of what is truly right and wrong. Even in cases where we have set in stone textual examples such as “thou shall not kill,” would we find it acceptable or morally right to let a person break into our house and murder our family and take no action or would we be allowed to fight back? These fundamental questions cloud the issue of objectivity. Jerry Coyne, "Why there is no objective morality," Why Evolution Is True, <https://whyevolutionistrue.wordpress.com/2013/07/24/why-there-is-no-objective-morality/>

Today, I will show that there is no objective morality through three contentions. First, humans are the only species on Earth that acknowledges a set of morals, second, our self-interest explain our social unity, and third, our development of self-knowledge proves that an objective morality is false.

First, humans are only one species. We are one set of living entities located on the third planet from the sun. On this planet, there are thousands of living organisms. They all live, reproduce, and die on this planet. On this planet we have an animal called a “cat.” A cat is a living animal that can feel pain, expresses emotions, and for all intents and purposes lives concurrently with humans. But a cat, unlike a human, is not bound by the same set of moral laws that we are. A cat will kill. A cat that kills a mouse is not punished. It isn’t put on trial or jailed. In fact we may applaud it for doing something good. In short, the cat is held to a different set of moral codes. If we live in a world of an objective morality, we must hold all living beings to the same moral level. Killing is wrong and thus it should be applied the same. The cat is an animal and is held to a different set of standards. In this regard, one must ask why humans hold themselves to the standard we do? Granted, I am glad we don’t go around killing and eating each other, but what separates us from the cat? In the grant scheme of life, it is an arbitrary call to a moral good that is dictated by our quest for order.

Second, morality develops within the person and does so differently for each person. Many people argue that since each person and culture across the world develops a set of morals that are similar to one another, it must be that there is an objective morality that guides human nature. However, one only has to look to our own self-interests and what we desire deep down in order to answer this question. In society, we don’t kill or steal because we don’t want that done to us. We know that maintaining order is a necessity to a functioning system of government and society and thus we follow the law. Likewise, according to Alan Gerwith, a professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago, our own moral actions are developed within us through the human experience. We are guided by society, human self-interest, and what is good for us to make decisions we deem moral. A child raised in a society that values murder or racism is more likely to value those actions and a child raised in a loving society can become a serial killer or a KKK leader. If there were an objective morality, this would not be the case.

Gewirth, prof. of philosophy at the University of Chicago, 1982 (Alan, “Human Rights: essays on justification and applications”, p. 229)

Third, if objectivity were true, then the concept of being an individual would be false. In our world, we pride ourselves on being individuals. I am not a number or just another cog in the wheel, but a member of society that has hopes and dreams and ambitions. I do so because I have the freedom of choice and the ability to create myself as I see fit. According to Hannah Arendt, a social philosopher, writes that if there was an objective morality, we would not be free to make our own choices or as a society determine what is right and wrong. If objectivity were true, then society would always gravitate towards the moral good and there would be no debate as action would be made and predetermined by what is morally good. So, the very activity that we are partaking in today proves that there is no objective morality because we are free to choose our choices and that there is a state of subjectivity in the world. Subjectivity in the world creates a state that provides a unique worldview. It gives us complex discussion and debate. It gives us creativity, it fosters a marketplace of ideas, and it drives innovation. Hannah Arendt, Social Philosopher, BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE, 1954, p. 49.

As humans, we seek to understand the world around us. We seek to find a common thread that unites us as a species. The concept of an objective morality that unites humans under the concept of a universal right and wrong is tempting. But today, by looking at how we function as humans, how we base our self-interests, and how we developed as a species, I must negate.