

This article will continue with the topic of relativism. Recall the meaning of relativism: the only thing that's true, the only truth there is, is what's true to the individual person. You say use of sexuality outside of marriage is wrong, well ok that's "true" but that's just what's true to you; somebody else says: no, it's ok, that's also true because that's what true them. There are no "universal truths" – things that apply to everybody, always and everywhere. There is no truth except what's true to the individual person. Notice that under the dictatorship of relativism, everyone is their own god, which is the cry of man's ancient foe, the devil.

When the meaning of relativism is stated outright, it most likely seems completely absurd, so much so that a lot of people's reaction when first hearing it spelled out explicitly would probably be something like: oh come on, now, nobody holds that, nobody is actually going to believe that... And the serpent was the most subtle of the creatures the Lord God had made. Who am I to judge? This is practically the modern mantra of relativism. Do you dare disobey? Do you dare say: no, there is absolute right and wrong that applies to everybody? Relativism might sound absurd when spelled out explicitly, but we have been taught to obey its tenets.

Who am I to judge? Notice the implication. That any statement of absolute right or wrong, truth or falsehood, is not possible because you are not capable of making such a judgement of right & wrong and true or false. That's actually true, but God is. What I state as absolute truth or what is absolutely right or wrong are not opinions much less personal preference, they are what God the Almighty has told us. That's not even on the table today precisely because relativism reigns supreme. I remember hearing a U.S. presidential candidate saying once that "you" will have to change your doctrines (to suit the modern world) – I suppose with an implied "or else." Many applaud and accept that because *of course* relativism is true in the minds of many. Yes, an outright statement of relativism might sound ridiculous, but the reality that is accepted and lived out is relativism all the same.

Relativism can also be presented in the nicest and seemingly most reasonable terms as well. Here's one example of such a presentation: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=518FR6SbY\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=518FR6SbY_k).

The dictatorship of relativism was initially pushed in the world in the area of morality – we've given examples of this. But now it has bled over into physical reality as well. Do you dare say: No, there are only 2 genders? Gender is...what? It's whatever the individual person feels is true to them.

As has been mentioned before, one tactic for promoting any false teaching, or for trying to trap a person so as to try to make their false claim undeniable, is the use of false dichotomies – acting as if there are only 2 alternatives and making the one you want to promote sound like the only option. For example, if someone wanted to back you into a corner and try to force you to accept scientism, or at least make you look like a fool if you don't accept it, they might say something like: so you don't believe in science? Do you believe the earth is flat? Do you want to eliminate doctors and medicine? The person is saying implicitly that there are only 2 options: 1) belief in scientism (i.e., science *alone* tells you about reality, *all* of reality – no Divine Revelation or any other such thing), or 2) you reject science altogether. No thinking person grounded in reality, or for that matter even a fool, is going to deny material reality or man's capacity to study it and learn about it. But this dichotomy (having only 2 choices) is false precisely because there are more than 2 options! I can (and do) believe in both material reality and spiritual reality. I can, and do, know that Divine Revelation does tell something of importance (actually supreme importance) about reality, and NO, I don't have to deny or reject "science" to do that. The false dichotomy is what's absurd, not what I know to be true.

Withstanding false dichotomies for relativism is where the word subjectivism can be useful. Recall that if distinguishing subjectivism and relativism, subjectivism is just relativism (which has a time and space element) reduced to the individual person – truth is just relative to the individual person rather than some time and place. Instead of saying: the only truth is whatever a particular culture at a particular time holds, subjectivism says that: whatever a particular person (the subject) holds true at a particular time is true, *and* that's the only truth there is. Now let us use the term subjectivism. A false dichotomy arguing for relativism might be: well, don't you believe in subjective reality? If a person says: I have a headache, are you going to say: no, I don't believe

it, there is no such thing as subjective reality? Are you saying people can't have opinions or even personal preferences about anything, things that are true to the subject?

There is in fact such a thing as subjective reality; of course there is. There *are* things that are true to the subject (the individual person) which are not universally true (true always and everywhere). A person says: I have a headache, that is (*of course*), true to them and it's not true always and everywhere for each individual person. HOWEVER, the reality of subjective truths does not eliminate the reality (or existence) of universal truths. That's just as absurd as saying that subjective reality doesn't exist. The false dichotomy that is being put forward, then, is simply that you have to choose one or the other: either all reality is just subjective reality or there is no such thing as subjective reality. It should be blatantly obvious that I can (and do) hold that both are part of reality – there are subjective truths and there are universal truths. If I commit mortal sin and never repent of it, I will go to hell. That is true always and everywhere, it applies to every individual person whoever has, does, or ever will exist. It is a universal truth.

This brings out another important aspect to false beliefs, false teachings. They are a corruption of something good, a corruption of some truth. Recall the classical definition of evil formulated by St Augustine and accepted by the Church: evil is the privation (or absence) of some good that should be there. Evil, then, is not something in and of itself (although we do speak of it in that way), it is the corruption of something good. Truth is a good that “should be there.” False teachings (like the isms we have been talking about) take what is true and corrupt it. There is such a thing as subjective reality. Relativism takes that and says: that's the only truth.

Let us come briefly to “opinions.” An opinion is not just a personal preference – it is a reasoned conclusion based on whatever information I can pull together. What separates an opinion from a fact is that a “fact” has (full) certitude but an opinion does not, it is an “estimate” if you will. It is necessary, not just ok, but necessary to have opinions in this life and this world, you can't function without them. Take a very simple and straightforward example. Suppose you are sitting in a building (maybe your house or the church) right now. You are of the opinion that the roof is not going to fall in on you, otherwise you probably wouldn't be sitting there. But it could fall in. There could be unknown problems or there could be a tornado or earthquake or some such thing that cause it to fall in. Same thing if you're (say) driving across a bridge; you're of the opinion that it won't cave in. Of course there are less obvious examples as well. Doctors give medical opinions (diagnosis and treatment) because the complexity of biological systems renders it (often) impossible to be absolutely certain. But is that all there is? Given the reality of opinion, does that mean that the only truth is what's true to the individual person? Of course not, but here we see how relativism eliminates God and Revelation. If everything is just personal opinion, then there are no universal truths that apply always and everywhere, which is exactly what Divine Revelation presents – those truths that are true always and everywhere.

Next week we will start with humanism, although that is only a small movement from relativism; humanism is just formally proclaiming man to be god. In the space left here, then, let us come back to the question of: what should we do with this knowledge of the isms? For a person of genuine faith, is just so we can get spittin mad and condemn everything? What is the purpose? These false beliefs, although widespread, are expressed in subtle ways. Take some time to try and really understand these various false beliefs, let them sink in your mind. It does take time, thought, and effort. Then try to begin to recognize them in everyday life. The purpose of this is twofold. One is so that you yourself don't get drawn into them and placed on the steps to separation from God, the stairway to hell. But the second point is to then begin to bring real wisdom to young people. This is the only way to cure this disease of the mind and save souls – to save souls, this is the purpose, which was the purpose of Fatima, and of course the purpose of our Lord. In other words, it is a great work precisely because it is a participation in our Father's own work.

*God bless you, Fr Kuhn.*