Jonny Hughes

Ethical Theory

4-14-20

Reading Journals

- Plato - Euthyphro

- This is laid out as a conversation, as much of Plato is, as he develops his thoughts on the ultimate origin of morality, and socrates helps in this endeavor via his typical method of questioning. They begin by discussing how someone accused Socrates of leading the youth astray, given his religious statements. Euthyphro challenges Socrates' view on universality of justice. His claim sources back to the actions and decrees of Zeus. When asked deeper about this "piety" as they called it, it seemed that what the gods hold dear is pious, and likewise what they don't is not. This is quite obviously a version of DCT, not quite the same as the christian version, as it may find difficulty when some gods find an action pious, whilst others don't, if that were to be a situation to occur. They then move forward to discuss this predicament. To which Euthyphro has no good answer, and Socrates roasts him calling him a "surprising man" which I find to be hilarious. They discuss the origin of status, if it is good, because it's decreed or for some outside state on the object.

- Rachels - Religion

- Rachels and Rachels attempt to answer the question about if there needs to be a connection between morality and relgion, can a non-religious person be moral? would it only be on accident? does that count? They discuss what they see to be pros and cons of Divine Command Theory, which are similar to topics brough up in your last lecture on the topic. Some isues they hold against DCT is its mysterious nature, arbitraryness of Gods decisions, and it providing the wrong reasons for morals (which seems to just be a bunt disagreement, not an argument against DCT). They also, quite arrogantly, claim that it is wrong, because of these flaws, and that it couldn't account for morality if God didn't exist, which is like saying Utilitarianism couldn't account for Morality if Utility/Happiness didn't exist. This is a non-issue, as the view need not apply when a base assumption is false. They also go into a similar barrage against Natural Law Theory, arguing that nature doesn't necessitate Goodness. They then ditch Theories, and discuss the separation of religion and morality in practical issues. They get into abortion, Church tradition, and other issues commonly debated in these circles. The claim is that one must either look to scripture, or church tradition to find answers to how to settle on conclusions about an issue. They conclude assuming that they have succeeded in proving that morality must be something separate than religion.

- Hobbes - Leviathan

- Hobbes begins by laying out some assumptions, such as our voluntary motions toward things, desires, and away from things, aversions, exist, and are primal in the nature of humans. He expresses that the motive behind these are often called love and hate, as well that these desires stem from both nature and experience. He then moves on to deliberation, the process of decision making, and the Will, is the last apatite or aversion leading to said deliberation, and both ideas are inseparable. Moving forward he discusses what he calls manners, not in casual nature, but rather the qualities of humanity allowing them to live in peace. Hobbes then discusses a multitude of desires people have, such as knowledge, praise and power. He claims boldly that all men have an equality, or strength and mind, which is far greater than difference. Furthermore a Law of Nature he argues is found by reason and preserves his life. Then he begins to get into the understanding of a contract, which is the only way he sees for men to all agree upon what is the way to act, or as such, what manners ought to be. He assumes also other laws of nature related to a contract, such that man must perform their covenants made, as well as the law of transferring rights to other men. As to break a covenant is injustice. He then moves toward the application of justice, in how an Arbitrator is required, such as when controversy arrives, they both submit their rights to the judgment of said arbitrator to fairly decide the outcome, as this he sees is the only way to fairly conclude outcome in the case of disagreement. Later on he discusses more social and Economical applications of this concept in such as how Equity, and commonwealth are things which the Leviathan, or Mortal god have influence, rightly so under the immortal God.

- Rawl's Justice as Fairness:

- This is a modification of what we read about from Hobbes' Social Contract theory. But rather it is a contract to be not opted in by people necessarily, but one which Rawls presents as self evident given it is constructed in the means presented, where it holds when even your enemy can assign your role in society. This would count for him as something which everyone would view as being fair. These are that everyone will have equal rights to basic liberties. Also that inequality is to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, as well as equal opportunity. Rawls here makes it obvious that inequality is something he strives to eradicate. he addresses some ambiguity may exist in "everyone's advantage", but does not clearly address a solution to this, and rather claims that while distribution may not be exactly equal it still ought to be to everyone's advantage. Later on he seems to try to defend this more, and it sounds somewhat like if the total amount of good cumulative is higher, thus even the least well off are better off than they would have been in principle, given total equity. It seems like the ultimate goal is consistent, which is simply, make sure things are fair for everyone in such a way that everyone will agree it is fair. In this I find myself extremely pessimistic, I don't think people could agree on what is fair. Then he gets into the maximization topic.

- Nozick - Entitlement Theory

- His conceptualization of Rights is that of "negative rights" rights one has. meaning people are constrained in acting certain ways against us, but not obliged to act in our favor. His theories follow this idea such that govt. exists to enforce that alone, preventing things from happening, not forcing good to happen to us. The theory of entitlement, simply is that you are entitled to what you have, no more. and what you do with it is your own choice. He describes why he says distribution, and why it differs from Redistribution, such that the first time ought be done correctly. He lays out a basic framework that if it was obtained and traded for fairly it is held justly, which seems legitimate to me. Then he starts to explain how to deal with past injustices of holding, perhaps that a conceptualization of what would occur had it not happened be realized. He explains how he finds the history completely relevant, and oddly i find points to a socialist, whom he claims would be upset if distribution matched what they want but not for their desert, rather been distributed because it makes equity. His personification of the socialist would want distribution to match the historical work put in and deserved, not straight equity of distribution. He finds that using the Wilt Chamberlain example it is implausible to create an end-state distribution which doesn't violate the liberties entitled to civilians. He argues that since working --> money, taxing on labor is equivalent to forced labor, which seems to follow. He then tells the story of a slave, to show that labor is something which is complicated to own, and that is important to understand, to know when our labor is being forced and abused.