

Philosophy Notes

3rd November 2015

1 Week M

1.1 Monday

1.2 Tuesday

Read from Alex Miller, Contemporary Metaethics (4.1), Norm Suppression (5.1).

1.2.1 Gilbert's Contribution: NORM EXPRESSIVISM

Moral judgements (like lying is wrong etc.), they're a non-cognitive mental state (thus not truth evaluable); They express certain kinds of norms that we accept. (this seems to Murthy to be the most apt way of describing moral judgements).

Idea of rationality: If something is wrong, lying is wrong for example, it only means that I'm rational to be held guilty for that act. It's rational for other people to feel angry for that act. So rationality here allows you to accept norms; this acceptance entails guilt and anger etc. (ask how rational).

This seems to suggest that there must be some truth condition; because rationality usually is this way. However he is extending the idea of rationality to something else, which is non-cognitive. How it's applied, is acceptance of norms.

Kant talks about rationality in terms of maxims (rules etc.). There rationality amounts to identifying some inconsistency etc. The inconsistency can also come, because in some way, there's some sort of rule operating. He also states that reason commands you to do something. He is in this sense defining rationality. (what about idea of freedom defined using rationality). Here however, the idea of rationality matches still. The rule acceptance is...

1.2.2 Hare's response: Non-cognitive

Interestingly, there'll be always some cognitive aspect in non-cognitive theories. If the primary component is cognitive, then the theory is cognitive. If it's not, then, you know. This is how he challenges Stevenson. The use of good has a commendatory aspect. And it also has a command aspect also. If X is good, then there's a descriptive part (using some criteria you evaluate this), which can change and a prescriptive part (the commandatory aspect of it). So Stevenson was combining commands with saying it possessed a certain kind of emotions. Recall there was magnetic component also, which entailed that the language has a goading aspect.

Aside: Locution: , Elocution: How is it stated, eg. warning, command (!? etc.); that can be used by modulation of voice. Perlocutionary aspect: Force by which one is made to act

So the charge on Stevenson was (by Hare) that Stevenson confused the perlocutionary aspect of moral language with morality itself. Moral language has two aspects as stated. The prescriptive aspect is not the same as perlocution.

Supervenience thesis: If something's commendable (this would come from descriptive properties) then something else with same properties will also be commendable. So there's some sort of universalizability. (why did he mention this?) Once you command,

Summary: Within non-cognitivism, we studied emotivism (Charlie, came by discarding Moore's naturalism); Emotivism gave rise to prescriptivism etc.

Meta ethics: What exactly do moral statements/judgements mean? Are they truth evaluable or not?

1.2.3 Egoism

One obstruction to ethics was relativism. Another one is egoism. Most of our actions are motivated by self interest. It is motivated by self interest only. Psychological egoism. All actions are (not ought to be) motivated by self interest. It's an all encompassing theory. It can justify anything. This generated another theory. It is different from utilitarianism in the sense that there it was utility for all, now it is for an individual.