

Module 1 - Ethics and Ethical Reasoning

Readings: - David Hume, *Ethical Judgements and Matters of Fact*
- C.L Stevenson, *Facts and Values*

- When we think about why we do something we are philosophers
- Moral philosophy, people need to know what we should do?
 - make sure there are no facts left to be considered
- Values are not facts, these are different
- What is a value?
 - the regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something
 - Values have to be produced with reason
 - You grow up with your family values and sometimes there can be conflict between them
 - One needs to learn autonomy, have their own values
 - To be free is to be able to reason more
 - Don't criticize other people's actions
- To be human is to be able to not simply be another effect, but to have some agency
- We decide to drop one desire to find more important desires

Order of desires

- First order of desire: what you immediately feel like having
 - Ex: I want ice cream now (always what you want now)
- Second order of desire: I have a higher order of desire
 - EX: to get a degree (things that have more value, typically future desires in life)
- Third order of desire
 - EX: why get a degree? What is the value to you? Why is it so important? How will this help you become an autonomous person?

What does philosophy do?

- To become more autonomous as a human being
- An attempt to produce coherence
- Alfred North Whitehead, a British philosopher once said:
 - "Speculative Philosophy is the **endeavour** to frame a **coherent**, logical, necessary system of general **ideas** in terms of which **every element of our experience can be interpreted**"

Autonomy

- To judge value using autonomy is stepping back from your values to judge value..., so would one embrace new philosophical values to judge values with autonomy? If so, how do we know that our values are not influencing the choice for new philosophical values?
- Our moments of autonomy are infrequent and rare
- leading one's life according to reasons, values, or desires that are authentically one's own
- moments of autonomy are crucial in organizing our life
- It is the ability to stand back from the values that one has been told to believe, as an infant, and assess them and decide if they truly are of value to their life
- We must decide which of our values take precedent over the others in our lives
- We try to discern good reasons for why we should believe

Normative Ethics and Metaethics

- Normative Ethics:
 - Normative ethics search for norms, not in the sense of what is average, but in the sense of authoritative standards of what it ought to be.
 - "what is right, what is wrong, and why?"
 - Particular moral claims
 - Particular moral judgements re moral truths
- Metaethics:
 - Metaethics is concerned primarily with the meaning of ethical judgments and/or prescriptions and with the notion of which properties, if any, are responsible for the truth or validity thereof.
 - "what could we mean by 'right', what could we mean by 'wrong', and what could be a proper kind of answer to the question, 'why is that right?'"
 - What is the metaphysical status of moral claims? What could they mean? What is their ultimate nature?
 - Are there moral truths? What makes something a moral truth? How would we know moral truths?

BREAK - 15 mins

Descriptive Statement

Gives an account of how the world is, without saying it's good or bad.

Normative Statement

Expresses an evaluation, saying that something is good or bad, better or worse relative to some standard or alternative.

Moral Statement

A claim that something is morally good or bad, right or wrong, or has some other moral quality.

All **Moral Statements** are **Normative Statements**.
Not all **Normative Statements** are **Moral Statements**.

Moral Argument

An argument that includes at least one moral statement.

Examples of Moral arguments:

- *Just because something is of nature, does not give us any reason to assess it as good*
- **EX:** Animals commit incest, so should humans do the same?
 - No, this does not give us any reason to do it just because our species do it
- **EX:** Pleasure, isn't it good for people and to the world?
 - No, pleasure is not always good. In some circumstances, pleasure can be bad or violent.
- **EX:** Is pain always bad?
 - No, pain after exercising is good, therefore not all pain is bad.

How can we convince ourselves that we have good reasons for being right?

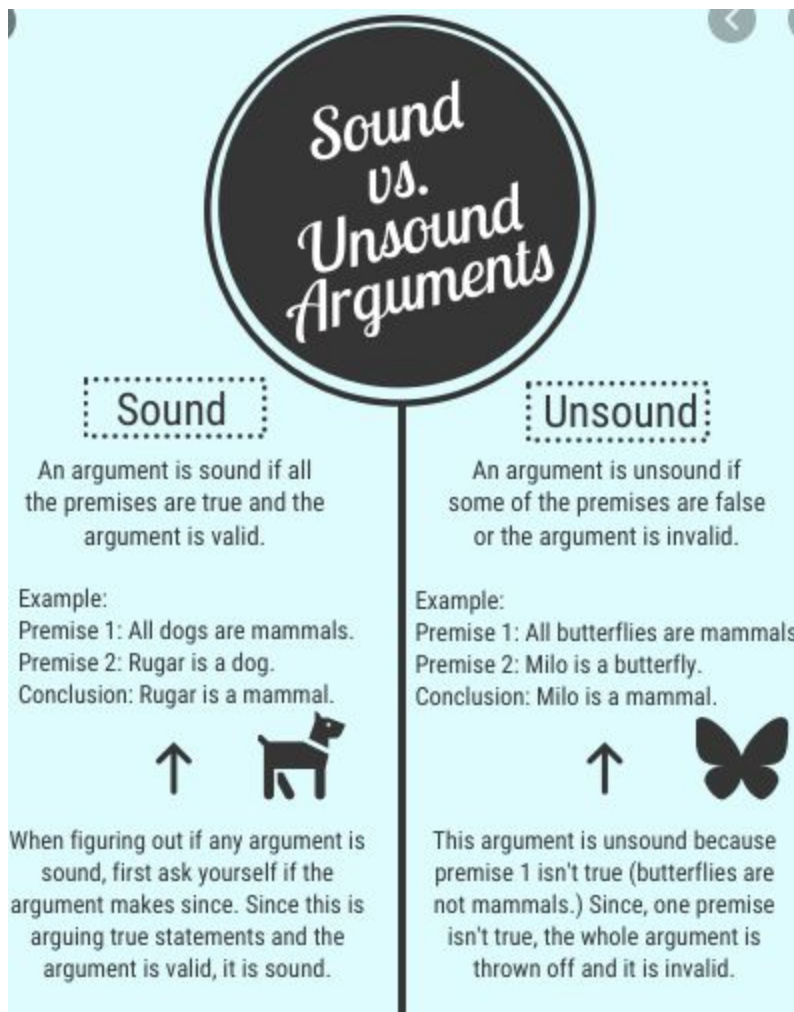
- Our feelings matter, however we can not be the answer for everyone else
- A good argument has to have good reasons and a good conclusions

Linguistics markers to distinguish a good moral argument

- because, given, since, (indicate a premise)
- therefore (indicates a conclusion)

What type of argument is it? Valid, Sound, Unsound?

read page 9-11 for more information on all types of arguments



A valid argument:

- It is impossible for the conclusion to be false if we assume that every premise is true.
- In a valid argument, the truth of the premises forces the truth of the conclusion.

A sound argument:

- In a sound argument, the premises are true and the conclusion follows from them.
- A good argument is a sound argument. It has a valid form in which the conclusion actually follows from the premises, and the premises or reasons given for the conclusion are true. An argument is poorly constructed when it is fallacious or when the reasons on which it is based are not true or are uncertain.

An ethical argument:

- An ethical argument always involves some claim about values—for example, that saving a life is good. These value-based claims must be established through some theory of values.
- Ethical arguments also involve conceptual and factual matters

Deontological theories:

- Asserts that the rightness of actions is determined partly or entirely by their intrinsic value

Intrinsic vs Instrumental value:

- The fundamental difference between **intrinsic and instrumental value** is that **intrinsic value** is valued for its own sake, whereas **instrumental value** is valued for the end results gained from it.
- **Instrumental goods** are things that are useful as instruments or tools—we value them as means toward some other end. **Intrinsic goods** are things that have value in themselves or for their own sake. For example, we might say that life is an intrinsic good and fundamentally valuable. But food is an instrumental good because it is a means or tool that is used to support life.
- **EX: Intrinsic**
 - Happiness, Pleasure, Knowledge, Virtue
- **EX: Instrumental**
 - Money, Exercise, Property, Liberty, Justice, Fame

Extrinsic value:

- If something has an **extrinsic value**, it has the value because it can be used as a means to acquire other things that have value. Things that are not necessary for sustaining life but they are just needed to run life. They include both physical and abstract. People, things and material items are valuable extrinsically.
- **EX: Extrinsic**
 - High pay, Job security, Job benefits, Cellphone, Bike, Dress

NEXT WEEK:

Module 2, part 1 - Religion and Global Ethics

Readings: - Plato, *Euthyphro*
- Harris, *Letter*
- Gandhi, *Religion and Truth*