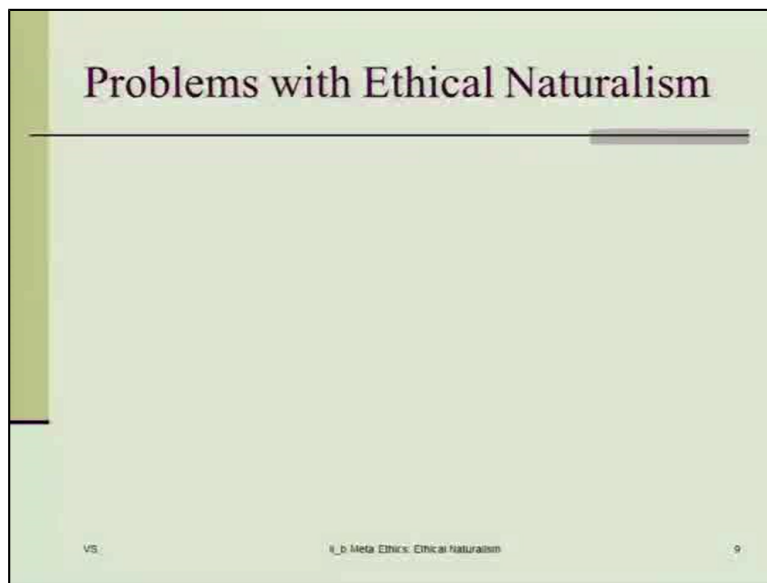


Ethics
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Module No. #01
Lecture No. #15
Ethical Naturalism - continued...

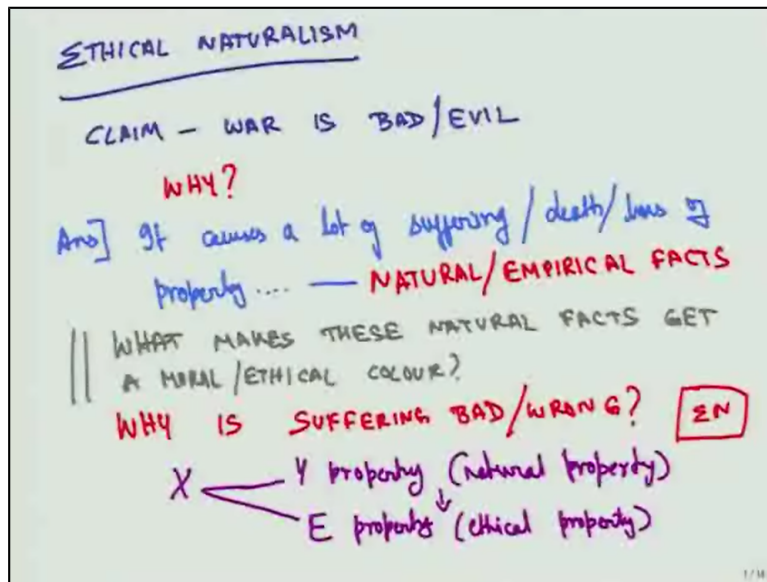
Now, we would like to explore in detail, what are the problems of Ethical Naturalism. Let us have a quick recapitulation of, what we have talked about. We have talked about Ethical Naturalism, which meant, that, ethical facts or moral claims, can be reduced or understood wholly, without any loss of meaning, in terms of natural, or empirical, or non-moral facts. Now, let us take a look at it. Why is this a problem? Why is this, such a deep profound Metaethical claim?

Now, it is a Metaethical claim. Because, it is a Metaethical foundation because, it is very implicit in our thinking, in our thought. And yet, it is a very crucial assumption, determining the direction, which our thinking on moral claims takes. Now, let us take an example. Let us take an example, that well, war is evil, or there is something wrong with war. Right. Why would we say, such a thing? Now, let us try to threadbare analyse, why would we say something like that, war is evil.



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Now, let us take a look at the template, to see why, to jot down the points, that we are saying.
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Well. Our claim is that; war is bad or evil. Now, a perfectly innocent question, that can be asked is, why do we make such a claim. Now, what could various answers to this claim be. Well. First is that, say, it causes a lot of suffering. It causes, suffering, death, loss of property. Okay. It causes a lot of suffering, death, loss of property, and etcetera, etcetera. Now, what kind of claims are these? Now, well, let us take a look.

Now, if it causes a lot of monetary loss, loss of property, loss of lives, disease, death, a relative stagnation of growth and development in the coming years. Why I can still innocently ask, or naively ask that, why does that make it evil. Is that sufficient enough, to make it evil. Well, the answer is, determines which direction, our thought is going to take. If now, if I am an Ethical Naturalist. And, I believe that, the Metaethical claim, that moral facts can be understood, in terms of natural facts.

Now, loss of property, disease, ill-health, death, these are all natural facts, right. Now, these are all examples of natural facts. Natural, as we talked, can also be understood as, empirical facts. Now, the question is, what makes these natural facts, gets a moral or an ethical colour. That is the crucial question, that is raised. That, what makes these natural facts, get a moral or an ethical colour. Why is suffering bad. So, when the fundamental question, we ask is, why is suffering bad

or wrong.

Now, this is a question, that is talking about Ethical Naturalism, that what makes suffering bad. What is wrong with suffering. Now, to most of us, perhaps the answer would be immediate, that well. In fact, we would perhaps be taken aback, when such a question is asked. And, we would perhaps be disgusted or disappointed, with naivety, or even the insensitivity of the questioner. But, let us bear with it, and ask, why can the questioner asked this question. What is wrong with suffering.

What makes suffering bad? What makes death bad? And consequently, what makes war bad? Now, that we do not dispute, that war brings about death and suffering. Those are empirical or natural facts. But, what makes a war, having these facts, or these properties, the same thing as having a moral property, or natural property is the same as moral property. We need to pay attention to comprehend, what is the moot question here. If, X has Y-Property, which is a natural property, and it is also the E-Property.

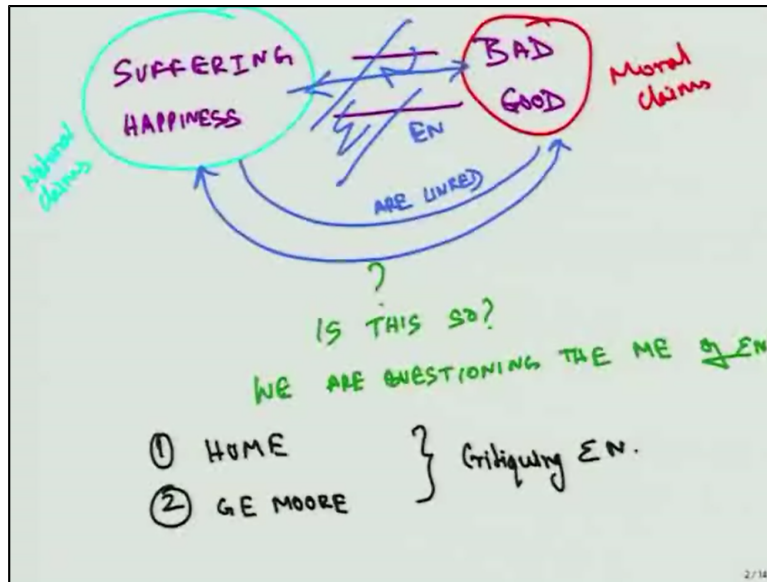
Let me write the, conventional alphabet of E. E-Property, which is an, same ethical property. Now, does having Y-Property, make this question, have the E-Property too. That is the question, that we need to tackle. Okay. Now, coming back to the question, that what makes suffering, something gives it a moral colour, gives it a moral property. The same question, which I could ask, or one could ask is that, what makes happiness, have a moral colour. That, happiness as something good, and suffering as something bad.

Now, these are two are very obvious assumptions, through which, we go through life. But, still nevertheless, we asked the question. We can ask the question, that what is it, that makes suffering bad, and what is it that makes, happiness good. Now, this exposes, or Metaethical foundation for somebody, who does not find this question meaningful also, or finds this question irrelevant, not even trivial, or finds this question as something incorrect.

Then, it betrays a very strong foundation, Metaethical foundation of Ethical Naturalism. So, for them, if you take a look, suffering turns out to be bad, and happiness turns out to be good. Now,

suffering and happiness are natural facts. A good and bad, are moral claims.

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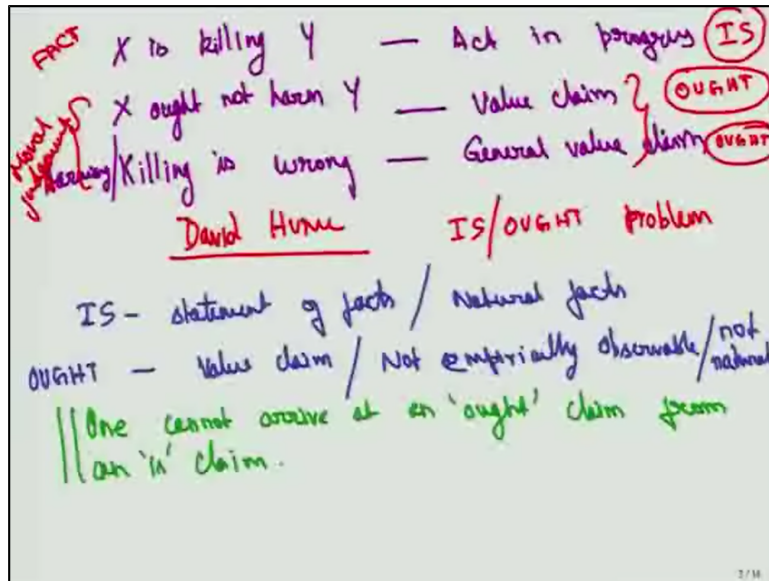
Suffering bad, and happiness good. Now, these are moral claims. And, these are natural claims. Ethical Naturalism is the relation between, these two domains. How are these two domains linked. Now, Ethical Naturalism claims, that well, these two domains are linked, in fact that they have the same property. Now, let us look at, what could be the problems here. Now, if you are clear about, what is the moot question over here.

Which is, how are natural facts, related or made equivalent to, non-natural facts, or which are moral facts. Now, this goes in the way our assumptions, or our frame work in the way, we approach the world. Now, if we have a very strong Ethical Naturalistic assumption, and we go ahead, and find these two domains of suffering and happiness, and bad and good, as equivalent. That is, they are connected with each other.

But, if we question this, is this so, then we are questioning, the Metaethics of Ethical Naturalism. How can we question, such a claim? Now, understanding the very basic problem of, what Ethical Naturalism is all about. Perhaps, the Utilitarians, as we talked about, assumed that, suffering was equated with happiness. Now, these are the claims of Ethical Naturalism. Let us try to assess it. Let us see, what kind of a problems, do the Ethical Naturalist, land up into.

Now, there are mainly two philosophers, who have objected, or found folly, with the Ethical Naturalist claim. And, the first one is, Hume. And, the second one is, G E Moore. These are mainly, the two philosophers, who are credited with critiquing Ethical Naturalism. Let us go step-by-step, and find out, how do they do such a thing. Now, let us take an example.

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X is killing Y. This is an act in progress. X ought not harm Y. This is a value claim. This value claim, comes from the general principle, killing or harming is wrong. Now, in Hume's parlance, this is example of an, IS claim. This is an example of an, OUGHT claim. And, so is this an example of an, OUGHT or a SHOULD claim. That well, these two claims are OUGHT claims. And, this is a fact. And, this is a moral judgement.

Now, Hume's fundamental question was, this philosopher called David Hume, who has made many fundamental counter commonsensical questions, which question our fundamental assumptions. Questioning position was one. But, what we are concern now with, is David Hume's IS, OUGHT, problem. Now, IS for Hume statement of fact, or what according to Ethical Naturalist is, natural facts. Now, OUGHT on the other hand, is a value claim. And, it is not an empirically observable. That is, it is not natural.

Hume says, that well, one cannot infer, or arrive at, an OUGHT claim, from an IS claim. Now, that is the fundamental point of Hume, that one cannot arrive at an OUGHT claim, from an IS

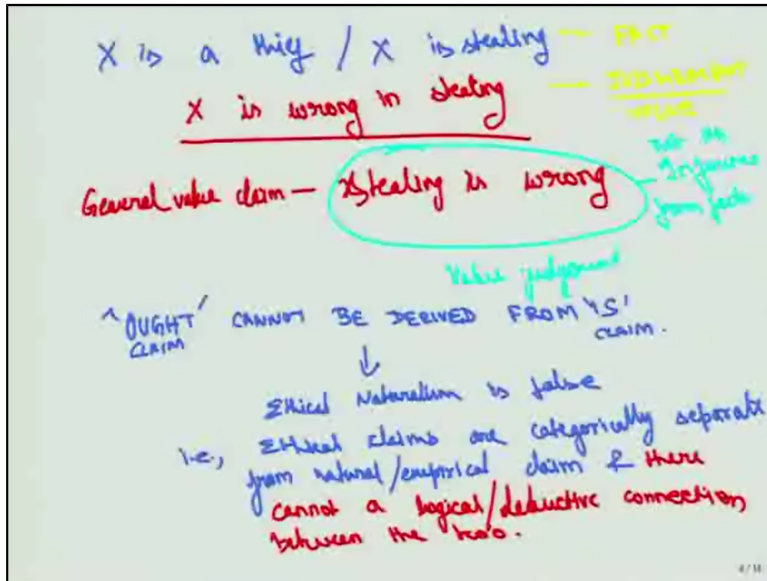
claim. Now, let us look at it that, what is Hume trying to say. Well. Let us say, you step into your, say friend's room. And, you find, that well, somebody, who is not your friend. Now, that particular friend, or not the owner of that room, is in that room, and is opening your friend's cupboard, and has put something in your pocket, and is about to go away.

What is your immediate reaction? You immediately stop him. You ask him that, who are you, and why are you taking it away. You judge him as a thief. Because, he is taking away something, that does not belong to him. And, you know it, because it belongs to your friend. Now, you catch hold of this thief. Someone, your friend, calls your other friends. And, now you sit, or you corner this thief in the room, and tell him that well, stealing is wrong.

Then, let us say, you have a philosopher friend, who points out, or who stands up and questions that, my dear friend, how do you say that, stealing is wrong. Let us call this thief as, X. What X was doing is, taking something, that does not belong to him. But, where did you make a jump, a leap, from inferring that, X is a thief to, X is doing something wrong. That is the jump, that Hume talks about.

That well, there are the domain of facts and actions, and there is the domain of value judgements. And, one cannot logically arrive, from the domain of facts, to the domain of judgements. Now, that is the claim, that Hume has talked about. That, we have the world of facts, and we cannot arrive at the judgement, from the world of facts. Now, does this seem sensible. Let us take a look. So, the claim is that well, X is a thief, or X is stealing.

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This is the fact. And, the judgement is, X ought not to steal, or X is doing something wrong, X is wrong in stealing. Now, this is fact. And, this is judgement or value. So, what we are talking about is that, X is a thief, or X is stealing, X is wrong in stealing. Now, how do we make this claim, that X is wrong in stealing. Well, X is wrong in stealing, because of our general value claim, that stealing is wrong. And, this value claim, this is not an inference, from any established facts, it is just our value judgement.

Now, before we go on to talk about, the consequences of this kind of a revision in our Metaethics, I would like to sound you out a little bit on, what are the likely problems with Ethical Naturalism. Now, well, Ethical Naturalism, well, perhaps more desirable side of it is that, it is more objective. Because, well, the standard utilitarian claim, that well, we have an indicator, an objective real indicator, when we talked about Moral Realism, as an Ethical Naturalism, is a form of Moral Realism.

So, there is an objective indicator, that well, to know whether something is right or wrong, we need to look into the world out there. For instance, if it is causing suffering, then it is wrong. If it is causing happiness, then it is right. Now, we therefore have a parameter, or an indicator. Now, Number-2, if we deny the Ethical Naturalist claim, that well, there is no connection, as Hume is trying to deny, there is no connection between, IS and OUGHT. Then, our question is that, well, how we arrive at, what is right and wrong.

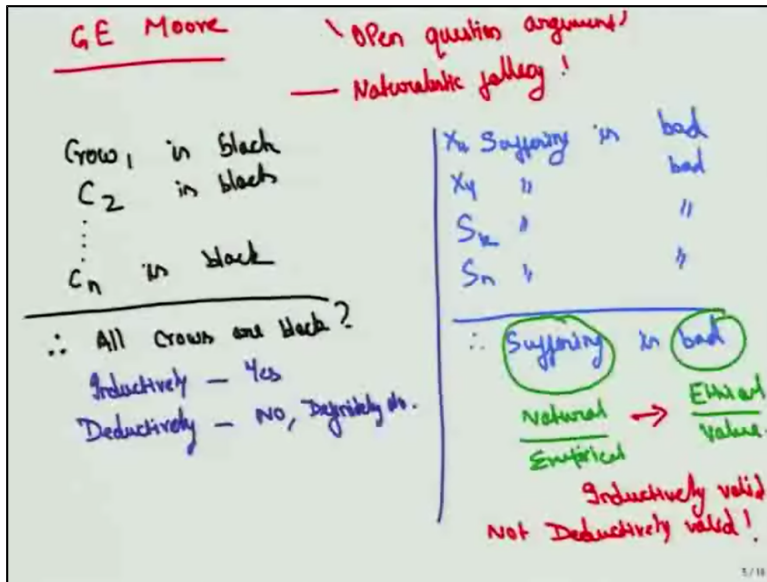
Then, right and wrong perhaps, are all our moral judgement becomes objective, and where are, or where else are they grounded on. Now, they could be, as we saw examples of Moral Objectivism or Realism, not subscribing to Ethical Naturalism, as Ross Deontological rules, or Kant's universalizability. That, we know something is right and wrong, not from facts out there, but from understanding. That well, if the act is universalizable, then it comes out to be wrong. If it is not, then it does not.

So, leaving the umbrella of Ethical Naturalism does not mean, that we are leaving Moral Realism, or Ethical Objectivism. So, these are terms and its uses, that you must be aware of, to make sense of the ethical engagement. So, all Ethical Naturalist are, Moral Realists, or Ethical Objectivists. But, all Ethical Objectivists, or Moral Realists, need not be Ethical Naturalists. Examples of Moral Realists, who are not Ethical Naturalist. Well, examples are, Kant's Universalizable Theory.

That well, there is a criteria of objectivity, but it is not grounded on natural facts. It is on the structure of the moral claim. So, the Humeian claim is, that well, OUGHT cannot be derived, from IS. So, that means, what Hume is simply saying, that well, Ethical Naturalism is false. That is, ethical claims are categorically separate from, natural or empirical claims. And, more importantly, there cannot be a logical connection between, logical or more accurately, a deductive connection, between the two. So, this is briefly what is, Hume's claims.

So, Hume is a prominent critic of Ethical Naturalism, separating moral facts or value claims from, natural facts. Hume goes on to give his own Ethical Theory, that what is the justification of moral claims, and where can they find their justification. But, that is not our field of enquiry, for the time being. Now, we note a second objection, or a problem, with Ethical Naturalism.

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And, that is, firstly called, G E Moore. He uses something called the, open question argument. And, he has talked about open question argument, and his fallacy is called as the, Naturalistic Fallacy. Now, before we note down, what Hume means by, the Naturalistic Philosophy. Let us briefly look at, what Moore is trying to point out. Now, Moore's claim is that well, we have moral properties, we have natural properties.

The two can be correlated, but cannot made equivalent. Put more simply. It would mean, that well, let us say, an object has a Property-X, and a Property-Y. But, having two properties, cannot be the same thing as, having one property. Okay, let us make it simpler. Let us say, this particular writing instrument, is black in colour, Property-1. And, is 10cms in length, Property-2. It has a length, and it has a colour.

Now, if we keep on saying in this world, that all objects, which are 10cms in length, and have the same colour, will tend to equate the two qualities. Now imagine, we always find, that this pen comes out to be, or this pen is always in black colour. Now, if this writing instrument is always in black colour, are we bound to think that well, perhaps being black and being 10cms long, are inseparably joint, and perhaps definition of a single entity.

Let us take a, frequently referred example, by philosophers. This has been pointed out, in the problem of induction. Now, most of us would have seen, crows. Crows are quiet prevalent, in

most parts of the world. And, they have survived the massive changes, caused by human beings, in the planet's environment. Now, we have seen black crows. We have seen crows, which are black in colour, forever. Since we are born, we have been seeing crows, which are black in colour.

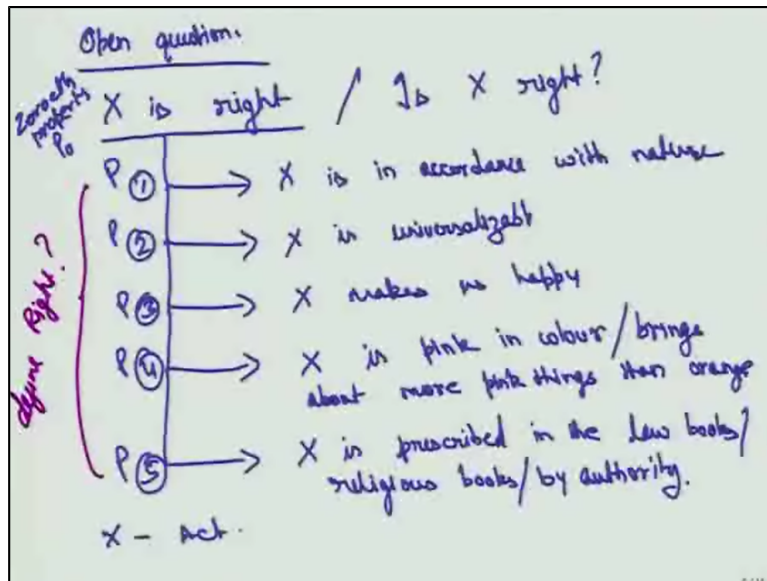
Let us say, some are jet black, some are ash coloured. But, let us sum it up as that, all crows are black. Are, all crows black. That is the question, that Hume asks. And, even to a certain extent, Moore reformulates it. And, that is, what is the problem of induction, that was also the Metaethical problem, which requires a grounding of ethics. Now, we have seen that, all crows are black. But, can we infer deductively that, all crows are black.

Now, if this is the case, why am I talking about this example. Because, when we say that well, when we are inferring that, all cases of suffering are bad. Are we also making a certain kind of inductive claim, not a deductive claim? Let us, take a look at the board. If I say that, crow-1 is black, crow-2 is black. And, we go head to, is black, which you can put to your heart's delight. Now, if there are so many crows, that are black. Can we infer, all crows are black. Inductively, yes. Deductively, no. Definitely, no.

Now, if on the equivalent, we find that well, suffering is bad. Well, let us say, a Human-X suffers, a Human-Y suffers, a Society-K suffers, a society N suffers. All of them call it bad. Right. So, can we then infer that, suffering is bad. Because, please understand, we are making a crucial difference. We are making, something natural or empirical, and something ethical or a value claim. Now, what makes this jump, possible. Well, it may be inductively valid, but it is not deductively valid.

So, as we see the question is, that well, most of the people, and most of the societies, if not all, would regard suffering as bad or evil. But, does that give justification enough to call, suffering as something bad or evil, in general. Now, that is the question, that we would like to address, that well, suffering is bad or evil. Now, let us go ahead with the Moore's questions. Now, Moore asks the question, that well, let us say, it is called the open question.

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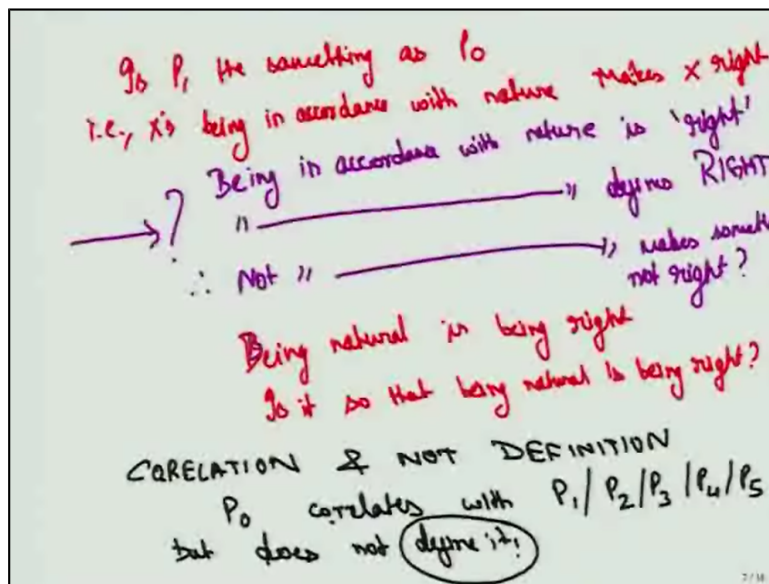
X is right, right. If, this is a claim, and the question form it is, is X right. Okay. Now, what could this mean? X is in accordance with nature. Or, X is a universalizable. Or, X makes us happy. Or, X is pink in colour, or brings about more pink things than orange. Or, that X is prescribed in the law books, or religious books. Or, the moot point, is by authority. Now, when we say, that well, let us quickly number them too. Now, we let us call this, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Right. Property-1, Property-2, Property-3, Property-4, Property-5.

Now, X is an act. Now, the act X has five properties. Right. And, let us call, X being right, as the zeroth property. Right. So, X is right. This is the zeroth property. Let us call it, P-0. Now, the zeroth X has six properties. And, these six properties, accompany X. And, from that, an Unethical Naturalist, or any ethical claim infers that, P-0, that what makes X right. Now, having these properties, is it the same thing, as being right. If, let us take a look, if the first property reads that, X is in accordance with nature.

So, if it is in accordance with nature, does that make it right. X is universalizable, X is right. So, let us say, these are five people, who have different reasons, for arriving at the same conclusion. The same conclusion being that, X is right. Well. The first person says, that well, X is in accordance with nature. So, I think, it is right. The second one says, well X is universalizable. That is, I would like to do X, and I would like others to do X, un to me. So, X is universalizable, and therefore it is right.

The third person would say, X makes me happy. And, the fourth person would say, that well, X brings about more pink things than orange, or any other colour. The fifth person says well, X is prescribed in the law books, or religious books, by authority. Now, these are various reasons, for calling X, right. Right. Now, Moore genius, is in asking, or in reversing the question, that well, is P-1, the same thing as P-0.

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That is, X is being in accordance with nature, makes X good. Now, what is the question, that is being asked here. That well, X is being accordance with nature, makes X good. That means, being in accordance with nature is good. Or, in other words, defines, already used the term, right. So let us use the term, right, to avoid any confusion. Now, this is where, Moore puts the question, that well, is this claim correct? Being, in accordance with nature, defines right. And therefore, not being in accordance with nature, makes something wrong, or un-right.

Now, this is the catch that, if you would carefully look at the screen, that this is the catch, that Moore wants you to comprehend. That well, being in accordance with nature is, right. But, going one step ahead, what we mean is that, being in accordance with nature defines, what is right. Now, therefore, not being in accordance with nature, makes something not right. Therefore, being in accordance with nature, is the definition of being right.

Now, our definitions or properties, which are correlated definitions of being right. Now, let us look at the earlier screen that, what are the various properties mentioned. The first property mentioned is, that well, X in accordance with nature, or X is universalizable. Now, second property is universalizability. Third, fourth, fifth, now are these properties, or any one of these definitional, do any of these define, what is right.

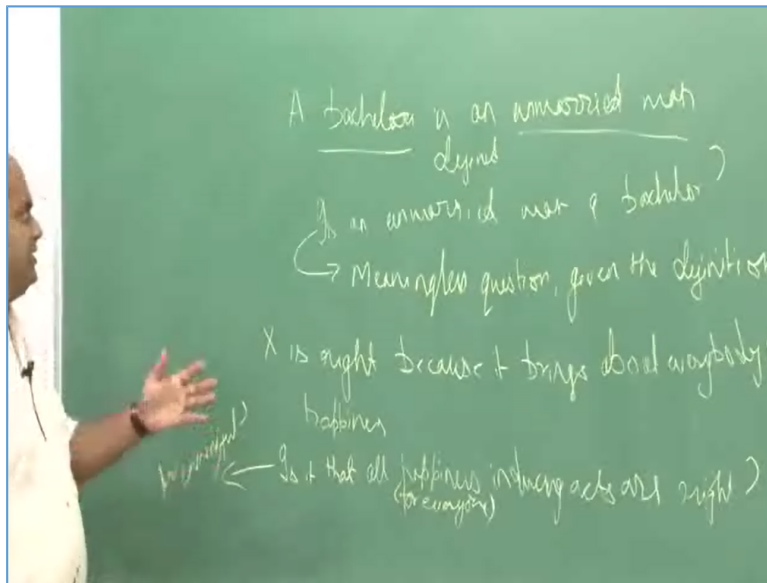
Well, if they define, what is right, then the inverse of the question, would be meaningless. Suppose, now looking at the next slide. That well, being natural defines for brevity, we make it precise, that being in accordance with nature, is to be understood as, being natural. So, being natural is being right. Now, being natural is being right, is definitional. So, that means, what is not natural. Or, can we ask the question, that is it really so, is it so that, being natural is, being right.

That, if we can ask this question, that well, being natural, really being right. Then, we can take a look. If, being natural means, being right. Then, is this the definition of being right. If we can ask the question, the other way round. That well, if being natural means being right, or if being right is being defined as being natural. And, we can again ask the question, that is being natural, same thing as being right. And yet, this question makes sense.

Because, there can be people, or there are people, who disagree. That well, being natural and being right, may be correlated, but are not definitional. So, the crucial thing to be remembered here is that, this is a relation of correlation, and not definition. So, what Moore tries to point out, that P-0 correlates with P-1, or P-2, or P-3, or P-4, or P-5, or a combination of these, but does not define it. And, that is the crucial claim that, Moore is trying to bring with the, open question arguments.

When we inverse the question, that well, P-0, because P-1. Does, P-1, define P-0. No. It is always a meaningful question, when we inverse the definitional question. But, by understanding of format of logic that, when we inverse a definition, or we cannot question a definition. For example, let us take a look at the board.

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Let us say, bachelor is an unmarried man. Now, let us say, this is a definition. So, bachelor is defined as an unmarried man. Now, can we ask this question, is an unmarried man, a bachelor. Well. This is not a meaningful question. In the sense, that well, if already defined that, a bachelor is an unmarried man. So, when I talk about reversing the, or inverting the question, that who is an unmarried man. A bachelor. It is a meaningless question, given the definition.

Now, if this is the case. Now, Moore's genius is in pointing out, that well, if I say, that X is right, because it brings about happiness. This is a claim. And, if this is a definition, that right is defined as anything, that brings about happiness. And, now we invert the question to ask that, is it the case, that all happiness inducing acts are right. And, if you want to be careful about the details, happiness for everyone. Because, that is what, we have written as a, definition.

So, is this question, meaningful, or meaningless. Now, this is where, briefly the four questions that bring about, the genius of Moore's open question argument. That well, first, we defined that,

the bachelor is an unmarried man. And then, if we ask the question, that is, an unmarried man, a bachelor. It seems to be a meaningless trivial question. Because, having given the definition, this does not make sense. However, when we do the same exercise in the moral domain, that X is right, because it brings about everybody's happiness.

And then, we ask the question, that is, is it the case, that all acts that bring about happiness for everyone, are right. Well, this does not seem to be a, meaningless question. Because, this is questioning the Metaethical foundation of Ethics. Now, for somebody, who is an Ethical Naturalist, this could be definitional, but everybody need not be an Ethical Naturalist. So, the binding power of this definition, is not there in this definitions.

So, for Hume, and further for Moore, perhaps, these are instances of correlation, and not definition. And, if they are not definition, then they are not complete. So, Moore comes with this claim, that well, if you look at this, that P-0 going to be understood as a moral property, good or right, correlates with natural properties, but does not define it. Because, inverting the question, we find that well, it is not a definition, but just an instance of correlation.