Chapter 3
Naturalizing Norms

x is good...., *y* is good,...., *z* is good.... *w* is good,...

Q: **Is there any property that *x*, *y*, *z*, w, all share in common?**

[Naturalism]:
____ Ethical conclusions derive from non-ethical terms and premises.

* Two Kinds of Naturalism in Ethics

[A]. The Externalistic Naturalistic Ethics
____ "Once we understand the nature of reality (metaphysics) and the nature of human perception in understanding the reality (epistemology), ethics follows logically from the relation of man's place in reality's order. The principle of morality can be derived from objective reasoning, i.e., from the observation and explanation of 'facts' about the natural world and humankind's place in it. Thus moral behavior is simply rational choice." ---- William Merriman

[B]. The Internalistic Naturalistic Ethics
____ We can still understand ethics in naturalistic terms, but where we would locate these natural

properties are not the outside world, but our own states of mind. Given that we humans are part of nature, our desires, preferences, dislikes, emotions, etc., should all be seen as "natural." To understand ethics, we need to understand humans instead of "the world."

Q: **Is expressivism "deflationary"?**

§ Blackburn's Theory: Expressivism

Note:
_____ "projectivism' = "expressivism" = "non-descriptive functionalism" = "practical functionalism" = "quasi-realism"

_____ It is a form of non-cognitivism and has commonly been interpreted as a form of anti-realism.

Note: realism/anti-realism in ethics
_____ A realist will emphasize that the way we think of moral issues is independent of our own opinions. It is an objective matter whether something is good, or a certain act moral.

_____ An idealist (anti-realist) will emphasize the contingent and variable patterns of attitude that lead different people to respect different rights and duties and suggest that rather than reflecting on an ethical reality, it is these responses that create it.

Note: realism/non-cognitivism
_____ A realist about X holds that discourse about X is apt for truth or falsity.

_____ For a non-cognitivist, seeming statement about X do not function in a genuinely descriptive way, but rather some other linguistic function. E.g. Ethics → expressive or imperative, rather than descriptive of facts.

[Expressivism]:
1. **There is no external moral fact. There are no objective ethical properties in actions or states of affairs.**
2. **When we give an ethical judgment, when we express an ethical proposition, we are not** *describing* **anything external to, and independent of, our very judgment.**
3. **The ethical proposition gets its identity as a focus for practical thought, as people communicate their certainties, insistences and doubts about what to value. There is no "truth condition" for any ethical statement.**
4. **What we express is merely our own states of mind, how we value things.**
5. **But we do not** *describe* **our states of mind; we simply** *voice* **them. [Therefore, it is not that we state, "I judge murder to be wrong." It is rather that "Murder is wrong"** *expresses* **my attitude on murder.]**
6. **Ethical phenomenon is essentially** *people valuing things*.
7. **This evaluative state of mind is nonetheless a "natural" state, and a naturally describable state.**
8. **For a subject** *S* **to think that** *X* **is good, is for** *S* **to value it.**

9. This state of mind can be explained in natural terms. ⇒ "States of mind are natural states."

10. Ethics remains essentially practical, a matter of attitude, disposition and emotion.

11. Ethics is not strictly about the way the world is; it is about the way we view the world and the way we value things in the world. For every fact, there is a question about what to do about it. Ethics is just a discussion of what to do about things.

Q: What does Blackburn mean by this statement: "States of mind are natural states."?

* holism of the mind

___ It is wrong to go for a single item-by-item analysis of mental states in terms of overt behavior. ↔ "logical behaviorism"

___ But it is still possible to isolate the function of a particular belief or desire in the rest of the cognitive economy.

* pervasiveness of normativity

___ When we are in the domain of the mental we are in an order of *rationality* rather than an order of *causality*. In other words, we can say what people *ought* to do or what *makes sense* for them to do if they have such-and-such a belief, coupled with such-and-such other beliefs and desires. But we cannot directly say what they *will* do. Mental states are located not by their place in a

causal structure, but by their place in a rational structure. It is a norm-centered approach.

* Functionalism
___ Functionalism identifies mental states by their place in causal networks, not by their place in systems whose principles of construction are normative. It is a cause-centered approach.

Beliefs, desires → | Mental Network | → behaviors

                                                                                      <Cause>
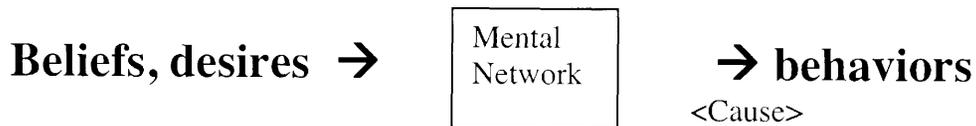
* API
___ The causal structure of a rational mind is *isomorphic with* its rational structure.

> (API)   It is analytic that creatures with beliefs, desires, and other states of mind, behave in ways that (best) make sense, given those states of mind.

e.g. Davidson: "The reason is the cause."

[Intrinsic Good]
___ People are generally motivated by the desire to do good, to do the right thing; when they deviate from the norm, it is exception rather than the rule.

[On Human Value]

To hold a value is typically to have a relatively stable disposition to conduct practical life and practical discussion in a particular way: it is to be disposed or *set* in that way, and notably to be set against change in this respect.

Changes are possible over time. But one's habits are resilient.

To hold a value is to have a relatively fixed attitude to some aspect of things, an attitude with which one identifies in the sense of being set to resist change, or set to feel pain when concerns are not met.

§ Examples of Expressivist's *Synthesis* of the Ethical Proposition:

(1) Believing that X is good or right is roughly having an appropriately satisfactory valuation of X.

(2) Wondering whether X is good or right is wondering what to do/what to admire or value.

(3) Denying that X is good or right is rejecting a favorable attitude to X.

(4) Being undecided is not knowing what to do or what to admire, etc.

(5) Being certain that X is good or right is having a settled attitude/rejecting the possibility that improvement could result in change.

(6) Knowing that X is good is knowing to choose X or admire X, etc.

"A moral proposition is a propositional reflection of [practical] states that are first understood in other terms than that they represent anything."

[Minimalism]
___ To say that 'p is true' is nothing more than stating p itself.
e.g. 'X is good' is true $\equiv X$ is good

Q: Does it imply that our moral judgment represents a moral fact?

Blackburn:
___ In all spheres of thought we make judgments, and judging is subject to standards of correctness. To represent the world as one way or another is to stand ready to be corrected. But in so far as this breaks down a distinction between representation and evaluation, it does so on behalf of evaluation.