

PHIL 308
Elementary Ethics

Lecture Three

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Reasons and Reasoning

- Reasons for believing — evidence IBE
- Reasons for doing
- Good reasons vs. bad reasons
- Good reasoning
 - Standards of good reasoning
 - Explanatory reasoning — IBE
 - Normative reasoning — IBNN

Mary Ann and Wanda

- R₁. It wasn't two weeks after she got married that Wanda started gettin' abused.
- R₂. She finally got the nerve to file for divorce.
- R₃. Earl walked right through that restraining order and put her in intensive care.
- R₄. One should always seek to maximize the good and minimize the bad.
- R₅. A world where Mary Anne and Wanda commit murder is better than a world where Wanda [and other women] continue to be abused by Earl.

T₀. Earl had to die.

Their Reasons

- Factual normative reasons
- Practical principles
- General normative principles
- Normative calculation
- Are these good reasons?
- How do we tell?

Explanatory Reasoning & Practical Reasoning

- Explanatory reasoning
 - Connie's hypothesis explains her evidence
 - IBE as a test of the quality of her reasoning
- Normative reasoning
 - Mary Ann and Wanda's recommendation doesn't explain any of their reasons
 - Is there a test for the quality of their reasoning

Narratives

- Stories
- Good stories make sense of things
- Connie's story as better than the revenge story and better than the detergent story
- Mary Ann and Wanda's story
- Is it a better story than other rival stories that we can imagine?

Inference to the Best Normative Narrative

- Stories about what to do
- Structure of the original story
- Rival stories
- Rank order — which of the stories makes the most sense of things?
- Test for the quality of normative reasoning

Normative Virtue

- Most complete story
- Simplest story
- Least *ad hoc* story
- Most plausible story
- Controversy again
- Practical tool — not a magic bullet

Origins of Normative Skill

- We are skilled story tellers, evaluators, consumers
- Making sense and intersubjective agreement
- Evolutionary origins
 - Evolutionary psychology
 - Theory of mind
 - Necessary social skill in hunter/gather times
 - Transference to reasoning

Mary Ann and Wanda

- Why I hate their story
- I sure get it
- Vigilante justice
- Vigilante self-defense
- Vigilantism is dangerous
- Vigilantism and the popular culture

Outlines of my rival narrative

- Same factual normative reasons
- Same general normative principle (for the sake of argument)
- Additional factual normative reasons
- A world which does not tolerate vigilante acts is better than a world where the criminal justice system occasionally fails
- Still, Wanda needs reliable protection