HAREAN UNDERSTANDING OF MORALITY

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ABSTRACT

The fundamental task of any philosophy in general to understand the reality as well as some philosophical concepts. In this process, philosophy aims at understanding the nature of man, and other concepts in reality. In an attempt to interpret the nature of man, and reality, the philosophers advanced several theories. The diversity of these interpreters resulted in the construction of various metaphysical and epistemological theories. For any kind of philosophical or metaphysical investigation, epistemology is necessary. If philosophical investigation aims at understanding the nature of object and its properties. It must see that the means and methods. For Hare, value words such as 'good', 'right' and 'ought' possess 'supervening' or 'the consequential properties'. According to the Hare, "one of the most characteristic features of value-word is a feature sometimes described by saying that 'good' and other such words are the names of 'supervenient' or 'consequential' properties. Here the 'supervenient' or' the consequential' characteristics refer to the justification or the reason that we give to a value judgment. Like other descriptive words, the value words always have descriptive characteristics. Hare holds that, there may be good reasons for justifying ethical conclusions. It is always possible to ask for a reason 'why', when a moral judgment has been passed. For instance, when one says something is 'good', that time one can raise the question why the thing is regarded as 'good'? If one says that this is a 'good bike' or this is 'the right way to go', then in these cases, one may always raise the questions like why this bike is regarded as good or why one chooses this road is the right road? The answer for these questions will be some factual descriptions about things concerned. For example, this is a good bike because it gives me a good mileage or this is a good road, because it is shorter than the other routes.

INTRODUCTION

The most influential contemporary British moral philosopher is R. M. Hare is famous for *The Language of Morals*. His two famous books: "*The Language of Morals*" and "*Freedom and Reason*" provides a deep

knowledge on morality. The Moral theory that R. M. Hare propounds as universal prescriptivism. Like Immanuel Kant, R. M. Hare also made some agreement between British empiricist especially logical positivist, and emotivists in a logical and analytic manner. Ethics, as Hare conceive is the logical study of the language of morals. "The freedom of will" which has placed in most introductions to his ethics and the notion of moral principle is to guide conduct. The language of morals is one sort of descriptive language represents; 'what shall I do?' the problems of conduct, the study of imperatives are the best introduction to the study of ethics.

To understand the moral truths, R.M. Hare developed a new ethical theory, a non-cognitive position on the nature of ethics called universal prescriptivism. His attempt was moral discourse. What is the nature of the moral concepts or of morality? Epistemological, question which also belongs to ethical theory: how one can set about answering our moral questions? rationally? Is it just a matter of how the individuals feel or what the current mores dictate? Or there can be rational discussion of moral questions; is there any truth about moral discourse, or a set of facts, that can be discovered? Relating these questions, Hare thought that for the meanings of moral words, sentences and concepts, the answer can be only in a rational way. The moral answers are not just a matter of how one feels or what current customs dictate. According to Hare, moral judgment must have the following three important components. In his words it does require, however, three main premises which are to be found there and which constitute the three most important truths about moral judgments. His moral language represents the metaphysic, the critically normative and intuitively normative. These three important components are:

a) "Moral judgments are a kind of prescriptive language."[1]

b) "They are distinguished from other judgments of this class by being universalizable."[2]

c) "Logical relations between prescriptive judgments."[3]

In the book of moral thinking, he added to his earlier universal prescriptivism of meta-ethics a particular theory of 'the separation of levels of moral thinking' and makes it do a great deal of work … firstly in order to shed light on some disputes in meta-ethics and secondly in order to defend a version of utilitarianism against and extremely commonly types objection. The basic idea of hare's doctrine of the separation of levels is that, besides meta-ethics or Meta-morals, there are two kinds of substantive morals thinking, in the abstract, there are or might be two kinds of normative moral thinking such as: firstly, pure uncritical or intuitive moral thinking, in which

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[1] Hare, R.M. *Freedom and Reason*, (OxfordClarendon Press, London: 1963), p.4

[2] Ibid, p.4.

[3] Ibid.p.4.

moral agents use or would use only relating simple "prima facie principle" of 'limited specificity' in directing their actions ,as most of do in our ordinary moral thinking , these principles being acquired somehow but not by the use of any kind of critical thinking or reflecting, and secondly, Pure critical moral thinking, in which moral agents make or would make use of any such principles of limited specificity in directing their action, but only of the method of universal prescriptivism. The Meta-ethical philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Ross, Hare distinguished between the descriptive and evaluative use of language. Moral languages are primarily used for giving advice or instruction or giving choices. In other words, they prescribe a particular course of action. According to Hare, "they are used primarily for giving advice or instruction, or in general for guiding choices."[4] Hare says, the prescribing is many-sided activity. It includes those uses of language such as, for example, commending a book, instructing pupil or deciding questions of what is the duty to do? For Hare, value words such as 'good', 'right' and 'ought' possess 'supervening' or 'the consequential properties'. According to the Hare, "one of the most characteristic features of value-word is a feature sometimes described by saying that 'good' and other such words are the names of 'supervenient' or 'consequential' properties."[5] Here the 'supervenient' or 'the consequential' characteristics refer to the justification or the reason that we give to a value judgment. Like other descriptive words, the value words always have descriptive characteristics. Hare holds that, there may be good reasons for justifying ethical conclusions. It is always possible to ask for a reason 'why', when a moral judgment has been passed. For instance, when one says something is 'good', that time one can raise the question why the thing is regarded as 'good'? If one says that this is a 'good bike' or this is 'the right way to go', then in these cases, one may always raise the questions like why this bike is regarded as good or why one chooses this road is the right road? The answer for these questions will be some factual descriptions about things concerned. For example, this is a good bike because it gives me a good mileage or this is a good road, because it is shorter than the other routes. Hare writes… Good is a supervenient or consequential. One may always legitimately be asked when one has called something as a good thing, 'what is good about it?' Now to answer this question is to give the properties in virtue of which we call it good. Thus, if one has said, that is a good motor car' and someone ask why? What is good about it, can be replied by considering its high speed combined with its stability on the road'. I indicate that I call it good in virtue of its having these properties or virtues."[6] Hare remarks that, when somebody is giving a factual reason for value judgments, individuals are actually invoking or applying a general criterion, a standard, rule or principle. Hudson points out, According to Hare, value judgments alone are

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[4]Hare, R.M.*The Language of Morals*, (Oxford University Press, London: 1975), p.155.

[5] Op.cit, p.80.

[6] Op.cit, p.131

"supervenient"[7]. The point which he notes about, e.g., "X is good" is not simply that one may ask a reason why and universalize the answer. It is rather that one can always ask "what is good about it?" and that the answer can never be "just its goodness. "This good about it?' this is where x is good differs from x is yellow. "To what is yellow about it?"The answer may, though it need not, be just its yellowness. "goodness (rightness or oughtness) is always necessarily "*supervenient*" upon other characteristics, as yellowness or any other no evaluative characteristics) is not."[8] Like Immanuel Kant, Hare holds moral judgments to be expressible as imperatives of a special kind. Hare thinks that the nature of moral judgment and moral reasoning ideally judges their moral conclusions. So, Hare's prescriptive language is in the form of imperative. An imperative statement is in the form of command. So, value judgments entail imperative means, that when one says one ought to do x, and committed to do 'x '.

Hare states, "we are therefore clearly entitled to say that the moral judgments entail the imperative; for to say that one judgments entail another is simply to say that you cannot assent to the first and dissent from the second unless you have misunderstood one or the other; and this 'cannot' is a logical 'cannot'-if someone assents to the first and not to second, this is in itself a sufficient criterion for saying that he has misunderstood the meaning of one or the other. Thus to say that moral judgments guide actions, and to say that they entail imperatives, comes to much the same thing."[9] The man who says that he ought to do x, but does not perform it, he either does not understand the meaning of the words which he is using or he may be insincere. Hare remarks that, it is a tautology to say that individuals cannot sincerely assent to a command addressed to ourselves, and at the same time not perform it, if now is the occasion for performing it and it in our(physical and psychological) power to do . Similarly, it is a tautology to say that we cannot sincerely assent to a statement, and at the same time not believe it."[10] If moral judgments imply sincere assent to a command, then it will be logically impossible to assent sincerely to any such judgment and yet act contrary to it. Sometimes a person will be indifferent between alternatives. In consequence, there may be more than all alternative that, all told, he most prefers. There is a need to understand conditional preference. A conditional preference is a preference that one actually has for a hypothetical circumstance. It may not be a preference would have if one was in that circumstance. One can construe it as a straight actual preference between two hypothetical alternatives. To say: I prefer all told doing 'y' given circumstances is to say that I prefer all told:

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[7] Ibid.p.135

[8] Hudson, W.D*., Modern Moral Philosophy,* (The Macmillan Press, HonKong: 1983*),* p.183

[9] Hare, R.M.*The Language of Morals*,(Oxford University Press,London:1975),p.172

[10] Op.cit.p.20

Being in s and doing x

to

Being in s and doing y.

This account will hold for conditional preference tendencies as well as for conditional preference told by all. The conditional preference tendencies will add up to yield conditional preference all told. "For I said there that I proposed to use the word 'value-judgment' in such a way that the test, whether someone is using the judgment "I ought to do x" as a value judgment or not, is does he not recognize that if he assents to judgment, he must also assent to the command "Let me do X?"[11] Hare believes that in certain circumstances, sometimes, sincere people can be morally weak. It may be possible that someone thinks that he ought to do x but is failing to do it. According to Hare, however, human beings are neither proles nor archangels; 'we all share the characteristics of both limited and varying degrees and at different times'. Therefore our moral thinking need not, as a whole has only should include the level thinking but also must or at least may include some of the one level pure critical moral thinking described earlier for dealing directly with particular situations in which our intuitive principles conflict, as well as with new ones for which yet individual have no such principles, and perhaps also an occasions when they are up to it. For testing such a principle to see if what it dictates is what the archangel would for after all, the right or best way for us to live or act either in general or on particular occasion is what the archangel would pronounce to be so if he addressed himself to the question; if being understood that he would use the method of universal prescriptivism or the act utilitarian method this entails. In other words the rational human universal prescriptivism has three ways of dealing with any particular situation. Hare views:

1) To apply a 'prima facia principle' of 'limited specificity' situation if no conflict is involved and an adequate critically selected one is at hand,

2) To us critical moral thinking to find a satisfactory new 'prima facia principle' of 'limited specificity' to apply, or

3) To apply critical moral thinking directly to the particular case without bringing in any p prima facia principle of limited facility' (important thing is to know what is pls and cmt).

Moral 'ought' statements are prescriptions of a special kind; they are universalizable: they entail identical judgments about all cases identical in their universal properties'. In other words a necessary and sufficient

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[11] Ibid,p.26

condition for a premise preference all told to constitute moral judgments. Hare distinguished two kinds of moral principle such as critical principle proper and prima facie principles. Critical thinking consists in making a choice (of principles) under the constraints imposed by the logical properties of the moral concepts and the nonmoral facts by nothing else. Hare tries to describe this difficulty in the following words, "nobody in his sense would maintain that a person who assents to an imperative must (analytically) act on it even when he is unable to do so."[12] In moral thinking, Hare gives his derivation in provisional form restricting the preferences.

R.M.Hare made the difference between imperative statement and indicative statement. For him an imperative statement differs from an indicative statement. Here imperative statement is a command 'shut the door' and the indicative statement is used for telling someone about something that is 'you are going to shut the door'. The first one is an imperative statement and second one is an indicative statement. "It is difficult to deny that there is a difference between statements and commands. The distinction lies between the meanings which the different grammatical forms convey. Both are used for talking about a subject-matter, but they are used for talking about it in different ways. The two sentences 'shut the door' and 'you are going to shut the door ' are both about the shutting the door in the immediate future; but what they say about it is quite different. An indicative sentence is used for telling someone that something is the case; an imperative is not-it is used for telling to make something the case."[13]

GOOD IS A PRESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE

Understanding is only possible through the meaning of a statement and proposition. Hare differentiates between three kinds of meaning such as: Descriptive, Prescriptive and Evaluative meaning. Hare defines: "the descriptive, prescriptive and evaluative meanings as an expression which, in a certain context has descriptive meaning and no other, I call a descriptive term, word or expression, as used in that context; One which has the prescriptive meaning (whether or not it also has descriptive meaning) I call a descriptive term; and one which has both kinds of meaning. I call an evaluative term."181 According to Hare, when we are passing a value judgment, that time, we are actually invoking or applying a general criterion, a standard, law or principle because, value words have descriptive meaning. This he refers to the '*supervenient character*' of the value judgments. And the evaluative term is one which has both descriptive and prescriptive meaning. Hare says, "Value words are indeed like descriptive words, both in that they have descriptive meanings, and in that the descriptive meanings of both

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[12]Ibid.p.26
[13] Ibid.p.27

are alterable, flexible and so on."[14] As earlier have mentioned that the value judgments are primarily used to prescribe a Particular course of actions. Hare however, says that the prescriptive meaning is constant for every class of object of which a value word may be used. The evaluative words entail imperatives because they possess a commendatory force. For example: Do your duty, or what is your duty to do? Hare distinguished between two kinds of meaning that in ethical statement such as cognitive and non-cognitive meaning. The cognitive meaning of a statement is factual or descriptive content it refers to, about an informative content. On the other hand, the non-cognitive meaning refers to the approbation or the favorable attitudes that speaker has towards the object. When we hear a person say, 'X is good', we know that he has a favorable attitude towards 'X', whatever 'X' may stands for. Therefore, irrespective of our knowledge of 'X', we know that the person favors it or has a pro-attitude towards it. This is in the non-cognitive, commendatory meaning of a proposition. According to Hare, the commendatory meaning of a proposition has primary importance in ethical discourse.

In the book "*Freedom and Reason*", and recently in moral thinking, Hare has clarified his account of the nature of moral judgment and development the agreement for his utilitarian conclusion. By the combination of the premises Hare made his argument more forcible. Hare says, moral statements are: prescriptive, universalizable, and overriding. The prescriptive meaning is logically prior to descriptive meaning, because any standard must be accepted before it is invoked. Moral language according to Hare is 'prescriptive' and that means that moral language express preference. A moral 'ought' statement expresses a speaker's preference much the same way as a factual assertion expresses the speaker's beliefs. A moral connection then is a state of preference, and we need to understand preferences. A moral ought statement expresses a state of preference all told. That is perhaps what Hare means when he says that moral judgments are 'overriding'. For Hare, a moral statement is an overriding prescription that is universalizable:

The prescriber must stand ready to prescribe the something no matter what position he occupies. An overriding prescription express ones preferences all told. Hare's argument appears to invoke a stronger requirement of universality.

Hare explicitly applies the conditional reflection principle to preferences not suffer; a preference, then, is rationally required if anyone who fully and vividly understood its circumstances would have a like conditional preference, one exactly like it in strength and direction. A preference tendency might be rational without being

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[14] Hare, R.M., *Freedom and Reason*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, London: 1963), p.26.

rationally required. It is rational so long the person whose preference it is would retain it if he were ideally knowledgeable. Conditional preferences are actual preference between hypothetical eventualities. A conditional preference may be echoed by a preference regarding the actual situation, but it need not be even if one is rational. One needs not to be tortured himself, but may lack any preference that others not be tortured. A sympathetic preference for a circumstance is a preference tendency for that circumstance which either; 1) Sympathetically copies a preference that, as a part of that circumstance someone else has, or 2) Sympathetically copies a conditional preference that one has oneself for the case of being the position of that other person. Both conditional reflected preferences and sympathetic preferences are derived, in a sense: having depending on the realization of what it is like to be in a circumstance one is not presently in the conditional reflection to interact with the requirement of universalization to yield the result. The principle of conditional reflection and the requirement of weak universality do not together entail that one must be a utilitarian or anything class. When a premise preferences do constitute moral convictions on the liberal reading, those convictions need not be in anyone way utilitarian. If one says the books are good with funny characters, it must be because one has accepted those books with informative content.

Hare believes that one can use evaluative word in order to change the descriptive meaning. The standard of goodness may vary down the ages. But the evaluative meaning will remain constant. Hare argues, "what is happening is that the evaluative meaning of word is being used in order to shift the descriptive meaning; we are doing what would be called, if 'good' were a purely descriptive word, redefining it. But we cannot call it that, for the evaluative meaning remains constant; we are rather altering the standard."[15]Another important feature of moral judgment is that it is universalizable. This means that when a person says that he ought to do something, he is committed to say that anyone else in the same situation, given the same condition will have to do it. Hare says, "that moral judgments are a kind of prescriptive judgments and that they are distinguished from other judgments of this class by being universalizable."[16] Hare says that both the descriptive and the evaluative terms are universalizable. But there is a significant difference between the universalizablity of factual terms and evaluative terms. While a factual term is universalizable on the basis of a meaning- rule. Evaluative term necessarily call for a preference to a universalizable moral principle. A critical morality, thus understand, itself justification various rules, maxims, and norm of ordinary moral thinking. Universal prescriptivism required that moral principles are those that a person would prescribe for everyone alike, including himself where he is the position of being

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[15] Ibid.p.79.
[16] Hare,R.M.,*Freedom and Reason*, (Oxford:Clarendon Press,London:1963),p.109.

disadvantage by the prescriptivism. A critical morality, expressing internal ideals of rationality and reasonableness gives central normative weight, is essential to the exercise and expression of our rational power as persons and the divine ways person, thus understood, realize their more ultimate aim expressive of such powers. According to Hare, "For, as we have seen, it follows from the definition of the expression 'descriptive term' that descriptive judgments are universalizable in just the same ways as, according to my view, moral judgments are. It is impossible consistently to maintain that moral judgments are descriptive, and that they not universalizable."[17]For Hare, universalizability is a necessary characteristic of moral judgment. The concept of universalizability is based on the very notion of meaning itself. He believes that language is meaningful if it is used in the accordance with rules. A descriptive statement such as 'my car is red' is universalizable with regard to a meaning rule. If I call an object red, I am committed to calling anything else like red. In saying that 'my car is red', I am committed to holding that there is a feature 'r' of my car such that any car having a feature which resembles 'r' will also be call red. According to Hare, "If I call a thing red, I am committed anything else like red. And if I call a thing a good X, I am committed to calling like X like it good. But whereas the reason in the former case is that I must be using the word 'red 'in accordance with some meaning-rule, the reason in the oater case is much more complicated."[18]A descriptive term is universalizable with reference to a meaning-rule. An evaluative term is universalizable with reference to a standard or principle. When I call a thing 'good', I call it on the basis of some principle or standard that the thing possesses. A universal preference tendency says, an intrinsic preference that promises not to be broken may be strong enough to render one's preferences all told for a situation weakly universal even though one lacks sympathetic preferences together. Preferences can be weakly universal and yet lack all trace of utilitarianism.

Hare presents, moral thinking does not invoke a special restrict assumption class to the one. We are to assure, when the individuals came to universalize our prescription, as morality demands that they have to consider only those prescriptions and preferences of other which they would retain if they were always prudent in the sense just defined. The archangel will be welfare plus his own ideals utilitarian. A preference tendency is universal if its content makes no reference to the person who holds. Hare maintains that, there is room for rational discourse in ethics and that logical relations hold in moral argument. To explain properly and for better understanding, he followed and maintains a distinction between '*Phrastic'* and the '*Neustic'* of a proposition. According Hare, '*Phrastic*' is derived from a Greek word meaning 'to point out or indicate 'and '*Neustic'* word meaning 'to nod

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[17] Ibid.p.119.
[18] Hare,R.M.,*Freedom and Reason*, (Oxford:Clarendon Press,London:1963),p.4

assent'. Both words are used in differently of imperative and indicative speech."[19] '*Phrastic*' refers to indicative mood or statement, whereas '*Neustic*' refers to the indicative mood. Here the two propositions may differ in the '*Neustic*' or an imperative mood though both may have the same '*phrastic*' or the propositional content. According to Hare, logical relations hold between in imperative as well as an indicative sentence because both of these sentences have the '*phrastic*' in common. Let us consider the sentences:

Shut the door (Imperative statement)

You are going to shut the door (Indicative statement)

In these two statements there is something common is a description or a state of affair, namely 'You are shutting the door' in the immediate future. The common ground between both the imperative and the indicative is called '*phrastic*'. The difference between the first and second as: first one is the form of command where the second is used to indicate something. For Hare, "We have noticed that the two sentences 'you are going to shut the door' and 'shut the door' are both about same thing ,namely, your shutting the door in the immediate future; but they are used to say different things about it."[20] The illustration of following words as:

You're shutting the door in the immediate future, please

You're shutting the door in the immediate future, yes

Here, the third sentence has an element called 'please' that shows the sentence is an imperative and the fourth sentence has an element called 'yes' that shows the sentence is an assertion. These two additional elements, that is, 'please' in the third sentence and 'yes' in the fourth sentences are called by Hare '*Neustic*'. As he says, "I shall call the part of the sentence that is common to both moods (you're shutting the door in the immediate future'), the *phrastic*: and the part that is different in the case of commands and statements ('yes or 'please'), the *Neustic.*"[21] In other words, the '*Phrastic*' is that part of the sentence, which is common to both moods; on the other hand, '*Neustic*' is the part which is different in the case of commands and statements. Hare says, the utterance of a sentence containing "*Phrastic*" and "*Neustic*" might be dramatized as follows that," the speaker points out or indicates what he is going to state to be the case, or command to be made the case and he nods, as if to say 'It is

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[19] Ibid.p.16.

[20] Hare, R.M.*The Language of Morals*, (Oxford University Press, London: 1975), p.18

[21] Op.Cit.pp.15-16

the case', or 'Do it'."[22]Hare argues that the logical relations hold between imperative sentences (i.e., sentences which tell us to make, something the case) as hold between indicative ones, because the logical words are best treated as part of the '*phrastics of sentences*'. For Hare, all moral reasoning is deductive. All deductive inference is analytic in character, i.e, It depends solely upon the meaning of the words used, and particularly that of logical words such as the sign of negation 'not', the logical connectives 'if', 'and', 'or', and quantifiers 'all' and 'some'. All these elements should be treated as parts of '*phrastic*'. According to Hare, in a moral argument, we always infer a normative value judgment and this demands that there must be at least on value judgments in the premise. We cannot derive value judgments from factual judgments. He maintains no imperative sentence can derived from merely a set of indicative sentences. Moral language is primarily used for giving advice or instruction, prescribes a particular course of action. Moral judgments must have both the descriptive and evaluative components. Hare argues that, a value judgment inherent in a factual judgment.

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[22] Ibid.p.18