**PHL 204
INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS**

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CONTENTS   **PAGE**

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to PHL204: Introduction to Ethics. PHL204 is a three-credit unit course that has a minimum duration of one semester. It is a compulsory course for all B.A. Philosophy students of the University. The course is supposed to expatiate on Ethics which you learnt about in Introduction to Philosophy during the first semester. It aims to enlighten you about the significance of ethics in philosophy.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- explain the origin of ethics
- define ethics
- explain the division of ethics
- discuss the methodology of ethics
- explain the value of ethics
- explain human values;
- examine the nature of human conduct
- discuss human act
- analyse the relationship between ethics and morality
- identify the disparity between ethics and law
- explain the concept of moral law
- discuss the principles of justice and conscience
- define the concept of good
- identify the good and doing the good
- examine the nature of right and wrong
- discuss whether ethics is science or art
- explain the assumption of ethics
- identify some fundamental principles of ethics
- describe the relationship between ethics and religion.

WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

To successfully complete this course, read the study units and do all the assignments. Open the link and read, participate in the discussion forums, read the recommended books and other materials provided, prepare your portfolios, and participate in the online facilitation.

Each study unit has an introduction, intended learning outcomes, the main content, conclusion, summary and references/further readings. The introduction will tell you the expectations in the study unit. Read and note the intended learning outcomes (ILOs). The intended learning outcomes tell you what you should be able to do after each study unit.

So, you can evaluate your learning at the end of each unit to ensure you have achieved the intended learning outcomes. To meet the intended learning outcomes, knowledge is presented in texts and links arranged into modules and units. Click on the links as may be directed, but when you are reading the text offline, you will have to copy and paste the link address into a browser. You can print or download the text to save it in your computer or external drive. The conclusion gives you the theme of knowledge you are taking away from the unit. Unit summaries are also presented in downloadable format.

There are two main forms of assessments – the formative and the summative. The formative assessments are presented as in-text questions, discussion forums and Self-Assessment Exercises. It helps you monitor your learning.

The summative assessments would be used by the University to evaluate your academic performance. This will be given as a Computer Based Test (CBT) which serves as continuous assessment and final examination. A minimum of two or a maximum of three computer-based tests will be given with only one final examination at the end of the semester. You are required to take all the Computer Based Tests and the final examination.

STUDY UNITS

There are 25 units in this course grouped into five modules. The modules and units are presented as follows:

Module 1

Unit 1   Origin of Ethics
Unit 2   Definition of Ethics
Unit 3   Divisions of Ethics
Unit 4   Methodology of Ethics

Module 2

Unit 1   The Values of Ethics
Unit 2   Human Value
Unit 3   Nature of Human Conduct
Unit 4   Human Act

Module 3

Unit 1   Relationship between Ethics and Morality
Unit 2   Ethics and Law
Unit 3   The Concept of Moral Law

Unit 4   Principles of Justice and Conscience

Module 4

Unit 1   Definition of 'Good'
Unit 2   Knowing the Good and Doing the Good
Unit 3   The Nature of 'Right' and 'Wrong'

Module 5

Unit 1   Is Ethics Science or Art?
Unit 2   Assumptions of Ethics
Unit 3   Some Fundamental Principles of Ethics
Unit 4   Ethics and Religion

REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Bentham, J. (1825). *The Rationale of Reward*. London: trans. R. Smith, J. and H.L. Hunt.

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Lillie, W. (1971). *An Introduction to Ethics*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd.

Morgan, P. & Lawton, C.A. (2007). *Ethical Issues in Six Religious Traditions*. Edinburgh University Press.

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Sagi & Statman (1995). *Religion and Morality*. Rodopi, Amsterdam-Atlanta.

Sidgwick, H. (1962). *The Methods of Ethics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Solomon, R.C & Greene, J.K. (1999). *Morality and the Good Life*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Tannsjo, T. (2002). *Understanding Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Theory*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The presentation schedule gives you the important dates for the completion of your computer-based tests, participating in forum discussions and participating at facilitations. Remember you are to submit all your assignments at the appropriate time. You should guide against delays and plagiarism in your work. Plagiarism is a criminal offence in academics, and it is highly penalised.

ASSESSMENT

There are two main forms of assignments that will be scored in this course: the continuous assessment and the final examination. The continuous assessment shall be in three-fold. There will be two computer-based assessments which will be given according to the University calendar. The timing must be strictly adhered to. The computer-based assessments shall be scored a maximum of 10% each, while participation in discussion forums and your portfolio presentation shall be scored a maximum of 10% if you meet 75% participation. Therefore, the maximum score for continuous assessment shall be 30% which shall form part of the final grade.

The final examination for PHL204 will be a maximum of three hours, and it takes 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of five questions out of which you are expected to answer four.
Note: You will earn a 10% score if you meet a minimum of 75% participation in the course forum discussions and in your portfolios. Otherwise, you will lose 10% of your total score. You will be required to upload your portfolio using google Doc. What you are expected to do in your portfolio is to present your notes or the jottings you made on each study unit and activity. This will include the time you spent on each unit and or activity.

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THE COURSE

To get the most of this course, you need to have a personal laptop and internet facility. This will give you an adequate opportunity to learn everywhere you are in the world. Use the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to guide your self-study in the course. At the end of every unit, examine yourself with the ILOs and see if you have achieved what you need to achieve.

Carefully work through each unit and make your notes. Join the online real-time facilitation as scheduled. Where you missed the scheduled online real-time facilitation, go through the recorded facilitation session at your own free time. Each real-time facilitation session will be video recorded and posted on the platform.

In addition to the real-time facilitation, watch the video recorded summary in each unit. The video/audio summaries are directed to the salient part in each unit. You can assess the audio and video by clicking on the links in the text or through the course page.

Work through all self-assessment exercises. Finally, obey the rules in the class.

FACILITATION

You will receive online facilitation. The facilitation is learner-centred. The mode of facilitation shall be asynchronous and synchronous. For the asynchronous facilitation, your facilitator will:

- present the theme for the week
- direct and summarise forum discussions
- coordinate activities in the platform
- score and grade activities when need be
- upload scores into the university recommended platform
- support you to learn. in this regard personal mails may be sent
- send you video and audio lecture and postcards.

For the synchronous:

There will be a minimum of eight hours and a maximum of 12 online real-time contacts in the course. This will be video conferencing in the Learning Management System. The sessions are going to be run at an

hour per session. At the end of each one-hour video conferencing, the video will be uploaded for view at your own pace.
The facilitator will concentrate on main themes that are important in the course. The facilitator is to present the online real-time video facilitation time table at the beginning of the course. The facilitator will take you through the course guide in the first lecture at the start of the facilitation.

Do not hesitate to contact your facilitator if you:

* do not understand any of the study units or the assignments;
* have difficulty with the self-assessment exercises;
* have a question or problem with an assignment or with your tutor's comments on an assignment.

Also, use the contact provided for technical support.
Read assignments, participate in the forums and discussions. This allows you to socialise with others in the programme. You can raise any problem encountered during the study. To gain the maximum benefit from the course facilitation, prepare a list of questions before the discussion session. You will learn a lot from participating actively in the discussion.

Finally, respond to the questionnaire. You will help the University to know your areas of challenges and how to improve on them for the review of the course materials and lectures.

CONTENTS   PAGE

MODULE 1

Unit 1   Origin of Ethics
Unit 2   Definition of Ethics
Unit 3   Divisions of Ethics
Unit 4   Methodologies of Ethics

UNIT 1   ORIGIN OF ETHICS

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
            3.1   The Origin of Ethics
            3.2   Stages of the Development of Ethics
                        3.2.1   Plato's Ethics
                        3.2.2   Aristotle's Ethics
                        3.2.3   Epicurus' Ethics
                        3.2.4   Diogenes' Ethics
                        3.2.5   Zeno's Ethics
                        3.2.6   Religious Ethics
                        3.2.7   Spinoza's Ethics
                        3.2.8   Utilitarian's Ethics
                        3.2.9   Kant's Ethics
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the course which introduces you to ethics. Ethics is an important branch of philosophy, and this is shown in your course Introduction to Philosophy. Ethics is a reflective philosophical venture which examines human actions. It attempts to make sense of our actions in terms of good and bad actions. These actions are in the basic categories of the morally permissible, morally impermissible, and the morally obligatory. Hence, ethics is all about human morality, values and norms. Values or normative principles belong to society, being universal and invariable. Both people and associations are subject to values, which they can obey or disobey. Values characterise the relation frames (modal aspects) following the natural ones. Norms are human-made realisations of values, and they are historically and culturally different. Persistently, humans do evaluate their own actions and the

actions of other people from a moral point of view. Philosophical ethics, therefore, investigates the normativity of human act. However, this unit will concentrate on the origin of ethics, its development through the periods of Plato, Aristotle and Kant.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the origin of ethics
- describe the stages of the development of ethics
- discuss Plato's ethics
- discuss Aristotle's ethics
- describe Epicurus' ethics
- explain Diogenes' ethics
- analyse Zeno's ethics
- examine Religious ethics
- discuss Spinoza's ethics
- explain Utilitarian's ethics
- describe Kant's ethics.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Origin of Ethics

Ethics originated from various cultures and civilisations. That is why it is not a common code of law for all nations. Some civilisations had times when there was no knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. They, therefore, had no ethical feelings and no general standards of ethics which were accepted (Brentano, 2009:3). These situations or conditions continued even after the bigger societies formed themselves into states. As such, the earliest systems of law and of punishment were set up without the influence of anything like moral feelings or a sense of justice.

However, is there such a thing as a moral truth taught by nature and independent of ecclesiastical, political, and every other kind of social authority? Is there a moral law that is natural in the sense of being universally and incontestably valid—valid for men at all places and all times, indeed valid for any being that thinks and feels—and are we capable of knowing that there is such a law?

At a later stage of development, people discovered that some actions are good, and some are bad or wrong. As such, some people always try to do what is good and avoid what is bad or wrong. They also try to advise

others to do the good and warn them against doing what is bad or wrong. Some suppose that we have discovered a natural sanction for a given type of conduct if we can show how it happens that the individual feels compelled to act that way. It may be, for example, that when we first render services to others, we do so in the hope that we will receive similar services in return. We thus form the habit of performing such services, and then we find that we are motivated to do so even when we have no thought of recompense. Some would say that we have here the natural sanction for the duty to love one's neighbours. But any such view is entirely wrong. A feeling of compulsion may well be a force that drives us to action, but it is not a sanction that confers validity.

Some think that motives stemming from hope and fear constitute a natural sanction for certain types of conduct. Thus, we may take an interest in the general good merely because we know that people in more powerful positions will look with favour upon certain types of action and with disfavour upon others. If this sort of thing is a natural sanction, then so, too, are the lowest forms of flattery and cowardice. But virtue proves itself most truly when neither threats nor promises can divert her from the path that she has set upon. As such, we cannot regard ethics as a purely academic study. The fact is that it has innate connections with the daily lives of people. Every person who is troubled by certain situations in his or her life, and who is also reflective, is a philosopher of ethics to an extent. Ethics, therefore, originated from people asking questions and wondering about the activities around them (Popkin, 1993:2). At a certain time, people believe that no one should take a human life. They also believe that they have to defend their communities, nations and countries against its enemies. Now, what should a person do when his or her nation is at war? It is a default on the belief that one should fight for his or her country if one refuses to do so. But on the other hand, if one does fight, he or she may take human life. So, what should one do in such circumstances? How can a person decide? The raw materials on which ethical theories are made are found in reflections of this kind. That is to say that ethics originate from everyday life.

The difference between the reflections of the ordinary person and those of the philosopher is that those of the philosopher is often more organised and usually more general. While an ordinary person may only be trying to solve a particular problem by deciding on a particular form of action, the philosopher tries to generalise.

So, the philosopher's question is not "What is the right course of action for an individual in a circumstance?" but rather, "What is it that will be good for everybody at all circumstances?" "What goal should we strive for, to live better?" "Is it an accumulation of wealth?" "Is it having fun

and pleasure?" "Is it happiness that we should strive for?" "Is it our duty that we should do well?"

The philosopher, like the ordinary person, starts a contemplation of ethics by reflecting about common issues. He then goes further to discuss more general issues. This kind of contemplation, when developed, usually forms 'ethical theories.' To this extent, we can say that ethical theories are products of their own time. They arise because people are not satisfied either with their personal lives or with the world in which they live. The origin of these ideas is what we shall later discuss.

3.2   Stages of the Development of Ethics

3.2.1 Plato's Ethics

Plato (c.429-347 BC) has his ideas disseminated mainly from the conversations called 'Dialogues'. These are the exchange of ideas between Socrates (470/69-399 BC) and other Greek philosophers. They lived during the fifth century BC. Plato's position about ethics since 300BC is that 'evil is due to lack of knowledge.' That suffices to say that if a person knows what the good life is, he or she will not act immorally. Plato is of the belief that if people can discover what is right, they will never act wickedly. But the philosophical question Plato asked and addressed since that time was "How do one discover what is right, or the good?" This seems to be something difficult when people differ so greatly in their opinions about the good life.

Plato's answer to these questions is that "finding the nature of the good life is an intellectual task very similar to the discovery of mathematical truth." It has to be done by trained people who must acquire certain kinds of knowledge, especially philosophy. His ethical philosophy is referred to as Platonism.

3.2.2 Aristotle's Ethics

Aristotle (c.384-322 BC) adopts a scientific or an empirical approach to ethics. Instead of using reflection alone to discover the nature of the good life for all, he examined the talk and behaviour of different people in everyday life. He observed that ordinary men consider some people within the society as leading what can be called 'good life' and others leading what can be called 'bad life'.

He further observed that the various lives which ordinary men consider to be 'good' all have one common feature, which is happiness. In a like manner, the lives which ordinary people consider to be 'bad' all have a

common feature, which is sadness. While answering the question 'What is the good life for a man? Therefore, Aristotle's answer, in a short sentence, is: It is a life of happiness. His ethical philosophy is referred to as virtue ethics.

3.2.3 Epicurus' Ethics

Epicurus (c.341-271 BC) was the advocate of a type of ethics which has continued for a very long time. He is of the view that pleasure is the only source of attaining the good life. The influence of this ethics can be judged from the fact that the English language still contains the word 'epicure', which is based upon the view of Epicurus (Popkin and Stroll, 1983:13). His ethics is said to be inconsistent; it consists mainly of the advice for living moderately but pleasurably (Johansen, 1998:435). It is wholly sufficient to create a life for oneself in inner freedom, independent of the external world, which in itself is neither good nor evil and which is not determined by a higher purpose or a providence. But man's forging of his happiness presupposes that he has what we call free will, and that again presupposes that natural events do not adhere to a strictly predetermined course. Apparently, the Epicureans were never really accepted (Johansen, 1998:436). They considered 'pleasure' as the goal in life and virtue as a means not as a goal, and therefore they were not socially acceptable. Internally the school was dominated by its founder even as late as the second century AD, when it faded. His ethical philosophy is referred to as hedonism.

3.2.4 Diogenes' Ethics

Diogenes (c.400–325) He practised extreme asceticism, rid himself of all conventions. He moved to <u>Athens</u> and criticised many cultural conventions of the city. He modelled himself on the example of <u>Heracles</u> and believed that <u>virtue</u> was better revealed in action than in theory. He used his simple lifestyle and behaviour to criticise the social values and institutions of what he saw as a corrupt, confused society. His ethics is that the world is fundamentally evil, so in order to live a good life, one must withdraw from participation in it. This ethical theory argues that if we trust our happiness to the possession of worldly things, we may find ourselves betrayed. Diogenes, therefore, shocked the establishment by breaking with conventions, quitting society, and living according to an ascetic ideal. His ethical philosophy is referred to as cynicism.

3.2.5 Zeno's Ethics

Zeno of Citium (335–265), is said to have lectured in the third century BC. He and his followers were very unhappy about the collapse of the

Greek city-state and the Alexandrian empire. They felt that social reconstruction was not possible. As a result, they devised the ethics of advising people to attain personal salvation. The emphasis of this ethics is for one to learn to be indifferent to external influences. Zeno's followers were initially called Zenonians, but they later came to be known with the name 'Stoics' because it was Zeno's practice to lecture in the *Stoa* or 'painted colonnade,' a prominent public building in the city centre. As a teacher and Athenian resident, Zeno was held in very high esteem, especially for his strength of mind and indifference to ordinary valuables and comforts. His ethical philosophy is referred to as Stoicism.

3.2.6 Religious Ethics

Some conceptions of religion assert that a feature, such as a focus on a transcendent reality or a non-conceptualise type of being, is at least a necessary condition of any "cultural system" that could be considered religious. Religions search for the good in light of limits and possibilities of the real, what is supremely good or most important. William Christian Sr. says that religions are concerned with what is "more important than anything else in the universe" (1964:60). One is not religious if one merely believes that "some things are more important than other things." To be religious, one must hold that something is more important than everything else and must relate that something (for example, God) to everything else in some sort of "pattern of subordination" (Christian, 1964, 67-70). A religious world-view, therefore, is a vision of the sacred: "By sacred is meant here a quality of mysterious and awesome power other than man and yet related to him, which is believed to reside in certain objects of experience" (Peter, 1969:25).

Religions have an ethical component. It frequently emanates from supernatural revelations or guidance. Some assert that religion is necessary to live ethically. Simon Blackburn (2001:90) states that there are those who "would say that we can only flourish under the umbrella of a strong social order, cemented by common adherence to a particular religious tradition". On this note, religious ethics stem from the divine beliefs of society on the power of God. The belief in God had led people to accept the prophets who were found in different societies at different times. Those prophets came with revelation from God. In those revelations were commands, instructions, warnings and so on. It is through those commands that the good life is pursued. The commands are regarded as an objective and infallible guide to correct behaviour.

3.2.7 Spinoza's Ethics

Spinoza (1632-1677) is regarded as one of the greatest writers on morals in the European tradition since the Greeks. He has a flexible but honest attempt to discover the 'good life'. However, Spinoza is a rigid determinist. He says that 'all things which come to pass do so according to the eternal order and fixed laws of nature'. In holding to this view, he was in the metaphysical tradition of the stoics. It means that no one is free to act capriciously or by chance; all actions are determined by past experience, by physical and mental constitution, and by state of the laws on nature at the moment.

Spinoza is also a relativist. He holds that noting is good or bad in itself, but it is only so in relation to someone. His unfinished treatise, On the Improvement of the Understanding, shows the undogmatic and honest attempt to discover the good life. His ethics is interpreted as offering guidance which, if followed will enable people to avoid fear, anxiety and unhappiness.

3.2.8 Utilitarian Ethics

Utilitarian ethics is said to have been advocated by Francis Hudson in 1775. But the most famous exponents of this ethics are Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1808-1873). Bentham was extremely shy and sensitive. He always felt insecure in the company of strangers. However, he became the head of a group of reformers in England called the 'Philosophical Radicals'. This group was, to a great extent, responsible for social and political changes in the country. The British criminal code was said to be significantly improved by them. Mill's father was a student of Bentham and was influenced by the Benthamite doctrine that a man's character and intellect can be determined completely by his education. The utilitarians conceived their ethics as an attempt to lay down an objective principle for determining when a given action was right or wrong. This is a maxim which they call the principle of utility. According to this principle, "an action is right in so far as it tends to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number." Bentham and Mills have all interpreted this principle as a form of hedonism because it identifies pleasure with happiness. But many modern utilitarians have are not hedonists. They hold the view that the force of utilitarianism is to the fact that it lays stress upon the effects of an action. If it produces surplus beneficial effects over harmful ones, then it is right, if not, then it is wrong.

7

3.2.9 Kant's Ethics

Kant (1724- 1804) believed that ethics was the most important subject in philosophy. It was Kant that used ethical arguments to establish the existence of God. His argument is that the moral law requires that people be rewarded proportionately to their virtue. Kant's ethical theory was designed to answer one main question asked in various ways: What is morality? To put this question in another way, one can say: What is a moral action as against a non-moral action? Or to ask: What is the difference between the person who acts morally and one who does not? Kant believed that these set of questions could be answered and that the key to it lay in distinguishing between acts from inclination and acts done from a sense of duty. The inclination is to be distinguished from obligation. An obligation is that which one ought to do despite one's inclination to do otherwise. Kant feels that a person is acting morally right only when he suppresses his feelings and inclination and does that which he is obliged to do.

4.0   CONCLUSION

This unit has introduced us to the origin of ethics and ethical theories. We discussed that the early theories are characterised by their efforts to answer two questions: 'What is the good life for people?' and, 'How ought people have to behave?' By examining these questions, we interpreted them as a request for advice by people of different cultures and periods who were baffled by certain characteristics of daily living. The various answers which the early and later philosophers provided can be regarded as statements of advice to the individuals for a good and praiseworthy life.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit has discussed the following ideas about the origin of ethics:

- The stage of development when people discovered that some actions are good and some are bad or wrong;
- Ethics, therefore, originated from people asking questions and wondering about the activities around them;
- The raw materials on which ethical theories are made are found in reflections which originate from everyday life;
- The difference between the reflections of the ordinary person and those of the philosopher is that those of the philosopher are often more organised;
- Philosophers' contemplation, when developed, usually forms ethical theories;

- Ethical theories are products of their own time. They arise because people are not satisfied either with their personal lives or with the world in which they live;
- Philosophical ethics began to develop with Plato (c.429-347 BC), who held the view that if a person knows what the good life is, he or she will not act immorally;
- Aristotle (c.384-322 BC) adopts a scientific or an empirical approach to ethics. His answer to what is the good life for a man is "It is a life of happiness. His ethical philosophy is referred to as virtue ethics;
- Epicurus (c.341-271 BC) was the advocate of a type of ethics which is said to be inconsistent; it consists mainly of the advice for living moderately but pleasurably. He considered 'pleasure' as the goal in life and virtue as a means not as a goal. His ethical philosophy is referred to as hedonism;
- Diogenes (c.400–325) practised extreme asceticism. His philosophy is that the world is fundamentally evil, so to live a good life, one must withdraw from participation in it. His ethical philosophy is referred to as cynicism;
- Zeno (335–265) and his followers felt that social reconstruction was not possible. As a result, they devised the ethics of advising people to attain personal salvation. His ethical philosophy is referred to as Stoicism;
- Religions have an ethical component that some assert that religion is necessary to live ethically. Religious ethics stem from the divine beliefs of the society on the power of God who commands how the good life is pursued;
- Spinoza (1632-1677) holds that noting is good or bad in itself, but it is only so in relations to someone. His ethics is interpreted as offering guidance which, if followed will enable people to avoid fear, anxiety and unhappiness;
- Utilitarian Ethics is said to have been advocated by Francis Hudson in 1775 and promoted by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1808-1873). According to this principle, an action is right in so far as it tends to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number; and
- Kant (1724- 1804) believed that the moral law requires that people be rewarded proportionately to their virtue. His ethical philosophy is that a person is acting morally right only when he suppresses his feelings and inclination and does that which he is obliged to do.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Briefly explain the origin of ethics.
2. What is Plato's idea of a good society?

6.0   TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   Why do societies need ethical guidance?
2.   Explain Plato's idea of a good life.
3.   How did Aristotle's observation of ordinary men influence his ethics?
4.   "A society can only flourish under the umbrella of a strong social order, cemented by common adherence to a particular religious tradition". Discuss.
5.   How would you explain Benthamite doctrine that "a man's character and intellect can be determined completely by his education"?

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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Christian, William A. Sr. (1964). *Meaning and Truth in Religion*., New Jersey. Princeton University Press.

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Dimensions of ethics https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuESiZAalgo

Ethics in Religion, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethics_in_religion

Introduction   to   Ethics, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_t4obUc51A

Introduction   to   Ethics, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_t4obUc51A&t=265s

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UNIT 2   DEFINITION OF ETHICS

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
        3.1   Definition of Ethics
                3.1.1 Etymology
                3.1.2 Definition of Ethics
                3.1.3 Philosophers' Role in Defining Ethics
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The previous unit discussed the origin of ethics. In this one, the attention is on the definition of ethics. This could be easily captured by first looking at the etymology of the word. For its definition, ethics is nothing if not a judgment about motives and their consequences. Furthermore, because these motives develop and occur in given contexts, that is, within and through actions and language-in-use, there is the possibility that rhetorical action produces (or causes to be produced) the linking of and negotiation between one order of motives and another. It is the identification of certain definitions with the needs of other definitions that makes possible an assessment of ethical actions and languages. As such, ethics deal with the distinction between right and wrong and the moral consequences of human action. In this light, every human action has defined ethics. As a result, there is character ethics, which is person-centred; there is research ethics, which is subject centred; professional ethics which is job centred, etc.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

* explain the root of the word 'ethics';
* define the word 'ethics'; and
* explain philosophers' role in defining ethics.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Definition of Ethics

3.1.1 Etymology

Ethics in Greek is *êthikos*, literally meaning something concerned with *êthos* (Greek, character), which in turn is connected with *ethos* (social custom, habit).

3.1.2 Definition of Ethics

Thomas Nagel (2005:379) defines ethics as the philosophy that tries to understand a familiar type of evaluation: the moral evaluation of people's character traits, their conduct, and their institutions. It is concerned with what bothers us about good and bad, the morally right and the morally wrong thing to do, just or unjust regimes or law, how things ought and ought not to be, and how people should live.

Simon Blackburn (2008:121) defines ethics as the study of the concept involved in practical reasoning: good, right, duty, obligation, virtue, freedom, rationality, choice. It is also the second-order study of the objectivity, subjectivity, relativism, or scepticism that may attend claims made in these terms.

Ethics has two parts: metaethics and normative ethics. The first part, metaethics, is concerned with what ethical judgement means, what, if anything, are they about, whether they can be true or false, and if so, what makes them true or false. The second part, normative ethics, is concerned with the content of those judgements. For instance, what features make an action right or wrong; what is a good life; what are the characteristics of a good society?

A central aspect of ethics is "the good life", the life worth living or life that is simply satisfying, which is held by many philosophers to be more important than traditional moral conduct. But there is a variety of terminologies: plain 'ethics' is used for what we can call 'morals' ('normative ethics' is another term used for this); and there are the more guarded terms 'the logic of ethics', 'metaethics', 'theoretical ethics', 'philosophical ethics', and so on.

In defining ethics, it will be significant to define other ideas closely attached to it. These include ethical constructivism, ethical formalism, ethical naturalism, ethical objectivism and ethical relativism.

12

Ethical constructivism is the anti-realists view of ethics that supposes the existence of ethical truth. It argues that human practices somehow constitute these ethical truths. Examples of the practices are human emotions and reactions, human policies and cultural habits.

Ethical formalism is the view that the form of maxim or value of an action can be inhibited sufficiently by public conditions to yield substantial ethical orders. It is a view largely associated with Immanuel Kant, whose ethics we explained in unit 1 of this module.

Ethical naturalism is the idea of placing ethical properties and ethical thoughts in the natural world. It includes any belief that the nature of ethical thinking is exhaustively understood in terms of natural propensities of human beings, without mysterious institutions, or operations of conscience, or divine help.

Ethical objectivism is the view that the claims of ethics are objectively true. They are not relative to a subject or a culture, nor are they purely objective. This opposes the error theories, scepticism, and relativism. The central problem, however, is finding the source of the required objectivism.

Ethical relativism is the view that the truth of ethical claims is relative to the claim to the culture or way of life of those who hold them. It, therefore, generalises to all of ethics what may reasonably be supposed true of all matters of etiquette. This is summed up in the proverb "when in Rome, do as the Romans do". The doctrine is not easy to formulate although its spirit appeals especially to people afraid of the imperial ambitions which they detect in Western liberalism.

3.1.3 Philosophers' Role in Defining Ethics

Ethics is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with studying and/or building up a coherent set of 'rules' or principles by which people should strive to live. It is a systematic approach to analysing, understanding and distinguishing matters of right and wrong, good and bad, and admirable and deplorable as they relate to the relationships and the well-being of societies. Many people do not consider it necessary to have a theoretical study of ethics for them to conduct their everyday activities. Instead, most people carry around a useful set of day-to-day 'rules of thumb' that influence and govern their behaviour in place of systematically examined ethical frameworks. Common among the rules include; 'it is wrong to steal', 'it is right to help people in need', and so on.

But due to the changes and difficulties of life, these simple rules are sometimes put to the test. Consider the thumb rule that it is wrong to kill. Our definition of ethics in philosophy raises a series of questions on this rule. These include; is it wrong to have capital punishment? Is it wrong to kill animals? Is it wrong to kill in self-defence? Is the termination of pregnancy wrong? Is euthanasia wrong? Straightforward answers may not always be forthcoming if we try to apply our everyday notions of right and wrong to these questions. We need to examine these questions in more detail; and we need theoretical frameworks that can help us to analyse complex problems and to find rational, coherent solutions to those problems. While some people attempt to do this work individually, for themselves, philosophers attempt to find general answers that can be used by everyone in society.

That attempt by the philosophers is ethics in theory. They do this because when ethics are involved, ethical determinations are applied through the use of formal theories, approaches, and codes of conduct. Ethics is an active process rather than a static condition; as such, some philosophers use the words 'doing ethics.' When people are doing ethics, therefore, they need to support their assertions and belief with sound reasoning. Definition of ethics then entails that even if people believe that ethics is subjective, they must be able to justify their position through theoretical and logically based arguments.

4.0   CONCLUSION

After explaining the derivation of the word 'ethics', this unit looked at various definitions of ethics. The concept involved in practical reasoning: good, right, duty, obligation, virtue, freedom, rationality, choice. Two parts of the concept, metaethics and normative ethics, were discussed. We also have shown what ethics is in its theoretical sense, and the philosophers attempt to provide formal theories and approaches where straightforward answers are not imminent.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit has discussed the following ideas about the origin of ethics:

- Ethics is derived from the Greek word *êthikos*, meaning something concerned with character, social custom, or habit;
- Ethics is the philosophy that tries to understand a familiar type of evaluation of people's character.
- Ethics has two parts: metaethics and normative ethics. While metaethics, is concerned with what ethical judgement means, normative ethics, is concerned with the content of those judgements.

- In defining ethics, it will be significant to define other ideas closely attached to it. These include ethical constructivism, ethical formalism, ethical naturalism, ethical objectivism and ethical relativism.
- Many people do not consider it necessary to have a theoretical study of ethics for them to conduct their everyday activities.
- Philosophers attempt to find general answers that can be used by everyone in society by using theoretical and logically based arguments to justify their position.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

i.   Explain the etymology of the word 'ethics.
ii.   Define metaethics and normative ethics.

6.0   TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   Define ethics from your own understanding.
2.   What kinds of questions are raised by normative ethics?
3.   Define any two ideologies closely attached to ethics.
4.   Why do you think 'rules of thumb' are not sufficient in defining ethics?
5.   Discuss why ethical questions are critically examined.

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UNIT 3   DIVISIONS OF ETHICS

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Ethics have been divided using different criteria. Such could be historical, geographical, by approach, etc. This unit shall adopt the more favoured method of current division. It is in three general subject areas, namely metaethics, normative ethics and applied ethics. This is how philosophers today usually divide ethical theories. The target of this unit is to unveil the essential attributes of each of the aforementioned division of ethics. Metaethics investigates where our ethical principles come from, and what they mean. Are they merely social inventions? Do they involve more than expressions of our individual emotions? Met ethical answers to these questions focus on the issues of universal truths, the will of God, the role of reason in ethical judgments, and the meaning of ethical terms themselves. *Normative ethics* takes on a more practical task, which is to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. This may involve articulating the good habits that we should acquire, the duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behaviour on others. Finally, *applied ethics* involves examining specific controversial issues, such as abortion, infanticide, animal rights, environmental concerns, capital punishment, nuclear war, etc.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to::

- explain the division of ethics
- discuss metaethics
- examine realism
- discuss intuitionism
- define naturalism
- explain subjectivism
- discuss relativism
- analyse cognitivism and non cognitivism
- discuss universal prescriptivism
- describe normative ethics
- examine consequentialism
- discuss deontology;
- describe virtue theory
- explain applied ethics.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Meta-Ethics

The term *meta* means beyond or after. So, metaethics means beyond ethics. Singer (1993:xiv) says that the term metaethics suggests that we are not engaged in ethics, but are looking at it and considering what exactly ethics is. What rules of arguments can apply to it, in what way ethical judgement can be true or false, and what (if anything) can provide a grounding for them? It is also an attempt to understand the metaphysical, epistemological, semantic and psychological presuppositions and commitments of moral thought, talk and practice (Sayre-McCord, 2014). Accordingly, meta-ethical theories are united in the contention that the substantive issue of morality is not their concern; rather, they merely stand back and analyse the activities as those engaged in the substantive enterprise. The implication of this, therefore, is that metaethics does not prescribe moral precepts and has no practical effects. Some key aspects of metaethics are realism, intuitionism, naturalism, subjectivism, relativism, universal prescriptivism, cognitivism and non-cognitivism.

3.1.1 Realism

Realism is objectivistic because it supposes something independent of the perceivers. To claim that something is objective means that it exists, whether its existence is held to be true or not (Audi, 1999:244). Realism in the context of ethics is thus the view that morality is objective. The essential attributes of realism have been outlined as follows: realism connotes that moral questions are correct by objective moral facts, that circumstances determine moral facts and that, by moralising, we can discover what these objective moral facts are (Smith, 1993:401). Furthermore, realism has both metaphysical and psychological implication. Metaphysically, there are distinctive moral facts and, psychologically, moral judgements are expressions of our beliefs about the way these moral facts are (Smith 1993:401). Some notable proponents of ethical realism are David Brink, John Finns, Geoffrey Sayre-McCardle, Nicholas sturgeon, G.E Moore, Thomas Nagel, John M. Dowell, Derek Perfot and Peter Railton. Intuitionism and naturalism are closely related to realism.

3.1.2 Intuitionism

Simply put, intuitionism is the view that moral claims can be true or false independent of the person making a claim and intuition is what leads to the knowledge of such truth or falsity. Intuition basically is direct and immediate knowledge of values without the need to define the notion, to justify a conclusion or to build up inferences (Strumpet and Fieser, 2003, 4). Intuitive knowledge is self-evident (Dancy, 1993, 411). Accordingly, intuitionism in ethics maintains that basic moral propositions are self-evident, that is evident in and of themselves and so can be known without the need of any argument (Stratton-lake, 2016, para 3). Sidgwick argues that self-evident proposition is different from obvious truth. For a proposition to be self-evident, he sustained that (1) it must be clear and distinct (2) be ascertained by careful reflection (3) be consistent with other self-evident truths (4) attract general consensus (Sidgwick, 1967 338). Another feature of intuitionism is that moral properties are indefinable and non-natural. This is because they are simply put differently; they deny that moral properties can be defined wholly in terms of psychological, sociological or biological properties. Even though some intuitionists like Sidgwick and Ewing hold that goodness can be defined in terms of rightness while others like E. G. Moore agree that rightness can be defined in terms of goodness, but they are all of the views that at least one of these moral properties is simple or indefinable (Stratton, 2016, para 57). Some of the proponents of intuitionism are G.E Moore, A.C Ewin, Henry Sidgwick, Robert Audi, Jonathan Dancy, David Enoch, Michael Huemer, David McNaughton and Russ Shutter Landau.

3.1.3 Naturalism

Naturalism agrees with intuitionism that moral judgements are propositions which can be true or false. However, it dismisses the view that moral fact or properties are not simple but can always be reduced to, or identified with other properties such as needs, wants or pleasure, for instance. Naturalists maintain that goodness can be further analysed or explained, reduced to something else or identified with some other properties. It is against this background that naturalists believe that goodness is a unique property which does not exist. The same view holds for badness, rightness, and wrongness (Pidgem, 1993:422). Moore considers this naturalist disposition a logical error which he called 'naturalistic fallacy'. Since for him the moral property good, cannot be reduced to non-ethical natural quality such as pleasure or desirability but can only be known through an intellectual intuition. Proponents of ethical naturalism are Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.

3.1.4 Subjectivism

Ethical subjectivism denies that moral properties are objective in nature. Rather, what gives grounds to moral truth is the individual in question. Put differently; morality is subjective. This implies that no moral opinion is superior to the other. Philosophers usually apply subjectivism to a range of ethical theories which hold that moral inquiry cannot yield objective truths rather such depends on the approval or disapproval of the person inquiring (Rachels, 1993:435). This view which ties ethical statement to the expression of one's approval or disapproval, is also described as emotivism. Some proponents are A.J Ayer, C.L Stevenson.

3.1.5 Relativism

This is subjectivism at the social or cultural level. It claims that society shoulders the duty to determine what counts as morally right or morally wrong. This logically leads to the conclusion that different things are right for people in different societies and in different periods in history (Rachels, 2015:1). A branch of metaethics also called descriptive ethics; relativism studies the actual moral beliefs or rules that guide conduct in different society (Airoboman 2016, 33). Relativism thereby denies universal truths (Wong, 1993:442).

3.1.6 Cognitivism

This is a concept which holds that ethical propositions are meaningful, and they can be true or false. Both naturalism and intuitionism are forms of cognitivism.

3.1.7 Non-cognitivism

Non-cognitivism claims that ethical statement does not express a proposition; they are meaningless and can neither be true nor false. Subjectivism is a form of non-cognitive theory.

3.1.8 Universal Prescriptivism

This is an ethical theory championed by Richard M. Hare who argues that if one judges a particular action to be wrong, one must also judge any relevantly similar action to be wrong in any situation where such obtains. He submits that universality here is not to be confused for generality. Since his moral principles do not have to be as general as 'never tell lies' of Kant, they can be more specific like 'never tell lies except when it is necessary to save an innocent life …' (Hare, 1981:457).

3.2 Normative Ethics

Normative ethics is a branch of ethics that prescribes moral principles which should regulate people's conducts. It is unlike metaethics, which is concerned with the analysis and systematisation of ethical theories. Normative ethics is substantive because it tells what counts as morally right or morally wrong. It is against this backdrop that it is defined as "that part of moral philosophy or ethics, concerned with the criteria of what is morally right or wrong." (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016). It includes the formulation of moral rules that have direct implication for both human actions, institutions and how ways of life should look like. The Golden Rule, which is to the effect that neighbours should be loved as oneself, is a good example of normative ethics. For Kagan (1992:223), normative ethics involves the attempt to state and defend the basic principles of morality. Theories under normative ethics can be broadly categorised as consequentialist theories, deontology theories and virtue theories (Fieser, Nd: parag13).

3.2.1 Consequentialism

This is also known as telegony, and it is the view that the result produced by action is what determines whether or not such action is moral or not. Thus, the end justifies the means. Fieser submits that consequentialism requires that the consequence of an action, both the good and the bad, be checked. Second, it should be determined whether the total good consequences outweigh the total bad consequences. If the good is greater, then the action is morally right if otherwise, the action is morally improper (Petit, 2000:230-241). Some consequentialist theories are utilitarianism, egoism and altruism. Utilitarianism is the view that

action is right if it produces good or happiness to the greatest number. Philosophers advocating this aspect are Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and Henry Sidgwick. Egoism claims that a morally right action is one which is favourable only to the agent performing the action. In other words, rational behaviour requires attempting to maximise self-interest. Altruism holds that an action is morally right if the consequences are favourable to others even if they are not favourable to the agent. The term is said to have been coined by Auguste Comte (Blackburn, 2008:12).

3.2.2 Deontology

Deontology is otherwise referred to as non-consequentialism. They are ethical theories which state that the rightness or wrongness of an action is inherent in the action, which is independent of the result it produces. Such theories identify duty or obligation as the foundation of our moral conduct. Deontology is from the Greek word '*deon*' which means duty. Kant's duty ethics emphasises categorical imperative and leaves no room for personal desires in ethical matters. Another good example of a non-consequentialist theory is W.D Ross 'prima facie duties.' These duties are fidelity, reparation, gratitude, justice, beneficence, self-improvement and so on (Davis, 2000:213).

3.2.3 Virtue Theories

These are theories that place emphasis on the learning of well-defined ethical norms and following them accordingly. Virtue theories stress the development of good habit or character and putting them to action. Through this way, morality thus becomes a habit. For example, Plato identifies four cardinal virtues, namely wisdom, courage, temperance and justice. Not only must we acquire good character, but the bad character must also be avoided. Aristotle and Alasdair Macintyre are some of the proponents of virtue ethics (Pence, 2000:249-259).

3.3   Applied Ethics

Applied ethics is the subject that applies ethics to actual practical problems. It discusses issues such as euthanasia, treatment of animals, abortion, and other political, legal and social problems (Blackburn, 2008:121). It is like normative ethics in the process. Applied ethics has gained attention in the contemporary world. Some hotly debated issues in applied ethics are world poverty, environmental ethics, sex, business ethics, crime and judgement, equality, discrimination and preferential treatment, politics and the problem of war and peace, and so on.

According to Fieser for an issue to qualify as an "applied ethical issue" it must possess two characteristics, namely:

i.   It must be controversial in the sense that there are significant groups of people both for and against it; and

ii.   It must be a distinctly moral issue and not just any topical issue (Fieser, Nd: paragraphs 33, 34).

4.0   CONCLUSION

The foregoing has shown that ethics can be viewed from various perspectives. The divisions of ethics discussed in this unit are by no means exhaustive, but essential identified the key features of ethics. The different divisions submitted by Popkin and Stroll are important because they help not only to organise the various types of doctrines into groupings which make them simpler to understand but also because they help direct our attention to certain theories which are distinctive. Finally, it goes without saying that out of all philosophical theories, none is immune from criticisms. Even the theories grouped together often antagonise one another.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit has discussed the following ideas about the divisions of ethics:

•   Ethics as a sub-branch of philosophy concerned with what counts as right conduct and wrong conduct has been divided along with different divisions;

•   The most recognised divisions are metaethics which is concerned with the metaphysical, epistemological, and meaningfulness of ethical propositions; Normative ethics which is prescriptive deals with the 'oughtfulness' of moral conducts; and applied ethics which deals with ethical principles as they apply to the real-life scenario;

•   The various sub-divisions were also explained as:
       1.   Meta-ethics, which has the following as its sub-divisions: Realism which supposes something is as independent as the perceiver; Intuitionism, which states that moral claims can be true or false independent of the person making a claim; Naturalism which states that moral facts or properties can be known intuitively; Subjectivism, which denies that moral properties are objective in nature, but rather, moral truth depends on the individual in question; Relativism, which claims that the society is what determines what counts as morally right or wrong; Cognitivism, which holds that ethical propositions are

meaningful and they can either be true or false; Non-cognitivism which claims that ethical statement does not express preposition, they are meaningless and can neither be true nor false; and Universal prescriptivism, which states that in judging a particular action to be wrong, one also judges any relevantly similar action to be wrong in any situation where such obtains.

2.   Normative ethics, which has the following as its sub-division; consequentialism, which is the view that the result produced by an action determines whether or not such action is moral or not; Deontology which states that the rightness or wrongness of an action is inherent in the action independent of the result it produces; Virtue theories which place emphases on the learning of well-defined ethical norms and following them accordingly.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1.   Briefly state and explain the three divisions of ethics
2.   What is your understanding of the term 'normative ethics'?

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   The term metaethics suggests that we are not engaged in ethics, but
      a) Many meanings of morality.
      b) Looking at it and considering what exactly ethics is.
      c) Making a suggestion about life.
      d) Looking at it and considering what morality is.

      2. Realism is objectivistic because
      a) It supposes something independent of the perceivers.
      b) It supposes something independent of morality.
      c) It supposes something independent of the perception.
      d) It supposes something independent of measurement.

      3. Intuitionism is the view that moral claims can be true or false
      a) When they are logical.
      b) Independent of the person making a claim.
      c) Independent of the theory of the claim.
      d) If they are scientific.

      4. Ethical subjectivism denies that moral properties are
      a) Ethical properties.
      b) Subjective in nature.

c) General properties.
d) Objective in nature.

5. Subjectivism claims that the society shoulders the duty to
a) Determine morality.
b) Organise social justice.
c) Determine leadership structure.
d) Organise ethical studies.

6. Normative ethics prescribes moral principles which should
a) Regulate people's senses.
b) Regulate people's ideas.
c) Regulate people's concepts.
d) Regulate people's conducts.

7. Normative ethics includes the formulation of moral rules that
a) Have no implication for human actions.
b) Have a direct impact on the human person.
c) Have little implication for human actions.
d) Have a direct implication for human actions.

8. In consequentialism, the end justifies the
a) Beginning.
b) Means.
c) Problem.
d) Solution.

9. Plato identifies four cardinal virtues, namely:
a) Wisdom, manners, temperance and justice.
b) Wisdom, courage, temperature and justice.
c) Willing, courage, temperance and justice.
d) Wisdom, courage, temperance and justice.

10. Applied ethics is the subject that applies ethics to
a) accounted practical problems.
b) actual people's complaints.
c) actual practical problems.
d) actual practical ideas.

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UNIT 4   METHODOLOGIES OF ETHICS

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
       3.1   Methodologies of Ethics
            3.1.1   Egoism
            3.1.2   Intuitionism
            3.1.3   Utilitarianism
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Ethics is a sector of the theory or study of practice. It is the study of what ought to be, so far as this depends upon the voluntary action of individuals. In deciding what they ought to do, men naturally proceed on different principles, and by different methods. By methods of ethics, it roughly means any type of general theory which claims to unify our general ethical judgement into a coherent system of some principles which are claimed to be self-evident (Broad, 1967:148). But there are two *prima facie* rational ends in any of the methods an individual wants to use; perfection and happiness: of which the latter at least may be sought for oneself or universally. It is also commonly thought that certain rules are prescribed without reference to hidden consequences. The methods corresponding to these different principles reduce themselves in the main to three, intuitionism, egoism and utilitarianism. In this unit, we shall examine these methods separately, conceptualising them from ordinary thought as precisely and consistently as possible.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

-     define the concept of methodology
-     enumerate the methods of ethics
-     explain the intuitionist method
-     explain the egoist method
-     explain the utilitarianist method.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Methodologies of Ethics

While the method is an approach to solve a philosophical problem, the methodology is the general study of the approach in the field of enquiry. The fact remains that any field can be approached more or less successfully and more or less intelligently. It is tempting then to suppose that there is only one right approach to investigation. Therefore, it is fundamentally important to recognise, at the outset of Ethical inquiry, that there is a diversity of methods applied in ordinary practical thought. The more modest task of methodology, therefore, is to examine the methods that are adapted to various stages of the investigation into different areas. This is done not to criticise, but for synthesising the propositions of a particular field in a specific time (Blackburn, 2008:232-233)

It is obviously one question to ask "What are the most basic principles of morality?" It seems to be entirely another question to ask "What is the method or procedure, if any, for determining the answer to the first question?" We might describe the second question as being about the appropriate method of ethics. We may remember that in the last unit, we discussed metaethics and normative ethics. Now, this inquiry into the proper method of ethics is not simply, by definition, that field of study which philosophers call "metaethics," where this term refers to the linguistic investigation of moral discourse. But the question of method is clearly a question for normative ethics because an investigation into metaethics is not sufficient in determining the appropriate method of ethics (Snare, 1975:100). If a man accepts any end as ultimate and paramount, he accepts implicitly as his method of ethics, whatever process of reasoning enables him to determine the actions most conducive to this end.

For this level of our study, we shall concentrate on the methods corresponding to these different principles of examining ethics, which are concepts we came across in unit one while discussing the origin of ethics. These are egoism, intuitionism, and utilitarianism.

3.1.1 Intuitionism

Intuitionism is the method of ethics associated with G. E. Moore. It identifies ethical propositions as true or false, different in content from any empirical or other kinds of judgement, and known by a special faculty of intuition (Blackburn, 2008:190). Intuitionists are of the view that there are a number of fairly concrete ethical axioms of the general form: Any action of such and such a kind, done in such and such a kind

of situation, would be right (or wrong) no matter whether its consequences were good, bad, or indifferent (Broad, 1967:148). For instance, our common sense would tell us that any action which was an instance of deliberate ingratitude to a benefactor would instantly be wrong and that this can be seen by direct inspection without any consideration of the consequences of the action or of the prevalence of similar action (Broad, 1967:148).

In the intuitionist method, so long as people confine their attention to fairly normal cases and do not try to analyse their terms very carefully, there is a great deal of agreement about what ought and what ought not to be done in given types of situation. And people's duties seem self-evident. Philosophers like Sidgwick believe that every other method of ethics must involve, at least, one intuition. This is for the fact that at any rates, the judgement that we ought to aim at so and so as an ultimate end must be intuitive (Broad, 1967:151).

Intuitionism takes cognisance of common sense. It takes, in turn, those types of actions which seems to common-sense to be self-evidently right (or wrong) without regards to consequences in a certain type of situation. But at this stage of our studies, we should note that the current contrast between, 'intuitive', or what you might have read in epistemology as '*a priori*' and 'inductive' or '*a posteriori*' morality commonly involves a certain confusion of thought. For what the 'inductive' moralist professes to know by induction, is commonly not the same thing as what the 'intuitive' moralist professes to know by intuition. In the former case, it is the conduciveness to the pleasure of certain kinds of action that is methodically ascertained. In the latter case, their rightness: there is, therefore, no proper opposition. There are, however, three phases of intuitionism, and we may term them respectively as Perceptional, Dogmatic, and Philosophical.

3.1.2 Egoism

As a method of determining reasonable conduct, egoism is a term equivalent to Egoistic Hedonism, and it implies the adoption of own greatest happiness as the ultimate end of each individual's actions. The egoist finds it self-evident that an individual ought to aim at a maximum balance of happiness for himself, and that, if necessary, he ought to be ready to sacrifice any amount of other people's happiness to produce the slightest net increase in his own (Broad, 1967:148). However, there are strong grounds for holding that a system of morality, satisfactory to the moral consciousness of mankind in general, cannot be constructed based on simple egoism. But it seems sufficient to point to the wide acceptance of the principle that it is reasonable for a man to act in the manner most conducive to his happiness. Bentham, although he puts forward the

greatest happiness of the greatest number as the "true standard of right and wrong", yet regards it as "right and proper" that each individual should aim at his own greatest happiness (Sidgwick, 1962:119). And Butler is equally prepared to grant "that our ideas of happiness and misery are of all our ideas the nearest and most important to us . . ." that, though virtue or moral rectitude does indeed consist in affection to and pursuit of what is right and good as such; yet when we sit down in a cool hour, "we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other pursuit till we are convinced that it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it." (Sidgwick, 1962:119-120).

We must, therefore, understand by an Egoist a man who when two or more courses of action are open to him, ascertains as accurately as he can the amounts of pleasure and pain that are likely to result from each, and chooses the one which he thinks will yield him the greatest surplus of pleasure over pain.

It must, however, be pointed out that the adoption of the fundamental principle of Egoism, as just explained, by no means necessarily implies the ordinary empirical method of seeking one's own pleasure or happiness. A man may aim at the greatest happiness within his reach, and yet not attempt to ascertain empirically what amount of pleasure and pain is likely to attend any given course of action; believing that he has some surer, deductive method for determining the conduct which will make him most happy in the long-run. At any rate, it would seem, therefore, that the obvious method of Egoistic Hedonism is that which we may call Empirical-reflective: and it is this that is commonly used in egoistic deliberation.

There is a fundamental assumption, concerning the empirical method of Egoistic Hedonism, which is the very conception of 'Greatest Happiness' as an end of the action. How do we commensurate the Pleasures and Pains the attempt to achieve such happiness? We must assume the pleasures sought and the pains shunned having determinate quantitative relations to each other. If not so, they cannot be conceived as possible elements of a total which we are to seek to make as great as possible. However, the utilitarian method addressed this issue.

3.1.3 Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism, as explained in unit one, is a consequential ethical theory which holds that the right action is the one that produces the most benefit, greatest good for the greatest number. The utilitarian method is that each person ought to aim at the maximum balance of happiness for all sentient beings present and future and that if necessary, he ought to be ready to sacrifice any amount of his own happiness provided that he

will thereby produce the slightest net increase in the general happiness (Broad, 1967:148). As such, morally right action is the action that produces the greatest good for the greatest number. Hence, it includes any moral theory which claims that actions are good only insofar as they increase the amount of happiness (and decreases the amount of suffering) in the world (Driver 2014). Utilitarians believe that actions ought to be performed according to the "principles of utility," which is "to do the action which provides the greatest happiness for the greatest number." Thus, what makes a good action good, according to utilitarians, are its consequences.

Utilitarianism is a kind of teleological ethics. Both the number of people happily affected and the amount of happiness each one gets are important in determining the right course of action in any given situation. The principle of utility always accompanies a principle of equality –in other words, one person's unit of happiness (a "utile") is always considered equal to anyone's unit of happiness. Thus, the theory is distinguished by impartiality and agent-neutrality (Solomon and Greene, 1999:474). The earliest and simplest form of utilitarianism, therefore, is a form of 'act utilitarianism.' To decide what to do in any given situation, then, one should assess the consequences of each course of action.

Utilitarianism is one of the most powerful and persuasive methods to normative ethics in the history of philosophy. The Classical Utilitarians, Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill identified the good with pleasure, so, like Epicurus, were hedonists about value. Mill at a later period revised utilitarianism considerably; however, he maintained some form or other of the principle of utility. It was his revision that resulted in the emergence of 'rule utilitarianism'. In this approach, the principle of utility applies to rules, not individual acts. What this implies is that 'people should obey the rules which provide the greatest happiness to the greatest number.' For example, a rule utilitarian may say that in the course of history, more people have been made happier by obeying the Ten Commandments than would have been if they had not obeyed them.

The foremost development in utilitarianism over the years has not been as a theory. But interest in its application as a method. This new concern is entirely beneficial, first of all, because applying relatively well-considered principles, instead of ill ones, to our problems must be an improvement. But, second, because applications constitute the best possible test for normative theory. There is no quicker way to show up a normative principle as efficient or inefficient than to confront it with real life. In fact, the pay-off so far has been mostly for methodology, if we have not yet got many good practical answers, we have got some very

good theoretical questions, many of which are important to utilitarianism.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, our discussion centred on the methodology of ethics. It is shown that in deciding what they ought to do, men naturally proceed on different principles, and by different methods. These methods are any type of general theory which claims to unify our general ethical judgement into a coherent system of some principle which is claimed to be self-evident. For this level of our studies, we concentrated on three of the methods corresponding to these different principles of examining ethics. These are intuitionism, egoism and utilitarianism.

5.0   SUMMARY

Below is the summary of some of the things we have discussed in this unit.

- While the method is an approach to solve a philosophical problem, the methodology is the general study of the approach in the field of enquiry. The fact remains that any field can be approached more or less successfully and more or less intelligently;
- The more modest task of methodology, therefore, is to examine the methods that are adapted to various stages of the investigation into different areas. This is done not to criticise, but for synthesising the propositions of a particular field at a specific time.
- The question of method is clearly a question for normative ethics because an investigation into metaethics is not sufficient in determining the appropriate method of ethics.
- If a man accepts any end as ultimate and paramount, he accepts implicitly as his method of ethics, whatever process of reasoning enables him to determine the actions most conducive to this end.
- This unit concentrated on the methods corresponding to three different principles of how to examine ethics; egoism, intuitionism, utilitarianism.
- Intuitionism is the method of ethics which identifies ethical propositions as true or false, different in content from any empirical or other kinds of judgement and known by a special faculty of intuition.
- Intuitionists are of the view that there are many fairly concrete ethical axioms of the general form. Any action of such and such a kind, done in such and such a kind of situation would be right (or

wrong) no matter whether its consequences were good, bad, or indifferent.

- Egoism is a term equivalent to Egoistic Hedonism. As a method, it implies the adoption of their own greatest happiness as the ultimate end of each individual's actions.
- An Egoist is a man who when two or more courses of action are open to him, ascertains as accurately as he can the amounts of pleasure and pain that are likely to result from each, and chooses the one which he thinks will yield him the greatest surplus of pleasure over pain.
- Utilitarianism is a consequential ethical theory which holds that the right action is the one that produces the most benefit, greatest good for the greatest number.
- As a methodology of ethics, it points that each person ought to aim at the maximum balance of happiness for all sentient beings present and future and that if necessary, he ought to be ready to sacrifice any amount of his own happiness provided that he will thereby produce the slightest net increase in the general happiness.
- Utilitarianism is one of the most powerful and persuasive methods to normative ethics in the history of philosophy because it is always confronted with real life.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

i.   What do you understand by the term "Method of ethics"?
ii.   in your opinion, why should there be any methodology of ethics?

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   Clearly define the concept of methodology.
2.   A method is an approach to solve a philosophical problem, but the methodology is
        a.   the general study of the appraisal in the field of enquiry.
        b.   the general study of the approach in the field of enquiry.
        c.   the general system of the approach in the field of enquiry.
        d.   the general style of the approach in the field of enquiry.
3.   Why is the question of method clearly a question for normative ethics?
4.   Philosophers believe that every other method of ethics must involve____
        a.   at least, one theory.
        b.   at least, one ideology.
        c.   at least, one perspective.
        d.   at least, one intuition.
5.   The egoist finds it self-evident that an individual _____

a. ought to aim at a maximum balance of happiness for his wife.
b. ought to aim at a maximum balance of happiness for his friend.
c. ought to aim at a maximum balance of happiness for himself.
d. ought to aim at a maximum balance of happiness for his team.

6.   Utilitarianism claims that actions are good only _____
   a.   if they increase the amount of happiness and decrease the amount of suffering.
   b.   if they decrease the amount of happiness and increase the amount of suffering.
   c.   if they increase the amount of suffering and decrease the amount of happiness.
   d.   if they increase the amount of heath and decrease the amount of suffering.

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MODULE 2

Unit 1   The Value of Ethics
Unit 2   Human Values
Unit 3   The Nature of Human Conduct
Unit 4   Human Act

UNIT 1   THE VALUE OF ETHICS

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
        3.1   On Ethics and Morality
        3.2   Values of Ethics
                3.2.1   The inevitability of Ethics
                3.2.2   Development of Argumentative Skills
                3.2.3   Elevation of humanity
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assessment
7.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn the values or, rather, the importance of studying ethics. Alongside this knowledge, you will learn the differences and similarities between ethics and morality. Further, you will discover that ethics' role as a regulator of human conducts is what confers on it the values it has. And, of course, you will notice that ethics differs from, say, law, religion, and traditions, for instance – which are themselves modes of regulating human conduct – because of its method, which is rational and critical. This, alongside the other 'values' that will be listed in this unit, constitutes its worth/importance to human society.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

•   attempt a further definition of ethics
•   discuss the relationship between ethics and morality
•   list the values of ethics.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   On Ethics and Morality

The philosophical discourse on morality studies the grounds and nature of rightness and wrongness of our actions. Hence, morality and ethics are used interchangeably, but in general terms, the former is said to be the subject matter of the latter which is taken as a sub-disciplinary area of philosophy. From our definition of ethics in Module 1 Unit 2, we may understand it as a field of discourse committed to the systematic examination of human characters (and customs), conducts and systems of values instantiated in the lives of particular persons as well as groups of persons.

The philosophical discourse on morality – ethics – seeks to offer us what sort of character we can imbibe for us all to lead the so-called 'good life'. It does this by offering a rational and logically consistent system of principles (theory) which it invites all rational beings to follow. Thus, William Frankena (19954) sees ethics as the "philosophical thinking about morality, moral problems and moral judgments". T. R. Machan, in Wallace (1997:149) similarly holds the position that ethics serves the purpose of providing rational justification for our moral actions. According to Machan:

> Ethics is the study of whether there are any values each and every person should pursue, whether there is a set of virtues or code of principles of conduct for everyone and what these are if they do exist (Wallace, 1997:149).

By this, it is implied that ethics performs the function of fashioning out an acceptable framework for appraising our moral judgments and for allocating praises and blames to our actions. Ethics, in this respect, may be construed as an umpire who sees to it that 'moral principles' are not violated. It, thus, takes into cognisance all our conducts as these have social bearings.

From the above, it can be safely asserted that ethics is a serious enterprise. It is, perhaps, in line with this assessment that Socrates, in Plato's dialogue, *The Republic*, is quoted to have said: "We are discussing no small matter, but how we ought to live". Now, this Socratic position above, in the use of 'ought', implies that the discourse of ethics is normative. A possible justification for this is the presupposition of ethics that we are all rational. If this is the case, it follows that no singular person or group of persons can force us into

living in one particular way. And as such, ethics invites all of us to reflect rationally on the principles it offers for human beings to follow. Moral questions largely have to do with what is right and what is wrong as against the wider ethical questions about good and evil, ultimate sources of value, or means of justification (Arendt, 1994:750). Moreover, the study of ethics involves the question of "why" certain actions are accepted as right/good while others are condemned as wrong/bad. This goes to show that in the study of ethics, there is a need for justification. So, in philosophy, ethics refers to the theory behind our moral pronouncements and how they are justified.

The preceding has suggested to us the method of ethics, which is logical reasoning and the rigour of argumentation to persuade us to live in certain ways. Herein lays the major difference between ethics and other normative fields of enquiry like religion, law, and etiquette. Thus,

> …morality (ethics) distinguishes itself from law and etiquette by going deeper into the essence of rational existence. It distinguishes itself from religion in that it seeks reasons, rather than authority, to justify its principles. The central purpose of moral philosophy is to secure valid principles of conducts and values that can be instrumental in guiding human actions and producing good character. As such, it is the most important activity known to humans, for it has to do with how we are to live (Pojman, 1997:6).

3.2   Values of Ethics

3.2.1 The inevitability of Ethics

Morality arises in social contexts. Studies have shown that no two persons are the same. Human beings' social natures and individual uniqueness are twin facts that bring up their own challenges. One may call these inter-subjective frictions. There is, therefore, the need to mediate or arbitrate in these frictions. Hence, ethics aims to do this via its normative and analytic theories and prescriptions. Without ethics, therefore, human society risks collapsing.

3.2.2 Development of Argumentative Skills

The philosophical enterprise places a great premium on persuasion, not coercion, in staking any claim or position. And ethics, being a branch of this (philosophical) enterprise would logically share in this nature.

Ethical studies, thus, impresses on its students the need to argue out clearly their views on any, and every, (moral) issue that cannot but crop up in daily living. By implication, it also teaches people how to argue out their cases without resorting to vehemence or bullish speeches, as is now rampant in contemporary societies. Any ferocious argument is likely to cause chaos and rancour. However, skilful arguments, as developed by ethical theories, are avenues of calmly convincing the listener to a logical conclusion.

3.2.3 Elevation of humanity

Another important value of ethics is its commitment to elevating human beings to higher ideals and standards. English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), in his book *The Leviathan*, advanced a very interesting description of humans while they lived in what he called the 'state of nature' (Hobbes, 1651:88-98). By the way, this state of nature was Hobbes' state of human living before the origin of society in the modern sense of that word. According to him, the actual nature of humans, unlimited by the strictures of civil society, was primarily one dictated by their 'appetites', 'aversions' and 'passions'. Humans, in the 'state of nature', Hobbes adds, under these preceding influences, acts, essentially, from a 'self-interested' perspective and are constantly trying to maximise their 'profit' or gain in every situation (Hobbes, 1651:64).

The preceding view, by Hobbes, has been tagged *psychological egoism* for it purports to describe what the 'facts' are about human behaviours. Now, if Hobbes' views of human nature is true, then life indeed – and as he attests – would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes, 1651:78). The interesting climax of Hobbes' thinking in this wise is that human beings later came to conclude that they ought to put aside their "natural" dispositions to be able to avoid these nasty realities. Hence, given this connection between ethics and human "civil" society, morality and ethics emerged and eventually civil society. Otherwise put, without ethics, there cannot be human society. An evident value of ethical studies here is that it helps to promote social amity and order, without which human flourishing and happiness cannot be possible.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed the values of studying ethics. The discussions included other side-benefits. We mentioned, for instance, the meaning of ethics and how it relates to morality. While moral questions largely have to do with what is right and what is wrong, ethics have wider philosophical questions about good and evil, ultimate sources of value, or means of justification. We also discussed the principal difference between ethics' quest to regulate human behaviour and other

areas of moral inquiry (religion, law and tradition) in helping to regulate human conduct. Ethics distinguishes itself from religion, law and tradition in that it seeks reasons, rather than authority, to justify its principles. Its value, therefore, is seen in its inevitability because of the need to mediate human conflicts. It is also valuable for developing argumentative skills and elevating human beings to higher ideals and standards.

5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed the following key points:

- The definition of ethics as a branch of philosophy that is committed to the systematic examination of human characters conducts, and systems of values instantiated in the lives of a particular person as well as a group of persons;
- Ethics and its relationship with morality, and the differences between ethics and other human values that guide conduct, such as religion, etiquettes, and law;
- The nature of ethics centred on the regulation of human conduct vis-à-vis other areas of human endeavours; and
- The three values of studying ethics: inevitability of ethics, development of argumentative skill, and elevation of humanity.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

i.   Discuss the importance of studying ethics.
ii.   Give a critical explanation of how ethics can elevate humanity.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSESSMENT

1.   List the values of ethics and explain any one of them.
2.   Ethics seeks to offer us what sort of character we can imbibe for us all to lead the so-called
       a) good friend
       b) good thought
       c) good job
       d) good life
3.   Ethics offers _____ and _____ consistent system of principles.
       a) rational and logically
       b) rational and notionally
       c) national and logically
       d) rational and nationally
4.   How do ethics distinguish itself from law and tradition?
       a) it seeks relativism, rather than authority,

b) it seeks research, rather than authority,
c) it seeks reasons, rather than authority
d) it seeks reading, rather than authority,

5.   Ethics is valuable to_____
a) mediate on human development, developing argumentative skills, and elevating human beings to higher ideals and standards.
b) mediate on human conflicts, developing argumentative skills, and elevating human beings to higher ideals and standards.
c) mediate on human conflicts, developing linguistic skills, and elevating human beings to higher ideals and standards.
d) mediate on human conflicts, developing argumentative skills, and elevating human nature to higher legal and standards.

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UNIT 2   HUMAN VALUES

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
3.0   Main Content
        3.1   What are (Human) Values?
        3.2   A Taxonomy of Values
                3.2.1   Aesthetic Values
                3.2.2   Religious Values
                3.2.3   Socio-political Values
                3.2.4   Economic Values
                3.2.5   Ethical/Moral Values
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The guiding question we will be trying to find an answer to in this unit is: What are human values? Put simply, *what are values?* Recall, in the last unit, you came across the word 'value' – though in relation with another word, ethics. It was taken for granted, in that unit, that values and the term 'importance' are synonymous. In the present unit, you will be told a slightly different thing. Values, you will be taught, are more seriously used, in the field of ethics, to mean things that are good or worth having. And as you should have probably have internalised by now, ethics deals with evaluating human actions – to find out whether they are good or bad. Those actions that are good are termed valuable in ethics, while the latter is labelled vicious (from vice). You may labour in vain to search for an analysis of vice in this unit, but it should suffice for you to note that what will soon emerge from our analysis of values can be appropriated as the rough opposite of vice.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

•   attempt a definition of values
•   explain the various types of values
•   identify the major types of human values
•   identify the classification of values.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   What are (human) Values?

Values have to do with appropriateness and rightness—that is, what is *good.* The preceding is what Christopher Agulanna has in mind when he says that values "refer to traits or qualities that we consider useful, beneficial or worthwhile" (Agulanna, 2010:6). In other words, values are things that are 'good'. Implicit in the preceding conceptualisation of values are two points. First, values are immaterial since they are "traits" which, presumably, are behavioural features (of humans—at least in this context). Related to this is the second point: since values are behavioural traits and behaviours are imbibed and exhibited among other humans, it means they are culture-bound. Because values are 'culture-bound', they are not exactly amenable to empirical analysis.

3.1.1 Personal values

From the above, you should note that values may be personal as well as cultural. Personal values provide an internal point of reference as per what is good and worth pursuing by an individual (Rokeach, 1973). Here, values are the reference points that individuals evolve in their respective lifetimes, primarily induced by their subjective experiences. Precisely, of personal values' subjective natures, they do not make for social cohesion and amity; hence, ethics, which has to do with promoting the latter, will find it hard to make use of these.

3.1.2 Cultural values

Cultural values, on the other hand, refer to the ideals shared by people. One can often identify the values of a society by noting which people receive honour or respect. In Nigeria, for example, a quick observation often tempts one to conclude that Nigerians generally value physical talents above intellectual talents, for example. A clear way to exemplify the foregoing is to take a look at the grave disparity in the earnings of footballers and academics.

3.1.3 Values relating to the norms of a culture

Values relate to the norms of a culture. Norms provide rules for behaviour in specific situations, while values identify what should be judged as good or evil. While norms are standards, patterns, rules and guides of expected behaviour, values are abstract concepts of what is important and worthwhile. Flying the national flag on holiday is a norm, but it reflects the value of patriotism. Different cultures reflect values differently and to different levels of emphasis. Members of a society take part in a culture even if each member's personal values do not entirely agree with some of the normative values sanctioned in that culture. This reflects an individual's ability to synthesise and extract

aspects valuable to them, from the multiple subcultures they belong to. If a group member expresses a value that seriously conflicts with the group's norms, the group's authority may carry out various ways of encouraging conformity or stigmatising the non-conforming behaviour of that member. For example, imprisonment can result from conflict with social norms that the state has established as law.

Values are generally received through cultural means, especially transmission from parents to children. Parents in different cultures have different values (Day, 2013). For example, parents in a hunter-gatherer society or surviving through subsistence agriculture value practical survival skills from a young age. Many such cultures may begin teaching babies to use sharp tools, including knives, before their first birthdays (*ibid.*). The reception of values can be regarded as a part of socialisation.

3.1.4 Relative and Absolute Values

Values may be relative or absolute. When relative, values are understood to vary across societies and time epochs. An extreme version of value relativism is subjectivism—the view that individual values vary, as well. While this is not the place to debate the very polemical 'jaw-war' that still subsist in the literature on this subject, it is worthy of note to state, here, that we reject the thesis of subjectivism. We also do not wholly subscribe to the counter-theses of value relativism, just briefly described above, and value absolutism—the position that there are ideals, worth pursuing (hence, 'valuable') by and independent of individual and cultural views, as well as independent of whether it is known or apprehended or not.

3.1.5 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Values

Additionally, there are intrinsic and extrinsic values. Extrinsic or instrumental value is worth having as a means towards getting something else that is good (for example, a radio is instrumentally good to listen to music). An intrinsically valuable thing is worth for itself, not as a means to something else. It is giving value intrinsic and extrinsic properties. Intrinsic and instrumental goods are not mutually exclusive categories (Riukas, 2016). Some objects are both good, in themselves, and also good for getting other good objects. Understanding science may be such a good thing, being both worthwhile in and of itself, and as a means of achieving other goods. In these cases, the sum of instrumental (specifically the all instrumental value) and intrinsic value of an object may be used when putting that object in value systems, which is a set of consistent values and measures.

Values, thus, and as prefaced above, are the 'trunk' that prop-up the society. Ideals and phenomena—like individual behaviours, protocols, and customs,

ethics, rules and governing relationships of socially situated individuals—can not make any social-wide sense outside the presence of values.

3.2   A Taxonomy of Values

3.2.1 Aesthetic Values

These have to do with what people consider to be artistically appealing. Aesthetics has to do to with beauty in artworks and the likes of artefacts. Here, values are concerned with how best to evaluate works of arts as beautifully appealing. For example, how beautiful is a painting, how nice is a piece of music, how thrilling is a film and so forth.

3.2.2 Religious Values

These have to do with those things that people pursue as a form of belief. Things that appeal to people's spiritual loyalty and which they consider as the supra-rational deity of worship. Reverence to God is one important religious value that is commonplace in all religions. Offering prayers, offering sacrifices, visit holy places, fasting in certain days, are among many any other religious values.

3.2.3 Socio-political Values

These are related to ethical values: justice, liberty, human rights, and others alike that are 'gains' afforded, and required, by 'civil society', as opposed to the previous 'state of nature' where life was invariably solitary, nasty, brutish and short, as in the words of Thomas Hobbes. We should clearly understand that socio-political values are the responsibilities of both the government and the governed. Take the issue of justice; for example, the citizens must practice it between themselves for the society to be stable. One must not wait for the government to be just to his or her friend in their relationship. However, the government plays the most critical role in ensuring a stable society by protecting the socio-political values.

3.2.4 Economic Values

They are those values that afford individuals to achieve at least a minimum level of material well-being to the end of attaining and sustaining, the 'good life', at least in the material sphere.

3.2.5 Ethical/Moral Values

As you may have noticed, this class of values was deliberately discussed last. The reason is simple enough: it has the most bearing on the focus of this unit, module and even course material! Moral values are those qualities, like

veracity, honesty, generosity, among others, that are necessary for smooth human relations.

What are the ethical values? You may not get a comprehensive answer to this question in the present unit. But you will at least be told right now that the question is only answerable depending on the ethical school or theory you subscribe to. These were, however, discussed in Module 1, Unit 3, Divisions of Ethics. Some ethicists, for example, reason that (ethical) values are to be sought for in the *outcomes* that emerge from our actions. These ethicists are known as *consequentialists* (Utilitarianism, egoism, altruism, etc. are examples of consequentialist theories). Some others think that values in ethics are what rational individuals, in a contracting party, would negotiate as valuable. This position is known as *contractualism*. T. M. Scanlon and David Gauthier are two notables contractualism theorists, among others here. There are also *deontologists* like Immanuel Kant, for example, who assert that ethical values are *intrinsic* properties; hence, acts are good/valuable and bad/vicious in themselves. What the ethicist should do, therefore, according to deontologists, is to identify these ethical universals that are worth having in order to attain a morally upstanding world.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed the meaning of values. Our discussion about values was on two major fronts: a general analysis and a more 'personal' one. Values, as we have now seen, are those things worth having. But the things worth having are quite numerous. If ethics has something to do with values, does it mean that ethics has to do with everything? To avoid the seemingly 'repugnant conclusion' that an uncritical affirmation of this question will bring, you were told that ethics strives for its own 'unique' brand of values. Although how ethicists construe value seems to be quite divergent, one point on which they all converge is that they all are in the same quest to offer rationally grounded outlines towards a stable society.

5.0   SUMMARY

The following is a summary of what we have discussed in this unit:

•   The definition of human values, which refer to traits or qualities that we consider useful, beneficial or worthwhile.
•   A discussion of the two types of values: intrinsic and extrinsic values.
•   An intrinsically valuable thing is worth for itself, not as a means to something else.
•   Extrinsic or instrumental value is worth having as a means of getting something else that is good.

- A description of the five major classes of human values and with particular emphasis on ethical/moral ones.
- Values may be relative or absolute.
- A taxonomy of values shows that there are aesthetic values, religious values, socio-political values, economic values, and moral values.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

i.   What are human values, in relation to ethics?
ii.   Attempt a brief description of the five classes of values discussed in this unit.

6.0   TUTOR MARKED ASSESSMENT

1.   Define human value. How is it relevant to ethical studies?
2.   Do a critical evaluation of personal and cultural values.
3.   Personal values provide an
     a)   internal point of reference as per what is good and worth preventing by an individual
     b)   internal point of reference as per what is good and worth pursuing by an individual
     c)   internal point of reference as per what is good and worth permitting by an individual
     d)   internal point of reference as per what is good and worth projecting by an individual
4.   Religious Values are
     a)   things that people pursue because they appeal to their spiritual loyalty.
     b)   things that people frame because they appeal to their spiritual loyalty.
     c)   things that people pursue because they appeal to their sensual loyalty.
     d)   things that people prevent because they appeal to their spiritual loyalty.
5.   Economic values are
     a)   values that afford individuals to achieve a maximum level of material well-being.
     b)   values that afford individuals to achieve a minimum level of material love.
     c)   values that afford individuals to achieve a minimum level of material well-being.
     d)   values that afford individuals to achieve a minimum level of material well-being.

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UNIT 3   THE NATURE OF HUMAN CONDUCT

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall look at the nature of human conduct. In doing this, we shall look at what the concept of human conduct is. We shall also examine that factors the influence human conduct. Philosophers argued that for human needs to matter in practical deliberation, we must have already acquired the full range of character traits that are imparted by an ethical upbringing (McDowell, 1998:185). Since our upbringings can diverge considerably, his argument makes trouble for any Aristotelian ethical naturalism that wants to support a single set of moral virtues. Another argument, therefore, is that there is a story to be told about the normal course of human life. According to which it is no coincidence that there is agreement on the virtues. Because we are creatures who arrive at personhood only by learning from others in a relationship of dependency, we cannot help but see ourselves as creatures for whom non-instrumental rationality is the norm (McDowell, 1998:413). Those norms which define our conduct as humans are the focus of our discussion here,

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

•   define the meaning of the concept "human conduct"

- enumerate some of the factors that influence human conduct
- classify the factors that influence human conduct
- explain how each of the factors influences human conduct.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Nature of Human Conduct

Human conduct has to do with the behavioural attributes of human being, that is, the way people behave toward others. Human behaviour is what the field of study called psychology, always interrogate. However, the interrogation of this behaviour is not limited to that field. From antiquity through ethics, even philosophy, which is regarded as the mother of all studies, has made human conduct part of its scope of evaluation. The dimension of the philosophical study of the nature of human conduct is a bit different from the psychological study of it. The philosophical study is a normative study usually refers to as the study of the human act, which is a moral evaluation of the rational actions of a human being. The psychological study is a descriptive analysis of factors, both internal and external, that influence human behaviour. Philosophers also put to consideration the external factors, but the major concern to them is the internal factors, which the actor has control over. They do a critical analysis of the internal factors, vis-a-vis human actions in order to prescribe the best conduct. From the foregoing, we can say that human conduct is in two categories – moral and behavioural. In this unit, we shall do more of the psychological aspect.

3.2   Factors Influencing Human Conduct

A human being is a complex machine, from the Cartesian point of view, woven together. Rene Descartes, then, divided the human person into two major categories – mental and physical. His position is difficult to explain till date, the relationship between the physical and mental remain unclear. Notwithstanding the difficulty, in our time, psychologists agree with Descartes that "much of behaviour can be understood as reactions to outside events: The environment poses a question, and the organism answers it" (Gleitman, 1981:17).

Accordingly, human conduct, which comprises of the total behaviour and actions of human being, is being influenced by such things like the environment, culture, impulses such as desires, instincts, wishes, wants, and so on (Fullerton, 2002:19). The factors influencing human conduct could be classified into two: internal and external. The internal factors are the things within the will of the person. In other words, the internal factors are the impulses that develop from the nerve cells or the central-

nervous-system. While the external is the social norms like the environment, law, etiquette, religion and so on.

Psychological impulses influencing human conducts can be group into two categories – positive and negative. Positive impulses motivate actions and include enthusiasm, interest, joy, love, satisfaction, and so on. While negative impulses do create fear and unmotivated, they include such things as anxiety, distress, apathy, hostility, and so on. All these are kinds of motives that direct human behaviour (Gleitman, 1981:55). All these impulses, because they are mental and produced by the brain, they are grouped as intellect. And because they repeatedly influence human conduct, they are called habit. It should be noted that there is a debate in the philosophy of mind that all mental activities are not the product of the brain; however, we shall leave that out for now. Therefore, in looking at the internal factors, we shall consider the intellect and habit as factors.

3.2.1 External Factors

3.2.1.1   Society

Human by nature are social beings, to live, therefore, is to live in the community of a human. In order to checkmate social unrest in such a society, that would turn the society to the Hobbesian state of nature; there is the development of principles that guide and guard individual conducts. The principles are in forms of law, norms, code of conduct, etiquette, and they influence individual conduct. The society and social order, in which individuals grow-up or are nurtured, to a large extent, would determine his conduct (Fullerton, 2002:24). Whatsoever the society values will be what individuals value. In this sense, hardly does the individual owns personal conduct. In other words, nobody has a monopoly of conduct; it is societal. As John Dewey puts it, "neutrality is non-existent. Conduct is always shared; this is the difference between it and a psychological process. If it is not an ethical "ought" that conduct should be social. It is social "whether bad or good" (Dewey, 1922:12). Now, let us examine the tools society use to influence human conduct. This shall be examined under custom, law and religion.

3.2.1.2   Custom

Through the society, the custom is developed. All the involving acts and practices of the society over the years then become influencing factors to people's conduct. The custom involves the entire way of life of a people. Their wants become the wants every individual must subscribe to. Deviation from the cultural elements means that the person is violating

the social order and harmony of such a society. This might likely receive condemnation, rejection, denunciation for the defiance to the society.

3.2.1.3   Law

Law is another thing developed in the society to guide human conduct. The law specifies the dos and don't's in the society. Law is to aid the common good in the society. But without the understanding of what the common good is, the nature and function of law in directing human acts cannot be cherished. The common good is different from individual personal good, the latter being the good of only one person, to the elimination of its being possessed by any other. The common good is universal and distributive in nature; it is being shared to all without becoming any person private good. Therefore, the law is to safeguard all individuals in the society, without special preference to individual. In this sense, there are two kinds of law; natural and civil. They both direct the affairs of the public and are no property of any individual.

The "natural law" is an unwritten law that guards the orderliness of things in nature. Natural law is clearly a fundamental principle for directing human acts. In the ancient and medieval periods, the natural law is seen as the "absolute moral order" (Lawhead, 2002:222) which are natural not created by man. Therefore, they have no special consideration of preference for individuals. The law is universal and fundamental preferences of human nature. It is available to reasoning which all humans have; thus; everyone ought to know almost all the universal precepts expressed in natural law.

The civil law is another kind of law that guide human conduct. This law is what Cicero and other ancient philosophers termed "man-made law". It is a law that human makes to govern the society. The law could, then, be defined as what promotes the common good. Generally, the law is to be the regulation of reason by the authority to direct the political society and its members to the common good, which is primed on peace and order. The primary aim of civil law is not to make human beings virtuous or moral, though it does command certain acts that make human to be virtuous and prevent acts that are vices. Civil law commands obedience with the use of stiff penalties. This made civil or man-made law to be different from natural law. This can be expressed as Antiphon; the sophist would say: "Most of the things which are just by the law are hostile to nature…..and the advantages which accrue from the law are chains upon nature, whereas those which accrue from nature are free" (Lawhead, 2002:32).

3.2.1.4   Religion

Religion plays significant roles in human conduct. From ancient time till now, the dominant religion determines the acceptable behaviour of such a society. Some societies are trying to make the major religion's rules and laws as the state or civil law, this shows how forcefully, religion is in human social interaction. Religious people believe that there are laws that are divinely given that guide religious devotions and all their other activities. The divine law and others are, at times regarded as the law of nature. It is also differentiated from the law of nature, and even seen to be more fundamental than natural law, in which natural law derivate from. Advocates of divine law would argue that God created the whole things in the universe, and made laws that direct their affairs.

3.2.2 Internal Factors

The internal factors are the inbuilt capacity in the biochemical make-up of an individual that influence his or her conduct. Arguably, the internal factors could have external influences, but such influences are not pronounced or dominant. For instance, human habit or temperament, or will be shaped by the religion he or she subscribes to, the culture he or she was brought up, but such influence is not directly available data at the point of performing an act.

3.2.2.1   Intellect

The intellect is a major factor influencing human conduct. It serves as the memory bank of both consciously and unconsciously built-in compelling factors influencing conduct. From childhood, individuals in the society reserve the societally acceptable conduct in the brain. Apart from societal shaping, intellect is also a major tool for natural instinct. The presence of the intellect in human is the basis of the philosophical antagonising mere psychological or biological explanation of the conduct of human being because it is assumed that it is responsible for coherently organising human habit. The intellect plays a significant role in the willingness, desire, intention motive of an action. The will, desire, motive, and intention carry moral evaluation. Incidentally, they are the focus of moral evaluation of human conduct. You shall learn more about this in the next unit. If we accept the power of the intellect: knowing, thinking, and reasoning, which cannot be denied, then, human conduct would need moral evaluation.

3.2.2.2   Habit

Habits as internal principles of human acts can be said to be a disposing of power to act in a determinate way. Naturally, human beings are

capable of diverse acts, but without the habitual nature of human, most of the human conducts would be done arbitrarily. Therefore, habit develops to strengthen human power, enabling the power to operate more effectively and with more capability.

Habits are not the personal property of individual organisms and minds. They include dispassionate factors as Dewey would say that "honesty, chastity, malice, peevishness, courage, triviality, industry, and irresponsibility are not private possessions of a person. They are working adaptations of personal capacities with environing forces. All virtues and vices are habits which incorporate objective forces (Dewey, 1922:16).

So habits are inbuilt in human nature generally, not in a particular person, and they are developed in individuals through the environment he or she is to help in perfecting individual acts. For the above stated above, habits produce consistency in operation and facilitate an act to be done more speedily and effectively; they make human action pleasurable.

3.2.2.2.1   Virtuous and Vicious Habits

Habits are usually divided into two categories – virtue and vice; virtues are the good ones while the bad ones are regarded as vices. Habits are meant to help human to do better than he or she would have done. The classification of habits as good or bad is a moral consideration, and it is different from the psychological point that shows how habits are being developed. In other words, the distinction between virtue as a good habit and vice as a bad habit is based on whether the habit produces acts favourable to encouraging human's moral, good or evil. Virtuous acts are those that are appropriate to human nature; that is, they are habitual acts performed according to the moral norms and principle. Vicious acts are seen to be against human nature, just as they are believed to be against the moral norms and principle.

Virtue, then, could be defined in the Aristotelian way as a habit predisposing one to choose the mean between the extremes of excess and defect. Vice, as the contrary habit, would predispose one to choose either of the extremes of both morally evil. Thomas Aquinas holds that the name of virtue expresses its mode. The mode of a virtue is its distinctive manner of realising the good at stake in some specific area of human life. It is the most proper component of any moral virtue and its major defining feature, which is why it is normally expressed by the virtue's name (cf. Austin, 2017:4).

Virtue is divided into two: moral and intellectual. This division is because it is believed that human being is being guarded by two principles: the intellect and the appetite. The intellect virtue comprises of perfect thinking, knowledge and understanding, wisdom, and science and art. The appetite virtue includes courage, generosity, honesty, modesty, prudence, justice, temperance and right disposition of the intellect virtues. Appetite virtue is also moral. All the virtues mentioned above have corresponding vices, which are their contrary habits.

Apart from the classical virtues mentioned above, there are some religious virtues, the Christian, for instance, argue that there are theological virtues, such as faith, hope, and charity, which are part of the principles of human acts. The argument in support of this claim could be captured thus:

> The need of such virtues for human arises from the fact that human happiness, the goal of all his actions, is twofold: happiness proportionate to human nature and obtainable by means of natural principles including the moral and intellectual virtues; happiness surpassing human nature and obtainable by and through God's power alone. Since the natural virtues cannot suffice to direct human to supernatural happiness, human needs additional principles of action to be directed to attaining supernatural happiness. Such principles are the theological virtues, which are infused by God, in which respect they are not wholly intrinsic principles of human action (Catholic Encyclopedia).

There are other internal factors like will, desire, motive and intention, but they would not be discussed here. We shall analyse their influence on human conduct in the next unit.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In our discussion on the nature of human conduct, we have limited ourselves to the psychological or behavioural analysis of the concept. Out of curiosity, it would be asked: where is the place of ethics or morality, which is the focus of every discussion in this course? Response to this yearning is that this unit is a prelude to the next unit, where moral or philosophical analysis on human conduct shall be

discussed under the heading "Human Act", for good understanding. Therefore, you would be very kind to yourself if this unit has been studied diligently.

5.0   SUMMARY

Below is the summary of some of the things you must have learnt in this unit.

- The social elements influencing human conduct – culture, law, religion;
- The psychological impulses influencing human conducts;
- The division of all that influence human conducts into two groups – external and internal.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the concept of "human conduct."

6.0   TUTOR MARKED ASSESSMENT

1. Discuss the ways external factors are influencing human conducts.
2. Critically examine the social elements that affect human conduct.
3. Do a critique of the term "civil law."

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UNIT 4   HUMAN ACT

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall do a descriptive analysis of the human act. We shall examine if all human actions are human acts or not. In doing this, we shall look at the defining factors or distinctive features of the human act.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain what constitutes the human act
- identify and explain the factors that define every human act
- do a moral appraisal of the human act.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Human Act

The term, "human act", refers to actions that are done by human beings deliberately; that is actions that are performed willingly without any form of coercion. A human act is based on reason; it proceeds from the intellect and the free-will decision of the human person. It is an act which the actor is responsible for; he or she should be blamed or praised because he or she is the master, either as the initiator or executor of the act. A human act is said to be free if the actor acts freely within his or

her volitions, desires and choices (Lund, 2003:132). Human acts transmit moral qualities to the person who performs them. It is usually differentiated from related terms that are called "acts of a human." Acts of human are regarded as acts performed by people who lack the use of proper reason or whose freedom is totally repressed or curtained as in sleep or under anaesthesia. For instance, if someone who is deeply asleep farted, his or her action is not classified as a human act, rather it is called an act of a human.

Human acts are good or bad, right or wrong, depending on whether they are in line with or against the norms, principles, codes of morality. Moral principles are universal and objective in nature and are purely theoretical approaches to guide the human act in the right direction. Practically, all deliberate actions are instrumentally done as a means to an end. In other words, virtually all human acts are means to a certain objective. To this end, the aim, motive and intention behind an action are morally good or bad, right or wrong. It should be noted that the list above does not solely determine the moral status of an action, certain actions are considered bad and wrong no matter the intention behind it. Also, the means employed regardless of the motive or intention to achieve an end carries moral value. Before we delve deeply on the moral value or judgment of human acts, let us look at the "driving force" of the human act.

3.2 The Factors Defining Human Acts

Human acts are being driven by certain factors that could be regarded as "driving forces". We call these factors forces, not because they are outside the control of human beings but because they are what influence people, persuasively, to act in the way they would act. In other words, the factors are what define an action as a human act. These factors are numerous, but here we shall discuss few, such as instinct, intention, and motive, among others.

3.2.1 Instinct

One of the major factors influencing human acts is instinct. Like most animals, a human being has an instinct which is a natural innate biological trait. It makes human, like other animals, to act or react "in a particular manner when placed in a certain situation" (Omoregbe, 1993:72). Instinct is in different degrees in human and other animals; beasts have a more natural instinct, which is mostly for survival, while human instinct is minimal but added advantage to human instinct is the availability to ratiocinate. Disputably, the animal might have this capability, but such cannot be compared with the human level of reason. We shall return to the necessity of rationality later. Now, instinct –

either in human or other animals – is geared towards something, the greatest of which is survival. Self-preservation is the strongest instinct. Another thing we do have an instinct for, is pleasure – an instinct for pleasure is best demonstrated in sexual pleasure. This could be the reason the Cyrenaics (who were the first advocate of hedonism) named sex as one of the three things that give pleasure (cf. Graham, 2004:41). There are other kinds of instinct, such as; the instinct of acquisition, curiosity, self-assertion, gregarious, and so on. However, all the other instincts can be grouped under the former two. In order words the instinct of acquisition, instinct of social, instinct of self-assertion, and instinct of curiosity could be for pleasure, they could also be for survival.

3.2.2 Intention

Another factor influencing human act is intention. The intention of an act is the calculated end result that the actor foresees. It is the aimed or desired outcome the actor hoped to achieve before doing such an action. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy,* the intention is the "state of mind that is favourably directed towards bringing about (or maintaining, or avoiding) some state of affairs." The intention is synonymous with volition, wish and desire; however, it has slight differences with them. The major difference is that in wish and desire, the actor might not necessarily be the initiator of the act, but just anticipated and end. While in intention, the actor initiates or set in motion the action and anticipate a certain end. The intention could be good or bad, which can be known from the consequence of the action. From the foregoing, it is obvious that not all human acts are intentional. Some acts are voluntary while some are behavioural.

3.2.2.1 Units of intention

There are two units of intention – immediate intention and remote intention. The former is the first aim that someone wants to achieve through an action, while the latter is the successive aim the person wants to achieve. For instance, a student immediate intention to read might be to know such a course, and the remote intention might be to have a good grade in the result after examination. It should be noted that either of this immediate intention and remote intention might be rated higher depending on the action and the actor. In other words, the quality and quantity of the intention are independent of being either immediate intention or remote intention. Rather, it depends on the action and the person that has such intention.

3.2.2.2 Kinds of Intention

Intentional actions are of two kinds: direct intention and indirect intention. The former is a kind of acts that is its end is anticipated or calculated to be so. The latter happens to be the derivative outcome that accompanied the anticipated or calculated end of an action. This derivative result is inseparable and acceptable part of the anticipated end. Joseph Omoregbe illustrates how indirect intention happens thus:

> During a war, a commander may order the bombing of a military base of the enemy. The commander foresees that some innocent civilians will surely be affected by the bombing and will lose their lives. This in itself is undesired and foreseen as a necessary by-product of the action of bombing and destroying the military base of the enemy, but it is allowed to happen since it is inseparably connected with the desired goal. In this case, the killing of some innocent civilians, along with the soldiers in the military base of the enemy is the indirect intention of the action (Omoregbe, 1993: 71).

3.2.3 Motive

The motive is another factor that influences human act. The motive is the reason or state of the mind that makes a person perform an action. Arnold defines motive as "a want that leads to action, that is, a goal appraised as good for action without further deliberation; it includes effective and deliberate action tendencies" (cf. Bunnin and Yu, 2004:450) Motive is close related to intention, in the sense that, it is the underlining factor that drives the human mind to form an intention. The motive is also necessary to know if an action is intended or not. The motive behind an action determines the manner, method, or system of executing such an action. Each of the following could be a motivating factor of an action: love, sympathy, empathy, hatred, ambition, greediness, nepotism, patriotism, enthusiasm. The motive behind an action determines the intention of such an action. For instance, if love is the motive behind an action, the intention of such an action would be different from the intention of that same action if hatred is the motive behind it.

3.2.3.1 Categories of Motive

Motives are of two categories; they are positive motives and negative motives. Positive motives bring about good intentions which make actions right. While negative motives bring about bad intentions that make actions wrong, motives, such as love, enthusiasm, patriotism, sympathy, and empathy are positive motives, while motives such as greediness, hatred, nepotism are negative motives. Ambition could be both a positive motive and a negative motive. Ordinarily, to be ambitious is positive, but over-ambition could be a kind of greediness, hence, in that process, it has turned to negative motive. Let us illustrate how positive motive and negative motive result in good and bad intentions respectively, and how the corresponding actions that follow are right and wrong.

If somebody with positive motives of patriotism, love for his society, sympathy for the citizen, and enthusiasm is made the leader of the country or head of a sector in the country economy, his or her intention would be a good one. Such good intention would drive him to perform right actions that are capable of bringing development to his country, eradicate the suffering, promote the dignity of every citizen; celebrate merit, and so on. On the other hand, if someone with negative motives like greediness, hatred and nepotism occupied the same position, his intention would be bad and wrong actions would be performed. Such actions that would division among citizens, celebrate mediocrity, embezzlement of public fund, mismanagement of public properties, and so on would rampage.

3.3   Moral Appraisal of Human Act

Thus far, we have examined the major issues that characterised human act. We said earlier that human act goes with responsibility, that is, it carries moral worth. Critical examinations of the factors that define human act would show that intention and motive could carry moral evaluation because it is within the actor capability, there is no external influence on him or her to perform the actions. However, in the case of instinct, it could be argued that actions performed are not strictly within the actor capability, because instinct is inbuilt in human nature. Therefore, there is a kind of external influence behind such actions. We said earlier that human instinct, unlike other animals, is guided with the ability to ratiocinate. Rationality is what makes human instinct different from other animals instinct, and it is the same rationality that makes human to be responsible for actions perform under instinct.

The point we are establishing is that only one of these defining factors might not guarantee that an action is a human act because an action

could be accidental that could be classified as a human deed, act of human, or behavioural. And any actions in the latter categories mentioned might not carry moral worth. Therefore, for an action to carry moral worth, it must first be a human act. The human act might then start or develop as instinct, the availability of rationality in a human would help to translate such instinct to motive, and motive would thereafter generate intention that will push human to do the action. When actions pass through these conscious stages, they could no longer be termed as an act of human or mere deed; they have moral worth which the actor must be responsible.

Some ethical theories believe that some actions are by their nature human act. They accept as true that actions such as; murder, adultery, theft, and so on are not done without passing through all the stages above, and to them, such actions are intrinsically bad and wrong. Classical Virtue Theory and Deontological school of thought: Divine Command Theory and Kantianism are known for this position. The position concerning murder could be express thus: "taking human life, we feel is an act of such significance that one cannot elide its description into a term which denotes its consequence or an end to which it was a means unless that term makes clear that this was the means used" (D'Arcy, 1963:18-19). Kant moved further to argue that the intention and motive or will behind an action is essential for its moral worth. The question is: when will intention or motive makes an action good? Kant says it is when the action is performed only from duty without inclination (Kant 1998:7). Hence, when someone from a sense of duty devoid of inclination, he or she has a good intention, motive or will, which then guarantee the positive moral status of the action. Under divine command theory, human acts would either be good or bad, right or wrong based on if they fulfil the conditions required by the law of God.

Teleological theories do not look at the mere intention or will behind an action but the consequence of the action. This is because it is difficult, most cases, to know the motive and intention behind an action. The actor could lie or deny the motive and intention behind if we are to find out that from him or her. Therefore, if an action produces good result, such an action is good, and if the result is bad, such an action is bad. Therefore, the moral worth of an action depends on the circumstances and the situations. Utilitarianism, for instance, would base the moral worth on the numbers of people affected by the consequences. While Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics would base it on the situation that is guided by love.

Some other schools of thought believe that actions have no moral worth than our expressions of emotion. Their position is what we dislike; we

say "it is not good", and what will like, we say "it is good." This position known as emotivism is well expressed by one of the major proponent A.J. Ayer thus:

> The presence of an ethical symbol in a proposition adds nothing to its factual content. Thus if I say to someone, "You acted wrongly in stealing that money," I am not stating anything more than if I had simply said, "You stole that money." In adding that this action is wrong, I am not making any further statement about it. I am simply evincing my moral disapproval of it. It is as if I had said: "You stole that money" in a peculiar tone of horror, or written it with the addition of some special exclamation marks (Ayer, 1936:107).

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, you should have learnt what characterised an action that could be called human act. The unit claimed that not all human actions are human acts and that only human actions carry moral responsibility and moral worth. Instinct, motive and intention are major characteristics of the human act. However, it is often common to hear people, after they have done something that seems obviously wrong, saying, in other to escape moral condemnation, "it is not intentional" or "that is not my motive". To know the motive and intention behind an action, therefore, becomes a herculean task. This has prompted alternative moral evaluation to the traditional virtue and deontological ethical theories.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit has discussed the following ideas about the human act:

- The definition of the human act as actions performed willingly without any form of coercion, which in turn transfers responsibility on the doer;
- The moral worth of actions: good or bad, right or wrong are based their conformity with moral codes, norms and principles; and
- Instinct, intention, and motive are some of the factors that define a human act.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1.   Critically examine the differences between human act and the act
of   man
2.   Do a comprehensive analysis of intention as regards the concept
      "human act."

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   Explain the factors that define every human act.
2.   Discuss the relationship between instinct and motive.
3.   Explain the influence of instinct on the human act.
4.   Mention three types of intention and explain any one of them.
5.   Differentiate between positive motive and negative motive.

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MODULE 3

UNIT 1   RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHICS AND MORALITY

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main content
        3.1   Ethics
        3.2   Moralities
        3.3   Relationship between Ethics and Morality
               3.3.1   Differences between Ethics and Morality
               3.3.2   Similarities between Ethics and Morality
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assessment
7.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

This unit is based on the discussion on ethics as that which seeks to resolve questions of human morality by defending concepts such as good and bad, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime. It also discusses morality as a system of principles and values concerning people's behaviour, which is generally accepted by a society or a particular group of people. It then further discusses the relationship between Ethics and Morality, by showing the differences and the similarities which are inherent in the two concepts, (ethics and morality). Consequently, it shall show the fact that morality is the basis of ethics. However, before dwelling deep into the relationships between the two concepts, the two concepts would be discussed simultaneously.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

-     explain what ethics is

- explain what morality implies
- discuss the similarities and differences between ethics and morality
- discuss the relationship between ethics and morality.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Ethics

Ethics has the morality of human actions and conducts as its subject matter. Its major concern includes the nature of ultimate value and the standards by which human actions can be judged right or wrong [Uduma 2000:99]. Ethics further shows that there are certain actions which are inherently morally wrong and which ought not to be done by any individual, for example, stealing, killing, adultery, dishonesty, among others. Even when an individual is doing these actions, naturally, it is known that they are actions which nobody ought to perform. On the other hand, there are also certain kinds of actions which would be considered as morally right, for instance, learning, teaching, giving of alms, fidelity to one's duties, respect for human life, and so on.

There are some kinds of actions which opinions about them differ. While some consider such actions to be morally right, others consider them to be morally wrong. Examples are contraception, abortion, euthanasia, masturbation, and so on. [Omoregbe 1993:3]. Hence, ethics works as a guiding principle to decide what is good or bad. They are the standards which govern the life of a person. It is the attempt to formulate the theoretical principles lying in or behind the evaluation of conduct. Ethical principles can be seen in various aspects of human endeavours as a means of regulating and analysing human's moral life-style. Hence, ethics comes in various forms which are recognised today.

Meta-ethics: It is about the theoretical meaning and reference of moral propositions and how their truth value can be determined.

Normative ethics: It concerns the practical ways of determining and arriving at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conducts.

Applied ethics: It deals with the analysis of specific, controversial moral issues such as abortion, animal rights, and so on.

3.2 Morality

Generally speaking, morality can be a body of standards or principles derived from a code of conduct from a particular philosophy, religion or culture, or it can be derived from a standard that a person believes

should be universal. Morality in most cases is specifically synonymous with 'goodness' or 'rightness' (Stanford 2019).

Furthermore, it can be seen as a set of rules, feeling or a kind of behaviour which entails compliance with the principles of good, moral or virtuous conduct. It is expected that every rational being should have a sense of morality and as a result, be able to make moral judgments from time to time. Morality can also be seen as man's attempt to harmonise conflicting interests [Ndubuisi 2010].

Morality denotes not any kind of evaluated conduct, but a body of 'accepted' conduct. Morality implies a standard of conduct. There are many different kinds of moralities, and they include:

i.   Christian morality is conduct sanctioned by the principles of Christianity; Islamic morality, which is a moral kind of teaching from the traditions of the Muslim Qur'an.
ii.   Confucian morality is conduct sanctioned by Confucius, and so on. [Morals, Morality, and Ethics 1928:453]. Morality has immorality, amorality and non-morality as terms which are related to it.
iii.   Conventional morality is that body of conduct which is sanctioned by the custom or habit of the group to which an individual is a member.

However, it is important to indicate that morality is said to be used in two distinct broad senses: a descriptive sense and a normative sense. Descriptively to refer to certain codes of conduct put forward by a society or a group (such as a religion), or accepted by an individual for his or her own behaviour, Normatively to refer to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, which would be put forward by all rational persons.

The two broad senses of morality are crucial when it comes to the discussion on morality. If one uses 'morality' in its descriptive sense, and therefore uses it to refer to codes of conduct put forward by distinct groups or societies, one will almost certainly deny that there is a universal morality that applies to all human beings. The descriptive use of 'morality' is the one used by anthropologists when they report on the morality of the societies that they study. Recently, some comparative and evolutionary psychologists (Haidt and Kasebir 2006) have taken morality, or close anticipation of it, to be present among groups of non-human animals: primarily, but not exclusively, other primates.

Any definition of 'morality' in the descriptive sense will need to specify which of the codes put forward by a society or group count as moral.

Even in small homogeneous societies that have no written language, distinctions are sometimes made between morality, etiquette, law, and religion. And in larger and more complex societies these distinctions are often sharply marked. So "morality" cannot be taken to refer to every code of conduct put forward by a society.

In the normative sense, 'morality' refers to a code of conduct that would be accepted by anyone who meets certain intellectual and volitional conditions, almost always including the condition of being rational. That a person meets these conditions is typically expressed by saying that the person counts as a **moral agent**. However, merely showing that any moral agent would accept a certain code is not enough to show that the code is the moral code. It might well be that all moral agents would also accept a code of prudence or rationality, but this would not by itself show that prudence was part of morality.

As we have just seen not all *codes that are put forward by societies or groups* are moral codes in the descriptive sense of morality. And not all *codes that would be accepted by all moral agents* are moral codes in the normative sense of morality. So any definition of morality in either sense will require further criteria. Still, each of these two very brief descriptions of codes might be regarded as offering some features of morality that would be included in any adequate definition. In that way, they might be taken to be offering some definitional features of morality in each of its two senses. When one has specified enough definitional features to allow one to classify all the relevant moral theories as theories of a common subject, one might then be taken to have given a definition of morality. This is the sense of definition we are concerned with, in this discussion. Morality has immorality, amorality and non-morality as terms which are related to it.

Immorality is the violation of moral laws, norms, or standards. It is normally applied to people or behaviours, or in a broader sense, it can be applied to groups or corporate bodies. Ronald Dmitri, however, sees immoral behaviour as that which does not merely consist in the performance of morally wrong acts, for morally wrong acts are not always blameworthy and immoral behaviour is blameworthy. Aristotle distinguishes between two types of immorality, and they are wickedness and weakness. He compares the morally weak person to a state that has good laws but fails to apply them and the wicked person to a state that applies its laws even though the laws are bad.

Amoral simply means having no moral sense or being indifferent to right and wrong. This term can be applied to very few people. And there are a few human beings who, despite moral education, have remained or become amoral. Such people tend to be found among certain types of

criminals who cannot seem to realise they have done anything wrong. They tend not to have any remorse, regret, or concern for what they have done: children, an insane person, a terminally ill person and so on fall under the amoral individuals.

The term 'Non-moral', means out of the realm of morality altogether. For example, inanimate objects such as cars and guns are neither moral nor immoral. A person using the car or gun may use it immorally, but the things themselves are non-moral. Many areas of study, for instance, mathematics, astronomy, and physics, are in themselves non-moral, but because human beings are involved in these areas, morality may also be involved.

Non-moral behaviour constitutes a great deal of the behaviour we see and perform every day of our lives. We must, however, always be aware that our non-moral behaviour can have moral implications. For instance, typing a letter is, in itself non-moral, but if typing and mailing it will result in someone's death, then morality must certainly enter into the picture.

3.3 Relationships between Ethics and Morality

3.3.1 Differences between Ethics and Morality

The first thing to note is that the two terms share a mix-up in their origins, and sometimes, they are interchanged even though they are not the same historically. Hannah Arendt says that the fact that we use 'ethical' and 'moral' to address questions of right and wrong, good and bad is indicative of our confusion in this area. What she is referring to is that etymologically ethical and moral simply refer to customs or habits. 'Ethical' was used in a phrase referring to excellence in habits or customs. Similarly, the Latin derived 'moral' was the modifier of a word meaning virtue or strength. Ironically, the subordinate words, ethical and moral, were retained for articulating a code of right and wrong, while the important ideas of excellence and strength were eclipsed (Hannah 1979).

In view of the above, therefore, etymologically, the English word "ethics" comes from the Greek word *ethos*. The ethos of a society or culture deals with its foundational philosophy, concepts of values, and system of understanding how the world fits together. On the other hand, morals have to do with the customs, habits, and normal forms of behaviour that are found within a given culture. Having shown the differences in the two philosophical concepts etymologically, the following discussion, however, shows the main differences inherent in the concepts (ethics and morality).

As ethics are the rules for deciding proper conduct, it is absolutely timeless. Ethical principles change very little with ages. Morality is the standards for behaviour that exist at some point in time. Compared to ethics, morality undergoes changes frequently. It is more like a snapshot taken of something moving. Since the principles of ethics are more fundamental and stable, ethics is bigger than morality. Ethics is able to call morality - the existing standards for conduct - into question, and cause morality to change. Let us consider slavery for an example. It was once considered moral to own slaves. Over time, ethics called the morality of slavery into question, and the eventual result was that slavery was no longer considered moral.

According to Baker (2008), the fundamental indicators of ethics are "should and ought" in life. However, ethics are also related to the values of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The term 'ethics' is not just a phrase. It refers to understanding and adopting moral values in our daily life. Many different types of ethics and virtues differ from one situation to another. Aristotle pointed to two within our soul. The first engages in reasoning, and the second is that which "cannot itself reason" (Kraut, 2010). However, to become "virtuous and practically wise" we must go through two stages: develop proper habits in childhood and gain "practical wisdom" in adulthood (Kraut, 2010). And it is only when the two are found in a person that the ethical virtues are fully developed. Ethics are an integral part of our social laws and politics. In normative ethics, the action of right and wrong is derived and defined, while descriptive ethics examines concepts of protocol and aesthetics (Dan, 2001). Applied ethics investigates the success or failure of the ethical theory of everyday situations.

Morals, on the other hand, according to Baker, are ethical principles that are always the same. Morality can also be descriptive and normative. It is descriptive where it is used in examining our societies' conduct, but normative when it is used in attaching specific conditions to logical beings (Gert, 2008). Morality, unlike ethics, is more of an ambiguous term because it is often distinguished from etiquette, law, and religion, which are codes of conduct proposed by a society. The descriptive sense of morality is also being used in reference to the principal attitudes of individuals (Gert, 2008). It can differ extensively in content and foundation within societies. Its primary concern can be purity or sanctity as oppose to the normative account of morality that is based on avoiding damage, hurt or injury. However, both the descriptive and the normative refer to guides that in part "avoid and prevent harm to some other" (Gert, 2008).

Ethics and morality define our own character; ethics dictates the inner working of a social system. That is because ethics are based on moral codes adopted by members of a given group. The difference between ethics and morality is often a fine line that differs between our global communities (Gert, 2008). Furthermore, ethics study the norms, standard by which things are measured and evaluated. While morality describes the way, things operate.

Ethics is concerned with 'ought-ness' and morality is concerned with 'is-ness'. This is because the former deals with how someone ought to behave, and the latter describes what someone is actually doing in a particular society. Hence ethics takes its primary occupation to what is right, and morality takes its own primary occupation to be what is accepted.

Morality is a general guideline framed by the culture, or religion of a society. For instance, we should speak the truth at all times. Conversely, ethics are a response to a particular situation. For instance, it is ethical to tell the truth in a particular situation? Morals may vary from society to society and culture to culture. This is in contrast to ethics, which remains the same regardless of any culture, religion and society.

Morality has been in existence for a long time; even before ethics come into existence, the man already has a sense of moral judgments without taking any principles or ethical considerations. Hence, it serves as the basis for ethics. Ethics is a term usually used by philosophers to be a philosophical study of morality. Morality is said to be a set of social rules, principles, norms that guide or are intended to guide the conduct of the people in a society. Morality is the subject matter of ethics; however, it is used most times interchangeable with ethics. Through critical analyses and arguments, Ethics is used as a philosophical instrument to explain and clarify the conceptual issues regarding morality.

3.3.2 Similarities between Ethics and Morality

It is very easy to point out some among our everyday judgments, with the truth of which ethics is undoubtedly concerned. Whenever we say, so and so is a good man or that fellow is a villain; whenever we ask what ought I to do? Or is it wrong for me to do this? Whenever we hazard such remarks as temperance is a virtue and drunkenness a vice, it is undoubtedly the business of ethics to discuss such questions and such statements; to argue what is the true answer when we ask what is right to do and to give reasons for thinking that our statements about the character of persons or the morality of actions are true or false. In the vast majority of cases, where we make statements involving any of the

terms, virtue, vice, duty, right, ought, good, bad, we are making ethical judgments; and if we wish to discuss their truth, we shall be discussing a point of ethics.

If we take such examples as those given above, we shall not be far from right in saying that they are all concerned with the question of conducts of human beings. They are concerned with the questions of what is good and what is bad, what is right, and what is wrong. For when we say that a man is good, we commonly mean that he acts rightly; when we say that drunkenness is a vice, we commonly mean that to get drunk is wrong or wicked action. And this discussion of human conduct is, in fact, that with which the name 'ethics' is most intimately associated. It is so associated with derivation, and conduct is undoubtedly by far the commonest and most generally interesting object of ethical judgments.

Accordingly, we find that many ethical philosophers are disposed to accept as an adequate definition of ethics, the statement that it deals with the question of what is good or bad in human conduct. They hold that its enquiries are properly confined to conducts and behaviours. Ethics is undoubtedly concerned with the question what good conduct is; but, being concerned with this obviously does not start at the beginning, unless it is prepared to tell us what is good as well as what is conduct. Good conduct is a complex notion because not every conduct is good.

In the same vein, morality is the differentiation of intentions, decisions, and actions between those that are 'good' and those that are 'bad'. The philosophy of morality is ethics. A moral code is a system of morality and a moral is any one practise or teaching within a moral code. Morality may also be specifically synonymous with 'goodness' or 'rightness.' Immorality is the active opposition to morality. However, amorality is variously defined as the unawareness of, indifference to, or disbelief in any set of moral standards or principles. An example of a moral code is the Golden Rule which states that "One should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself."

Hence, both morality and ethics loosely have to do with distinguishing the difference between 'good and bad' or 'right and wrong.' Many people think of morality as something that's personal and normative, whereas ethics is the standards of 'good and bad' distinguished by a certain community or social setting. For example, your local community may think adultery is immoral, and you personally may agree with that. However, the distinction can be useful if your local community has no strong feelings about adultery, but you consider adultery immoral on a personal level. By these definitions of the terms, your morality would contradict the *ethics* of your community. In popular discourse, however, we will often use the terms *moral* and *immoral, ethical and unethical*

when talking about issues like adultery regardless of whether it is discussed in a personal or in a community-based situation.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have shown to which extent ethics and morality are related and different. Also, it has been shown that the importance of morality in human society cannot be overemphasised and, finally the role which ethics as a philosophical tool plays when it comes to the issue of the critical analysis of moral statements and judgments.

5.0   SUMMARY

The following have been discussed so far in this unit:

- Morality can be defined either descriptively or normatively. Descriptively, it is a certain code of conduct put forwardly by a society or a group. For instance, religion and accepted by an individual. Normatively, it is a code of conduct that after specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational individuals.
- Ethics is the discipline which is concerned with what is morally good and bad, right and wrong. The three major areas of study in ethics are meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics.
- Ethics and morality both have good and bad, right and wrong and so on as their subject matter.
- The words morality and ethics are sometimes interchanged, even though they have different etymological meanings.
- Morality serves as a basis for ethics because ethics is the explicit reflection and systematic study of morality.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

How would you explain the relationship between ethics and morality?

6.0   TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   Morality has been in existence among humans right from the time of creation. Discuss.
2.   Ethics is a philosophical tool which is used to discuss the issues about morality. Explain.

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UNIT 2   ETHICS AND LAW

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Aristotle was right when he agreed that man is by nature, a political (social) animal. If the aim for which society was created, namely the maximisation of self-preservation must not be defeated, then, a concerted effort must be taken that order is secured in the society for meaningful development, both at the individual and social levels. It is common knowledge that the two most effective mechanisms of social control loosely described as the control of social behaviour that is, behaviour that affects others (Akintayo and Sanni, 2006, 79), are ethics and law. An ocean of ink has gone into the attempt by moral cum legal philosophers over the centuries to examine whether or not there is a correlation between ethics and law.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

•   explain what ethics implies
•   define the concept of law
•   explain the relationship between ethics and law.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Meaning of Law

Our discussions on the meaning of ethics in Module 1, Unit 2 suffice in the present unit. Law, however, like most other concepts, has no standard definition however, for our purpose, it may be defined as a rule or body of rules made by institutions, bodies and persons vested with the power to make such rules which are binding and enforced among the

members of a given state or society (Sanni, 2006, 5). That law is enforced means that agents of government exercising public authority can use official compulsion to give effect to legal norms just as private persons can invoke the government coercive force to enforce their legal right (Hazard, 1995, 449).

Accordingly, the law is a transaction involving at minimum, three participants: the person whose interest is protected by norms; the person whose conduct is in question under the adjudicate controversies concerning the application of norm and eventually enforce a judgment (Hazard 1995, 449, 450). Legal norms, therefore, impose duties which one would fail to carry out either positively or negatively at the risk of sanctions. Law equally develops on the controversial assumption of "intersubjective intelligibility" which means that a rule written by one person can be substantially understood by another, the controversy notwithstanding, the law has not only persisted, but it is flourishing.

What the foregoing shows are that whereas law and ethics are connected with the regulation of people's conducts in any given society, the law is more effective because it compels obedience, unlike morality which is not binding. What follows is a closes looks of the relationship between ethics and law.

3.2   Ethics and Law

In primitive societies, Pound states, religion, morals, law, customs and manners existed as an undifferentiated whole (Pound, 1926, 26, 85). The attempt to distinguish ethics and law, therefore, is an offshoot of the complex nature society has to take. Even so, the boundaries between them are hazy and ill-defined (Hazl:tt, 1994, 62). The outstanding illustration of the fusing and separation of ethics and law is the bickering between natural law and legal positivism (HazI: tt, 1994, 62).

Natural law is otherwise referred to as the law of nature. According to Fuller, the law of nature in its prescriptive sense is a universal percept or command intended by nature to regulate human behaviour (Fuller, 1969, 15). Lard Lloyd equally described the expression "natural law" as a body of objective moral principles based on the nature of the universal and discoverable by reason (Llyods, 1985, 93). According to Aquinas, the natural law is available to reason and can be discerned from human nature by every competent thinker who is not blinded by passion, bad habits and ignorance (Law head, 2002, 178-180).

Essentially, natural law holds that laws and legal system can be criticised on moral grounds; that there are standards against which legal norms can be compared and sometimes found wanting. This standard is

sometimes described as "a (the) higher law (Bix, 2010, 211). Bix categorised natural law theories under two broad groups, namely: traditional theories and modern theories. While the traditional theories were generally taking a particular position on the status of morality (that true moral beliefs are based in a or derived from human nature or the natural world, that they are not relative, that they are accessible to human reason, and so on) a position which then had some implications for how legislators, judges and citizens should act (as well as for all aspects of living a good life); the modern natural law theories contain theories specifically about law, which hold that moral evaluation of some sort is required in describing law, particular legal systems, or the legal validity of individual norms (Bix, 2010, 219). Major proponents of traditional natural law theory are Cicero, Thomas Aquinas and John Finnis while major proponents of modern natural law theory are Lon Fuller, Ronald Dwarkin, Michael S. Moore, and Lloyd Weinrebeto.

Cicero defined true law as right reason in agreement with nature. He further held that such law is universal, timeless, and none can be freed from its obligations (Plato, 1928, Republic III, xxii. 33, at 211). For Aquinas, genuine or just positive law that can be considered as human law, is derived from natural law. In his words "every human law has just so much of the nature of law, as it is derived from the law of nature. But if in any point it defects from the law of nature, it is no longer a law but a perversion of law" and "unjust laws are acts of violence rather than laws" (Aquinas, 1993:324). Hence natural law theory draws a necessary nexus between law and ethics and posits that laws that are inconsistent with morality are sub-standard.

Legal positivism dismisses the necessary connection the natural law theorist. All legal positivists, according to Coleman and Leiter show two central beliefs: first, that what counts as law in any particular society is fundamentally a matter of social fact or convention (the social thesis). Second, there is no necessary connection between laws and morality (the reparability thesis). They, however, differ among themselves over the best interpretation of these care commitments of positivism (Coleman and Lieter, 2010, 228). Like other philosophers, the label "positivism" legal positivists insist that phenomena comprising the domain at issue (for example law, science) must be accessible to the human mind (16: d).

A crude version of legal positivism was stated by Ulpian (170-223 A), a Roman Jurist of train ancestry when he averred that "what pleases the prince has the force of law". In a similar vein, Austin propounded the command theory as law which holds that law, as a rule, laid down for the guidance of an intelligent being by an intelligent being (the sovereign) having power over him. The command of the sovereign is

backed with a sanction in the event of non-compliance (Austin, 1975, lectures 2-4). For Bentham, the law is essentially a command issued by a sovereign to his subordinates or by a superior being to his inferiors (Bentham, 1970, chap. 1-5). Furthermore, Professor H.L.A Hart submits that law is a command and there is no necessary connection between law and morals or law as it is (*lex lata*) and the law as taught to be (Hart, 1958, 601, 602).

From the above, the legality of a norm is determined by its source and not its merits. In essence, that means the source of law is what gives the grounds for its legality. But Austin argues that the office, and not the person, is the sovereign because the office is an institution. In a nutshell legal positivism emphasises that once a law meets the requisite technical requirement, it is a standard law without regards to its merits or otherwise. The sources of law are created and empowered to do so by what H.L.A Hart calls the "Rules of Recognition" (1961:43).

4.0   CONCLUSION

The foregoing has shown that the debate about whether or not ethics and law are correlated, and the extent of this correlation if at all they are, is far from over. However, it must be conceded that in the realm of praxis, legal positivism is having its way because what the courts interpret is not what the law ought to be but what it is. In other words, courts do not invalidate a law which has passed through the requisite constitutional process on the ground that it is immoral. The fact remains that what constitutes morality or otherwise varies from society to society and from individual to individual. So it will be difficult, pragmatically, to draw a necessary connection between law and morality. However, as Hazard rightly puts it, as far as behaviour is concerned, there is the co-existence of legal, moral and ethical obligation. For example, the fact that most people consider theft and homicide to be morally wrong reinforces the strength of the legal prohibition against such behaviours. Likewise, a legal duty that does not enjoy popular support or which is not sustained by personal internalisation generally has corresponding weaker force. A legal change (Change in law) can be influenced by a strong adherence to a particular moral code but at the individual and social level (Hazard, 1995, 448).

5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed the following about ethics and law:

- Current usage interchanges ethics for morality such that it will be safe to speak of morality and law;
- While law and ethics are concerned with the regulation of human conduct in order to secure social order, law, unlike ethics, is binding and can be enforced;
- The most vivid example of driving home the delineated status of the relationship between ethics and law is the debate between natural law, which holds that laws that are inconsistent with ethics are not laws in the fullest sense of the word, and legal positivism that holds that law is totally valid irrespective of its morality;
- Law is static as long as it meets the requisite technical requirement; and
- The unit concluded that through the courts agree with legal positivism, changes in law can be influenced through strict adherence to moral codes.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

i.   Briefly explain what ethics and law mean and state their relationships.
ii.   Law and ethics are concerned with the regulation of people's conduct in any given society. Discuss.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   State the two forms of law which were discussed in this unit.
2.   with reference to H.L.A Hart, are there any relationships between law and morality? Discuss.

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UNIT 3   CONCEPT OF MORAL LAW

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
       3.1   The Concept of Moral Law
              3.1.1   The Divine Command Theory
              3.1.2   The Idea of Natural Law
              3.1.3   Kant's Duty Ethics
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Ethics is defined as the systematisation, defence and recommendation of concepts of right and wrong behaviour (Fieser, n.d. para 1). There are various schools of thought that attempt to establish the status of morals. One view that has been pushed is the concept of 'moral law'. This unit, therefore, will critically evaluate this concept.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you would be able to:

• explain what moral law means
• identify the three divisions of the concept of moral law
• explain the divine command theory
• explain the idea of natural law
• explain Kant's duty ethics.

3.0   MAIN CONTENTS

3.1   The Concept of Moral Law

Morality refers to precepts that guide people's conduct as to what counts as good or bad action. According to Gert and Gert, morality is a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons (Gert and Gert, 2017, para 2). It is one thing to submit that a particular act is morally right and another thing to justify why it is so. Various reasons have been given as to what makes an act morally right. On the one hand, such reasons are tied to the motive behind such

actions. Some of such motives are: because I care for the good of others, or for the pleasure it gives me, or from fear of punishment in this world or the world to come, or because I believe the act to be pleasing to the Deity, or because I have been taught to consider it as right, or habit, or because it is useful to the world and to myself, or because my conscience tells me so (Thilly, 1990:229). On the other hand, the justification may be objective in which case the result of the action is relevant. It is relevant because while some believe that morality depends on the result or consequence of an action, others hold that morality is an intrinsic property of an action.

In a short while, it shall be demonstrated that moral law eliminates some of the aforementioned justifications for moral actions, but it is important to make a few comments on the notion of law. Generally, the law is a rule or body of rules made by institutions, bodies and persons vested with the power to make such rules which are binding and enforced on the members of a given state or society (Sanni, 2006:5). This general definition, however, deserves some qualifications for the current discourse. In the realm of ethics, there are no institutions, bodies and persons vested with the power to decide what constitute morality. However, it must be pointed out that ethical relativism believes the society decides what is moral and what is immoral. Suffice it to say that a key feature of the law is that it imposes obligation as well as duty. According to the Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, the term duty is what a person is obligated or required to do. Duties can be moral, legal, parental, occupational etc. They can also be negative or positive. Negative duties are duties not to do certain things, such as to killing or harming, while positive duties are duties to act in certain ways, such as to relieve suffering or bring aid (The Cambridge Dictionary of philosophy, 1999:213). On the other hand, an obligation is that which one ought to do despite one's inclinations to do otherwise (Popkin and Stroll, 1993:42).

It is in the light of the above that Lawhead defines moral law as precepts stated as categorical imperatives rather than being stated in the form of hypothetical imperative since it tells you what you ought, should, or must do, it does not depend on any prior conditions or subjective wants and wishes and it contains no qualifications (Lawhead, 2002,342). In a similar vein, Thilly, well before Lawhead, submitted that moral laws do not consider the individual, as such. They tend to regulate the relations existing between men, thereby ensuring the possibility of social welfare (Thilly, 1900:227). The moral law commands the individual to sacrifice his welfare to that of his fellows, wherever conflict arises between egoistic and altruistic impulses (ibid, 226). However, it must be pointed out that the foregoing does not mean that egoistic actions are immoral,

but simply that they are not objects of moral reflection at all except such egoistic actions affect the life of the society (Ibid, 237).

What the foregoing has succeeded in doing is to give a rough sketch of what the concept of moral law connotes. Like other concepts in philosophy, there is no agreement among philosophers on the theories of moral law . This shall be briefly discussed below.

3.1.1 The Divine Command Theory

As the term 'Divine' denotes, this ethical theory maintains that supernatural force(s) determines what counts as moral and what counts as immoral. The supernatural may be the Muslim Allah or Christian God or any other supreme being or gods recognised by other religions. The moral precepts under this school of thought are usually found in the sacred texts of the various religions or through the recognised intermediaries. For instance, Ockham described God as one who decides what is moral and immoral (Lawhead, 2002m 192). An essential attribute of divine command theory is that moral precepts are binding on all and that it is our eternal benefit that we obey the command since to deviate from it could result in very unpleasant consequences (Paley, 1991, 259). Divine command is otherwise known as the supernatural theory.

3.1.2 The Idea of Natural Law

Natural law is also referred to as the law of nature. For Fuller, the law of nature in its prescriptive sense is a universal precept or command intended by nature to regulate human behaviour (Fuller, 1969:15), Lord Lloyd equally described the expression natural law as a body of objective moral principles based on the nature of the universe and discoverable by reason (Lloyds, 1985:93). According to Aquinas, natural law is available to reason. It can be discerned from human nature by every competent thinker who is not blinded by passion, bad habits, and ignorance (Lawhead, 2002:178-180).

Essentially, natural law holds that laws and legal system can be criticised on moral grounds; that there are standards against which legal norms can be compared and sometimes found wanting. This standard is sometimes described as "a (the) higher law" (Bix, 2010:211). Bix categorised natural law theories under two broad groups, namely: traditional theories and modern theories. While the traditional theories were generally taking a particular position on the status of morality (that true moral beliefs are based in or derived from human nature or the natural world, that they are not relative, that they are accessible to human reason and so on), a position which then had some implications

for how legislators, judges and citizens should act, it also has implication for all aspects of living a good life.

The modern natural law theories contain theories specifically about law, which hold that moral evaluation of some sort is required in describing law, particular legal systems, or legal validity of individual norms (ibid, 219). For Aquinas, not only must our individual moral lives be consistent with natural and divine law, positive human law must be derived from natural law. Laws that are inconsistent with the natural law are no laws in the true sense of the world.

While Aquinas submits that anti-natural human laws may be obeyed if disobedience would result in a greater evil or scandal, law inconsistent with divine laws must be disobeyed because it is better to obey God than man. Accordingly, natural law leads to man's natural ends, i.e. the good life on earth, whereas divine law leads to eternal happiness and what counts as moral can only be deduced from them. The divine law is found in the Holy Scriptures, according to Aquinas.

3.1.3 Kant's Duty Ethics

Immanuel Kant's contribution to moral philosophy is special. Essentially, he emphasised on duties, motives, the dignity, and worth of persons, and moral law that is absolute and unchanging (Lawhead, 2002, 340). He argues that moral law cannot be derived from any empirical facts or experience but only from reason. Acting morally is thus reduced to acting rationally and acting immorally is deduced to acting irrationally. A rational rule is one that is universal and consistent. It is universal in that it is a rule that applies to all people at all times and in all circumstances. It is consistent in that it does not lead to any contradiction (Ibid, 324).

The starting point of morality, Kant submits, is the realisation that nothing in the world can possibly be conceived, which could be good without qualification except goodwill (Kant, 1959:9). The justification for this is that other good things or qualities such as mental abilities, qualities of temperament, and fortune can be used for evil without goodwill. Goodwill for him is always good under any condition. Actual consequence, intended consequences, and feelings or inclinations are irrelevant in identifying this goodwill. In his words, even if it should happen that, by a particularly unfortunate fate or by the (Stingy) provision of step-motherly nature, this will should be wholly lacking in power to accomplish its purpose and if even the greatest effort would not avail it to achieve anything of its end, and if there remained only the good will (not as mere wish but as the summoning of all the means in our power), it would sparkle like a jewel in its own right as something

that had its full worth in itself (Ibid, 10). Actual consequences are irrelevant because the motive behind them may not be good. Further, feelings or inclinations are of no moment because they are unstable, whereas the demand for morality is always sacrosanct.

The only motive that gives the goodwill moral worth is when the moral action is done out of a sense of duty. Kant illustrated this by asking us to imagine a man who has power and the moral obligation to help others in distress but is so clouded by his sorrows that he is emotionally numb to the feelings of others. Now supposed to tear himself, unsolicited by inclination, out of his dead insensibility and to perform this action only from duty and without any inclination – then for the first time, his action has genuine moral worth (Ibid, 14). Accordingly, a will is morally good if and only if it is moved to act on the basis of moral duty.

For Kant, acting out of a sense of duty is not enough since one might have goodwill (be well-intended) but still end up doing the wrong thing. It is for this 'reason' Kant sees moral law as a rule for guiding behaviour, which has as its source reason. Moral law is stated in the form of categorical imperative and not hypothetical imperative because it is not (contingent on prior conditions, subjective wants, and wishes, etc. The principles governing moral conduct that must be done out of duty in the form of categorical imperative are in three versions. They are:

i.   Act only according to the maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law (Ibid, 39)
ii.   Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end never as a means only (Ibid, 47). What this means is that each person has intrinsic worth and dignity, and we should not use people or treat them as things; we should treat ourselves with respect.
iii.   The third is the idea of the will of every rational being as making universal law (Ibid, 49). This essentially means that though all moral agents are bound by the moral law, as long as we are rational persons, we are autonomous legislators of moral law. If all people obeyed the law of reason, they would constitute a perfect community, which Kant calls a kingdom of ends in which everyone would follow the same universal morality (Lawhead, 2002:344).
        In line with his Christian tradition, Kant used his moral theory to prove the existence of God. For him, if we act out of duty, there is someone who commands such duty, and that entity is God who also rewards such virtue (Popkin and Stroll, 1993:41).

4.0   CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion has shown that moral law as a concept is more forceful because it imposes an obligation on the individual to act morally according to laid down moral precepts irrespective of the consequences or one's inclination. Duty and obligation, therefore, run through the three ethical theories that can be described as moral law discussed above. However, it is common knowledge that certain situations lead to awkwardness when a general rule is applied to them. Even in law, it is commonplace that every general rule has an exception. Moral law has thus been criticised for not being a realistic philosophy. However, a more plausible way of viewing moral law is that suggested by Thilly, who argued that the moral law was made for man and not man for the moral law (Thilly, 1900:228). Thilly summed up his view by submitting that moral laws can differ for different stages of society because conditions differ within the limits of a given society. Moreover, the individuals themselves differ (Ibid, 232).

5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, we discussed the concept of moral law with emphasis on the following:

- The concept of moral law essentially imposes a duty to act morally on all moral agents irrespective of the consequences of such actions or their subjective feelings or inclinations.
- The service of such moral precepts varies from one school of thought to the other. While divine command theory holds that the supernatural is what determines what is moral and what is immoral, the natural theory claims that what counts as moral can be deduced from nature through reason.
- From Kant, rationality is the source of moral law.
- The Kantian conceptions of moral law are too rigid for a rapidly changing world, and accordingly, a more realistic and flexible version should be embraced.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

i.   Briefly state and explain what the concept of moral law implies
ii.   List the divisions of the concept of moral law and explain any one of them.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   State the three versions of categorical imperative statements.
2.   Briefly explain the following:

         a.   The divine command theory
         b.   The Idea of Natural law
         c.   Kant's Duty Ethics

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UNIT 4   PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE AND CONSCIENCE

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to the principles of justice and conscience. It shows how the two concepts are interwoven and how conscience was prior to justice. Conscience can be conceived as our sense of duty, justice is sometimes seen by some philosophers in terms of equity, and others sometimes see it as fairness. It is also considered as an agreement with set-down laws or principles (Ndubuisi: 2010). According to this understanding, conscience motivates us to act according to moral principles or beliefs we already possess and to act by either whatever is just or unjust. This unit looks into the concept of justice and conscience espoused by different philosophers from different philosophical eras.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

* explain Plato
* discuss Aristotle
* examine St. Augustine
* describe Thomas Hobbes
* elucidate on Immanuel Kant
* explain John Rawls.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Justice

It is not an exaggeration to say that Socrates spent his whole life inquiring into the meaning of justice. For Socrates, justice was minding one's own business (Stanley, 1942:395-399). Justice, as a concept, could be seen from different perspectives. There is hardly any definition that can exhaust the meaning of justice. Historically, justice has regularly attracted the profound interests of politicians, economists, sociologists, and jurists, among others. Despite its significant role in institutionalising social institutions and designing the system of distribution, the question of what is justice has always endured the problem of conceptual disarrays. It is still unfolding demands for conceptual clarities and interpretations. However, below are the different conceptions of the principles of justice by leading justice thinkers from different philosophical epochs.

3.1.1 Ancient Period

From the ancient period emerged the general concept of *dikaiosune*, or justice, as a virtue that might be applied to a political society.

3.1.1.1 Plato

The Platonic idea of justice is expressed through the faculty of his teacher, Socrates. In his Dialogues, Plato consistently speaks through his teacher Socrates, who takes the main character in almost all Platonic dialogues. Plato has specifically dealt with justice in one of his Dialogues called Republic. Book I and II of Republic especially elaborate on the Platonic concept of justice.

At the end of Book I, Socrates remarks that "And the result of the whole discussion has been that I know nothing at all. For I know not what

justice is, and therefore I am not likely to know whether it is or is not a virtue, nor can I say whether the just man is happy or unhappy". This observation of Socrates springs from the long discussion between several high profile people attempting to define justice mostly from three broad perspectives. First, justice was discussed as an act of fulfilling a duty. The example taken was paying-off a debt. Socrates exposes exceptions to this idea of justice. With the exception in place, the next concept of justice was discussed.

Second, the discussion focused on distinguishing between justice and injustice or just and unjust. Among many examples discussed, one of the representative ideas was that being friendly, or just, to a friend and being unjust to the enemy was considered as the standard of justice. However, Socrates again discounted this idea of justice, arguing that one should not be exempted from paying off the debt even to an enemy. Third, being dissatisfied with the discussion, philosopher Thrasymachus proposed a third idea of justice. His idea of justice was that whatever the forms of government might be, tyrannical, monarchical, or democratic, the interests of the ruler are ordered (commanded) in the form of law, which in the final analysis is justice. Socrates also discounted the third idea of justice proposed by Thrasymachus. A question arises, then, what Socrates means by justice. The provisional agreement among the discussants, including Socrates, was that justice was virtue and wisdom, and injustice vice and ignorance. (Benjamin: 2011). For Plato, virtue is good and advantageous; therefore, virtue is the source of well-being. Thus, Plato draws well-being as the standard of justice both at the individual and institutional contexts (Benjamin: 2011).

3.1.1.2 Aristotle

Aristotle's inquiry on justice begins with a question: what is the highest of all goods achievable by human actions? Despite various accounts, Aristotle infers that the answer to the question for all people should be happiness. (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, location 19714, in Aristotle's Collection 29 Books (W. D. Ross Transl. Kindle Edition, 2007). As the highest achievable good, happiness can be perceived in several ways. Among them, Aristotle finds three interpretations of happiness: *pleasure, wisdom, and virtue*. Many people perceive happiness as pleasure, which to Aristotle is animalistic instinct. Some people perceive happiness as honour, but Aristotle considers it as practical wisdom or political wisdom. Few people perceive happiness as a virtue, (19731-19740), which Aristotle considers the highest form of human achievement.

Nevertheless, all types of people choose happiness for self-satisfaction and never for the sake of something else. Pleasure, honour, and virtue

are chosen for the sake of happiness, judging through them, one should be happy. Contrarily, no one desires happiness only for the sake of pleasure, honour, or virtue, but for anything other than itself. The question Aristotle asks: is happiness self-sufficient? Aristotle argues that as the end of an action, where acts are pleasant to the lover of justice and in general virtuous acts to the lover of virtue, only virtuous acts are self-sufficient.

In Book V of Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle specifically dealing on justice, asks a question that, what kind of actions would champion justice? Aristotle infers, justice is a kind of character reflected in just acts, and injustice is the opposite of just acts reflected in unjust deeds. He further explains what is just and what unjust acts are. Aristotle powerfully argues that all lawful and fair acts are just; all unlawful and unjust acts are unfair. In quintessence, Aristotle emphasises that all lawful acts are what we mean by justice.

Further, Aristotle contends that just acts are divided into two categories: lawful and fair; likewise, unjust acts are also divided into two categories: unlawful and unfair. This analysis of Aristotle is highly impressive, but fails to answer the question of whether in any modern state, is a person supposed to interact with others with both of these standards (lawful and fair) side by side? Are people free to choose a standard conceived fair by them instead of a lawful standard? If there is a conflict between fair and lawful standards, what standards should the people and institutions choose? These basic questions discounted by Aristotle in analysing the concept of justice have opened a historically unsettled debate on the nature of law, morality, and justice. On the one hand, this very concept of Aristotelian justice presents a brilliant idea about justice, and on the other hand, it also presents complex conceptual disorientation.

The confusion emanates from combining lawful and just acts within the framework of justice. Should an act be lawful to be just? Or, should an act be just to be lawful? If the answers were positive, then the division between just and lawful or unjust and unlawful would be redundant. In other words, any act that is not justified by law cannot be supplied as a standard of human interactions. In this sense, the idea that law in itself is justice has been ignored under the Aristotelian framework of justice. As a result, normative undertakings have overwhelmed the Aristotelian discourse on justice.

The Aristotelian concept of justice as a means or an intermediate, and injustice as an extreme, is equally thought provoking as to the idea of virtue. For Aristotle, justice plays a commensurate role in the process of exchange and distribution. For instance, maintaining a state of

equilibrium in the process of exchange is the name of fair distribution. In this state of equilibrium, no one gets more or less disproportionate to the value of exchange.

3.1.2 Medieval Period

3.1.2.1 St. Augustine

The Augustinian notion of justice includes what by his day was a well-established definition of justice of "giving every man his due." However, Augustine grounds his application of the definition in distinctively Christian philosophical commitments. "Justice," says Augustine, "is love serving God only, and therefore ruling well all else." Accordingly, justice becomes the crucial distinction between ideal political states (none of which presently exist on earth) and non-ideal political states- the status of every political state on earth. For example, the Roman Empire could not be synonymous with the City of God precisely because it lacked true justice as defined above. And since "where there is no justice, there is no commonwealth," Rome could not truly be a commonwealth, that is, an ideal state. "Remove justice," Augustine asks rhetorically, "and what are kingdoms but gangs of criminals on a large scale? What are criminal gangs but petty kingdoms?" No earthly state can claim to possess true justice, but only some relative justice by which one state is more just than another. Likewise, the legitimacy of any earthly political regime can be understood only in relative terms. The emperor and the pirate have equally legitimate domains if they are equally unjust.

3.1.3 Early Modernity

3.1.3.1 Thomas Hobbes

Whereas Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and so on, all offer accounts of justice that represent alternatives to Sophism. Thomas Hobbes, the English radical empiricist, can be seen as resurrecting the Sophist view that we can have no objective knowledge of it as a moral or political absolute value.

According to Hobbes, in *The State of Nature*, all moral values are strictly relative to our desires: whatever seems likely to satisfy our desires appears "good" to us, and whatever seems likely to frustrate our desires we regard as "evil." It's all relative to what we imaginatively associate with our own appetites and aversions. But as we move from this state of nature to the state of civil society using the social contract, we create the rules of justice by means of the agreements we strike with one another. Prior to the conventions of the contract, we were morally

free to try to do whatever we wished. But when a covenant is made, then to break it is *unjust*. To Hobbes, however, the definition of injustice is no other than *the non-performance of the covenant*. What is not unjust is *just* in civil society. This turns out to be the third law of nature, that, in the name of justice, we must try to keep our agreements.

3.1.4 Recent Modernity

3.1.4.1 Immanuel Kant

The philosopher Immanuel Kant believed that his retributive theories of justice were based on logic and reason. The retributive stance on punishment states that punishment is necessary, and indeed, justified, on the basis that the act of committing crime deserves punishment. The strict guidelines Kant's theories created, coupled with the very nature of retributive justice, fuelled the arguments of Kant's critics who claimed his approach would lead to harsh and ineffective sentencing. Kant opined that:

> judicial punishment can never be used merely as a means to promote some other good for the criminal or for civil society, but instead, it must in all cases be imposed on him only on the ground that he has committed a crime; for a human being ought never to be manipulated merely as a means related to another's purposes… First, he must be found to be deserving of punishment before consideration can be given to the utility of this particular punishment for himself or for fellow citizens. (1988:114 and 643)

Upon considering the above, it is clear that, in Kant's view, the only purpose punishment should serve is to penalise the criminal for committing a crime. Whether or not the punishment could affect the criminal's propensity to reform is therefore irrelevant. The punishment is there to punish the criminal for the crime they have committed; nothing more, nothing less.

This leads us to the theory of 'justice as deserts'. This theory is now considered as one of the most prominent views on the subject of punishment of criminals. The key belief of the principle is that offenders must deserve punishment. In everyday thinking about punishment, the idea of desert figures prominently. One can see that when you ask the person on the street why a wrongdoer should be punished, he or she is likely to say that he 'deserves' it."

Kant advocated two principles regarding the way punishment should be meted out. As we have established above, the first of which is that the only right and proper grounds for punishment is that the criminal 'deserves it'. And so it follows that punishing a criminal to promote happiness, reformation, or deterrence would run contrary to the 'categorical imperative' by making the punishment a means to an end. Kant's categorical imperative is the universal law that states that all people must act in a morally correct manner at all times. Therefore one's desires or wishes cannot be taken into account when making a decision, as no one person's desires should be prioritised above another's. The desired outcome of any action must be to avoid causing harm or inflicting damage upon another person. In this regard, Kant defines an act as 'morally correct' if it can be applied as a universal law. For example: "I will never tell the truth" would be deemed to be immoral because it could not be applied as a universal law as, in the event of everyone having to "never tell the truth" (1998:197), the truth would lose its significance.

In simpler terms, when considering Kant's categorical imperative, the logical approach surely dictates that we must consider that the effect our own actions will have on others, and then to avoid carrying out actions that will harm or hinder the rights of others. The second of Kant's principles regarding punishment relates to proportionality; the sentence received should be proportionate to the crime committed (Kant, 1988:581).

Kant's theories of autonomy and free decision making make up the foundations for his view on 'justice as deserts'. The theory submits, first of all, that everybody is duty-bound to respect each other's rights. Kant goes on to suggest that adhering to the law is a sacrifice of one's right to freedom of choice (674-687). Therefore, those that commit crime gain an unfair advantage over those that do not. Punishment is used as a means to redress the balance between the law-abiding citizens and the criminals, removing any unfairly gained advantage from the criminals. The punishment is intended to punish no more or less than relates to the advantage gained. It follows, therefore, that deterrence and reformation bear no relevance to this method of sentencing.

3.1.5 Contemporary Period

3.1.5.1 John Rawls

Justice as fairness is not only a popular phrase widely used across the globe in almost all social science disciplines under the influence of Rawls, but also represents a deep explication of the concept of justice. Despite being influenced by Kant, Rawls clearly departs from the Kantian conception of justice by claiming that justice as fairness is not a metaphysical conception (a categorical imperative) but a political conception of liberal democracy (1999:187). As a metaphysical concept, the idea of justice always placed priority on the laws of reason (moral laws) over the positive laws. Rawls considers such an idea of moral laws would be detrimental to democracy; instead, he offers how laws, including a constitution, could incorporate the idea of justice and implement justice as a part of the rule of law (ibid, 192). Yet, it should not be ignored that the Rawlsian conception of justice has some roots still connected with the Kantian legacy. Rawls himself has acknowledged that justice as fairness resembles, in a fundamental way, with the Kantian moral conception. Despite the fact, the Kantian idea of justice and the Rawlsian idea of justice are not the same.

A Theory of Justice is one of the most important works of John Rawls. It offers two principles of justice. First, he offers these two principles provisionally and then, with in-depth analysis, offers the final version of the two principles, which are also revised. The provisional version of the two principles is as follows: first, each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others (ibid, 220).

Second: Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all (ibid, 226). The first principle can be called a principle of liberty, and the second principle can be called a principle of managing inequality. However, Rawls calls the first principle 'equal liberty principle,' and the second he calls 'difference principle'. These are principles Rawls argues would be the outcome of negotiations in the 'original position'. By the original position, he means something equivalent to the state of nature where negotiations take place.

3.2   Conscience

If there is such a thing as conscience, in a sense (which we need not yet endorse), very roughly of a piece of mental equipment which tells us authoritatively what is the right thing to do from time to time, then

moral philosophy ought to have no other positive advice to offer than simply 'Do what your conscience advises,' 'Always let your conscience be your guide,' etc. And if moral philosophers had any practical function other than re-iterating such exhortations, it would take the form, not of discovering what in particular conscience would recommend, but of finding ways and means of making peoples' consciences clear, or of inducing people to take their consciences seriously. The reason why philosophers, if they agreed that there were consciences in the above sense, could not proceed to offer positive moral advice, or set up supreme moral principles, or anything of the kind, is that to do this would be to usurp the supposed authority of conscience to invite people to consult, not their conscience but a philosophical theory.

What exactly do we want to know when we ask whether there is such a thing as a conscience? What seems to be required is a definition of conscience sufficiently illuminating to enable us to have a look and see, and to identify what we see as being or not being an authentic instance of conscience. But there is something very odd about the thought of first writing down a definition of conscience, saying 'This is what consciences is'. (Hunter: 1963:309-334)

3.2.1 Historical Definitions of Conscience

Historically, systematic thought about conscience arose from attempts to unravel the knotty problem of what was called 'the erroneous conscience' If conscience commands something which God's law forbids, what is the position? St Augustine, early in the fifth century, gave a famous answer: 'The command of a subordinate authority is not binding if it runs counter to the command of his superior; but conscience has no authority except that which it receives as God's delegate; if, therefore, conscience commands something which is against God's law, we are bound not to follow it. This argument went almost unchallenged for over 800 years. It was disposed of by St Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century. Augustine's principle would be relevant, he urged, only if one knew that the subordinate's command ran counter to his superior's, but the person whose conscience is in error does not know that it is at variance with God's law. A person is to be judged, not in the light of the situation as it actually is, but in the light of the situation as he perceives it to be; Aquinas, therefore, concludes, without qualification, that it is always wrong to act against conscience.

He applies his principle with rigorous logic and exemplifies it with two striking cases. First, if a person believed in conscience that it was sinful to abstain from fornication, he would sin by so abstaining. Second, if a person believed in conscience that it was wrong to become religious, he would sin if he became one. Hence for Aquinas, conscience is not a

faculty nor an innate perceptive skill, but a judgment of ordinary human reason brought to bear on a moral issue. At the same time, Aquinas holds that every normal adult is equipped with the 'primary precepts' prerequisite for making such judgments. Not matters of specific moral principle, but some very general underlying presuppositions of value judgment.

For instance, happiness is preferable to unhappiness; life is preferable to death; health, to sickness; pleasure, to pain; knowledge, to ignorance or error; to have friendship and love is preferable to being without them. On one interpretation of Aquinas, these and a few other such radical preferences or 'natural inclinations' provide the implicit premises for all moral reasoning and choice. They may not be explicitly stated in propositional form, but they are so universally taken for granted as a value system (Eric D'Arcy:1977:98-99). The following philosophers also contribute to this topic.

3.2.2 Bishop Butler

Bishop Butler characterised moral conscience by two well-known and, one supposes, deliberately paradoxical phrases: it is "a sentiment of the understanding," and "a perception of the heart." These descriptions neatly straddle the question as to whether conscience is a faculty of reason or a faculty of sense or sentiment. For Butler, conscience seems to be a combination of cognitive faculty, affording knowledge of what is right and wrong (whether intuitively or not is not quite clear), and emotive faculty, registering feelings of obligation, remorse, etc.

How does conscience guide us? Butler answers that any man reflecting in a calm and cool hour simply knows what is right and wrong. If he will but let his conscience speak, it will tell him what he needs to know from a moral point of view. However, it does not speak in general rules or formulas. Hence Butler seems to subscribe to a form of what Henry Sidgwick has called 'perceptual intuitionism.' Why obey conscience? Because it is a law of my nature, Butler answers. It carries its own authority with it. The question, "Why should I obey my conscience?" is virtually equivalent to the question, "Why ought I to do what I ought to do?" No further justification of the validity of conscience's dictates is possible or necessary. Our passions may have greater power, but conscience has supreme authority, it has strength, it has right, it has power, and it has manifest authority that could absolutely govern the world.

3.2.3 John Stuart Mill

According to Mill, the internal sanction of duty, whatever our standard of duty may be, is one and the same. Whenever we violate a duty, we have a feeling in our mind, a pain, more or less intense, attendant, on violation of duty, which in properly cultivated moral natures rises. This feeling, when disinterested and connecting itself with the pure idea of duty, and not with some particular form of it, or with any of the merely accessory circumstances, is the essence of conscience.

Apart from the often-repeated criticism that Mill in general confused moral binding force with psychological determination or moving appeal, two comments about his particular conception of conscience are in order:

(1)   Mill acknowledges, rightly, that conscience is a "complex phenomenon" and that it is difficult to extract the "essence" of conscience from the "collateral associations" and "accessory circumstances" with which it is incrusted and surrounded. But this is merely another way of saying that the authentic voice of conscience is difficult if not impossible to distinguish from other "voices" be they moral, immoral, or amoral, religious, cultural, or social. Since Mill did not appeal to conscience as the highest tribunal of moral judgment, however, he is not compelled, as is Butler, to resolve the difficulty at hand.

(2)   Mill would have us understand that conscience is an effective response to a deliberate, willed action fulfilling or violating our duty as we conceive it to be. But would it not be more accurate to say that conscience occasions feelings of remorse and guilt, approval and esteem, than to say that conscience is these feelings? If conscience is a feeling of guilt, approbation, etc., then not only is it not a faculty or source of moral knowledge, it is not even a faculty or source of distinctively moral sentiments. For, as Mill points out the sentiments in question are often occasioned by or have reference to non-moral states of affairs. Finally, we might note that on Mill's view, conscience is merely reflexive. It has no active moral role at all. On this account, the phrase "dictates of conscience" is left with no intelligible meaning.

3.2.4 C. D. Broad

C. D. Broad asserts that conscience has a threefold nature: cognitive, affective, and conative. According to Broad, to say that a person has a conscience means, in the wide sense:

(1)   That he has and exercises the cognitive power of reflecting on his own past and future actions, and considering whether they are right or wrong; or reflecting on his motives, intentions, emotions, dispositions, and character, and considering whether they are morally good or bad.

(2)   That he has and exercises the emotional disposition to feel certain peculiar emotions, such as remorse, feeling of guilt, moral approval, etc., towards himself and his own actions, dispositions, etc., in respect of the moral characteristics which he believes these to have.

(3)   That he has and exercises the conative disposition to seek what he believes to be good and to shun what he believes to be bad, as such, and do what he believes to be right and avoid what he believes to be wrong, as such (Peter Fuss:1964:111).

4.0   CONCLUSION

This unit has introduced us to the origin of justice and different opinions of philosophers from different philosophical epochs. It has been shown that through our individual conscience, we become aware of our deeply held moral principles, we are motivated to act upon them, and we assess our character, our behaviour and ultimately ourselves against those principles. Different philosophical approaches to justice and conscience have emphasised different aspects of this broad awareness.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit highlighted the following about the principles of justice and consciousness:

- History of justice starting from the ancient Greek period to the medieval period, to the early modernity, recent modernity, contemporary period.
- Conscience can be conceived as our sense of duty; some writers sometimes see justice in terms of equity.
- Others sometimes see conscience as fairness or as legitimacy that is sometimes an agreement with set-down laws or principles.
- For Socrates, justice was minding one's own business and an act of fulfilling a duty.
- Justice has regularly attracted the profound interests of politicians, economists, sociologists, and jurists, among others.
- The Augustinian notion of justice includes what by his day was a well-established definition of justice of "giving every man his due.";
- According to Hobbes, the definition of injustice is no other than *the not performance of covenant*.

- Immanuel Kant believed that his retributive theories of justice were based on logic and reason. The retributive stance on punishment states that punishment is necessary, and indeed, justified, on the basis that the act of committing crime deserves punishment.
- Rawls clearly departs from the Kantian conception of justice by claiming that justice as fairness is not a metaphysical conception (a categorical imperative) but a political conception of liberal democracy.
- Bishop Butler characterised moral conscience by two well-known and, one supposes, deliberately paradoxical phrases: it is "a sentiment of the understanding," and "a perception of the heart."

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

i.   Explain John Rawl's concept of justice.
ii.   What do you think is the idea of justice, according to Hobbes?

6.0   TUTOR MARKED EXERCISE

1.   Explain the phrase "minding one's own business," according to Socrates' view.
2.   How did St. Augustine justifies, "giving every man his due" as justice?
3.   C. D. Broad asserts that conscience has a threefold nature. Mention them and explain any one of them.

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MODULE 4

Unit 1   Definition of Good
Unit 2   Knowing the Good and Doing the Good
Unit 3   The Nature of Right and Wrong

UNIT 1   DEFINITION OF GOOD

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objective
3.0   Main Content
            3.1   Defining Good
            3.2   The Functional Definition Of Good
            3.3   Philosophical definition of Good(ness)
                        3.3.1   Moral Objectivism
                        3.3.2   Moral Nihilism
                        3.3.3   Moral Relativism
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the previous sections (modules), you learnt about the nature of ethics, origin, definition, division, methodology, and the nature of human conduct. You also learnt about the relationship between ethics and some related concepts, such as morality, law, justice, and conscience. In this module, we shall examine the concept of good, right, and wrong, doing good and avoiding wrong. However, in this unit, we shall go through the definition of the concept, 'good'.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

• explain the philosophical definition of good
• differentiate between the philosophical definition of good and functional or ordinary language definition.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Defining Good

The word 'good' is being used in many senses. Two major usages of it shall be examined in this unit. The most common way of its usage is 'the functional' or 'ordinary language' usage. The other usage seems not too popular, but it is frequently used without people paying attention to its importance, it is 'the philosophical or moral usage'. David Ross called it 'the predicative use' of good, (Ross, 2002: 65). Though people do not pay much attention to the differences between the two usages mentioned, we shall examine them in this unit. Each of these usages has the definition of good on its own.

3.2   The Functional Definition of Good

Often times, when we speak, we do say 'something is good.' For instance, watching a football match, someone might remark 'team A is good'; another person might claim that team B is good also. We do also say, 'the orange is good.' The above examples are attributive usage of good. Likewise, in daily conversation, it is common to hear statements in the following manner: Samsung is a good electronics manufacturer, Land Rover Defender is a good car, and so on. Apart from the application of good to things, it is also being ascribed to human beings. In this regard, we could say: 'Samuel Peter is a good boxer.' 'Sunny Ade is a good singer.' These latter examples are predicative usage. Note usage in this form: 'Akin is a good person.' Though, it is also a predicate usage, but different from the previous ones. Because it is easy to find out what is meant by a 'good singer' and a 'good boxer', but not the case with a 'good person'. The question is: what do we mean by the word good in these expressions?

It is not difficult to define good as used in all the expressions above except the last example, because, in ordinary language usage, the word good is used:

(i)   When some of our desires are satisfied, that is when we like what we describe as good. In other words, it is often used to show personal liking and preference. The instance of this is seen in the attributive usages above.

(ii)   When someone performs a function to a certain degree of our satisfaction.

(iii)   And of a thing, when it functions up to standard or more than the other things in its category. Now, the dictionary definition of good fit into the functional definition.

According to Webster's dictionary, good is "being positive or desirable in nature", "having the qualities that are desirable or distinguishing in a particular thing." This definition is adequate as to the functional definition, and it could address the statements given as examples earlier without many challenges.

There might be disagreement between people weather a thing is good or not in the functional or ordinary language usage of the word good; however, such disagreement could be resolved by merely looking at the basic standards to be fulfilled. For instance; we can examine the quality A having to be described as good over, and above B. On this note, we want to agree that the dictionary definition is suitable for the functional usage of the word 'good' but not sufficiency to the philosophical usage of the word, which is moral in nature. If we take the dictionary definition of good as final, the philosophical question that would likely follow is: is good a subjective value to be determined by each individual according to what they think desirable? Owning to this obvious the philosophical question, we shall look at the definition of good or goodness as defined by philosophers.

3.3   Philosophical Definition of Good(ness)

Before we move on, two clarifications need to be made:

(i)   Philosophical concepts are not easy to define in a simple single sentence. Philosophers define concepts through analysis, which is called conceptual analysis.

(ii)   The functional or conventional or simply put, the dictionary definition of word or concept is taken tentatively by philosophers.

In other words, the dictionary definition of words is not taken as final by philosophers, rather, as a 'rough guide' in analysing concepts.

Philosophical definitions, like other definitions, are clarifications of meanings that are usually aimed to assist the process of definitions. But in most cases, it does this by providing or pointing at an example: this is called 'ostensive' definition. Having made the above note, let us begin the philosophical definition of good.

Now, when we say 'a ball pointed pen is a good biro', we mean such a ball pointed pen functions optimally. There is no philosophical problem in the statement above. We have a standard of how a biro works. However, when we say 'Musa is a good person'; there is a philosophical problem. It is a value or moral statement. It is a statement in the realm of ethical judgment, such as: 'pleasure is good' or 'knowledge is good'.

The question is: How do we measure a good person? With what parameter do we measure human beings? A 'good person' in the statement has to do with the acts or actions or characters of the person mention. Human actions and characters are the focus of ethics and ethical theories.

Though everyone takes action or has character, does that mean everyone knows what is good? Out of curiosity, another question could be triggered like: what do we mean by "good"? In other words, what do we call "good"? This question appears simple to answer. At least, someone can give a functional or dictionary definition to it. This would seem to remove the ambiguity. However, it would not remove the philosophical problems that gave birth to the question. Because, the dictionary would give an ordinary descriptive definition, and states how a word is employed in common usage. Meanwhile, the philosophical definition is prescriptive. It states how a word is used in a certain context or system (Williams, 1937:416).

Philosophers over the ages have attempted a definition of good, or identify what good is. However, there are differences in their definitions and what they identified as the ultimate good. According to Franz Brentano, to answer the question "what is good?" we must, first of all, find out 'the origin of our concept of the good.' He said the concept of good, like all other concepts, has its origin in certain intuitive presentations (Brentano, 2009:8). Some philosophers, notably, G.E. Moore, claim 'good' cannot be analysed, even if an attempt is made to analyse it, it cannot be understood by someone who does not know it. According to Moore, "good is incapable of any definition" (Moore, 1993:10). Furthermore, Moore said good is a simple concept like the colour yellow, just as you cannot explain to anyone who does not already know what yellow is, you cannot explain what good is too. He opined that we could use 'the good' to term all that is good—as such, defining good would then involve classifying, listing, pointing out the several good things.

Many philosophers have rejected Moore's position. Though they agreed that the concept of good is not easy to define philosophically, as we have in ordinary language usage. David Ross, for instance, says, "I can with a certain modification accept Professor Moore's comparison" he noted that goodness is a quality that cannot be defined in terms of anything but itself. He further opined that goodness 'is essentially a quality of states of mind' (Ross, 2002: 86).

Without dwelling much on the on-going debate, let us examine what other (few) philosophers and ethical theories have said on the subject. We shall do this under three categories:

(i)   Moral objectivism
(ii)   Moral nihilism
(iii)   Moral relativism. Each of these categories will be represented by one or two philosophers or ethical theories.

3.3.1 Moral Objectivism

The Platonic – Plato and his supporters – believe that goodness is not what everyone can know, rather, only the intellectuals have the capacity to know. According to Plato, there is the immutable real things, goodness included, in the world of forms, and everything we have in this world only shares attributes of the one in the world of forms.

Like the Platonic, most philosophers believe that goodness is mental. They do not do the definitional analysis of the concept. Instead, they examine the moral attitudes that can be characterised as good. They seem to have the notion that the concept of good in itself does not have a definition.

Aristotle in the opening paragraph of the *Nicomachean Ethics* opined that all 'skills', 'inquiries', rational 'actions', and 'choices' aim at good. In other words, good is the ultimate aim of human activities. (Aristotle, 2004:3). Aristotle later distinguished between good as an end and good as a means to an end. This is what the latter philosophers discuss as an intrinsic good and instrumental good. The intrinsic good is the moral values considered to be good in themselves; they are not meant to achieve any other good, while instrumental good is the moral values considered as means to achieve other moral goods.

3.3.2 Moral Nihilism

The concept of good has no existence according to 'moral or ethical nihilism'. Ethical naturalism and two major philosophers – Baruch de Spinoza and Friedrich Nietzsche – though they belong to different worldviews, shared a Nihilistic view on the concept of good, with variations. Spinoza, a pantheist – pantheism holds that God and the world are not different and that everything in the world is part of God, and Nietzsche an atheist – atheism denies the existence of God. The detailed evaluation of their views could also be interpreted as relativism; however, in this unit, we shall examine them as nihilists.

Ethical naturalism holds that all ethical statements containing the terms such as; good, bad, evil, right, and wrong are reducible to non-ethical statements without loss of meaning. By doing this, the moral worth of such statements will vanish. Accordingly, ethical statements like

"stealing are wrong" is reducible to something like: "stealing is taken another person's property without telling him, and with the aim of not giving it back to him."

Spinoza, 'a thorough-going determinist,' opined that all events in the universe are chronologically arranged and could not be otherwise. Hence, nothing is good or evil in itself; human classification of things into good and evil or bad is based on subjective interest and concern. Whatever we wish or desire, we call it good and anything we adverse, we call evil or bad. He illustrated that a thing could be good to someone, bad to another, and indifferent to another.

In Nietzsche's view, what is classified as good, depends on individual social strata. He said the history of human societies is the history of masters and slaves. Then concerning morality, what we have is masters' morality and slaves' morality. The will governs every individual to power, so the class someone belongs to will determine what she or he will classify as good. The masters have the strong will to power, and their good are things like: pride, courage, power, strength, and nobility. On the other hand, the slaves have the weak will to power, and their good are things like: humility, piety, patience, charity, compassion, modesty, and so on. It is human that infused moral values to this based on their social status, no moral value initially.

3.3.3 Moral Relativism

Moral relativism is the belief that the worth or value of an action is relative to the situation, people, or time. There is no absolute moral standard to evaluate the goodness of an action (Lawhead, 2002:253). To the utilitarian, utility is the defining factor of good and other moral values. According to Jeremy Bentham, the major proponent of utilitarianism, in chapter one of his book *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation,* said utility means anything that tends to produce good, pleasure, and happiness but prevent evil and pain (Bentham, 1948:14-18).

While Bentham seems to promote individualistic utilitarianism, his follower, John Stuart Mill, believes utilitarianism can be universalised. He argued that as individuals look at the greater good – pleasure –to derive from an action, society can look at the greater good – pleasure – for a greater number of people. Based on utilitarianism, an action has no intrinsic worth or objective moral values; the moral value of an action is the consequence of it. In this sense, an action could be good in a particular instance and bad in another instance. Because utilitarianism values action based on its consequences, it has been classified as consequentialism which is also called teleological ethics.

It should be noted, however, that philosophers whose contributions were examined are not the only major philosophers that have expressed their thoughts on the concept of good. Rather, we examined them because of the significance of their contribution here.

Critical examinations of the three theories discussed so far under the philosophical definition of the concept of good show that:

(i) The first group sees 'good' as a purely mental, universal, and objective concept.

(ii) The second group sees 'good' to be non-existence, rather, the actor determines the value of the act.

(iii) The third group sees 'good' to be relative to the consequence of the action. It is an action or object-based; it has nothing to do with the subject. Though the theorists do not have the same view on the nature of good, they all see good to be what every human person accepted to be desirable under certain conditions.

In light of the above, it seems 'good' could be defined as qualities or things that are seen to be useful, beneficial, or aimed at for their own sake or for the sake of other goods. We could also describe good as what a person or group of people accepted to be desirable and want it done on to them even if they would not be able to replicate it. In other words, 'good' seems to be what every human person wishes for himself, and he is ready to do to others under favourable circumstances. This definition might be classified selfishness by some people, but we want to say it is not selfishness rather self-interest. Hence we shall distinguish between selfishness and self-interest. In the words of Louis P. Pojman, selfishness requires the sacrifice of other people good for personal good, even when it is unreasonable, while self- interest entails that we are free to pursue our own good, but not necessarily at all cost. I wish to excel, but I also recognise that, at times, I will fail to do so. I accept the outcome even though it is unsatisfying. (Pojman, 2005:28).

Other philosophers and ethical theories have made contributions to the discourse of the concept of good but were not considered because, in the first instance, they did not define the concept as such. What they did is a demonstration of how to know that an action is good, bad, right, or wrong. In other words, their contributions centred on what makes an action good or bad, right or wrong. Secondly, their contributions one way or the other have similarities with either of the theories examined. That is, they are either objective-based, nihilistic based, or relativistic based. Nonetheless, their contributions shall be examined in other units in this module.

4.0   CONCLUSION

Having examined the definition of good thus far, and having realised that there is no one-sentence definition acceptable by philosophers, also that philosophers do not have one voice regarding what can be characterised as good, the question that comes to mind is; how can we know that an action is good or not? This question shall be the basis of our discussions in the next unit.

5.0   SUMMARY

Below is the summary of what has been discussed in this unit:

- The concept of good could be defined in two major ways, which are the two major usages of it – functional usage and philosophical usage.
- Functional usages do take dictionary definitions.
- Disputes arising from functional usage of the word 'good' could be resolved by merely looking at the basic standard to be fulfilled.
- Philosophers do not agree on a single definition of what is good; they rather describe what they mean whenever the word has been used.
- Ethical theorists examine the concept of good in three categories: objectivism, nihilism, relativism.
- The category someone accepts determines or influences the way he or she describes good.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the two usages of the concept of good according to this unit?

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   Discuss the idea of good under the following headings:
      a. Moral Objectivism
      b. Moral Nihilism
      c. Moral Relativism
2.   "Goodness is not what everyone can know." Discuss
3.   Discuss the differences between Spinoza's and Nietzsche's nihilistic views?

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UNIT 2   KNOWING THE GOOD AND DOING THE GOOD

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we examined the definition of the concept – good – in two major ways, functional or ordinary language usage and philosophical usage. We assert that while it is easy to define 'good' in the former usage, the reverse is the case in the latter usage. In this unit, despite the difficulty of defining 'good' philosophically, we shall examine what makes an action good – philosophical criterion, and how to choose and do a good action.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

• explain the philosophical criteria for classifying actions to be good or bad
• explain why an action is good or bad
• discuss the rational justification for good actions.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Knowing the Good

As much as it is important to define what is good, it is much more important to know the good action. In other words, the major reason good (and other terms) is defined for someone to know and distinguish it from every other thing. This might be one of the reasons philosophers

112

do not spend all their time to do a descriptive analysis of the concept of good. They rather spend an enormous time demonstrating how to identify good actions in our daily interactions in society. Hence, apart from the question of definition, philosophers deal with other essential questions.

Now, we arrive at an even more fundamental question: How are we to *know* that a thing (action) is good? This question is more indispensable than the question of the definition of good. This is because the major reason we have to define, as we mentioned earlier, is to aid recognition, such that we would be able to distinguish a thing from others. Also, it is essential because it is a more philosophical question than the question of definition; 'what is good?' In philosophy, the question of 'how', is normative, it deals with 'oughtness' – which is the major concern of ethics, a major branch of philosophy – it prescribes or suggests the principle of behaviour. While the question of 'what' only describes the way things are.

3.2   Types of Good

Before we answer the question of how to know that an action is good, let us examine the two main divisions of good in philosophy. Since Plato's assertion that there exist two worlds – the world of forms and world imitation – and Aristotle's claim that we have categories of good – good as an end and good as a means to an end, philosophers have classified good into two: intrinsic good and instrumental good.

3.2.1. Intrinsic Good

The intrinsic good is things that are good on their own. They are not pursued because we want to use them as a means to get other good. Things in this category are self-sufficient. According to G.E. Moore, anything that is intrinsically good must be objective. That is, if we classified anything to have the value of intrinsic good, such a thing could not be said to be evil or bad by other people (Moore, 1993:182-184).

Philosophers do not agree on those things (actions) that could be classified as intrinsic good or having intrinsic value. Some philosophers like; the Hedonists, Plato, Aristotle, Mill, claim such things are abstract in nature. They listed happiness, pleasure, knowledge, virtues as things that have intrinsic value. Some philosophers disputed, argue that concrete things have intrinsic values. For instance, Elizabeth Anderson said things like laurel, job well done can be classified as intrinsic good (Anderson, 1993:120). Also, Shelly Kagan opined that historically significant things could be something categorised as intrinsically

valuable. He said the pen Abraham Lincoln used to sign the Emancipation Proclamation could be said to have intrinsic value (Kagan, 1998: 285).

We shall not respond to all issues arising from the nature of intrinsic good and the things that could be classified to have intrinsic good as mentioned above. However, it is worthy of note that it is disputed if pleasure, happiness, joy, and knowledge are intrinsically good. It is assumed that when someone has the knowledge, it is for a purpose. For instance, having knowledge of music might be to compose a good song, knowledge of driving might be to drive safely. In response to this, philosophers claim there is some intrinsic good that can as well be instrumental good. Hence, they have double values: intrinsic and instrumental, depend on how they are being viewed.

In another case, it is claimed that some people derived pleasure or happiness when evil happens to others. If this is true, can we say pleasure and happiness are intrinsically good? The simple response to this has been the Kantians notion that 'goodwill' is what can have intrinsic value. Therefore, any action that is not emanating from 'goodwill' is not valuable. On Kagan's pen intrinsic value, it is best to respond in line with Ben Bradley that it is not the pen that has intrinsic value, but the state of affairs involving that pen; that is, the pen was used to sign the Emancipation Proclamation (Bradley, 2001:25).

3.2.2 Instrumental Good

Instrumental good is the value that something has, in virtue of being a means to an end. In other words, instrumental good is the moral values considered as a means to achieve other moral goods. The best way to explain instrumental good, also called extrinsic good, is to illustrate thus: you are a student of this institution, offering this course PHL 204: Introduction to Ethics. You got this course material for you to read. You want to read so that you can know the course. You want to know it in order to pass it. You want to pass the course in order to graduate with a good grade. You want to have a good grade so that you will be able to get a good job. You want to get a good job because you want to live happily. Looking at the chain of actions here, it is obvious that one action leads to the other. That is to show the antecedent is instrumental to the consequence.

3.3   How to Know that an Action is Good

Now, we are back to the question of how to know that an action is good. In philosophy, it is unusual just to say this particular action is good or that particular action is bad without rational justification. And when it

comes to how to know good actions, philosophers do set the criteria or means of identifying good action. As noted earlier that philosophers do not agree on issues, it is not different in this case. Now we shall delve into different ethical theories criteria of knowing the moral status of an action.

3.3.1 Hedonism

According to this theory, the human person is governed by two masters – pain and pleasure – one is bad while the other is good. The good one – pleasure – is always being pursued, and the bad one is persistently being avoided. If we agree that pleasure is the only 'naturally good' that we must pursue and that pain is evil that must always be avoided, then the question is: What kind of life must we live that will amount to the greatest pleasure? In answering a question like this, the Cyrenaics (who were the first advocate of hedonism), according to Gordon Graham, claimed it is a bodily pleasure of food, drink, and sex (Graham, 2004:41).

However, excess food could cause obesity. Indiscriminate sex could cause HIV/AIDS. Much drinking could cause nausea. All these instances, if occurred, are painful. This would, therefore, mean pleasure can lead to pain. Then the pain we try to avoid has found its way back. This seems to be a huge challenge to bodily pleasure. In order to deal with these inadequacies, the Epicureans (Epicurus) classified pleasure into groundless (fame, material luxuries) and natural. He further divides the natural into unnecessary (sex, delicious food) and necessary (for happiness: wisdom and friendship; for comfort: adequate clothing; for life: water and plain food) (Lawhead, 2002: 91-92). Accordingly, we are to pursue the natural and necessary pleasure.

Graham accused Epicurus and his disciples of deviating from the principle of hedonism because of that call for moderation in seeking pleasure. Accordingly, he said it is an obvious fact that in the pursuit of bodily pleasure, it is practically impossible to avoid bodily pains. Hedonism cannot be salvage the way Epicureans intended to salvage it (Graham 2004:41). The question is: How do we get good and avoid bad within hedonism? In recent centuries, two philosophers (Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill) have these answers to the question.

Accordingly, Bentham introduced what is called hedonistic calculus as tools to weight which action brings more pleasure and less pain. With the calculations, we shall be able to know what to do and what to avoid. In chapter four of his work; *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Bentham listed the following as principles to calculate pleasurable actions: (i) Intensity (ii) Duration (iii) Certainty or

Uncertainty (iv) Propinquity of Remoteness (v) Fecundity (vi) Purity (vii) Extent. (Bentham 1948:31-34)

Based on the complex nature of human beings and human actions, combined with the difficulty and bizarre process of Bentham calculation, the process was rejected by John Stuart Mill. Accordingly, he accused Bentham of promoting individualistic pleasure without considering the fact that human being takes into cognisance the society before they act. Also, he argued against Bentham's quantitative pleasure, and said that must be replaced with qualitative pleasure. But how do we know quality pleasure? In Mill's view, an intelligent person knows what is pleasurable. He argued that the same way human's pleasure cannot be compared with pig's pleasure, Socrates' pleasure could not be compared with a fool's pleasure. He stated further that the fools, like the pigs, will have a different opinion because they know only their side of the opinion, but someone like Socrates knows both sides, and his opinion is far better than the fool's opinion. Going by Mill's argument, we can deduce that what makes actions good is not the mere pleasure they give us, but something else. Then, there must be some other good rather than pleasure; strict hedonism claims seem false.

3.3.2 Egoism

Egoism is a doctrine which holds that the good life is one in which you get what you want. To an Egoist, therefore, the good action is one in which its consequences are favourable to the performer. Egoism is dated back to antiquity. In the ancient period in Philosophy, Plato, through his interlocutor, Socrates attacked the theory in his dialogues – *Georgias* and *Republic*. There, Socrates disagreed with Calicles and Thrasymachus respectively on the notion that the good life entails being successful or accomplishment of what you want (Graham, 2004:20-21). During the modern era, the 17th century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes is a major proponent of the theory. According to him, human beings are naturally selfish, self-cantered, and self-seeking. If these define human beings, and good life is getting what we want, the question is: what is it that we want? What are the desires that human beings wish to fulfill? If killing others is the desire or want of a person, can that action be justified as a good one? These and many related questions are big huddles for egoism to cross-over.

3.3.3 Virtue

This theory emphasises the character trait of the person carrying out a moral act. Virtue ethics focuses on the over-all traits of character, in relation to the traits of personality. It is assumed that traits of character can, in some way, be developed through training or education, while traits of personality are fixed in human biology (Tännsjö, 2002:92). In Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, 'good' is said to be 'activity of the soul in harmony with virtue.' Thus, Aristotle's idea of the good life is one in which we use our minds (our intellectual faculty) to make, and think, and act in the best possible ways. According to Graham, Aristotle's appeal to the activities of the mind does not indicate that academic inquiry makes up a good life. But, it is intelligence in the full range of human activities that everyone can employ in their respective tasks and occupations (Graham, 2004:57)

Furthermore, in book two of the *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle explained that the good is the mean between two extreme ends. For instance, coward and recklessness are two extremes; the mean between them is courage. So, courage is a good character. Temperate is the mean between abstinence and self-indulgence, so temperate is good. Aristotle further clarifies that the mean of some actions and feelings are not accepted as good, because such actions are entirely bad. Actions such as; 'spite', 'shamelessness', 'envy', 'adultery', 'theft', 'homicide' "and others like them" are said to be devoid of "excesses or deficiencies", but bad (Aristotle, 2004:31). Knowing the mean requires practical, which Aristotle called 'practical wisdom'. The ancient Greeks put emphasis on four fundamental virtues: wisdom, courage, temperance, justice. To these natural virtues, Christianity added three theological virtues; faith, hope, love, and they claimed that the greatest of these is love.

3.3.4 Kantianism

This theory focuses attention on the intention, motif, or will behind an action. The theory is associated with Immanuel Kant, the eighteenth-century German philosopher. According to him, there is nothing in the world that "could be considered good without limitation except 'goodwill.'" Intelligence, wit, judgment, wealth, health, honour, happiness, power, courage, perseverance, and resoluteness can be misused. He argued that once the 'goodwill' is not in these "gifts of nature," they will be used to be extremely evil and harmful. In light of this, the consequences of some actions are being adorned without considering if they featured pure and 'goodwill', which ought not to be so (Kant 1998:7).

Consequently, actions should not be evaluated based on their consequences alone, rather based on the motif of the actor. Therefore, the goodness of a good motive can be what makes certain actions right. In the same way, the moral rightness of an act is not determined by the value of the consequences that follow from it, but by the moral value of the motives and intentions from which it is done.

Kant's position can be illustrated thus: if Musa heard the screaming for help of a baby stuck on a railway track and there is a fast-approaching train, then Musa rush to save the baby. Though the baby was crushed before he could be saved, the intention of Musa could have moral worth when we consider the intention behind the action. In other words, Kant opines that further exposition of Musa's motif could reveal that his intention does have moral value or not.

Multiple motifs could be behind Musa's action to save the baby. He could be moved out of pity; that is, he acted based on his emotion. He could also be to gain popularity. He could be looking for the reward that the families of the baby or the general populace would give him if he is successful. If any of the above was the motif, the action has no moral worth. Then, when will intentions or motif makes an action good? Kant says it is when the action is performed only from duty without inclination (Kant 1998:7).

It, therefore, follows that actions and their consequences must be separated from the will or intention for proper evaluation. Then, the question is: how do we determine a 'goodwill' behind an action, if we are to separate it from the consequences of an action? To ask in another form, apart from the performer of action, can others know the intention or will behind an action without examining the action and its consequences, or been told of the motif by the performer? Is it not possible that the performer could lie in order not to be blamed for the consequences of his action, and claim to have a good intention?

According to Kant, the morally 'goodwill' is in conformity with moral law (Lawhead, 2002:341), and 'goodwill' can be universalised as law, which would then be imperative (Kant, 1998: 44). Kant distinguished between two kinds of imperatives: hypothetical and categorical. Hypothetical states that if you want B, then do A. Kant rejected this because it is teleological. A real moral law he opined comes in categorical imperative, which states what someone ought to, should, must do, without any qualification, prior condition or subjective wants or wishes (Lawhead, 2002:341).

Based on the foregoing, Kant generates the categorical imperatives that should guide every human action. The first one goes thus: "act in

accordance with a maxim that can at the same time make itself a universal law." (Kant, 1998:44). Kant's position here seems to be another version of the 'golden rule', treat others the way you want to be treated. The second is as follows: "act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means." (Kant, 1998:38). It is important to note that Kant believed that only rational and free human beings could act in accordance with these categorical imperatives. Perhaps, it could be best to say that Kant's 'goodwill' depends on these imperative. If this is correct, then the 'goodwill' will be one which must put into consideration these imperatives whenever there is a moral duty to perform.

3.4   Doing Good

Having examined some ethical theories relating to our discourse, it is pertinent for us to examine ourselves, criticise the ideas we live by, or the ideas that guide our actions daily. Obviously, every one of our actions is being motivated by one or more of the ethical theories discussed, though we might not have prior knowledge of this.

Being alive is good; in fact, it is the greatest good without qualification. Because without, first, being alive, there is nothing we can do. Also, the good life is what we all desire. In order to attain a good life, everybody wishes for what appears good to him or her. In other words, to have a good life, everybody desires what seems desirable to him or her. But oftentimes, as G.E. Moore would say, people do confuse desirable with desired and end with means, and in ethics, it is difficult to convince someone that he or she has made a mistake and the mistake affects his or her judgments (Moore, 1993:195). The mistake in judgment of what is good is well explained by Aristotle when he says, "pleasure seems to deceive them because it looks like a good when it is not; people, therefore, choose what is pleasant thinking it to be good, and avoid (anything they think is capable of bringing) pain thinking it to be evil" (Aristotle, 2004:45).

Assuredly, in every action we take, we are always battling with two contending issues: doing right and faring well. These two expressions constitute what we refer to as 'the good life'. The former relates to 'living as we ought', which could also mean 'the virtuous life', and the latter refers to 'living as we would like to', that could be called 'the happy life' (Graham, 2004:124). Each of the issues raises the question of: What should I do in this situation? How should I live my life? In that respective order. Correspondingly, Louis Pojman tagged the questions as the first-order reflection and the second-order reflection. Pojman further illustrates that the second-order reflection is based on personal

interest; "I want to know what kind of life is likely to bring me the most fulfillment or happiness." (Pojman, 2005:22-23).

Indeed, individuals can aspire to be happy, but there are limitations. This is the reason hedonism, and even egoism is a theory that is built to fail. Similarly, utilitarianism would also fail. The limitations to individual happiness arise from the fact that human beings, by nature, are social beings. Even the monks that live in the cave still socialise on rear occasions. Every one of us has families, friends, and neighbours, and we want to live in a harmonious community with them. Of what use is friendship if not to care about the welfare of one another even when no immediate benefit is likely to come to oneself? If egoism is the care about oneself, and would only care about other persons to the extent that they are useful to him, then, egoists would find it difficult to live in a harmonious society.

In a similar vein, happiness or pleasure cannot constitute the only good thing as the hedonists claim. Many a time, as a member of society, we must take actions that might not be pleasurable to us. We need to deny ourselves of some goodies for the society to live in harmony. To buttress this point, Pojman says:

> The point is that our values conflict, and the pursuit of our own happiness or continued life are not absolute values. They can be overridden by other values (or combinations of values), including our love of liberty and our love for our family, friends, and nation. Many parents love their children or spouses so much that they would rather die than see them suffer excruciating pain or death. (Pojman, 2005:28)

Sacrificing for others here is not in the form of the greater good for the greater numbers of people as utilitarianism would claim, rather, it is a sacrifice born out of love and concern for others. There is no evil in the pursuit of self-interest, that is, we could be concerned to promote our own good, but that must not be at any cost. In our desire to succeed, we must recognize that sometimes we might fail to do so. Then, we must accept the just outcome even though it is frustrating.

Suffice to say in David Ross's voice that the presumption that there is one characteristic by virtue of which all the things that are good are good is not valid. It would be more plausible to say that the goodness of any action depends on its coherence with the whole system of purposes of the agent and of the society he lives in (Rose, 2002:79). The society transcends individuals, family, tribe, and ethnicity. It comprehensively accommodates everybody living together, irrespective of gender or race.

Any theory that prescribes what is good, contrary to this, would only throw society into chaos and must not be followed. Of all the theories we examined above, the virtue theory and Kantianism come close to fostering a good society, even if they have some huddles. Though others, too, have their good side, in the overall analysis, the others are too dangerous to humanity. To bring this discussion to an end, we must know that doing the good is what moves life forward, and avoiding it will twist life out of control to its demise. Therefore, our utmost actions must be aimed at good.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt some of the criteria ethicists outlined on how to know morally good actions. The unit dispels some of these criteria on the ground that it promotes individuality, which is inconsistent with human nature. Because, human beings by nature are social beings, and any form of individuality has high tendencies of breading anarchy in society. It is not enough to know morally good actions; the ultimate thing is always to do morally good actions. Based on the foregoing, the unit emphasized doing good as what everyone must prioritize.

5.0   SUMMARY

Here are some of the things we have discussed in this unit:

- The two major categories of good: Intrinsic and instrumental;
- Intrinsic good are things considered to be good in themselves, while instrumental good are things that are good because they lead to other good.
- Some ethical theories like hedonism, egoism, virtue, Kantianism, and utilitarianism have explained how to know morally good actions.
- That being alive is the greatest good, because without first being alive, there is nothing we can do.
- The theory we should allow to influence our moral actions must be able to promote a healthy society, not individualised one
- For there to be a good society, members of the society must deny themselves, or sacrifice some of their personal benefits.
- Individuals can aspire to be happy, but there are limitations. The limitations to individual happiness arise from the fact that human beings, by nature, are social beings, so as a result of interactions, individual liberty is being curtailed.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTION

Critically examine the reason why good moral actions should be the priority of every member of a society.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. "An egoist will find it difficult to live in a harmonious society." Discuss.
2. "Pleasure can lead to pain." Use this statement to do a critique of hedonism.
3. Explain Kant's 'goodwill' according to your understanding.

7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3   THE NATURE OF RIGHT AND WRONG

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The question of right and wrong action is central to morality and ethics in general. It is so fundamental that no discourse on ethics or about morality can be meaningful unless it takes into consideration the rightness and wrongness of human actions. Hence, in this unit, we shall be looking at the nature of right and wrong in morality. The following questions shall be our guide:

(i)   why do people think one action is right and another wrong?
(ii)   Which actions really are right or wrong, and how can we know that they are?
(iii)   Do right and wrong vary from place to place, time to time, or group to group?
(iv)   What do we mean when we mention the terms like 'right' and 'wrong'? It should be noted that these questions would not necessarily be answered directly or in the order, they are arranged here.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of the terms right and wrong in ethics;
- explain the differences between the right actions and wrong actions
- discuss what makes an action right, and another wrong, based on ethical theories approaches.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Nature Of Right and Wrong

The nature of right and wrong is the major concern of ethics because it deals with the question of right and wrong in human action. It is majorly concerned with the systematic study of morality. Morality itself deals with moral principles, codes, precepts that ought to guide human behaviour at every time (Omoregbe, 1993:3-4). The word "ought" in the last statement is very important, because that is what makes ethical study a normative venture. We shall not go back to the definitions and discussions on ethics and morality here, because you have treated them earlier.

The terms right and wrong are being used in many ways in human endeavour. They are being used in ethics, law, religion, engineering, politics, economics, and so on. The usage of the terms might be straight forward without confusion in some cases. But, it is always confusing in the former three ways mentioned; this is because, in those usages, they are normative. They spelt out the code of conduct expected of every member of a society. However, while legal codes are written, and they go with their sanctions, moral codes are not written, and no specific sanction stated, though they are sometimes the basis of legal codes. Like moral codes, religious codes have no natural sanction in a liberal society. The sanction is believed to be supernatural (hell, reincarnation, *karma*, and so on). However, in some religions, members may dissociate themselves from those who violate the codes. In this unit, our focus is on the moral usage of the terms.

The term 'right' is being used to describe behaviours that are judged to be acceptable, while the term 'wrong' refers to behaviours that are judged to be unacceptable. The terms moral, good, and right are interchangeably used. Correspondingly, the terms immoral, bad, and wrong are used interchangeably (Russo, 2012:253). Hence, what can be said about good could also be said about right; the same applies to bad and wrong (that does not mean there are no distinctions of any kind

between them). Ethical theories that discuss the moral worth of actions are majorly into the two categories – relativism and objectivism. Though there are ethicists that jettison the two categories and they denied the existence of morality. This position is called ethical nihilism. For now, at least in this unit, we shall examine only the two categories – objectivism and relativism.

3.2   On the Relativity or Objectivity of Right and Wrong

3.2.1 Moral Relativism

Often times, we do say, "that may be right for you, but that does not mean it is right for others," and "Do not impose your values on me." If at all you have not made a statement like these, you would have heard it in one form or another. Statements in these forms are breeds of moral relativism. Moral relativism holds that the criteria or principles by which one makes moral judgments or assessments are not absolute or universal but are relative to the individual or his/her community (Sheehy, 2006:1). It should be noted that not all relativists subscribe to individuality. For instance, Ruth Benedict argued that the moral worth of actions is being defined by the culture or society (Benedict, 2004:45). Moral relativism, in other words, is the idea that right and wrong are determined by, or are relative to time, place, and people. If that is so, then there is no right and wrong, objectively speaking. Also, right and wrong would be determined by emotion or a higher percentage of people that like a certain action.

Moral relativism becomes problematic when we examine what makes an action right and wrong. Assuming 90% of a group of people say that an action is right or wrong, would that make the action right or wrong? For instance, if 90% of Nigerians believe embezzlement of public fund is right, would that makes it right? Can we say because some cultures or societies approved racism (racial discrimination) to be right, then it is right? Other challenges faced by moral relativism include the logical consistency of accepting that an action is right in a place and wrong in another place. In a similar vein, the possibility of an action hitherto said to be wrong but now accepted to be right.

3.2.2 Moral Objectivism

The challenges moral relativism could not surmount were addressed by moral objectivism. Moral objectivism holds that the criteria or principles by which one makes moral judgments or assessments are absolute or universal. That is, what is right or wrong in a particular society has the same status in other societies. These principles are usually referred to as the law of nature (Lewis, 2004: 71). It is also assumed that everyone

knows the 'law of nature' and does not need to be taught. Moral objectivism posits that the moral value of an action does not change; either people acknowledge it to be so or not. For instance, if killing is wrong, either it is accepted by a society or not, it is wrong. If we accept moral objectivism, it means that we are not the authors of right and wrong, rather something beyond us. Also, we are all subject to the same moral standard, which cannot be bent to suit our whims or justify our actions or ease our consciences.

Any ethical theory that discusses moral actions objectively is characterised by five important criteria: rationality, openness, universality, impartiality, practicality (Russo, 2012:254-255). On rationality, an ethical theory is rational if it is not based on mere feeling, emotion, belief, and preference, but grounded on reasons which would be acceptable to sensible people. Openness entails that the theory allows criticism that would thereby showcase its merits over other theories, or its demerits. Universality requires that the theory provides general rules of behaviour, like "everyone ought to do 'y'." Then 'everyone' involved must be as broad as possible, perhaps involving humankind. Such a rule should be one that can be practical in all societies. Impartiality prohibits the treatment of people in different ways on the ground that they are different individuals. On practicality, a theory must not be so rigid that human beings would not be able to live according to its principles. That does not mean the theory cannot be idealistic or lofty, but it must not be what even people with the high moral standard will find difficult to live according to its principles. Moral rules, however, are for human beings, not for angels or ghosts.

3.3   The Theoretical Approaches to Right and Wrong

There are many ethical theories that have shaped people's sense of right and wrong, whether the people are aware or not. In our discussions here, we shall treat a few of them under the following categories: virtue ethics, deontological ethics, and consequentialist ethics. Virtue ethics and deontological ethics are also called non-consequential ethics.

3.3.1 Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethical theory believes that an act is morally right or wrong by looking at if the person that performs the act is a virtuous moral character or not. According to the theory, a virtuous person is one that has been trained and grounded in virtues such as honesty, justice, self-control, courage, and so on. Due to his or her training and habitual practices of these virtues, he or she cannot act contrary in any situation. Therefore, a virtuous person always does what is right whenever there are moral decisions to make. Aristotle and other virtue ethicists believe

that a virtuous person knows the right thing and will do just that in every situation. It should be noted here that virtue ethics based right and wrong on the actor, not the act.

3.3.2 Deontological Ethics

According to deontology, an act is morally right if such an act aligns with the rule that everyone can follow. Such a rule must also be able to be universalised. While virtue ethics look at the person that performs the act, deontology pays attention to the action. Based on the deontological principle, whatever the status of a person or his or her antecedents, he or she can still act rightly or wrongly. In principle, acts such as lying, stealing, killing of innocent people, cheating, and so on cannot be justified or universalised. Hence, they are wrong, and whoever carries out acts in this category, in respect of who he or she is, is wrong.

There are versions in deontology, rule deontology, and act deontology. Conversely, we have divine command theory, W.D. Ross deontology, and Kant deontology. We would not discuss Kant here because we have treated the theory in the previous unit in this module. Moreover, the discussions on good can also be substituted for right. Also, we would not discuss Ross deontology; therefore, we shall discuss the divine command theory.

Rule deontology holds that an action is right or wrong in and of itself because they conform to certain rules, not because it is an act of certain kind. Act deontology, on the other hand, holds that an action is right or wrong not because it conforms to certain rules or because of the kind of act it is, rather, it is by intuiting right or wrong into it.

3.3.3 Divine Command Theory

Divine command theory hinges morality on the commandments of the supernatural. This is strictly a religious view. The rightness or wrongness of an action is based on if the action is approved or not by God. The basic thing in this theory is that there is the existence of a 'supernatural being' that issues commands. Religious people, especially the 'Abrahamic' religion – Judeo-Christian and Islam – believe in the existence of a supreme being, who is the Almighty. He gave his commands that all must obey. The commands, therefore, determine what is right and what is wrong. Whoever disobeys will be punished, and whoever obeys will be rewarded, either "here on earth or in the life after death" (Omoregbe, 1993:24). The life after death is regarded as heaven, a rosy place for the virtuous people who obey the commands, and hell, a cruel place for those who disobey the commands. In light of this system of divine justice, a man who stole money either from individuals or

misappropriated government money but was not caught, prosecuted, and sentence, only to escape human's actions, but he would be punished by God here on earth of in life after death. The same thing is applicable to all offences.

There are many challenges to divine command theory. The first challenge has to do with the existence of God. The agnostics argued that if God does not exist, then the whole theory collapsed. While this challenge is basic, it is as well trivial. Because it is difficult to argue that God does not exist, even if his existence has not been scientifically proven which is what many people who argued that he does not exist based their arguments on. The second challenge is the one raised by Plato in his dialogue *Euthyphro*. Plato, through his interlocutor, Socrates, queried if gods' command is what makes an action right or wrong. He poses the question that; was the act right or wrong before gods' commandments? If an action is right before God's commandments, it means God's commands are not necessary. And if God's command is what makes an action right, thus, it follows that if God commands someone to kill, killing is right.

Another challenge to divine command theory has to do with the nature of the commandments of the monotheistic God of the Abrahamic religion: how the same God can give conflicting commands. These and many objections have been raised against Divine Command Theory. The discourse on these objections is beyond the scope of this unit. What is very clear about this theory is that it is a matter of faith. Once a person believes in God, he/she accepts the commands.

3.3.4 Consequentialist Ethics

As the name implies, consequentialism focuses on the end of actions. Consequentialist ethics is also called teleological ethics. The root word of teleology is *teleos,* which is a Greek word for end. Hence the end of an action is the sole determining factor of what is right and what is wrong. Every ethical theory that justifies the rightness and wrongness of actions based on their consequences is called consequentialist or teleological ethics. In this category, we have utilitarianism, hedonism, egoism, and situation ethics. These theories hold that right actions are one in which the ends are more favourable. In other words, the moral rightness of an action is determined by the value of the consequences that follow from such an action. We have discussed utilitarianism, hedonism, and egoism in the previous units. Hence we shall not be discussing them here.

3.3.5 Situation Ethics

According to situation ethics, the rightness or wrongness of an action is based on the situation. Joseph Fletcher, the major proponent of the theory, spelt out the conditions that make actions to be right and wrong, in his 1966 book *Situation Ethics*. He identified there approaches to moral decision making to be: legalism, which sees moral norm as absolute, antinomianism, which is lawless and without principles, that is, rejection of all moral laws, and situationism, which sees universal moral principles as a guide in one's decision making (Omoregbe, 1993:257). He rejected legalism and antinomianism because they are extreme and impracticable.

He argues against the legalistic inclinations in ethics, particularly traditional Christian ethics, which claims that some actions are intrinsically wrong. He said actions are not always wrong, rather the situation determines if they are wrong. Therefore, an action which is right in one situation can be wrong in another situation. He opined that legalism considers the letter of the law, and insists on its adherence, neglecting the spirit of the law (Fletcher, 1966: 18).

Also, Fletcher argues against legalistic positions that there are many absolute moral norms. He said all moral norms are relative, except one, which is "the law of love". Love, therefore, is the only intrinsic good. Any action that is right must be based on love. He identified three types of love, thus:

(i)   *Filial,* which is friendly love or affection, it is the kind of love that exists between parents and children;
(ii)   *Eros,* which is fanatical sexual love; and
(iii) *Agape,* which is unconditional, Christian, biblical love, the kind God shows to mankind, and everyone must extend to others.

Fletcher argues that the latter love is the only genuine love that religious people must exhibit, and it is fundamental to situation ethics. Hence, when someone performs actions in any situation based on love, the actions are right. Conversely, any action that is not based on love is wrong.

Fletcher gives ten principles of situation ethics, which are divided into four working principles and the six fundamental principles.

3.3.5.1 The Four Working Principles

1.   Pragmatism: This states that the principle of action must be practicable or workable.
2.   Relativism: Moral right and wrong are always relative to the situation.
3.   Positivism: Situation ethics relies on facts and empirical approaches to moral decisions.
4.   Personalism: Situation ethics believe that moral laws and principles are for the benefit of the people; they are for the well-being of humanity.

3.3.5.2 The Six Fundamental Principles (Propositions)

1.   Only one thing is intrinsically good, namely love. Love is always good.
2.   The ruling norm of Christian decision is love.
3.   Love and justice are the same, for justice is love distributed.
4.   Love wills the neighbour's good, whether we like him or not. Love is more than liking.
5.   Only the end justifies the means. Actions only acquire moral status as a means to an end; therefore, the end must be the most loving result.
6.   Love's decisions are made based on the situation.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have examined the nature of right and wrong, and how central it is to ethics. A graphic representation of the three categories of ethical theory was also examined. This unit will be more meaningful if you understand the previous units in this module, and diligently study the next unit, which shall be the application of the tools – ethical theories – to moral issues in human societies.

5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed the following:

• Right actions are seen as behaviours that are morally acceptable, and wrong actions are seen as behaviours that are judged to be morally unacceptable.
• Moral theories can be grouped into: relativism and objectivism.
• Moral relativism holds that there are no universal or absolute criteria to evaluate moral actions, while moral objectivism holds that the principles or criteria for assessing moral actions are universal and absolute.

- Objective ethical theories are characterized by: rationality, openness, universality, impartiality, and practicality.
- Deontology is an objective ethical theory. And it is divided into act deontology and rule deontology.
- Act deontology holds that an action is right or wrong not because it conforms to certain rules, or because of the kind of act, it is, rather, rather it is by intuiting right or wrong into it, while rule deontology holds that an action is right or wrong in and of itself because they conform to certain rules, not because it is an act of certain kind.
- Divine command theory centres morality on the commandments of a supernatural being.
- *Agape* love is the fundamental principle of moral in Joseph Fletcher's Situation ethics; and
- Virtue ethics focuses on the person; deontology focuses on action, while consequentialism focuses on the outcome to determine the moral worth of human's actions.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Assess deontological ethics as an approach to understanding right and wrong.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.   What are the challenges to ethical relativism?
2.   What are the principles of Fletcher's theory, are these principles tenable?
3.   Do a critical examination of the relationship between the following: legal codes, moral codes, religion codes.
4.   Explain the differences between the right actions and the wrong actions using Virtue ethics.
5.   Explain what makes an action right and another wrong based on the divine command theories approach.

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MODULE 5

UNIT 1   IS ETHICS A SCIENCE OR AN ART?

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
         3.1   What is Science?
         3.2   The Relationship between Ethics and Science
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assessment
7.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

By now, you probably are aware of the fact that all disciplines – in the arts and various sciences – originated from philosophy. What you may not be sure of is what the criteria are that qualifies any discipline, say, ethics, as one or the other. Put, in other words, is the philosophical discipline of ethics a science or an art? What is even science? In this lecture unit, you will find out possible answers to these related questions, among other ones.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- define science
- explain the two views of science to determine which one aligns with ethics
- discuss the relationship, if any, between science and ethics.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   What is Science?

Science, as a concept, derives from two words: *scientia* – a Latin word that means knowledge – and *wis ens chaff* – a German word which means systematic and organised knowledge (Randi, 2012.). Therefore, science descriptively is a body of systematic or organised knowledge. The two keywords here – systematic/organised and knowledge – are very instructive. Knowledge, a somewhat natural property of human beings' curious disposition, is also the objective of scientific inquiries, and not surprisingly so. But unlike other kinds of knowledge pursuits, the scientific brand of same is allegedly systematic and organised. What makes this the case deserves a probe. But we shall have to return to this subject much later in this discourse. In the meantime, it appears, from the foregoing etymological analysis of science that, an early answer to our running question: whether ethics is a science or not, must be rendered in the affirmative.

Ethics, as we have seen from previous units' discussions, is a systematic and organised pursuit of knowledge in the moral realm. If ethics is thus a science, it means we can infer that its inquiries into the field of human values and morality are conducted in such a manner that is not different from those subjects that we generally attuned to regarding as scientific (Chemistry, Physics, Biology, and so on). But you also know this is not the case. If this observation accords with reality and in line with our descriptive exercise in this unit, it follows that we must quickly abandon our earlier assent that ethics is not a science.

Ethics, we are saying, differs in kind to the 'sciences' of Chemistry and Physics, among others. But perhaps, there is a middle ground to this conundrum. Could ethics, in certain aspects, be a science and in other regards be not? To do this, we may have to point out that there are at least two conceptions of science: the maximalist and minimalist accounts. According to the maximalist view, science, alongside being a systematically organised knowledge edifice, is guided by a unique methodology. This methodology involves making empirical observations about facts of reality and ultimately deducing general or natural causal laws from these with which future events can be adequately predicted and even manipulated. The minimalist view, however, is that science is any activity that involves a methodological and coherent study of any aspect of reality.

Clearly, then, and on the maximalist view, ethics is not a science, but conversely, that is, on the minimalist conception of science has shown that ethics is a science. It is important for us to note, in addition to all

what you have been reading thus far that science as it is conceptualised today, is essentially the idea of the founders of the Royal Society of London, the oldest organisation for the advancement of science in the world, chartered in 1662. Christopher Wren, Robert Boyle, and other founders were interested in the new 'philosophy' or natural science that was then emerging with the experimentations and observations of men like Nicolaus Copernicus, Galileo Galilei, Sir William Gilbert and Johannes Kepler (Randi, 2012).

3.2   The Relationship between Ethics and Science

Ethics and science share in the similar business of generating general laws to explain phenomena of the physical universe and of human behaviours. One is to describe these phenomena while the other is to prescribe how human behaviours ought to be tailored. This is why ethics is said to be a prescriptive science, unlike the 'core' sciences that are descriptive. What this implies is that whereas science tells us what the case (and what is likely to be the case in future) is, ethics tells us what ought to be the case (and, hence, what we ought to do).

These differences, notwithstanding, a plethora of similarities may be easily found in the two vocations of ethics and science. First of all, no humanistic science is possible without adherence to ethical strictures (Schweitzer, 1962). Although, it may not necessarily be the case that science is anti-human. For, at first blush, the overarching aim of science is satisfying human curiosity and making humans better able to cope with the limitations of natures. It often appears to most sceptical people's minds that many of the activities of science are too impersonal, therefore anti-human – to be left un-critiqued. And since ethics keep close tabs, more or less, to human well-being, it means such concerns against the activities of science would necessarily occupy the front-burner of its discourses. Therefore, there must, of necessity, be an ethical underpinning for every scientific practice and theory (Donnant, 2003).

Conversely, ethics would benefit a lot from science. Because ethics is overtly preoccupied with abstract, normative and conceptual issues vis-à-vis human conduct, the need to get a good grip on the facts of every matter of ethical inquiry becomes important. Take the ethical evaluation of certain issues in environmental science – say, the science of climate change – for example (Attfield, 2011). How else would ethicists be able to, via their analytical and argumentative methodology of inquiry, find out the rate of global warming? How, furthermore, would they be able to find out the anthropogenic dimension to the latter problem (of global warming/climate change) without relying on data being supplied by concerned scientists working in these fields?

For science to function positively, a thorough consideration of ethical values – like autonomy, truth, non-maleficence and beneficence – must be adhered to (Agulanna, 2010). Many – or, rather, all – of the current and future innovations of science ought to be ethically evaluated also. If such considerations were borne in mind, such inventions that now threaten to annihilate humanity from the face of the planet, like nuclear bombs would have been averted or at least better regulated. Ethical studies are imperative while considering issues of allocation of scarce medical resources and carrying out of risky or controversial medical procedures (such as physician-assisted suicide, abortion, etc.). What this examination points to, is that although some sceptics (perhaps, of the maximalist school of science) may be restrained in consenting to the fact that ethics is a science, what no one may deny is the symbiotic relationship between the two seemingly disparate disciplines. This is what you have been intimated in this unit.

4.0   CONCLUSION

We have basically discussed two things in this lecture unit. We started with an analysis of the concept of science. Your knowledge of ethics, of course, was assumed, and rightly so. It emerged from this first consideration that ethics, at least from the point of reference of the minimalist view of science, is a science. It is, of course, not the case that ethics, from the angle of the maximalist account, is a science.

Related to the first is the second task of this unit, is the nature of the relationship that possibly exists between science and ethics. What may be surmised from the latter task is that there is a genuine reason for scientists to take cognisance of ethical theories and submissions in their vocation. Ethicists, too, would benefit from trends and discussions that animate the enterprise of science. The two disciplines, thus, need to complement, not diverge from, each other.

5.0   SUMMARY

The following is a summary of what we have discussed in this unit:

- Science is systematic and organised knowledge.
- Ethics is a systematic and organised pursuit of knowledge in the moral realm.
- The maximalist view is that ethics is not a science.
- Conversely, the minimalist conception ethics is a science.
- Ethics, like science, to repeat, share in a similar business of generating general laws to explain phenomena.

- No humanistic science is possible without adherence to ethical strictures.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the relationship between ethics and science.

6.0   TUTOR MARKED ASSESSMENT

1.   What is science?
2.   How would you answer the question: 'is ethics a science?'
3.   Explain the relationship between ethics and science.
4.   Examine the possibility of ethics being a science.

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UNIT 2   ASSUMPTION OF ETHICS

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall examine the basic presupposition of ethics. From the beginning of this course, you should have realised, especially when we try to define ethics and morality, that actions that have moral values are actions done voluntarily and freely. In doing such actions, the performer is held responsible. Owing to the foregoing, we can deduce that ethics is based on two major assumptions: freedom and responsibility.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the basic assumption of ethics
- discuss the concept of freedom
- discuss the concept of responsibility
- explain determinism and its relationship with freedom and responsibility

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Assumption of Ethics

Ethics is built on the basic assumption that actions that have moral values are actions done willingly and freely, and any action performed under this condition places responsibility on the human subject. This assumption seems understandable and straightforward. However, critical examination of it would raise several questions: how do we act freely and willingly? In other words, what are free or voluntary actions? What is freedom or freewill? Are we completely free? What is responsibility?

3.1.1 Freedom

Freewill or freedom is the belief that man is free and accountable for all the decisions he made. He must be held responsible for the consequences that arise from such decisions. Freedom entails the capacity of "self-determination" which means someone has the capability to decide what to do and what to avoid. B. M. Laing describes freedom as the capacity that human being possesses to initiate occurrences as against mere transmission of occurrences (Laing, 1929:469). This means that the person has the ability to originate an action.

John Bourke described freedom (liberty) in three different ways: Capricious freedom, neutral freedom and rational freedom, which can be recaptured as 'freedom from', 'freedom to' and 'freedom in' respectively. Capricious freedom does not give room to choosing; nobody can predict the next action of himself or that of others. Such freedom has neither contact nor direction. He described this type of freedom thus;

> *Capricious freedom" is simply that "freedom" which a person is said to possess in virtue of which all his actions are sheerly undetermined. It is the "freedom" of chance .... It may be described as "freedom from"; but whether by that is understood a freedom from this or that particular determining cause, or from all determining causes whatever, it is not a freedom in respect of which we could be said to be capable of choosing* (Bourke, 1938:227).

Neutral freedom' is the freedom to do or act within different alternatives. That is we can express ourselves in either this or that

139

way when we find ourselves between equal or contrary alternatives, such as: to do good or bad, to act in the right or wrong way. This description agrees with J.P. Sartre's position that freedom is to choose or not to choose from alternatives. "Freedom is the freedom to choose… not to choose is, in the fact, to choose not to choose" (Sartre, 483).

Rational freedom, he said, is the freedom that brings about a result of some particular kinds. The latter description of freedom seems to present the possibility of absolute freedom. The question is, can we have absolute freedom at all? Is freedom possible such that we can do what we like without any obstructions, disturbances, and interruptions?

3.1.2 Libertarianism as a Form of Freedom

Libertarianism is a metaphysical position which holds that human actions are not in any way determined. Everything human being engaged in is out of his or her free will. Libertarianism is against any form of compatibility (the position that freewill or freedom of action can still be found in a determined world). It is an absolute concept of freedom of action. Libertarianism position is that human beings, as agents have freewill, therefore determinism is false. Libertarianism is used to describe free thinkers that believed that freewill is opposed to determinism. Libertarianism is a recent view of metaphysics. Nevertheless, the position has long been postulated by philosophers from the ancient period, although not with the name or term libertarianism. Epicurus has theorised a similar position in the ancient period of philosophy. Recent scholars, who theorised about libertarianism, although not all of them accepted the claim, include Robert Nozick, Hugh McCann, Alfred Mele, Peter van Inwagen, Carl Ginet, Roderick Chisholm, Robert Kane, and so on.

In the ancient period, Epicurus followed the atomists and posited that everything in the universe is made up of atoms, including man. He argued that the movement of atoms has no deterministic tendencies. Epicurus is said to have modified his atomic theory so that not only could atomic motion result from atoms own weight and form the impacts of other atoms. But it could also occur, spontaneously as a minimal deviation from its existing trajectory – a swerve (cf. Furley, 1999:205). This was introduced to preserve the ascription of moral responsibility.
Robert Kane and Peter van Inwagen followed Epicurus in holding an extreme position of libertarianism. They are of the opinion that the even human "will" does not have control over actions. Other

libertarians posited that psychological events that prompt actions do not have a physical explanation. They believed that one's actions are not determined by anything prior to a decision. The question we need to examine, therefore has to do with either human being are free absolutely or not.

3.1.3 Responsibility

A person is morally responsible for his action if it is as a result of his conscious power. No responsibility falls on a person whose act is compelled. That is actions from all of the following factors: external forces, unconscious states that are inaccessible to meditations, and the inevitable consequences of juvenile situations. Responsibility could be said to be the admittance of the consequences of the actions someone took either praise or blame. In other words, to be responsible for a thing is for such a person to admit without resistance that he took an action willingly and consciously; whatever the outcome may be, he or she must be ready to accept it.

If the above description of responsibility if taken admittedly, it follows, therefore, that for a person to be responsible for an action; such a person must have acted consciously and willingly without coercion or compulsion. If this is the case, the question is, do we act in such a way that our actions are consciously taken and not determined by some circumstances beyond our control? Is it the case that our actions are not coerced?

3.1.4 Are Individuals Completely Free?

Affirming the question above will trigger serious implications. For instance, if we claim that human beings are completely free, it follows, therefore, that; we selected our biological parents, we decided our place of birth, and so on. Meanwhile, denial of the question follows therefore, that, there are some factors, which limit our freedom. Such that, given those factors, we cannot but behave in line with the influences they have in our day to day life pattern.

We shall be looking at these factors, which account for some of our actions, under two perspectives: internal factors and external factors. It should be noted, however, that the debate on internal and external factors is to argue for and against the existence of freedom and responsibility.

3.2   Determinism

Determinism is a metaphysical position which seems to hold that all actions or events in the universe have a condition that necessitates them. Philip stokes (2003) defined determinism as "the view that whatever happens has to happen for every event is the inevitable, hence necessary outcome of its specific, preceding causes, which themselves were the necessary result of yet previous causes" he added that "the chain of cause and effect might be seen as determined by God or the laws of nature" (Stoke, 2003:211). In furtherance of this Maher writes that determinism "denote the philosophical theory which holds, in opposition to the doctrine of free will, that all man's volitions are invariably determined by pre-existing circumstances" (Mahar, 1908. online). Determinism, according to Bourke (1938) is "a theory in general which denies our power of choice" He went further to identify two main senses of determinism. The first one he called "natural determinism" which is the view that determinism is external, through natural forces and that human being has no control of it. The second sense of determinism identified by Bourke is what he called internal determinism, which is like the opposite of external or natural determinism.

There are many types of determinism, such as, ethical determinism, theological determinism, physical determinism, psychological determinism, etc. Ethical determinism, which is our concern here, is the belief that men's actions are determined by what they see as good. That is the choices someone makes are based on what such a person felt to be good human are not free, when someone makes a choice it is based on the deliberation of what we think to be good.

Thomas Aquinas, Plato and Socrates held a similar view. According to them, no human being would do something he knows to be evil; all that man would choose is what such a person thinks is good. For Aquinas, if anybody rejects a good thing, it is because such a person sees the bad aspect of such a thing. And when an individual chooses what is good, it is based on the fact that such a person do not see the bad or evil aspect of such an act. Plato and Socrates hold the belief that nobody who knows that something is bad will choose to do such a thing. Anyone that does any bad thing is ignorant of the fact that such a thing is bad. This seems to imply that we are not free at all; hence we ought not to be held responsible for our action.

Prior to J.S. Mill, determinism is not strictly separated from concepts like necessary cause and fatalism, but Mill and some philosophers after him, usually objected to such terms – necessary cause and fatalism – because they believed that, determinism does not suggest external

compulsion as necessary cause and fatalism seems to imply, rather, motives and volitions are the determining factors of human actions.

Philosophers all over the ages have argued for one form of determinism or the other. This they do in order to give room for human responsibility and freedom of action. While some held that there is no chance for human freedom of action or freewill, others argued that even in the face of determining factors man have the choice to choose freely and must be held responsible for any choice he made. The above position has paved the way to the emergence of two main trends of determinism, hard determinism and soft determinism.

3.2.1 Hard Determinism

Hard determinism is a form of determinism that denied human freedom in any action he takes. Hard determinism like soft determinism can be derived from all the types of determinism – ethical determinism, theological determinism, psychological determinism, physical determinism, historical determinism, etc. According to hard determinists, man's freedom is illusory. That is to say, everything man does is based on the way forces that compelled him have decided.

Democritus, an ancient philosopher, theorised that everything in the world, including man is made up of atoms. And the behaviours of things are based on the atoms they are made up of (Stoke, 2003:27). Therefore all actions are determined not freely, but rather by the substance one is made up of. Zeno, another ancient philosopher, opined that there is nothing like freedom, all what we have is an absolute law of nature that governs everything (Russell, 1948:254). Barunch Spinoza took the theological types of hard determinism. In his view, God is the determining factor of all things. Spinoza holds that everything in the universe is a part or extension of the nature of God. Bertrand Russell said Spinoza determinism shows that "Only ignorance makes us think that we can alter the future; what will be, will be, and the future is as unalterably fixed as the past" (Russell, 1948:574). It appears, therefore that all events in the universe are chronologically arranged by God or nature. Just as God determined all events in the universe, human actions are not left out, because human beings are also part of the universe. There are inherent problems from Spinoza denial of any form of human freedom. In a sense that, how and where can we position wickedness, sin and evil, since everything is part of God, with the attributive nature of God?

3.2.2 Soft Determinism

In order to account for moral judgment and hold a man responsible for his actions, in the world of determinism, scholars theorised that there is a form of determinism that give room to freedom of will. In other words, scholars advanced the argument that even though actions of man are determined, there are still some volitions or choices that man makes, which he must be responsible for. Apart from this ethical point of view that soft determinism sprung from, soft determinism also advances some forms of theological point of view to defend the attribute of God. In the sense that, religious leaders and scholars argue for a kind of freedom of choice and action for them to explain the problem of evil.

Owing to the foregoing, Saint Augustine of Hippo posited that although God is omniscient, he knows every action of man before man embarked on it; nevertheless, it is not God that pushed man to take such action. God foreknowledge is not the cause of man action; therefore, man is free to make any decision. Augustine position has a wide range of acceptance among Christians. Another philosopher, Epictetus, in order to justify and make man accountable for his actions posited that, although some things are not in our control, yet we have a lot of things in our control. He noted that things like our opinion, desire, pursuit, aversion, our actions and so on, are in our control and we must be responsible for them.

3.2.3 Fate/Fatalism, an Extreme Form of Determinism

Fate or fatalism is the doctrine that all events are subject to inevitable necessity. Human being has no chance of controlling any event with their action. All things have been preordained. Fatalism does not give room for human action at all. Man has no power to influence or control events, no initiative, no freedom; man is subject to superior force or forces. Fatalism believes that "what will be will be" because every event has been preordained. The causes of events are outside ourselves, that whatever occurs to us does so regardless of what we do. We cannot act, since events are beyond our control, and there are no alternatives, therefore, deliberation is illusory.

3.2.4 Causation as a Form of Determinism

Causation is a position that seems to suggest that certain thing caused the other. That is given a certain condition; there is a necessary step that follows. Causation has a widespread orientation like determinism, it is also sometimes referred to as determinism. In other words, causation and determinism are used interchangeably. Causation states that given a condition A, B follows. Anytime that A occurs under that same

condition B must follow. Causation is usually described in terms of cause and effect. So when one is thirsty, for instance, what must follow is that one will have to drink water.

There are trends in the discussion of causation just as we have in determinism. Scholars advocate for a different thing to be the cause of things. Some claim that God is the cause of all events, while some advocated for psychological causes of events. In short, all the types of determinism we have are also types of causality. Causation or causality has been a topic of philosophical discussion since the ancient period. As a matter of fact, we can say, it is the beginning of Ionian philosophy. In the sense that, the Ionian philosophers' (Thales, Anaximander, Aneximenes) discussions about the primary substance, which every other thing were made, were in a way looking at what caused other things to take effect.

Aristotle also established the subject (causality) and made it prominent when he identified four causes of things: material cause, formal cause, efficient cause, and final cause (Lawhead, 2002:78). These are what bring about a change of things; from potential to actuality; from matter to forms; from one substance quality to another. Donald Davidson argues in his essay, 'Actions, Reasons and Cause', for a kind of determinism which seems to be compatible with causal determinism. He says the reasons or a purpose for an action is taken itself as a cause for that action (Davidson, 1963:685-700). In other words. Davidson claims that when an action was carried out, the doer has a reason that motivated or driven him/her to embark on that particular action. Therefore the reason or the motivating factor is a causal determinism for such an action.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Our elaborated analysis thus far reveals to us; (1) that determinism is real. (2) Absolute freedom is not certain. The question then is, are we responsible for our (moral) actions in the face of this deterministic tendencies? Human actions are not determined such that man is not responsible for them. There is no single action someone can take that does not have an alternative. Bourke put the illustration thus:

> When we say of an action which we have done that we were "free" to do it or that we did it freely, or again, that we chose to do it, we do certainly mean that we were free to do it only because we were also free not to do it, or to do something else; and again, that we chose to do it only in the sense that we chose it in preference to and as against one

or more other possible actions, any one of
which we could equally well have chosen
(Bourke, 1938:278).

Although the alternative available might be that such a person will not
take any action at all, the fact still remains that human's attempt to avoid
the consequences of not taking action would itself be a responsibility.
Therefore the outcome of our actions must be accepted. It is obvious that
when we get our desired result, we assumed that we are responsible for
it, but when it is the other way round, we seem to suggest that we are not
responsible. This portrays that we are not indifferent to praise and
blame.

5.0   SUMMARY

Below is the summary of what we have discussed in this unit that:

- The basic assumption of ethics centred on freedom and
  responsibility.
- Those actions that have moral values are actions done willingly
  and freely, and any action performed under this condition places
  responsibility on the human subject.
- The concept of freedom and responsibility has been threatened
  with the belief that some certain elements influence human
  actions.
- Determinism has many strands, and these are ethical
  determinism, theological determinism, physical determinism,
  psychological determinism, etc.
- In the overall analysis of the concept of determinism, human
  beings have, at least, freedom of choice, which places
  responsibility on their actions.
- Fate or fatalism is the doctrine that all events are subject to
  inevitable necessity; as such human being has no chance of
  controlling any event with their action.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

How would you argue for the opinion that human beings are not
responsible for their actions?

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSESSMENT

1.   "Determinism is reconcilable with freedom and responsibility"
      Discuss.
2.   "Only ignorance makes us think that we can alter the future."
      Discuss.

3.   Make a critique of fatalism as a form of determinism.

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UNIT 3   SOME FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

It is significant to note that ethics, as a systematic study, has fundamental principles. This is its fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behaviour or for an ethical chain of reasoning. In this unit, and for this level of our study, we shall discuss respect for the autonomy of others, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the basic principles of ethics
- explain the kinds of moral principle
- discuss the importance of each of the principles for human social relation
- discuss the reflections of the principle of ethics.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Fundamental Principles of Ethics

The principles of ethics are called moral principles. They are also called fundamental principles of moral law. The moral law is the law that guides all human beings to do what is good and avoid what is bad. The moral law is practically based on reason. Hence, all reasonable men obliged to it. The obligation comes from conscience (Omoregbe, 1993:59). The moral law is also referred to as 'Natural Law' or 'law of nature'.

The laws are universal, that is to say, they are applicable in all time and places. They classified the 'dos' and 'don'ts' human societies. These principles are different from State laws which are man-made. According to Cicero, the natural law is "the law above the laws", and man-made laws are valid if and only if they conform to the natural law (Cf. Lawhead, 2002:98).

3.2   Kinds of Moral Principles

The moral principles are the standard measure of ethical norms that human's conducts and behaviours must conform with. In other words, they are guides that stipulate the way we should behave. In fact, they show us what we must do and what must be avoided. There are two kinds of moral or ethical principles, namely; the positive principles, and the negative principles.

The positive principles classify the conducts that we should do and how we should behave. These include dignity and respect for human life, autonomy and respect for the right the others, justice, honesty, kindness, truthfulness, altruism, hospitality, generosity, fidelity, and so on.

Conversely, the negative principles proscribe some certain actions and behaviours that are seen to be wrong. Such actions and behaviours as murder, adultery, suicide, hatred, stealing, bribery, cheating, and so on are to be avoided. To be concise, all the opposing actions to the positive principles are to be avoided because they are capable of destroying both the performer of such actions and the society at large.

According to Immanuel Kant, in his work *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* the moral law is inbuilt in human's rational will.

3.3   Four Fundamental Ethical Principles

All the moral principles, both positive principles and negative principles, mentioned above, are fundamental principles. However, we shall examine four principles below, because each of the other principles can be categorised under at least one of these four principles. The principles are, respect for the autonomy of others, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice.

3.3.1 The Principle of Respect for the Autonomy of Others

The word "autonomy" is a Latin word which means "self-rule" or independence. This principle states that we have an obligation to respect the autonomy of other persons, that is, to respect the decisions made by other people concerning their own lives. This principle is also called the "principle of human dignity". It restricts or limits our interference in the affairs of human persons. However, human persons in this sense are reasonable or competent or mature adults.

German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, is a major proponent of the ethical principle of autonomy, which is also referred to as 'autonomy of the will' or 'freewill.' According to Kant, a rational person should act independently of any influence. The 'will', he argues must be free to operate independently of influences such as; appetite, desire, satisfaction, happiness and so on. Also, the 'will' should be free to act in accordance with its own law. He added that the will is in line with human nature.

To this end, Andrews Reath says Kant shows that the human person should have "not only a capacity for choice that is motivationally independent, but a lawgiving capacity that is independent of determination by external influence and is guided by its own internal principle–in other words, by a principle that is constitutive of lawgiving" (Reath 2006). Additionally, Kant argues that freewill is the foundation of the dignity of 'human nature', which is an end in itself.

This principle of humanity and in general of every rational nature, as an end in itself (which is the supreme limiting condition of the freedom of action of every human being) is not borrowed from experience. First, because of its universality, since it applies to all rational beings as such and no experience is sufficient to determine anything about them. Second, because in it humanity is represented not as an end of human beings (subjectively), that is, not as an object that we of ourselves actually make our end, but as an objective end that, whatever ends we may have, ought as law to constitute the supreme limiting condition of

150

all subjective ends, so that the principle must arise from pure reason (Kant, 2002:67).

To be precise, the ground of all practical lawgiving lies in firstly the objective rules that are also universal, which makes it fit to be a law of nature. Secondly, it lies in subjective rules, which are an end. But the subject of all ends is every rational being as an end in itself.

3.3.2 The Principle of Beneficence

The principle of beneficence states that we have moral obligations to act for the interest or benefit of others by helping them in preventing or removing possible evils or harms. We have an obligation to perform actions that bring good always. In other words, we must take the proper steps to prevent harm. The principle of beneficence aims to benefit others, and it is similar to the principle of non-maleficence. However, while the former states that evil or harm should be prevented, the latter says one should not cause evil. On the other way round, while no prevention of harm might make a person to violate the latter, it makes someone to violate the former. However, adopting this corollary principle frequently places us in direct conflict with respecting the autonomy of other persons.

3.3.3 The Principle of Non-Maleficence

We need to make some clarifications before we move on. The clarifications have to do with some terms that seem related to non-maleficence but are quite different. If such clarifications are not made, one might easily think they are the same thing. It is not "non-malfeasance," which is a technical legal term meaning wrongful conduct by a public official. Also, it is not "non-malevolence," which means that one did not intend to harm, or not to wish evil to others. The principle of non-maleficence holds that we have an obligation not to inflict harm on others. It is closely associated with the maxim *primum non nocere* (first, do no harm). And do not increase the risk of harm to others. It is wrong to waste resources that could be used for good. The principle of beneficence and the principle of non-maleficence are close to each other, though they have a difference. However, they agreed that every one of our actions must produce more good and avoid harm.

The principle of non-maleficence states that we should act in such a way that we do not cause evil or harm to others. We should ensure that harm and all kinds of evil are avoided. This includes avoiding the risk of harming anybody. As noted earlier, this principle is not about intention or wish not to harm; therefore, one can violate the principle even if he or she does not have the intention to harm them initially but harm others

151

accidentally. In another way round, if someone deliberately or non-deliberately exposed others to harm or evil or unnecessary risk, he or she has violated this principle.

3.3.4 The Principle of Justice

The principle of justice is one of the most pronounced of all the ethical principles. The principle states that we have the moral obligation to make available or give to others whatever they are owed or they deserve. The principle of justice is central to many of the principles. In fact, it encompasses many of the principles. For instance, it entails the principles of equality, fairness, impartiality and so on. Accordingly, Justice is cardinal to the continued existence of humanity. Western philosophers from ancient till now devote considerably to the concept of justice. They regard justice as the most important of all virtues to foster social relationships and to sustain a society. The term justice involves respecting individuals as free and rational agents.

According to Plato, justice is a virtue that gave birth to rational order. It is through justice that each part of the society performs a proper role and not meddling with the right performers of others. In Aristotle's view justice involves in the lawful, fair and equitable distributions. For Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, justice requires the giving to all people their due in relational distributions or give-and-take connections. Thomas Hobbes believed justice is a non-natural virtue that came about as a result of the voluntary agreements of the social contract to function as a necessary means of orderliness for civil society. David Hume classified justice as services in public utility by protecting property. For Kant, the principle of justice is related to the principle of autonomy. Accordingly, justice is a virtue whereby we respect the freedom, autonomy, and dignity of others by not interfering with their voluntary actions so that their rights to think and act from the 'will' is not violated. John Rawls described justice in terms of supreme equal liberty and opportunity on basic rights and duties for all members of a society, were socio-economic inequalities requiring moral justification in terms of equal opportunity and beneficial results for all (Rawls, 1999:18-26).

3.4   Further Reflection of Principle of Ethics

As noted earlier, the principles of ethics are universal and objective; however, these features do not indicate that the principles are absolute or rigid. According to Omoregbe, the universality of the principles of ethics means they are applicable in all ages and societies. But to classify them as absolute or rigid would mean there is no situation or circumstance where an exception can take place. He argues that moral

principles do allow for an exceptional situation. His illustrations show that when we are confronted with two or more circumstances where we must choose one ethical principle, we must choose the most reasonable. For instance, it would be reasonable to lie in order to save a life. The same way it would be reasonable to steal foodstuffs in order to save one's life from starvation (Omoregbe, 1993:63-66). He warned that the exceptional situation should not be misinterpreted as relativism. Relativism is an ethical term that holds that there are no universal or objective moral principles. It claims that each society determines what is right or good and what is bad or wrong on its own.

4.0   CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, let us state categorically that the moral laws and the principles of ethics are indispensable, universal and objective. They apply to all ages and societies. Obeying them is necessary for the growth of the society. They are rules that are innate in every reasonable individual. We are all familiar with them by instinct; therefore, whether they are part of state laws or not, we ought to obey them naturally. And it would be better if state actors allow them to be the foundation of state laws.

5.0   SUMMARY

Below are a summary of what we have discussed in this unit:

- Ethical principles are also called moral principles, and they are the standard measure of ethical norms that human's conducts and behaviours must conform with.
- They are also called fundamental principles of the moral law.
- The moral law is the law that guides all human beings to do what is good and avoid doing what is bad.
- The moral law, also called natural law or law of nature, are based on reason.
- Ethical principles could be positive or negative; the positive principles classify the conducts that we should do and how we should behave, while the negative principles proscribe some certain actions and behaviours that are wrong, which we should avoid.
- The fundamental principles include but not limited to respect for the autonomy of others, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice.
- The principle of autonomy states that we have an obligation to respect the decision of others concerning their lives.
- The principle of beneficence holds that we have an obligation to prevent possible harm on others.

153

- The principle of non-maleficence states that we have an obligation not to inflict harm on others.
- The principle of justice states that we have the moral obligation to make available or give to others whatever they are owed or they deserved.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What do you think makes the concept of justice a fundamental principle of ethics?

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the fundamental principle of Ethics
2. Critically examine the positive and negative principles of ethics.
3. Evaluate the concept of autonomy as a fundamental principle of ethics.
4. Discuss the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence.

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UNIT 4   ETHICS AND RELIGION

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Thus far in this course, you have learnt so much about ethics and morality. In the course of that, you must have seen some religious undertones in what ethicists said to be good, bad, right, wrong, and what constitutes the good life. Therefore, in this unit, we shall be looking at the relationship that exists between ethics and religion. We shall examine the possibilities of the existence of ethics without religion and that of religion without ethics.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the relationship between ethics and religion
- state explicitly the points of divergences between ethics and religion
- describe the roles ethics plays in religion.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Relationship between Ethics and Religion

The relationship between ethics and religion is dated back to antiquity. The one that preceded the other is difficult to know, and there have been debates on this from time immemorial. (For instance, Plato in ancient Greek, through Socrates, had asked Euthyphro if morality is as a result of God's commands or it existed before the commands). However, religion, like ethics, is preoccupied with the right conduct of human

156

beings (Omoregbe, 1993:7). Though the major concern of religion is the worship of supernatural being, as a secondary function, it states how worshippers must relate with their fellows and others in the society.

3.2 The Major Link between Ethics and Religion

Majority of our moral thoughts have religious undertones. Ancient society's codes of conducts, from where we developed some of our ethical ideas, are deeply connected to religious belief. For instance, most people agree that actions such as murder and adultery are wrong irrespective of circumstances. The major world religions shared these views and incorporated them. They are in their ancient codes of conduct, and these traditions really guide social intuitions.

The major link between religion and ethics is best explained with the "Golden Rule". The Golden Rule is captured thus: "Do unto others as you would wish them to do unto you". To put it differently: treat others the way you would want to be treated. Virtually all of the world's great religions contain in their religious manuscripts some correspondence of this Golden Rule. And it is the basic ethics that guides all religions. If this is adhered to, happiness will follow. Apart from the golden rule, there are many other teachings and practices of what is right or wrong, good or bad, virtuous or vicious, from a religious point of view. Below is the way some of the world popular religions express the Golden Rule.

3.2.1 Religions Expression of the Golden Rule

Judaism – What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellowman. This is the entire law; all the rest is commentary (Talmud, Shabbat 3id). Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Leviticus 19:18)

Christianity – All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, Do ye so to them (Matthew 7:1).

Islam – No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself (Sunnah. 40 Hadith of an-Nawawi 13).

Confucianism – Do not do to others what you would not like yourself. Then there will be no resentment against you, either the family or in the state (Analects 12:2).

Buddhism – Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful (Udana Varga 5, 1). Having made oneself the example, one should neither slay nor cause to slay. . . . As I am, so are other beings; thus let one not strike another, nor get another struck. That is the meaning (Dhammapada).

157

Hinduism – This is the sum of duty, do nothing onto others what you would not have them do unto you (Mahabharata 5, 1517). Wound not others, do no one injury by thought or deed, utter no word to pain thy fellow creatures (The Law Code of Manu).

Taoism – Regard your neighbour's gain as your gain, and your neighbour's loss as your own loss (Tai Shang Kan Yin P'ien).

Zoroastrianism – That nature alone is good, which refrains from doing another whatsoever is not good for itself (Dadisten I-dinik, 94, 5).

3.3   Existence of ethics or religion without the other

Having established the links between ethics and religion, and out of curiosity, the question would be: is ethics possible without religion? In other words, can we be ethical without being religious? This question could also be asked the other way round: can we be religious without being ethical?

As hinted earlier that ethics and religion have been coexisting from antiquity, and which one preceded the other is a debate, so is the existence of ethics without religion. It is argued in some quarters that ethics cannot exist without religion. St. Augustine, Soren Kierkegaard and many others hold this view dearly. As a matter of fact, Plato's dialogue mentioned earlier is a debate that attempted to argue from both sides. While Plato's interlocutor, Socrates, intended to argue for the futility of religious undertone in ethics, thereby establishing the possibility of ethics without region, his co-discussant, Euthyphro, argues that ethics is grounded in religion and that it would not be possible to have ethics without religion.

In line with Euthyphro's position stated above, people make an important argument concerning ethics and religion. For many people, "morality and religious faith go hand in hand" (Traer, 2009:8). Based on this claim, rather than relying on rational arguments, some people view the rightness or wrongness of actions on the condition that God commands them. Some moral philosophers do not view the arguments based on divine command as being rationally secure. They believe, in line with Socrates' position that we can determine if an action is right or wrong through rational thinking. Therefore, if God only commands what is right then, deductively, this makes divine commands unnecessary. In other words, the knowledge of what is right or wrong is possible through rational thinking without relying on any divine commandments.

However, R. Traer argues that the discussion on the divine command arguments is relevant to ethics for numerous reasons. Firstly, there is no unanimous agreement by people on what action is right or wrong. Therefore, it remains unclear how we can determine what is right and wrong merely through rational thinking. Secondly, the fact that many people in the universe make religion their ethical guidance, "the moral teachings of a religious tradition … to persuade the public to embrace a higher moral standard" should not be undermined (Traer, 2009:9). Even though many people may insist that rational arguments should justify ethical principles and decisions, Traer argues that the contemplation of religious arguments must not be left out from the study of ethics. Even if individuals personally do not choose to accept religious arguments as valid within ethical discussions, it is a resolution that entails vigilant consideration.

If ethics deals with morality, then, the view that its source is in religion is primitive, and has much influence till now, though, many have disputed that. In an attempt to defend the view that morality emanated from religion, J. S. Mackenzie argues that modern thoughts tend to upturn the "relation not to proceed from the idea of God to the idea of morality, but rather from the idea of morality to the idea of God." (Mackenzie, 1900:474). Furthermore, Mackenzie argued that if we try to justify that there can be the possibility of ethics without religion, we would need to find the source of our moral actions in the conscience. According to him, the conscience is created by God; hence, we are back to the position we attempted to avoid.

Conscience needs to be disciplined and educated, the way Aristotle said character traits must be nurtured, in order to be reasonable. If that is the case, reason rather than conscience would be the source of morality, as such ethics would be able to stand without religion. Reason as the basis of morality is a theory the German Philosopher, Immanuel Kant, posited. Kant had argued that every action must be subjected to thorough reason. Accordingly, reason is primed on the 'categorical imperatives': "act in accordance with a maxim that can at the same time make itself a universal law." (Kant, 1998: 44), and "act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means." (Kant, 1998:38).

Mackenzie claims that Kant attempt is not successful. Thus he posed the teaser that there is the doubt that whether reason as the "source of moral obligation is not a somewhat dry one, whether it can of itself furnish us with any real content for the moral life." (Mackenzie, 1900:475). However, the quest for the possibility of ethics without religion is not to search for the foundation upon which ethics is built. The search for

ethical foundations has pushed those who argue that ethics cannot exist without religion to posit that the foundation is what connects all classical ethical theories. There might be differences in other aspects.

The position of philosophy is not to look for foundation, but to search if a person can be moral, even if such a person does not subscribe to any religion or believes in the existence of God.

Obviously, if we are to look for foundation, it will be extremely difficult to bypass religion as the foundation of ethics. The reason is that society and religion are hardly separated. In every human society, there has been a myth of creation in which supernatural plays prominent roles. Ever since then, man has subscribed to one religion or the other for the proper ordering of the society. Doing away with foundation, then to address the issue at hand, it is safe to say that many people in the society do not profess any religious belief and are morally upright, and live exemplary lives (Omoregbe, 1993:7). If the above is the case, it follows that ethics can exist without religion.

Having established the existence of ethics devoid of religion, the question is: can religion exist without ethics? In other words, can someone be religious without being ethical? If the argument that religion is the foundation of ethics is sustained, then it would be good to argue that ethics is a lead way to religious perfection. This is because God issues commandments, rules, codes of conduct or morality that would aid the adherents of religious beliefs to perfection. Owing to the above, we can conclude that religion cannot exist without ethics. In this sense, ethics is a watchdog to religion. It scrutinises worshippers actions if they cohere with their religious beliefs. It also scrutinises religious beliefs if they are coherent with the attributive nature of God that religion proclaims.

3.4   The Role of Ethics in Religion

Though religious tenets are built on ethics, morality is not the major concern of religion. The major concern of religion, as noted earlier, is worship; adorations through rites and devotions. Ethics, on its own part, is concerned with morality. Religion dabbles into morality indirectly as an indispensable condition for true worshipping. Based on the foregoing, ethics or morality is the judge of religion; it judges both religion and its adherents. It judges religion by revealing the inherent immoral actions religion preaches or encourages; that would make humanity to know that such religion is a false one. It judges adherents of a religion, by showing light on the numerous immoralities that many people who belong to the religion engage in. For an illustration, if a religion that grounds its rules or commandments on the divine should do

what is obviously in contrast with the nature of God that it professes, then such a religion must be rejected.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have examined the relationship that exists between ethics and religion. It is observed that the relationship is so robust and dated back to time immemorial, such that, it is very difficult to separate them from each other. We realised that while it a matter of debate which of the two proceeded, their connectivity is unarguable. Apart from the fact that religion dabbles into ethical domains by teachings and practices of what is right or wrong, good or bad, virtuous or vicious, the major link of ethics and religion is the 'golden rule'. Virtually all the major world religions profess a version of the golden rule. Therefore, by way of conclusion, whichever religious belief you share, it is important for you as a member of society to always scrutinise yourself, and all your actions with the golden rule. This is so even if such actions emanate from religious creed before you carry them out.

5.0   SUMMARY

Here is a brief summarised point of what we have discussed in this unit:

- Majority of our moral thoughts and ideas are developed from ancient codes of conducts and have a religious undertone.
- The major link between ethics and religion can be best explained with the "golden rule" – "Do unto others as you would wish them to do unto you".
- The major difference between ethics and religion is: while the primary role of ethics is morality, religion's primary assignment is worship, it only dabbles into morality as a secondary duty.
- There is a disagreement between scholars if either of ethics or religion can exist without the other.
- Arguably, while ethics can exist without religion, religion cannot exist without ethics.
- The major role ethics play in religion is a watchdog, to show the inconsistencies of religious people with the norms of their religion, and to show incoherence within the norms and values of a religion.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Critically examine the roles religion play in ethics.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSESSMENT

1.   Discuss the various religious expressions of the golden rule.
2.   Discuss, according to Mackenzie, how ethics cannot exist without religion.
3.   Justify the existence of ethics without religion.

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