

**KANT'S UNIVERSALIZABILITY THEORY AND THE
SEARCH FOR A NEW MORAL ORDER**

**BY
ONYEKWERE, BARTHOLOMEW AGUNNIA
B.A. (HONS) PHILOSOPHY, (LASU) M.A. PHILOSOPHY
(LAGOS)
MATRIC NO. 999001065**

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DEDICATION

To all who strive to do what is right simply because it is right.

To all who uphold what is right even when they are ridiculed.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a critical and analytical study of Immanuel Kant’s moral philosophy. Kant’s moral philosophy is grounded on human pure reason and erected on the notion of duty, hence deontological. Kant is of the view that there is the moral law operating in man the reason why man must not shirk his moral responsibility. For Kant there is no room for moral anarchy and moral phobia for any rational being since human beings have moral nature. He concludes that man is condemned to be moral and that morality should be universalizable such that it applies to all with equal force. The thesis finds Kant’s moral arguments plausible and takes the position that Kant’s moral philosophy can be applied to man’s present environment. It notes that the moral problem of Kant’s time is similar to the contemporary moral problem. For example, presently, as it was in his time, morality

has been corrupted and in some cases applied confusedly. The result is the prevalence of moral outlook such as moral nihilism, moral relativism, moral personalism, moral individualism, moral situationism, moral scepticism and amoralism. The implication of these approaches to morality is that society is always exposed to turbulence, disharmony, anarchy, instability and is steadily on the brink of precipice. There arises then the need for agreement on morality if man must remain in the face of the earth in peace and also continue to live in his only home, the earth. The thesis establishes the fact that man is in need of morality, is capable of moral actions and also benefits from being moral. The task before him is to rekindle his moral nature and accept the imperative of morality. This is a contract he entered into with himself and other rational beings with whom he forms the moral *kingdom of ends*. The thesis argues that humanity is in need of a new moral order. The new moral order will be founded on the stable of moral universalism wherein uniform moral norms will hold for all rational beings irrespective of circumstances of birth, race, status, creed, religion, and geographical location. There is one and only one moral community for every rational being. Also the circumstance one finds him or herself is not different from those of the others in similar condition. This calls for moral regeneration and ethical reorientation for every rational being. The thesis concludes that the much desired new moral order will be supported by moral training, moral education and a social system that is supportive of morality. This is to provide the needed atmosphere on which morality thrives and is sustained for the good of man and society.

INTRODUCTION

The study is on moral philosophy. Moral philosophy or ethics is the branch of philosophy that studies the person and personal deeds from the point of view of the rightness or wrongness, the goodness or evilness of the person and the deeds. Moral philosophy, also called moral theory, grows out of life-situations in which we are confronted with some sort of perplexity or doubt about what is the right thing to do or the best course to follow; situations in which incompatible courses of action seem to be justifiable. Such conflict situations call forth personal inquiry into the reason(s) for deciding where the right really lies. This is the domain of moral philosophy; the domain of human intelligence reflecting in the face of moral conflict and doubt. Our interest in moral philosophy is premised on the conviction that morality – the observance of objective moral canon, rules, values,

tenets, precepts and norms - is a strong factor in the survival of human species, human society, and social institutions. This conviction has been confirmed by human experience hence our resolve to study it philosophically. Morality has always been the quality quest and rational demand of all ages and races. However, there exists disagreement of what constitutes its foundation hence the existence also of different moral systems. The challenge is how to reconcile the different systems. This challenge demands rational inquiry.

The importance of moral philosophy lies in its force to direct man's moral reflection. Reflective morality emerges when a person attempts to find general principles by which to direct and to justify personal behaviour. Right and wrong, good and evil, are not only characteristics of the deed done but of the doer who commits self personally to the deed. We are not just playthings dangling on the strings of fate; we have a say in the shaping of our lives. This task is at the same time our most glorious personal prerogative and our most *serious* responsibility. It examines man's capability and capacity for morality as exemplified in moral training. It also examines the importance of morality to human beings in general, especially as it is integral to the attainment of peace and stability. The emphasis is, however, on the universalizability of morality. By that is meant that there is a yardstick by which we evaluate human action universally. Attempts at universalizability of morality are noticeable in those age-old principles such as found in Thales' **Excellent rule of right** 'Do not yourself what you blame in others' (Douglas, 2008:11), Jesus' **Golden Rule** 'Do unto others as you would like them do unto you' (Matt. 7: 12), the **Silver rule** of Confucius 'What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others' (Rosenstand,2006: 175), the **Platinum rule** 'treat others as they want to be

treated', and in some complex codes of conduct embedded in tribal custom and usage all of which strongly anticipate moral formalism. The study takes Immanuel Kant's theory of moral universalizability as its basis, hence the title: **Kant's Universalizability Theory and the search for a New Moral Order**. The study argues the position that morality, in spite of its relative coloration, is a concern of every human being, irrespective of background, religion, status, calling, and profession.

The role of morality in the organization of society and in the management of human beings have always been stressed by philosophers, moralists, ethicists, founders of religious faiths and well meaning citizens of the world. They saw the need for moral living and maintained that society can only be sane, civilized, balanced, peaceful, and stable on the strict observance of moral rules. The absence of morality in the state will result in what Hobbes called state of nature wherein reigns continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short (Hobbes, 1978: 100). They would have observed that in the absence of moral living, human society will be chaotic, and in such a situation, the society will not be a good place in which to live. This is a fact confirmed by human experience. Philosophers and moralists have always stressed the fact that morality is basically human concern. It would be disastrous for men to develop *moral phobia* or toy with moral living. Socrates, for example, argued that morality is basically about human rational thought: *about how we ought to live our lives* (Plato, *Republic*). Immanuel Kant argues, on his part, that human beings have moral law within them and as such cannot resist the call to be moral (Kant, *Critique Of Practical Reason*, 1996). Even moral nihilist, Friedrich Nietzsche, posited that a tablet of virtue hangs over every people (Solomon, 2002: 259). This tablet of virtue is morality. Morality

is a human endeavour to live in an acceptable manner with the knowledge that only doing that which is right will be the best practice. Morality involves knowing what is right and doing it, simply because it is right, and refusing to do that which is wrong, simply because it is wrong.

The primacy of morality dates back in antiquity. It can be argued, without any fear of contradiction, that the idea of morality is as old as man even in the primitive, customary, and unreflective age. There is yet to be found any people without rules of social engagement. Customary, unreflective morality, however, has its shortcoming, namely lack of uniform standard for the appreciation, evaluation, and judgment of what could pass for moral act, especially as different tribal and ethnic groups have their own parameters for measuring moral acts. Even when men started to reflect about their conducts, there remained the problem of uniform moral standard. This lack of univocal voice for morals has continued and it has also haunted morality over the ages. The result is that moral philosophers, intellectuals, and moralists have been divided in their opinion about what constitutes morality or what drives moral actions. John Stuart Mill (1961) had noted thus:

From the dawn of moral philosophy, the question concerning the *summum bonum*, or, what is the same thing, concerning the *foundation of morality* has remained problematic. This question has occupied the most gifted intellects, and divided them in sects and schools, carrying on a vigorous warfare against one another. And till date to our utmost chagrin and amazement, the same discussions continue, moralists and ethicists are still very much divided, each maintaining a different canopy. Neither thinkers nor mankind at large seem nearer to being in a unanimous agreement on the subjects.

This lack of agreement foisted on us has resulted in the existence of different moral outlook and moral systems, such as moral opportunism, moral individualism, moral relativism, moral egoism, moral altruism, humanism and Marxism, all of which find support in moral theories such as we find in Divine Command (religious morality), Areataic (virtue), Hedonism (happiness or pleasure oriented), Teleological (consequence-driven), Deontological (duty-oriented). These foundations of morality will at the end yield systems that guide individual actions as we experience today. This is not good for mankind's moral quest because it will give way to confusion and the purpose of morality would be defeated. The implication is that there will arise many *unequal roads* purportedly leading to one venue. At first this might appear harmless, but a rational mind will observe this subtle but potent harm against morality. Everyone will claim to be performing a moral act since there is supposedly a moral theory on which to anchor such acts. And even the best judge will find it quite difficult to appreciate, evaluate, and judge human acts in terms of their moral worthiness. There is also the likelihood of having in a place different morality for different people: races, religions, believers, atheists, statesmen, scientists, supermen, leaders, followers, masters, and servants. Danger arises following this way of approaching morality: the motive for acting will be purely on self interest, from the beclouded aperture of regional mindset. And the whole trouble of embarking on a moral journey is defeated.

However, Kant is one man who took notice of this disunity in the house of morals and the implication for morality seriously. Kant lived in a world which had an avalanche of moral theories, but failed to agree on what constitutes morality. The moral firmament had been threatened by such attitudes like *moral nihilism*: an attitude that argues that there is no

right or wrong view points; that the whole moral issue is a cultural game, and neither your opinion nor mine matters in the end, for there is no ultimate right or wrong. There was also *moral scepticism*: a view that we cannot know whether there is any moral truths. Also *moral subjectivism*: an attitude which holds that moral views are merely inner states in a person and that they cannot be compared to the inner states of another person, so a moral viewpoint is valid only for the person who holds it (Rosenstand, 2006:106). These attitudes would be avoided, according to Kant, if only we understand the nature of morality. Kant had observed that “morals themselves are liable to all sorts of corruption as long as we are *without that clue and supreme canon by which to estimate them correctly*” (Kant, *Metaphysic of Morals*, 1996: 254). Aside from establishing the supreme principle of morality, Kant also maintains that morality is a human business in which every human being must, as a matter of necessity, participate. So, one is a- being- for-morality as long as one is a human being and also rational. Accordingly, we must admit that moral law must be valid, not merely for men but also for all *rational creatures generally*, not merely under certain contingent conditions or with exceptions but with *absolute necessity* (Ibid.263). If Kant’s position is granted, it means that we must drop all attitudes that promote moral phobia and moral doubt. That is to say that self interest will not be the primary motive for performing moral acts. Every act must be tested for its moral worthiness and not because of satisfaction or consequence. And for that reason, morality would not be left in the hands of irrational elements but must be the making of all rational beings acting under reason and freedom with their wellbeing in view. What constitutes moral rules should not be the legislation of self- serving people.

Kant also presents some cogent points which will guide morality to the desired destination: that every act, for it to qualify as a moral act, must have its origin in good will, for without good will, it may become extremely bad, and the coolness of a villain not only makes him far more dangerous, but also directly makes him more abominable in our eyes than he would have been without it (Ibid.256). Kant likens good will to a jewel which shines by its own light; suggesting that whatever is the result of any action, provided it is from good will, it would have its own value in itself. And, because morality may not always be attractive, Kant posited that we must first recognize the moral law and then treat morality as something bound by duty and also as a command which we cannot but obey. To stress the importance of morality, Kant introduced the notion of the *categorical imperative* or the *law of morality* which for him is the *carrier* of the *moral ought* (Ibid. 268).

There arises the need to streamline moral principle and moral standard in line with universal human demand. This is what Kant presents in his theory of moral universalizability. His position is that human beings as rational beings must have one set of generalizable and universalizable moral principle to guide them. The reason is that, as a human being, the situation you are in is not different from that of other human beings. If something will trouble you, it will probably trouble others, too. Kant's argument is that morality, for it to be employed in the service of humanity, must shade all personal, regional and sectional colours and then be dressed in the universal, rational apparel where no one will be excused or exempted on the grounds of faith, creed, status, background and calling.

The Nature of Morality

Human beings engage in various activities in the ordinary course of business. In the relationship with others, their conduct should be guided aright. The guide of this conduct or behaviour – that is, the whole of actions and/or inactions freely performed – is **reason**. It is in the light of reason that morality of human actions and inactions take their meaning. That is to say, morality first and foremost, is a matter of consulting reason: the morally right thing to do in any circumstance is determined by what there are the best reasons for doing (Rachels, 1968: 8). Morality is, at the very least, the effort to guide one's conduct by reason – that is, to do what there are the best reasons for doing while giving weight to the interests of each individual who will be affected by one's conduct. According to Erich Fromm (1947: 16) valid ethical norms can be formed by man's reason and by it alone.

Morality, according to Unah, is about behaviour, about manner, about character; it is the conception regarding right and wrong actions or good and bad actions (Unah, 2009: 59). Morality defines and demarcates acceptable forms of behaviour from the unacceptable ones; the commendable forms of conduct from the condemnable; and the healthy manners from the ill-manners. Morality, for Azenabor, refers to a set of rules and norms for guiding and regulating the conduct of people in the society or their behaviour patterns (Azenabor, 2008: 231). It is for that reason that Azenabor argues that morality is a rule of conduct for harmonious living in society. Morality is generally used to describe a sociological phenomenon: the existence in a society of rules and standards of conduct. Every society has a morality, since this constitutes the basis for mutually beneficial interaction. Without such fundamental rules as 'Do not kill' and 'Do not steal' for example, stable communities would be impossible (Boatright, 1993: 20). The importance

of morality is its force to stabilize society because of its emphasis on the moral health of society. Morality is the standard that an individual or a group has about what is right and wrong, or good and evil. A society without morals is at best a decadent society, and its fabrics will lack a veritable catalyst to cement it together in moral bond (Gonsalves, 1989: 310). In the same vein, Bell has argued that without a sound moral basis, a society cannot be civilized (Bell 1988: 19). Morality is a set of principles, or rules that guide us in our actions. Moral rules tell us what to do, for example, “tell the truth”, “love one another”; and what not to do, for instance, “do not cheat”, “do not commit murder” (Solomon, 2002: 259). Morality gives us the rules by which we live with other people. It sets limits to human actions, gives us guiding principles for making decisions and checkmates our desires even as it tasks our discipline.

It can then be said that morality is about imperatives. That is why it goes with the *ought* in human action. It is a *directive* on how we ought to live, how we ought to behave and how we ought to conduct ourselves in our *commerce* with the world. So, morality is about the *oughtness* of conduct, behaviour, character and manner. Morality is about values embedded in human act. Morality is overriding and it is meant to take precedence over other considerations in human acts. It is therefore wholly practical. It is for that reason also that morality is associated ultimately with reason, impartiality, duty, command, consistency, generality, prescriptivity, objectivity and universality.

Morality, even in its minimum conception is not always in tandem with individual's motives, desires, volition, and feelings, no matter how defendable they may be. The reason is that feeling, motive, volition, inclination, etc., and any other human desires may

be irrational. They may issue from prejudice, selfishness, or cultural conditioning (Rachels, 1996:7). They however, need morality to govern them. The cultural and official policies which gave rise to, and promoted colonialism, racialism, apartheid, caste system, untouchable, slavery, obnoxious and *draconian* laws are products of *feelings* that lacked morality. Yet they were approved with vigour by those societies who invented them and foisted them on others.

Morality remains the *force* that regulates the world to its desired goal: the common good and conducive atmosphere enough for human beings to go about their business. Morality is the veritable guide of culture, law, religion, and all other such human control mechanisms. Culture, law, politics, and religion must therefore adjust to the dictate of morality for them to be rationally defensible. Morality should ultimately be at the basis or foundation of all these to make them useful and beneficial to human beings. For instance, law, culture, religion, etc., are adjudged to be good or bad, right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable, commendable or condemnable, according as they approximate to morality. Morality must therefore service culture, politics, law, and religion. Sanctions are meted out on the infractions of law, culture, and religion because they, by implication, are of moral category. In short, all social and societal control mechanisms are only support for morality and they can only be rationally acceptable if and only if they queue behind morality and follow the way it has pointed. This is why Pojman argues that morality has a unique feature of overridingness (Percesepe, 1995). This is because moral principles take precedence over other kinds of considerations, including aesthetic, prudential, and legal ones. Kant had argued long ago that morality is self-sufficient; it is in no need of

anything. On the contrary every other human endeavour is in need of it (Rabel, 1963: 237).

Morality presupposes freedom of action. It is taken for granted that human beings act freely, and that they are in control of the acts which they perform. It is this presupposition that grounds praise or blame, commendation or condemnation, which accompany any act or any refusal to act in any circumstance. That is why human actions taken under duress or coercion cannot be judged on moral grounds. The act must have issued from freedom exercised by the one who acted for it to be judged morally.

A peer or social group is free to adopt their ways of relating with group members. An ethnic group is free to adopt their mode of greeting, dressing and food. That is in the domain of culture. Morality is not about table manners or method of greeting people or eating food. However, in formulating our group culture or folkways, the voice of morality should be hearkened to. That is why morality is universalizable. It is because of its relevance in all spheres of human endeavour that makes it an important affair. Morality gives consideration to mankind's common heritage. The role of morality cannot be underestimated in whatever we do as human beings if we want to attain a balanced and civilized society, wherein the rational ends of men would be met (Soyombo, 2009: 28). We must not shy away from it neither are we to develop moral phobia because it is not a simple matter, but how we ought to live with one another, since by our nature we are social beings who always engage in social relationships.

Morality has been expanded to embrace individuals and groups, a typology that has further underscored its importance. For instance, Unah (2009: 60), has identified two

types, namely, private morality and public morality. Mark Bell (1988: 23) also talks basically about two types namely private, personal or individual morality and civic morality. Individual morality is the standard that a person or an individual has about what is right and wrong or good and bad which directs his or her conduct and guides his or her relationship with others. He argues, however, that civic morality and personal morality are inseparable and indispensable. Bertrand Russell has identified personal as well as civic morality. He argues that both are very important because without civic morality communities perish; and without personal morality their survival has no value (Russell, 1975: 156). Rosemary Goring (1995: 491) writes on social morality which she defines as laws, rules, and standards of behaviour designed to enable members of a society live together harmoniously. Violation of social morality is met either with criminal proceedings or, in the case of non-criminal offences, social disapproval. In one of his hit songs, *War*, reggae maestro Robert Nestor Marley, called for international morality. Following suit, we can also talk of national morality. Friedrich Nietzsche also presented two types of morality: Master morality and Slave morality. Nietzsche's typology of morality however, arose in his bid to construct a new moral code (Azenabor, 1996: 75). Master morality serves as a code of discipline which the ruling class (superman) have to impose on themselves in order to maintain their position in the face of danger from without or below (Ibid. 76). Since the master's acts are not to be rated either as noble or ignoble but acceptable, master morality serves as the freedom to act, an unfettered access to freedom of the will, and the assertion of one's values.

The Concept Ethics Explained

Just as it is with so many words in common use, the term ‘ethics’ has a number of meaning. In one of its most frequent uses, ‘ethics’ refers to a code or set of principles by which men live (Popkin & Stroll op cit. 1). Thus, we speak of ‘media ethics’ and by this phrase we mean the code which regulates and guides the behaviour of journalists in their *News* gathering and reporting. Or again, when we speak of ‘legal ethics’, we refer to the principles which prescribe the behaviour of men and women in the legal profession. The same is true of ‘medical ethics’, “ethics in the helping profession”, ‘Christian ethics’ etc. There is always a code or set of principles by which men and women who belong to an organization or association are expected to live. The implication is that not every approach to doing things is acceptable if the best interest of all is to be attained. What this suggests is that there is always the best way to do or to act. There is always that which constitutes the best practice; that which becomes the standard of practice and it regulates relationships both within and without.

Philosophers, however, do not only employ the word in this sense when they speak of ‘ethics’ or ‘moral philosophy’. They also mean by it a theoretical study concerned with *ethical theories*. An ethical theory is a systematic exposition of a particular view about what is the nature and basis of good or right. Ethical theory provides reasons or norms for judging acts to be right or wrong and attempts to give justification for these norms (Machinon, 1988: 8). Ethical theory deals with such questions as ‘How ought men to behave?’ ‘What is the good life for man?’ etc.

Ethics is derived from the root Greek word *ethos* which is equivalent to *customs*. It is equivalent to the (Roman) Latin *mores* (moral) which also means *customs* (Schwab, 2001:

3). For Gary Percesepe (1995: 2) ethics is frequently referred to as moral philosophy. *Moral*, derived from the Latin word *moralis*, and *ethics* derived from the Greek word *ethikos*, both mean conduct and custom. It is a network of social customs and institutions (Cottingham, op cit. 360). According to Albert *et al* (1984: 6) both *ethos* (ethics) and *mores* (moral) refer to customary behaviour and therefore can be used interchangeably. In the contemporary usage however, *ethics* and *moral* refer to what is good or bad, right or wrong, acceptable or condemnable, praiseworthy or blameworthy, in human conduct. On this basis, G.O. Ozumba (2001: 5) defines ethics as a theory of moral evaluation. In his *Preface To The Metaphysical Elements of Ethics*, Immanuel Kant defined ethics as the system of the *ends* of the pure practical reason; and as a *doctrine of virtue*. Elsewhere, he argued that ethics in ancient time signified moral philosophy which was also called the *doctrine of duties*.

Ethics is also called moral philosophy and moral theory. For Pojman (1989: 1) ethics is a systematic endeavour to understand moral concepts and justify moral principles and theories. It undertakes to analyse such concepts as ‘right’ ‘wrong’, ‘ought’ judging acts to be right or wrong and attempts the justification for these norms - ‘evil’, ‘permissible’ in their moral contexts. According to Omoregbe (1993: IX) ethics is concerned with the question of right and wrong in human behaviour. It deals with how men ought to behave, and why it is wrong to behave in certain ways and right to behave in certain other ways. To put it straight, ethics studies and is concerned with the reasons why certain kinds of actions are morally wrong and why other kinds of actions are morally right, acceptable and commendable. It is in the light of this that Rachels (1986: 1) argues that moral philosophy (ethics) is the attempt to achieve a systematic understanding of the nature of

morality and what it requires of us – in Socrates' words, “how we ought to live” and why. On their part W.T. Jones *et al* (1977: 1) observed two senses of ethics. In the one sense it is a “pattern or norm, or code of conduct actually adopted by a group of people”. In another sense “ethics applies not merely to the various approved codes but also to the activity of appraising and perhaps revising these codes”.

According to Andrew Ghillyer (2008: 4), the field of ethics is the study of how people try to live their lives according to a standard of “right” or “wrong” behaviour – in both how we think and behave towards others and how we would like them to think and behave towards us. For *The Josephson Institute of Ethics*, ethics is about how we meet the challenge of doing the right thing when that will cost more than we want to pay (*Ibid.* 4). On his part, John Donaldson (1992: xxi) writes: “moral philosophy can also refer to the customs or standards which a particular group or community acts upon (or is supposed to act upon). Thus it refers to the codes and practices and to the principles to which can be analyzed or criticized positively or negatively”. Ethics, for James Christian (1981: 108) is the philosophical study of moral judgments – value judgments about what is virtuous and base, just and unjust, morally right and wrong, morally good and bad, or evil, morally proper and improper.

So, ethics or morals take its primary concern from the ‘*ought*’ in human conduct and behaviour. It posits that certain acts of men *ought* to be and certain other ones *ought not* to be. Ethical or moral behaviour therefore asserts that there is always a good or the right act and there is also a bad or wrong act. It is from this assertion that we commend some

actions of men and condemn some other actions of men also. No action is commended and at the same time condemned.

Morals and or /ethics, unarguably is the primary concern of human beings. It is human beings that are naturally demanded to be of good behaviour. Human beings live in organized societies that require moral bonding for its survival and continued existence. Human associations are in dire need of codes, norms, principles, that is, ethics, for their relevance. It becomes primarily human to observe moral rules. The so-called animal kingdom or animal society needs no moral or ethical standard or principle. The *capacity* for the truly moral is *enjoyed* by human beings. In their nature human beings are *free moral agents*, meaning that they can act for good and for bad and also evaluate their actions for good or bad, right or wrong.

Human beings are adjudged moral or immoral because their acts are *free acts*, that is, they have the capacity to choose between alternatives. That is to say, it is only human beings and not animals that can think and act and take responsibility for their acts. This is because human beings make choice for themselves and as such they must take the responsibility for any choice of theirs. When we defined ethics along the view of conduct, it suggested voluntary action. Action can be said to be good or bad, right or wrong, for the simple fact that the human person who is being judged acted freely, out of his volition. It is free and voluntary acts that come to the court of ethics.

It is pertinent here to say that by the ‘acts of men’ and the ‘actions of men’ we also imply *inactions*, that is, refusal to act voluntarily. By *inaction* we mean deliberate refusal to act. For instance refusing to prevent a baby or an infant from falling into a well or putting its

hands on fire, is an inaction that is immoral. So, even in refusing to act, it is taken as an action. And it has its ethical or moral implication since it is done by an adult who chooses to do so freely. That is why negligence is punishable. Ethical judgment is based on actions and inactions of men done from motives. We must say then that ethics or moral looks into all human conduct – actions and inactions-of men freely performed or refused to perform.

Ethics emerges from *reflective morality*. It is opposed to *customary morality*. Reflective morality leads us to search for constant and universal principles whereby we can decide for ourselves, from inner conviction, what the good life is and how we ought to live it (Gonsalves, loc cit. 3). Customary morality, on the hand, offers us definite rules and precepts to guide our conduct. It is received from the *voice* of nature, from experience, from education and training sustained by tribal custom. Customary morality however, was prior to reflective morality. It is morality *received* and adopted by virtue of belonging to a tribal or ethnic group at a particular point in time.

We must admit that the transition from customary to reflective morality began in the Western culture, with the Greeks. By the sixth century B.C. the Greeks had reduced primitive speculations about the universe and our place in it to some sort of order or system and integrated these speculations into a general body of wisdom called *philosophy* (*Ibid*). In the days of the Sophists and Socrates, the Greeks turned their insatiable curiosity on man, (after a brilliant period of speculation on the structure of the universe) human life and society. As a people with the *philosophic resolve* nothing was too sacred or too remote for their penetrating scrutiny. Besides, as seafarers and colonizers, they

tried to compare *anthropological notes* of theirs with those of the others with whom they came in contact. This was because they noted differences in customs, practices, laws and institutions. There arose the problem of which culture were superior or inferior. This led to the study of all human conduct as though to obey the Socratic dictum (creed) of reflection: “the unexamined life is not worth living” (Albert *et. al*, op cit. I).

The study of ethics was, as it is, socially and naturally driven. And ethics itself grows out of life-situations in which men are confronted with some sort of perplexity or doubt about what is the right thing to do or the best course to follow, situations in which incompatible courses of action seem to be justifiable. Ethics is geared towards resolving moral conflict since it is the “domain of human intelligence reflecting in the face of moral conflict and doubt” (*Ibid*). When one already holds moral conviction either from his culture or religion and has no need for reflection, moral theory cannot emerge. But when a child, for instance, or somebody for that matter, begins to question the injunctions and prohibitions of his parents or tribe, moral theory begins to emerge. This is the beginning of moral reflection.

Ethics is not concerned about customs and usages that are purely conventional such as table manners, modes of dress, forms of speech, and expression of courtesy (ethics is not about rules of etiquette). The reason being that these vary in different parts of the world and at different times and can be changed at will. Ethics takes interest in those universal conducts and customs of men which can be adjudged right or wrong. Ethics is in the domain of axiology. It pursues sterling values and not folkways. For instance, telling the truth, helping the needy, respect for lives and property of others, doing one’s job to the

best of his ability, being open to argument, etc., are universal custom that stands the test of time and are timeless values. However, all culture, folkways, rules of etiquette, is expected to imbibe ethics.

According to Mackinnon, ethics rekindles support for these time-tested values. Ethics, or moral philosophy, asks basic questions about the good life, about what is better and worse, about whether there is any objective right and wrong, and how we know it if there is (Mackinnon, op cit. 5). This definition of ethics assumes that its primary objective is to help us decide what is good or bad, better or worse, either in some general way, or regarding particular ethical issues. This is generally called *normative ethics*. There is also another approach to ethics. It is called *metaethics*. In doing metaethics we only analyse the meaning of ethical language. Instead of asking, for instance, whether abortion (the willful termination of the embryo or foetus before its term) is morally justified, we would ask what we mean in calling something “morally justified”, or “good” or “right”. We would analyze ethical language, ethical terms and ethical statements in order to determine what they really mean. In doing this we would be functioning at a level removed from that implied by the definition. It is for this reason that this approach is called metaethics, *meta* meaning “beyond” (*Ibid*).

It is at this juncture we want to inquire whether ethics is a ‘science’ or an ‘art’ or both. Some philosophers have defined ethics as science of oughtness. For instance Schlick thinks that ethics merits to be called science. According to his position:

If there are ethical questions which have meaning, and are therefore capable of being answered, then ethics is a science. For the correct answers to its questions will constitute a system of true propositions concerning an object the “science” of that

object. This ethics is a system of *knowledge*, and nothing else, its only goal is the truth. Every science is, as such, purely theoretical; it seeks to understand; hence the questions of ethics, too, are purely theoretical problems (Schlick, 1992: 1).

It is true that the goal of science is knowledge and this knowledge is epistemic and therefore truth. It is also true that ethics searches after the truth and knowledge at the same time. It will also interest us to note that the Latin word *scientia* (science) and Greek *episteme* (knowledge) mean the same thing.

However, does it mean, as Schlick has argued, that ethics can rightly be called science or equated with science? Can we define ethics as the normative science of the conduct of human beings living in societies – a science which judges this conduct to be right or wrong, to be good or bad? Before we answer this question we want to understand the meaning of science. According to Goode and Hatt (1952: 7) science is popularly defined as an accumulation of systematic knowledge. For Pasteur, (Ekpeyong 1993: 7) science is the knowledge gained by systematic observation, experiment and reason. And Akaneme (2004: 1) defines science as a body of knowledge and as a method for acquiring knowledge or studying and understanding the world. In the definitions above, the important word is *systematic*. What makes scientific knowledge differ from ordinary, haphazard knowledge is it's being organized and being systematic and being arranged in a definite coherent system. That is why we call science organized body of knowledge. Knowledge is called scientific because of the approach about it. This is supported by scientific methodology.

It must also be said that there are basically two levels of sciences according to the class of objects or phenomenon they deal with. They are natural science and social science. It is

however, *pure, positive, empirical* ('normal') science that is science strictly called. This is because, as it has been said, social science, because of its subject matter (man and society) cannot achieve exactitude which is the final goal of science. But some natural science can achieve exactitude because it studies natural phenomenon and their laws. So, it is science, strictly speaking. And since ethics is in the sphere of social science it cannot be called science in the real sense. It is *pseudo* science. It is only the empirical and formal sciences: mathematic, physics, chemistry, etc that can be said to be science in the real sense of the word.

However, this way of looking at science has been debunked. The problem of the confusion of ethics being a 'science' or not has been largely attributed to semantics and the *spell* of Comte. According to Gonsalves (loc cit. 7) the scientific world is still largely under the spell of the nineteenth-century mode of thinking, originated by Auguste Comte, known as *positivism*, which eliminates and also restricts scientific knowledge to facts and relations between facts. If science is defined from the point of view of the positive sciences, then ethics will not qualify as a science. But if we take the definition as given and consider the current usage which also defines science as *anybody of systematized knowledge about an object*, then ethics will be admitted in the courtyard of science.

The point must be made clear that ethics is not *exact* science such as the physical and experimental sciences. But as a body of systematized knowledge ethics is a science. Like any other discipline that merits to be called science, ethics weighs, assesses, evaluates, analyses and studies relationship of empirical data (Gonsalves, Ibid. 7). According to Ozumba (op cit. 19) ethics is said to be both a science and an art. It is a science because it

is a body of organized ethical principles which regulate human conduct. It is an art because it deals with its subject-matter with an air of profound imagination and skill.

We want to note however, that ethics, as a matter of fact, does not consider the conduct of minors or children below the age of reason. In short, the acts of children are not subject to moral or ethical judgment. Children are said to be amoral, that is, not subject to moral judgment. Children are likened to lower creatures which actions are not subjected to ethical judgment. The fact that we discipline children, and admonish them does not imply ethical judgment. We as parents and older ones owe it a moral duty to bring them up by correcting them when the need arises. The correction we give develops their moral consciousness and awareness. The fear of punishment and the joy of reward put the children on the pathway of moral development. This agrees with the stages of moral development as outlined by Psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg in his six stages of moral development (Omoregbe, op cit. 86). The first stage is the stage of punishment and the second stage is the stage of reward and profit-seeking. Parents and guardians apply these to the moral upbringing of children until they grow up to appreciate the beauty of moral living and progress to the third stage which is the stage of conformity to social expectations. And through the fourth stage, the stage of respect for authority, the fifth stage, the stage of rights and law, to the sixth and the highest stage, the stage of conscience.

On our part we say that ethics is reasoned discourse on morality. Ethics for us is a reasoned contemplation of how men ought to live and to conduct their affairs. It is the critical examination of what constitutes the best and the most acceptable behaviour for

men in a given circumstance and for all times. Ethics can therefore be called practical science.

We need to distinguish between ethics and (morals) morality and also to show the relationship which exists between the two concepts. First, we say that etymologically, the words morals (morality) and ethics (ethical) are identical. The Latin word *moralis* from which the English word morality originated, was created by Cicero from *mos* (pl. *mores*), meaning custom(s), which corresponds to the Greek *ethos* (custom). This is why in many contexts, though not always, moral/ethical, morals/ethics, moral philosophy/ethics, etc. are interchangeable. But the two words have also been used to mark various distinctions (Mautner, 2000: 365). The term *moral* is essentially equivalent to the term *ethical*.

Ordinarily, the opposite of *moral* is taken to be *immoral*, so that we mean by a “moral person” one who is good and does what is right, and by “immoral person” one who is bad and does what is wrong. However, moral may also be used in a wider sense to refer simultaneously to right and wrong. The same analysis may also be made of the term *ethical*: its antonym is unethical, that is, it refers to what is wrong.

What though do we mean when we use the term morality, in its strict sense? The noun *morality* is the quality or value human acts have by which we call them right or wrong, good or evil. It is the general term covering the goodness or badness of a human act without specifying which of the two moral values is meant. As Corey *et al* (1998: 3) put it “*morality* is concerned with perspectives of right and proper conduct and involves an evaluation of actions on the basis of some broader cultural context or religious standard. Most human acts have their quality or value of either being good or bad. They are not

value-neutral often times. This is what we refer to as the morality of an action – the fact of it being good and commendable, or evil and condemnable. C.S. Momoh seems to have successfully compared ethics and morality in the following argument:

The moral is the basis of the ethical but it is more encompassing, comprehensive and pervasive. Ethics represents a theoretical dimension to morality. Morality will say that a human being ought to live a good life. Ethics will ask or examine what goodness is or what a good life is. Morality will say that man ought to be kind, but ethics will be more interested in the nature of moral kindness. Morality is more concerned with action while ethics could spend considerable time and space on ethical speculation and formalism (Momoh, 1991: 126).

Morality is a set of principles, or rules, that guide us in our actions. It is, generally speaking, the rules for right act and prohibitions against wrong acts. Sometimes morality is that single act of absolute rules and prohibitions that are valid for all men at all times and in all societies. More loosely, a morality can be any set of ultimate principles and practices basic to a society.

Morality and Ethics

What is the relationship between ethics and morality? To answer the question, we first understand what is meant by ethics. Omoregbe, gives three senses of ethics: ethics can be defined as the branch of philosophy which studies the norms of human behaviour; ethics as a systematic study of the fundamental principles of the moral law; and ethics as the normative science of human conduct (Omoregbe, 1993: 4) Solomon (2009: 60) defines ethics as the study of good and bad, right and wrong, the search for a “good life”, and the defence of the principles and rules of morals. Ethics is the study of the norms or standards of human conduct (Unah, 2009: 60). It is in general the study of the fundamental principles guiding the good of the individual within the control of the social interactions

and the community of the “whys” and “why-nots” of human actions or conduct (Azenabor, 2008: 230). Ethics can also be called moral philosophy and moral theory (Gonsalves, 1989: 30). Ethics and ethical issues grow out life situations in which rational and reflective human beings are faced with doubt, disagreement, and even perplexity about what is the right thing to do or the best course to follow. Daily, there are incompatible courses of action that seem justifiable. Situations such as that give rise to the inquiry into the reasons and the justification or otherwise for deciding actions or for judging them to be right or wrong. The task of evaluating or judging or deciding is the domain of moral philosophy and it is where ethics assumes its basis and relevance. As the history of philosophy portrays it, ethics has as its purpose the interpretation of the human fact of life, namely, the acknowledgment of the right and wrong in human conduct. The fact remains that people do make judgments of right and wrong, and philosophy cannot afford to overlook this. It must investigate and explore all that are involved in the judgment and the evaluation of human acts. Ethics studies human conduct in terms of its rightness and wrongness, as well as its *oughtness*.

There is also a sense of ethics as approved code of conduct for groups, associations, the professional bodies and religious bodies. For example, there is ethics for journalists, ethics for medical practitioners, ethics for accountants, ethics for lawyers, Christian ethics, etc. This is a code of conduct guiding the behaviour of members of the group, profession or association. The need for ethics arises because there is always a certain level of behaviour expected from every member of the association. There is always that which passes as *acceptable best practice* below which the conduct or behaviour of an individual or group is adjudged condemnable and unacceptable. Ethics here serves as a moral

compass directing conduct in order to attain best practice. There is also a sense of ethics as it is applied in real life situation (Azenabor, Ibid, 231). This is the sense of application of the ethical and moral themes, standards, principles and decisions to controversial problems of society such as war, euthanasia, abortion, suicide, same sex marriage, etc.

There is no human action that escapes the searchlight of ethics. The fact of daily activities of men is the basis for ethics. In all of human acts, there are those that are adjudged necessary and compulsory and some are not. Human beings have the tendency to judge in three possible ways:

1. Those that a person *ought* to do.
2. Those that a person *ought* not to do.
3. Those that a person may *either* do or not do.

However, there is no general agreement on this and ethics must prod men's reflective capacity in order for them to come up with the rational, objective moral principle which to follow in making decisions. It can then be said that ethics is both practical and normative science that discovers, explains, and demonstrates the principles and rules of right conduct.

What then is the relationship between ethics and morality? According to Omoregbe (Ibid. 5), there exists a relationship between ethics and morality. The relationship is similar to the relationship between logic and thinking or that which exists between theology and religion. Religion for example is the basis for theology while thinking is the basis of logic. Human beings already have a sense of morality and they were already engaged in moral judgment. Ethics only marks a transition from customary to reflective morality.

So, ethics presupposes an already existing sense of morality which emanate in man. Ethics only aids us to reflect on morals. Azenabor argued that morality is practical, while ethics is theoretical (Ibid, 231). And according to Unah, ethics studies the different theories of morality (Ibid. 60). Ethics can therefore be the systematic endeavour to understand moral concepts and to justify moral principles and theories. However, ethics is more compelling than morality; in fact ethical principles can be enforced but morality cannot be enforced. Ethics allows us an open window to enforce that which we have accepted as morally defensible. Both the individual and the group can be compelled to observe ethical rules that have been agreed upon. Morality on the other hand is that instrument of control that uses persuasion – an appeal to reason.

It is however one thing to be a student of morals and quite another thing to live a moral life. The study of ethics is no guarantee that the one who studies it will live morally. Something else is required; namely a conviction and resolve to live and act morally and actually choosing to do so. Moral theory (ethics) is indeed an intellectual endeavour, but it draws its data from life as it is lived, charged with emotion and feelings.

The relevance of morality is obvious in its practical application to real life. Morality has been adopted by almost all human institutions as the practical way out of the wood. Its measurement of standards of good and bad, right and wrong has been applauded. Ethics on its side has been accepted as a rational voice that directs actions. It can then be seen that ethics and morality have over the ages served as veritable support for good action such that institutions organised by man for man can no longer function without recourse to the standard supported by ethics and morality. This is underscored by the existence of

codes of ethics and codes of conduct by institutions and organisations. The professions, religions, and even governance have all their moral and ethical demands. And it is on the standard approved by ethics or morality that they all have their social approval or disapproval.

Types of Ethics

There are different senses of ethics. There is ethics as the study of what humans *ought* and *ought not* do. It deals with the norms, standards or principles of human behaviour. Its central question is what constitutes moral standard. Most ethical theories including utilitarianism, categorical imperative, egoism, hedonism are attempts to answer the central question of moral standard. Ethics in general can assume the following typology:

Normative ethics *Normative ethics* also known as *analytic ethics* is that branch of ethics that makes judgment about obligation and value. It attempts to establish principles, standards or norms about how we ought to behave and what we should pursue (Omoregbe 1993), (Ozumba 2005).

Metaethics This is the study of ethical theory itself; it is ethics' own reflection on itself judging the success or failure of itself as moral theory. Metaethics has two aims: (1) to analyse the meaning of the terms used in moral argumentation and (2) to examine the rules of reasoning and methods of knowing by which moral beliefs can be shown to be true or false. The first aim is to explain precisely how such terms as 'good' and 'evil', 'right' and 'wrong', 'duty', 'ought' and 'moral obligation' function in moral language. The task of metaethics is to make a careful and thorough analysis of the meaning of the words and statements that make up moral discourse so that we can understand fully our moral

concepts and how they function in moral discourse. The second aim of metaethics is to make explicit the logical principles that are followed (or intended to be followed) when we give moral reasons for or against doing something or when we try to justify our acceptance or rejection of a moral judgment or argument. Metaethics tries to show how moral beliefs or convictions can be established as true or false and on what grounds a person can claim to know that they are true or false. This second aim is twofold – (a) to determine whether there is any such thing as moral truth or moral knowledge and (b) if so, to discover the method or methods for attaining it.

Applied ethics This is the study of what general norm and standard to be applied in actual problem. This is the application of ethical principle and moral standard to real life moral problems. The knowledge of ‘good’ and ‘evil’, ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ is not expected to be only ‘*descriptive*’ but should be applied to a real life problem. When we deal with issues such as prostitution, abortion, lying, stealing, as they happen in real life and either support or condemn such acts, we are in the domain of applied ethics. We bring our knowledge of moral values to bear on practical issues and *problems* of life.

Descriptive ethics makes no rules for behaviour. They make no laws, give no injunctions and give no commands. They simply describe what is happening in the moral world, they account for what people do and what people say should be done (Iroegbu, 2005: 23).

Empirical ethics is practical ethics which tells the right steps to take for such and such in order to arrive at the good.

Types of Morality

The typology of morality shows its relevance in all human arrangements.

Social morality also known as public morality; civic morality: – This means laws, rules and standards of behaviour designed to enable members of a society to live together harmoniously. Without social morality the behaviour of individuals could not be regulated and society could not exist. Social morality is about the application of social control mechanism which society believes will bring about harmony and stability.

Individual morality also called private morality: This is the standard an individual or person has about what is good or evil, or right or wrong. This is subjective morality issuing from the conviction of the individual concerned. However, the individual might as well be acting on social, family or religious moral knowledge which has been imbibed and internalised. It could also be purely subjective, relative morality when the individual cuts his own moral teeth largely due to personal experience or individual convictions.

Positive morality This is a body of doctrine that is generally adhered to by a set of individuals, concerning what is right and wrong, good and bad, in respect of character and conduct. The individuals may be members of a community or of a profession or some other kinds of social group.

Religious morality This is morality or the standard of good or evil accepted by members and adherents of a religion as standard or principle that guides their life and living. Every religion, both *theistic* and *non-theistic*, revealed and natural, have their morality. For revealed religion, morality is written in the scriptures and holy books. In the case of *natural* religion moral principles are passed from one generation of adherents to the other. The major world religions – Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism – all have their morality based on religion.

Traditional morality Traditional morality or cultural morality is the standard of good and evil, right and wrong, of a tribal or ethnic group imbibed and defended as the accepted way to guide conduct and regulate relationships. It is the sum total of rules, laws, norms, and values designed to enable members of the tribal group to exist harmoniously. The breach of the morality attracts social opprobrium. African traditional morality is located here.

International morality This is the rule of justice and fairplay that is expected to permeate every individual in the global community and to shape the relationship even as it exists between the rich and the poor, the weak and the powerful and the successful and the down-trodden. It is the uniting force for the human species who belong to the same family and whose continued existence in peace and harmony depends on the observance of morality.

The types of morality as described above are still largely *relativistic* and not *universalized*. Even social, civic or public morality is still localised within a particular given society. Besides, there is still the interference of personal or individual morality. Also, international morality is still a dream yet to be fully realised. But it is a quality quest for which we must work hard to achieve. The quest for *universalizability* of morality is a *good* support for international morality.

Differences between Morality and Ethics

The Latin *moralis* was first used by Cicero as an equivalent to the Greek *ethikos* which explains why in many contexts *moral/ethical*, *morality/ethics*, moral philosophy/ethics are pairs of synonyms. However, the two words can be used in different and contrasting senses:

- There is a sense of ethics as a theoretical enterprise. Here ethics becomes descriptive and not applied to any specific problem. Ethics can also be prescriptive, that is, it assumes normative stance – human conduct as it *ought* to be. There is also the sense of ethics as applied to controversial moral problems. There is ethics as a *science* – normative science. Ethics here is concerned with *values*.
- Ethics as the study of the principle of morality. Breach of *ethics* can be punished with sanctions already agreed upon. But breach of morality is always met with social condemnation or opprobrium.
- Ethical systems are enforceable especially as it is always enshrined in a code.
- Ethics is more appealing to professional bodies because it is codifiable.
- Morality refers to a set of rules and norms for guiding and regulating the conduct of people in society.
- Morality is the basis for ethics because we already had a sense of morality before ethics which is reflection of morality.
- Morality is the rule of conduct for harmonious living in society – it is individual's concern.
- Morality is practical, often based on personal conviction or social belief.
- Appeal to act morally is always on suasion while that of ethics is compelling.

African Traditional Morality

There is an African morality. Africans have always imbibed moral consciousness which basically is how they ought to organise their society. As a people who live communally and in ethnic groupings, the need arises always how best to organize their own. African traditional morality is formalistic and ontological. However, what has been the bone of

contention is the basis of African morality. The disagreement is not on whether morality really exists, but on what template is it carved and maintained? Kwesi Wiredu argues that Akan people of Ghana hinge their morality on rational reflection as to what is conducive to human welfare (Omoregbe 1997: 135). S.B. Oluwole argues that Yoruba morality is secular morality with rational basis. If there is the thought of the gods in Yoruba morality, it is only to ensure its enforcement especially where human beings have failed to do so. The basis of Yoruba morality is Golden Rule and utilitarian considerations (Ibid. 136). Bolaji Idowu however, identifies the religious foundation and argues that it is the basis of Yoruba morality: "With the Yoruba, morality is certainly the fruit of religion" (Idowu, 1982: 146). According to J.C. Okei, the foundation of African (Igbo) morality is founded on communal spirit; it is social and ontological in nature (Okei, 2003: 57). Claude Summer examines Ethiopian morality and argues that it is established on the natural light of reason with conscience playing a central role (Omoregbe, Ibid.142). For Placide Tempels Bantu, morality is real, philosophical, and objective. He argues that objective morality to the Bantu is ontological, immanent, and intrinsic morality. Bantu moral standards, according to Tempels, depend essentially on things ontologically understood (Tempels, 1953). These are, however, regional morality situated within a particular existential experience. It can however, serve as a prop for universalizable morality.

Morality and other Disciplines

Besides its relation to the other branches of philosophy of which it forms a part, ethics is also related to the other human and social sciences. These latter sciences have the same broad subject matter, but ethics differs from them by its distinctive point of view.

Anthropology and ethics both deal with human customs on various levels of culture and civilization. Anthropology studies the origin and development of human customs without passing any judgment on their moral rightness or wrongness. However, it is this rightness or wrongness alone that is of interest to ethics. Anthropology testifies to the existence of moral notions among primitive peoples; ethics borrows much data from anthropology but goes on to examine the moral value of these concepts and customs.

Psychology and ethics both deal with human behaviour, with the abilities people have and the acts they perform. Psychology studies how humans actually do behave, ethics studies how they *ought* to behave. Sanity and sanctity, a well-adjusted personality and a morally good character, despite the relationship between them, are essentially different things; so too are their opposites madness and sin, psychic eccentricity and moral depravity. What psychologically motivates a person to a deed, good or bad, is different from the goodness or badness of the deed. Ethics is dependent on psychology for much information on how the human mind works, but it always passes on from how people do act to how they *ought* to act.

Sociology, economics, and political science study human social life, and so also does ethics but with some difference of viewpoint. These three sciences deal with actual social, economic and political institutions – what they are and how they function. Ethics determines what they *ought* to be and how they *ought* to function. A hard and fast line between these three sciences, and between them and ethics, would render all four studies impractical. The endeavour to remedy the social, economic, and political ills of mankind involves an application of ethics to these three fields. Such a combination is sometimes

called *social*, *economic*, or *political philosophy*. But ethics, precisely as ethics, always preserves its distinctive point of view, the *ought*.

The study of *law* is closely related to ethics. Though both deal with the *ought*, the civil law and the moral law do not always perfectly correspond. The study of civil law deals only with those acts permitted or prohibited by civil law, ethics with the tribunal of conscience judging all of our acts. There is a difference between crime and sin, legal rectitude and moral worth, being law-abiding and having true virtue of soul. A mingling of ethics and the civil law on a wider field gives us the *philosophy of law*, the study of how laws *ought* to be framed and interpreted, a study some writers call *jurisprudence*.

Morality, Ethics and Metaphysics

Metaphysics takes us face to face with reality and gives us the tool to penetrate and interpret reality. Metaphysics, according to Unah (2002: 18) is the most fantastic telescope of world understanding. For that reason, metaphysical view and understanding of reality including man and the universe, have implications for morality. On metaphysics rest our claim about pure reason, *a priori* knowledge, universal axioms and principles, moral law, and some other presuppositions which we have about the world. If we take African metaphysical view as the guide, for instance, we encounter metaphysical view built around ‘force’, ‘vital force’, ‘spirit’. This ‘force’ is ever present in things and connects all things and creates a situation of mutual compatibility among all things such that nothing is out of the chain. These forces, although in hierarchical order, interact and interpenetrate with one another. The implication is that nothing is isolated, but in one way or the other, everything has a way by which it touches and is touched by another. There is

no boundary, no line of demarcation, natural or artificial. There is interaction and interrelation, thereby creating an ontological unity.

The implication of this metaphysic to morality is that there is unity among beings, and an attempt to tamper with this ontological unity will have negative effect on the beings, both human and non-human. Immorality always punctuates the flow of the ontological unity. It brings about disequilibrium and disharmony. It disrupts cohesion and brings society, including its institutions, to the brink of collapse. For instance, wanton killing of people, stealing, lying, corrupt practices, etc. do not promote healthy and harmonious social relationships. Interpersonal relationships are soiled in the event of vices being committed. Trust, unity of purpose, contracts, and social interaction which promotes human relations are sacrificed when morality is not upheld. The ontological tools of unity, development, human interaction are destroyed when actions that bring about discord, dissension, disharmony, are introduced and even promoted and taken as the norm. Morality is in accord with man's ontological foundation. Acts that are contrary to morality only punctuate the moral order and tilt the scale towards chaos in society. Even in the advanced societies where social arrangements are seen in terms of 'kingdom of ends', 'life-boat', 'global village', it only points to the fact that there is a web of relationships so ontological that it forms a unity that must be respected and protected. This is the ground of the metaphysics of ethics and morality.

Morality and Law (the *Is – Ought* Controversy)

The imperative of morality may not always be expressed vividly and logically due to the age and time of a people and the selfish agenda of opinion leaders and men in authority.

Yet it has never been suppressed totally because it is *how we ought to live our lives*. Attempts at keeping morality alive has been made by moral philosophers, moralists, ethicists, founders of religious faiths, law-givers, as well as well-meaning citizens of the world. It is this that underscores the affinity which law has with morality. Even when it is not fully expressed in law, it is obviously implied. Law is a rule and measure of acts whereby man is induced to act or is restrained from acting. It is nothing else than a rational ordering of things which concern the common good; promulgated by whoever is charged with the care of the community (Aquinas, 1982). Morality has indeed become the rational choice of sane as well as sentient men in the task of organising society and human experience. It is for that reason that contemporary men need not see morality as old fashion or treat it with levity. Rather, it should be taken as that which has universal appeal. There is therefore no place for moral phobia, moral scepticism, moral subjectivism, moral nihilism, and amorality - all of which ride on the back of moral relativism (Rosenstand, 2006: 106). That calls for reconciliation of egoism (self-interest) and altruism (disregard of self for the sake of others). The two extreme moral principles are reconciled in moral universalism – the contention that it is the moral duty of an individual to seek the good of his community as a whole. The need for morality in society is supported by human experience. Over the ages, human beings consumed by self-interest, have pursued interests that only predispose society to chaos. In order to bring sanity to human community, there has been recourse to law, rules, norms, folkways, conventions, and such other regulations that are made to check possible human excesses and/or shape human character, conduct, and behaviour to the level of comportment and in keeping with rational quests of man. These are pathways to universalism.

Of all attempts that have been made to bring stability in society, law is the closest to morality. By law, we mean the rules made and promulgated as a social control mechanism geared towards checking human excesses and regulating human conduct. It is not respecter of anybody. Everybody is expected to obey the law. The affinity of law and morality dates back to antiquity hence the universalizability principle suggestive of laws. From the Code of Hammurabi in ancient Babylon to the legislation of today, some laws have reflected the moral climate of the time. Since laws tell us what we ought to do or ought not to do, it may be argued that all law have a moral element to them; if nothing else, they promote the idea that it is morally good to uphold the law. However, sometimes law does not seem to be morally right. The apartheid laws of South Africa, during the days the policy lasted, is good example. At times, laws change as live changes. At some other time it takes violence or civil disobedience to effect change in law. All laws cannot be said then to be morally just as experience has pointed. The relationship of law with morality has brought up the controversy between the natural law proponents and those of legal positivism, two schools of jurisprudence. This is known as the *Is* and *Ought* controversy. The controversy has its origin in Hume's epistemology wherein he argued that knowledge originated in sense impressions and that such uniformity as there was in our perceptual experience is derived from the mind's *associating qualities*. He therefore argued that relations of cause and effect are not intrinsically valid but are the result of mental *habits*. Hume then opposed those who confused "is" and "ought". He expressed his surprise at finding "that instead of the usual copulation of propositions, *is* and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought* or an *ought not*". It was inconceivable "how this new relation can be a deduction from others which are entirely

different from it" (Curzon, 1979: 104). Hume's supposed epistemological difficulty was converted to jurisprudential tool by legal positivists who argued that a statement of fact 'is' cannot be derived from a normative statement 'ought'. In other words: Can what is experiential be inferred from non-experiential? Can the '*ought*' be reducible to the '*is*'? Can we reduce what is non-factual to the factual? (Idowu, 2005: 100). This problem or controversy centres on whether law and morality are necessarily related. While legal naturalists argue that law, morality and justice are related as they defend the inseparability thesis, legal positivists argue that it would be *naturalistic fallacy* to derive the 'is' from the 'ought' because the two are separated. They therefore argue for the separability thesis. Legal positivism holds the ground that law is moral-neutral and for that, when law is promulgated by the appropriate state authority, it cannot be adjudged immoral or unjust by any standard outside the province of the law in question (Ndubuisi & Nathaniel, 2002: 114). They argue that law is free from all moral judgment and should not in any way be influenced by morality. So there can be nothing as law as it *ought- to- be*. That would be making a law metaphysical category. The danger here is that law loses its natural affinity with morality and misses its rational mark of achieving justice, social order, social cohesion and social control which is the same quest of morality. The controversy, aside from separating morality and law (even when they have the same original purpose), makes law superior to morality and exposes morality to questioning. This is not healthy and does not support the quest for a new moral order. Law ought to recognise the moral climate of the time and also put to the fore the moral element which unarguably is an essential part of its original foundation, that is, the *metaphysics of law*. For that reason, law cannot be free from moral judgment.

We argue however, that the implication of “*is-ought*” problem would weigh positively or otherwise on our quest for a new moral order depending on our understanding of the origin and purpose of law. If we take the letter of the law (the ‘*is*’) and leave out the spirit of the law (the ‘*ought*’) then we run into problem. Both the *letter* of the law and the *spirit* of the law must be considered together. The spirit and the letter are like two sides of the same coin (Azenabor, 1999/2000: 66). We must ask: ‘what is law intended to achieve?’ ‘What is the primary purpose of law?’ If our answer is *justice* then all law is in need of morality (*Ibid*), hence the need also of constant reforms because of inherent dynamism. Instead of separating law as *it is* and law as *it ought to be* we should marry the two and give law the moral backing which it really deserves. Since Justice is the goal of law, then morality is the strong element. There is natural affinity between law and morality. To argue for moral-neutrality or moral-separability of law is to present law for what *it is not* originally and primarily elected to achieve. Law is a dependable ally of morality and its usefulness in the quest for new moral order accords with right reason. Law already has universalizability criterion in justice. Law, guided by right reason will provide support for morality. Failure to appreciate the above will set law against morality and will show the limitation of law – i.e. a refusal to see beyond the wider horizon of law.

Importance of Ethics and Morality

Morality is a superior social control mechanism over other mechanisms such as **culture**, **law**, **religion**, **society**, and **government**. This is so because all other forms of social control need ethics or morality in order for them to accomplish their own goals rationally. That is to say, the relevance and continued acceptance of religion, culture, law, the state, and government depends on how each is allowed to be permeated by moral or ethical

standards and principles. Ethics is concerned with the way men ought to live, the way they ought to behave and the norms of conduct to which human actions ought to conform (Omoregbe, 1993: 4). Ethics is therefore concerned with values. It deals with values that are “worthy”; values that are thought to be good in themselves and with values leading to what is good (Barry, 1980: 77). Ethics is a quality and rational inquiry of human conduct intended to streamline conduct and behaviour with civilized demands. According to Moore and Bruder, ethics is the branch of philosophy that considers the nature, criteria, sources, logic, and validity of moral value judgments (Ibid. 406). For McInerney, ethics is the study of how to live, of good and evil, of right and wrong, and of the principles of morality (Ibid. 173). As for Mackinnon ethics or moral philosophy asks basic questions about the good life, about what is better and worse, about whether there is any objective right and wrong, and how we know it if there is (Ibid. 5). This definition of ethics assumes correctly that its primary objective is to help us decide what is good or bad, better or worse, either in some general way or regarding particular ethical issues. Ethics also aims to help us determine what is the right or better thing to do in particular situations. Morality, according to Solomon, is rules for right action and prohibitions against wrong acts. Sometimes, morality is that single set of absolute rules and prohibitions that are valid for all men at all times and in all societies (Solomon 2002: 415). Morality, apart from regulating conduct and behaviour, is also universal. It cuts across boundaries and locates human beings and impresses them on the need to be moral that is, to do only that which is right and good and leave that which is wrong and bad.

Ethics and morality are instruments used to guide conduct and behaviour in order to direct them to their desired, civilized goal. Valasquez defines morality as the standards that an

individual or a group has about what is right and wrong, or good and evil. He also defines ethics as the activity of examining one's moral standards or the moral standards of a society, and how these standards apply to our lives and whether these standards are reasonable or unreasonable, that is, whether they are supported by good reasons or poor ones (Valasquez, 1998: 8 – 11). A critical look at ethics reveals that it is saddled with the onerous task of regulating, directing and guiding conduct and behaviour rationally. It is the only activity or endeavour that has a universal business of evaluating human conduct and judging same to be either good or bad, right or wrong, praiseworthy or blameworthy, and acceptable or condemnable. Other endeavours, enterprises, institutions, and activities of men require the *silent voice* of ethics and the *directing hand* of morals in order to be relevant, acceptable, and useful in order to guarantee their continued existence. It is this importance of morality that underscores the need for its universalizability.

These importance can be summarised thus:

- it serves as constant reminders on how we ought to live our lives
- it prods our conscience to remain steadfast and upright
- it provides the basis for sustainable relationships
- it provides the basis for appreciation, evaluation and judgment of human acts in order to ascertain their moral worthiness.
- It guides our footsteps in our relationships with others

Ethics and Other Instruments of Social Control

Ethics and Law

Human positive laws are enacted and promulgated to regulate the activities in the state. According to F. N. Ndubuisi (1999: 4) law centres on the regulation of man's behaviour,

especially his external conduct as a member of an organized society, an institution which is enforced by a system of compulsions and coercion. In the contemporary society, it is difficult to imagine a state without law. Law has thus become a veritable instrument for regulating human behaviour within a given state and also critical to the stability of any state. As Mark Bell(1988:162) puts it “essentially, the law means the sum of rules properly made, in the interests of enabling a society to function, by persons acting on behalf of the society’s citizens”. St. Thomas Aquinas has a good impression of law: “law is nothing else than an ordinance of reason for the common good, promulgated by him who has care of the community” (*Summa Thologica*,1-11,q.90.a.4). Law brings about sanity in society, regulating various activities ranging from driving, manufacturing, business, buying and selling, contractual agreements, relationships, construction, marriage, etc. That is to say, law is a rule or a body of rules that tells individuals what they may or may not do.

By its very conception law *ought* to be good because it ought to originate from morality. However, in most cases it is noticed that there are unjust laws, bad laws, draconian laws, apartheid laws, racial laws, punitive laws, – laws that do not agree with natural justice, equity and good conscience. Law therefore is in need of morals to make it what it ought to be. Omoregbe argued that:

Ethics is the judge of law, for morality takes precedence over law and is itself the standard for law. Law is at the service of morality and dare not contradict morality without *ipso facto* ceasing to be law and losing its right to be obeyed. In order therefore for any law to be authentic and deserve to be obeyed, it must conform to morality and never contradict it (loc cit. 6).

So every enactment of law requires the visible presence of morality. If morality were brought to bear on law, laws that supported colonialism, slavery, apartheid, race hate, holocaust and pogrom would not have been promulgated at first. These laws lacked morality which is the basis of law. It shows that for law to give justice, it requires virtue, which is in itself a moral category.

Ethics and Religion

Religion is that human disposition that brings the invisible personality, whether real or imagined, face to face with human beings who desire it. In theistic religions the concept of God is central. Religion involves the worship of God or any other transcendental personality believed to exist who is higher and more powerful than man. This higher personality is worshipped, revered, respected, adored and bowed to. This is done through prayer, sacrifice, music, dance, supplication, incantation, meditation, festival and observance of seasons, recitation of sacred scriptures etc. Theistic religion, which is our concern here, is universal, although religious men of faith do not lay claim to the worship of one Deity nor do they conceive it alike.

Morality (ethics) and religion are different and independent. However, it is pertinent to say that the nature of religion and its primary concern always predisposes it to practices, rites, festivals and occasions that demand the civilized ‘voice’ of ethics. For instance, Bell has observed that throughout history countless atrocities have been committed by a fanatical laity in the execution of what its members have conceived to be the wish of God or clergy: ‘such are the heights of wickedness to which men are drawn by religion’ (Bell op cit. 87). There has been human sacrifices, religious bigotry, jihads, crusades,

inquisition, etc., that took millions of human lives, all carried out with fanatical zeal. That notwithstanding, every religion wants to be called a good religion. Every religion wants to be accepted by people. But that every religion wants to be a good religion requires that morality is allowed to be part and parcel of that religion. According to Bartley III (1971:1) morality and religion must be compatible. As for Omoregbe (loc cit.2) religion needs morality in order to gain acceptance as genuine religion. Civilized people will have nothing to do with any religion which is bogus or corrupt. Therefore, religion needs morality to be made complete. A religion that is morally lax will not be acceptable by civilized people. The presence of sects in religious organizations only underscores the quest to appropriate morality.

Ethics and Culture

Culture is another form of social control instrument within a given society. Culture can be defined as the integrated system of learned patterns of behaviour, ideas, and products characteristic of a society (Hiebert, 1976:26). Culture is also made up of systems of shared concepts by which people carve up their worlds, of beliefs by which they organize these concepts into rational schemes, and of values by which people set their goals and judge their actions. Culture is the model that provides the people in a particular society with a description and an explanation of reality. Culture is always created after basic assumptions of a people about reality. That is why culture is always localized and not universalized. A people's cultural practices are not static but dynamic. Culture can 'live' and 'die' and another can be 'created'. Culture includes all that make up a people's furniture of the world such as language, food, dressing and grooming, worldview, marriage system and family life, tools and implements, greeting, rites of passage, dance

and music, religion, aesthetics, etc. However, the dynamism of culture is not always guided by moral tenets. That leaves culture open to emotions which makes it compatible with moral tenets. For that reason, not all cultural practices can pass moral test. For instance, some cultures support or carry out human sacrifice, burying people alive along with dead kings, killing of aged parents, showing outright hatred to strangers, burning people accused of or suspected to be witches, killing of twins, etc. Some cultures support slavery and other forms of slave labour. Some even show outright disregard to infants and old folks exposing these vulnerable group to danger of neglect. All these are not morally acceptable. That most people drop these practices after some long period suggests that morality is the ‘king’. For instance, the care of the aged and infants, the respect for life and for the dignity of human person is universal. That is why people begin to drop those cultures that are not universalizable as they appropriate civilization and as the light of morality shines on them. Therefore, culture needs moral direction to be acceptable and to stand the test of time.

Morals and Society

A society is a grouping of people. Human beings, as social beings live in society and they can no longer refuse to do so. The Greeks had a saying “to live a good life one must live in a great city” (Solomon, Ibid.295). What the Greeks meant is that to live a good life one had to live in a good community – one in which people respected one another and obeyed the rules, one that flourished and was not overwhelmed with immoral problems of crime, poverty; one in which the happiness of one person was not to be gained at the expense of others.

Whether we want to attain the *utilitarian* ‘greatest happiness of the greatest number of people’ or Kant’s ‘moral Kingdom of ends’, the basis is morality. According to Milton Gonsalves a society survives because of its bond of morality Gonsalves, (loc cit.310). There is no community of people that will meet their aspirations in the absence of moral qualities. Mark Bell has also captured it thus:

Without a sound moral basis, a society cannot be civilized. A society may have good laws, a just constitution, regular elections, well organized courts and an efficient structure of government and administration; but, if it has a weak moral basis, the qualities of a civilized society will nevertheless elude it. A sound moral basis is needed, not only to provide the motive for introducing good laws and policies, but also to ensure that good laws and policies work well (loc cit. 19).

Morality gives society that large playing field to realize her objectives. What every society needs most is the respect of the rights of all the members. Respect for the rights and interests of others are fundamental to civilized society; but respect cannot exist in a moral vacuum. Accordingly Bell argues:

While civic morality and personal morality are distinct from one another, the development and maintenance of civil morality depend on the general standards of personal morality being high. A willingness to respect the rights and interests of other people derives partly from a feeling, rooted in common sense, that a society needs mutual respect to function well: but the depth and quality of this willingness derives from a moral desire to show due consideration to people (Ibid. 23).

A society, whether big or small, whether in the South Pole or North Pole will only survive, thrive and continue to exist on the bonds of morality of the members. A society that lacks moral bonding invites anarchy, instability and corruption. The moral road is the best road to follow.

Morals and Government

The institution of government is another social control mechanism which also needs to be guided and directed by moral principles. Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to satisfy human wants. To the extent the wants are satisfied depends on the morality exhibited by the government. The best government is that which desires to make the people happy and knows how to make them happy. A good government is that which balances the forces in society. This can only be done however, if government is guided by moral standards. By applying moral principles government can ably distribute equitably the opportunities, benefits and burdens of society. But when government becomes tyrannical, it means slavery for the governed. Society has no worst enemy than the tyrant under whom there can be no good laws and social stability.

Government consists essentially of leadership, and in a civilized society leadership includes the ability to take the initiative, to be proactive, to feel the pulses of the governed and a readiness to bear the responsibility. A government that is guided by moral tenets will not seek power for the sake of it; not for the sake of being rich or corrupt, but for the legitimate use of it in the service of the governed. What separates a good government and a bad one is the appropriation of morality in governance by the officials.

Government, like the other institutions or mechanisms for social control mentioned above is in need of morality. Its supremacy or sovereignty notwithstanding, without the application of moral tenets, without allowing itself to be abided by moral principles and standards, government becomes at best a gang of bullies and its failure becomes inevitable. According to Plato:

... the truth is that you can have a well-governed society only if you can discover for your future rulers a better way of life than

being in office; then only will power be in the hands of men who are rich, not in gold, but in the wealth that brings happiness, a good and wise life. All goes wrong when starved for lack of anything good in their own lives, men turn to public affairs hoping to snatch from thence the happiness they hunger for. They set about fighting for power, and this internece conflict ruins them and their country (Plato, op cit. 235).

This observation by Plato is still obtainable even in the 21st century world that lays claim to civilization which is said to be unequalled in human history, a century that boasts for scientific and technological sophistication. Government and its officials must embrace morality to be useful to the state and to the citizens.

Statement of the Problem

When one takes a rational look at the events in the world, one may be tempted to conclude that human beings have affinity with beasts and vampires. On a daily basis news of violence against humanity is heard all over the place. On a large scale there is man's inhumanity to man resulting in killings, lack of respect for persons, injustice, and such other vices that punctuate the flow of human relationships. To the chagrin of keen observers of events in the world there seems to be no relationship between happenings in the world and the claim of civilization. Also there seems to be no difference whatsoever in the existing state of affairs in the world today and in such past times referred to as primitive, barbaric, uncivilized, pre-literate, pre-scientific, etc. For example, how can one explain the phenomenon of corruption, injustice, racialism, genocide, terrorism, ethnic cleansing, violence, wars, scorched- earth policies, etc. The best way to explain the present state of affairs is that mankind is in a moral quagmire. There is moral dilemma permeating man's attitudes. But this moral dilemma must be resolved if the events in the world are to be ordered in line with civilized demands. There can be no doubt, however,

that the world's problems can be reduced to moral problem. The moral problem is traceable in the main to various moral systems or moral principles each purporting to provide the basis for moral acts. However, in the face of competing moral principles supported by various and varying moral theories, there arises the problem of the evaluation of human actions and inactions on moral grounds since there is no one acceptable moral principle that would serve as a yardstick. For that reason morals become corruptible. Yet human beings must submit themselves to morality. They must also agree on a moral template in order to evaluate, appreciate and judge human acts equally and correctly. The absence of this agreement on the moral principle has become a problem and a challenge to morality. That is the task for which this research is interested. Human beings can no longer exist under different moral canopies. The days of moral relativism, moral contextualism, moral individualism, moral personalism, moral egoism, moral particularism, moral nihilism and amoralism are numbered. In their place, we advocate moral universalism, the view that one can recognize no special interests such as attachment to family and friends over strangers, in an ethical decision (Fearn, 2005: 188).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this work is to examine Kant's universalizability theory and show how it can lead to a new moral order. Other objectives include:

- i. To critically examine what constitutes morality and to argue that human beings are capable of it.
- ii. To critically examine deontological moral theory in order to make it the basis for a new moral order.
- iii. To examine various ways in which people react to moral and immoral practices.

- iv. To support the assertion that morality is universalizable and that its social benefits lie in its being made universal culture.
- v. To identify the benefits of imbibing and internalising moral tenets for the individual and for groups.

Significance of the Study

This study is not geared towards establishing a blissful earth, a heaven on earth, and imagined situations such as utopia and *eldorado*. It is not a search for a messiah, a philosopher-king or a saint. Rather, it recognises that human beings do not have holy will. They can as a result engage in unwholesome behaviour, rationally unacceptable conduct, and immoral acts. Human beings are always under pressure - social, economic, religious, emotional, and political - to transvalue moral values, to punctuate the course of moral norms, and to engage in acts contrary to reason. There is also established fact of human weakness (*akrassia*). Yet these are not enough reasons to encourage moral phobia or to accept moral anarchy. The presence of various difficulties militating against our moral quests would not be enough reason to disobey moral law. Human capacity for morality with its attendant benefits must be given prominence. The fact remains that a liar would not want anyone to lie to him; a thief would not want his property stolen; a killer would want to preserve his own life and even he who has wrong work ethic would want to be served quicker and better. What these show is that we engage in wrong behaviour when we believe it would pay us to do so. Yet we recognize good practice when we see one and want to be respected and be treated with dignity.

This work, therefore, calls for a return to man's active moral appreciation with a view to attaining sound and universalizable moral principle and practice that is fitting for rational, sane, and civilised people in a civilised society. The world would be a more conducive place to live in when it is populated by people who show high regard for values. The study, therefore, takes the position that human beings as moral agents can no longer dismiss the fact that they are capable of moral living and cannot afford to run away from being moral. The study also shows that the best way to maximise the gains of morality is to universalize it, that is, to make it the business of every rational being. Students of moral philosophy and the society alike would benefit from the insight afforded by this study. It would also serve as the basis for founding strong institutions, formulation of good policies and improved social relationships. This is because the study analyses critically the role of morality in the affairs of human beings.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

It will be too complex to attempt a comprehensive study of moral philosophies. For the purpose of this study, therefore, the scope is limited to the deontological moral theory as ably represented in Kant's moral philosophy. However, there is a comparison of deontological moral philosophy with other moral philosophies based on Aretaic, Eudaemonistic, Hedonistic, Divine Command, and Teleological moral theories. The purpose of the comparison is to assert the plausibility of deontological moral theory and its application in real life situation.

Research Questions

The following questions are fundamental to this research work:

1. What is it that constitutes morality; are human beings capable of living moral life?

2. Do human beings have what can be called ‘nature’ that prevents them from acting morally?
3. What do we mean when we talk of *a new moral order*; can it be attainable?
4. Why do we show preference for good people instead of bad ones?
5. Is the quest for universalizable moral principle realizable?
6. Are there benefits of imbibing and internalising moral tenets both to the individual person and to the society?

Thesis

Kant’s moral philosophy can form the basis for a new moral order. The task, however, is to reposition Kant’s moral philosophy and make it the basis for the much awaited new moral order. Kant’s moral philosophy has the veritable ingredients and the building blocks for moral regeneration which the contemporary society so much needs. For instance, Kant builds his moral idea on the fact that every rational being is capable of morality. That morality is not for a selected few neither is it discriminatory of background or calling. He also argues that personal gains as well as group or regional gains should not be the primary or first consideration for performing moral acts. Rather the larger interest of society which also takes the individual interest into consideration should be the consideration for acting morally. Besides, Kant argues that allowing a place for moral relativism would only frustrate morality. He therefore argues for the veritable place of moral universalism. He presents a case against having individuals as moral role models. He quite agreed on the difficulty of acting morally. But he said since morality is imperative and the imperative is categorical, then, all rational beings must see it in terms of duty. He concluded that it is only in acting morally can we achieve the rationally

desired goal of respect for persons and guarantee the safety of our kingdom of ends. Kant's stand on morality is in agreement with the moral teachings of great moralists, great teachers, religious founders, founders of kingdoms and patriarchs and great law givers. For example, Jesus' Golden Rule 'do unto others as you would like them do unto you' and Confucius' 'what you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others.' These injunctions of human action anticipated moral universalism.

However, before we can apply Kant's moral theory, some things which he took for granted or forgot completely, would be put in place. That is to say, to adopt Kant's moral philosophy requires that we update his thoughts in line with present realities. For instance, after Kant, a lot of researches has been carried out about man and his 'moral nature'. Kant took it for granted that only reliance on reason would arm mankind – rational beings – with the right moral tools. This has been seen not to be so. Human beings do not possess innate moral knowledge that automatically equips them to act morally. There is the need for education. Kohlberg (1976) and Gilligan (1982) have done a lot of work on the role of education in man's knowledge. Kant may also have thought that once a person becomes moral he must always remain moral. However, we argue that a person requires support and reward and a conducive environment to remain moral. The state, for instance, should provide the common good, social insurance, civilized reward system, and good justice system to make society conducive for living. Where the state lacks the moral and political will to take care of the citizens, then the moral landscape would be polluted. Morality should not be seen as an individual affair. This will only create the existence of moral lone rangers. Rather morality should be seen as a collective project wherein every rational person is compelled to act right for the interest of all. For

that reason society should find ways of enforcing moral acts and punishing immoral acts. Morality should not be consigned to conscience alone. Rather society should identify what is moral and demonstrate the community will to enforce it. The state should make use of the legitimacy and power which only sovereign arrangements enjoy to enforce morality for the common good of all. The kingdom of ends must be promoted through moral living.

Conceptual Clarifications

Categorical imperative The one general moral requirement that underlies all morality. It is a command that does not admit any exception. It forms the basis for the universalizability of morals. One formulation of the categorical imperative is: *Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become universal law.* The categorical imperative enjoins action without any ifs, or without regard to the effect such an action may have. It enjoins you to do such and such without qualification. It is selfless imperative.

Morality Morality (or morals) is similar to ethics, and many use the terms interchangeably. Morality is practical and ethics theoretical but at times they are taken to be synonymous. Morality usually refers to private, personal standards of what is right and wrong in conduct, character, and attitude. Sometimes the first clue to the moral nature of a situation is an aroused conscience or an awareness of feelings such as guilt, hope, or shame. Another indicator is the tendency to respond to the situation with words such as ought, should, right, wrong, good, and bad. Moral issues are concerned with important social values and norms; they are not about trivial things. In general morality is the rules for right action and prohibitions against wrong acts. Sometimes morality is that single set

of absolute rules and prohibitions that are valid for all men at all times and in all societies. This is the sense of morality that is taken up in this work. More loosely, a morality can be any set of ultimate principles and practices basic to a society.

Moral development Ethical decisions require persons to think and reason. Reasoning is a cognitive function and is, therefore, developmental. Moral development is the process of learning to tell the difference between right and wrong and of learning what ought and ought not be done. It is a complex process that begins in childhood and continues throughout life. Theories of moral development attempt to answer questions such as these: How does a person become moral? What factors influence the way a person behaves in a moral situation? Two well-known theorists of moral development are Lawrence Kohlberg (1976) and Carol Gilligan (1982). Kohlberg's theory emphasizes rights and formal reasoning; Gilligan's theory emphasizes care and responsibility, although it points out that people use the concepts of both theorists in their moral reasoning.

Ethics The term ethics has several meanings in common use. It refers to (a) a method of inquiry that helps people to understand the morality of human behaviour (i.e., it is the study of morality), (b) the practices or beliefs of a certain group (e.g. medical ethics, nursing ethics), and (c) the expected standards of moral behaviour of a particular group as described in the group's formal code of professional ethics. The sense in which we use it in this work is (a) above.

Moral universalizability This is the capacity of morals to be generalized for everyone, everywhere. What this also means is that one and the same set of moral principle will apply to every person, in every society, at every time in history, regardless of the

particular circumstances and interests of individuals or different societies. Moral universalizability tasks every individual to act objectively irrespective of the circumstances that militate against moral action. It means that whatever action one intends to take that individual should **will** that the action be what everyone in similar situation must take.

New moral order A system of things in which all rational beings are expected to follow moral rules rationally agreed upon as though of duty; to imbibe and internalize moral tenets and make them their own. New moral order is a social state wherein universalizable moral principles rule over every rational being irrespective of differences in status, background or geographical territory in which one finds himself. It is a system of things where morality is made imperative.

Moral The term *moral* is essentially equivalent to the term *ethical*. Etymologically, these terms are identical; the former being derived from the Latin words *mores*, *moralis*, *moralitas*, and the latter from the Greek word *ethos*, *ethikos*, both words referring to customary behaviour. In the sense in which we will use it in this work, it *means* “good” or “praiseworthy”. Moral for us means capable of distinguishing right from wrong with a predilection for right; it describes a person or act or thing that conforms to rationally and objectively agreed-upon standards of conduct.

Ethical theory In ethics, it is the attempt to state and evaluate principles by which ethical problems may be solved. Ethical theory is the conviction that moral acts can be guided following the way it has pointed.

Universalism This means that it is the moral duty of an individual to seek the good of his community as a whole. It claims to combine the true elements in egoism and in altruism,

as the good of community will include both the agents' good and good of others. Universalism is a system where individualism is united with altruism.

Summum bonum Supreme Good that ought to be the foundation of morality. All moral theories quest to attain this supreme good.

Unsocial sociality: This is the situation that results when man, a social being by nature, decides to withdraw from sociality, isolate himself from society because he fears that society can antagonise him. For that reason he forms some form of resistance against society. Man, in this condition, is driven by lust, ambition, greed, power. He wants to subdue others and rule over them. He wants to be above all men, yet he cannot exist without them.

Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded on metaphysics. Alfred North Whitehead, (1929) in his book *Process and Reality* defines metaphysics as the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted. The aim of metaphysics is a comprehensive view of the universe, an overall worldview (Solomon, 2002, Iroegbu, 1995). Metaphysics provides a wider field and viewing space, not an aperture that may blur our vision. Metaphysics is concerned with *first principles* around which revolve all other principles. Metaphysics give us the tool of reflection and to be human is not to give up researches in metaphysics (Kant, *Prologomena*, 1950:116) Kant employed metaphysics as a foundation of discursive thought (Scruton, 1999: 135). This core branch of philosophy is primarily concerned with realities that are beyond the physical, hence, it is called the science of the *beyondness* of *being*. It also gives a comprehensive account of reality not only in the physical world but

also in the spiritual world, hence, the nature and structure of ultimate reality is investigated. The concern of metaphysics is the study of a “form of reality underlying the appearance of things or the study of supra-empirical *a priori*ities which are the presumed source(s) of all palpable experiences” (Unah, 2005: vii). To this end metaphysics is the principle that governs concrete, physical and spiritual realities. However, since our emphasis is on man (human beings in general) it is pertinent we apply a perspective of metaphysics called ontology of man. Ontology primarily is the study of being in general (Heidegger, 1990, Sartre, 1966). Ontology of man, however, is the study of the being of man in order to comprehend it entire. It is the philosophy of man (Unah, 2005). It is not the study of the being of this man or that man, but man as generically and universally conceived. Ontology of man is better comprehended phenomenologically. Phenomenological study of man as man makes the essences of man to stand out without bias, prejudice or presupposition (Unah & Osegenwune, 2010).

Methodology

This is philosophical research carried out through analysis and critical review of relevant works. The works are thoroughly reviewed, analysed and then criticised in order to bring out the balanced view of the contents and reflect the authors' thoughts. In this research, various moral theories were examined before arriving at Kant's moral philosophy. They include Divine Command (religious based), Arete (good man with good character), Hedonism (pleasure) and Eudaemonism (happiness), Teleology (good consequences), African Traditional morality (emphasis on good community person), and Deontology (duty based) moral theories. Divine Command theory takes God as the author of morality. The problem here is how to identify the personality of God. Besides, such commands are

given to adherents of a particular faith. Therefore, it lacks generalization. Aretaic moral theory only tries to encourage a moral individual and makes him the model for others to follow. This also has its shortcoming because everybody ought to embrace morality. Hedonistic and eudaemonistic moral theories emphasize individual happiness and pleasure as the basis of morality. The problem is what happens to unmerited and unworthy happiness and unwholesome pleasure. Teleological moral theory as represented by utilitarianism emphasizes the consequence of action especially the happiness of the greatest number. This also has its shortcoming because not all moral acts may result in pleasant consequences. African Traditional moral principle, although founded on the principle of the golden rule and empathy, is always tilted towards blood relationship. It is regional morality, situated within a particular existential experience. Deontological moral theory was examined and found to be fitting for our research. It is a moral theory that emphasizes duty and moral universalism. It makes morality the duty of all. Its critical argument is that whatever your character may be; whoever you may be; provided that you are a rational being you must observe moral rule as a matter of duty. Immanuel Kant is the consistent voice of this theory, hence his texts have been chosen as primary texts for analysis.

CHAPTER ONE

KANT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS PHILOSOPHY

1.1 Introduction

Philosophy – the love of wisdom – is the human reaction to his brute existence in order to make meaning out of it. It is a product of human experience, awe and wonder. Philosophy is primarily about a constant and continuous quest for knowledge and understanding of the universe and man’s place in it. According to Anyanwu (2000: 62) philosophy is a product of culture and an attempt to organize experience by means of thought. Its ideas are shaped not only by existing state of social development and inventory of culture and science, but by the world outlook, material needs, vital aims and aspirations of diverse sector of society.

A philosopher is a professional thinker. He or she is “a thinker equipped with intuitive insight and rational stamina to delve, more than superficially, into the difficult and complex problems of life and living”. ‘Take nothing for granted’, is the dictum of the philosophers (Azenabor, 2004: 6). For Momoh (2000: 5) a philosopher, like any other professional or individual is a child of his culture. Cultural and social pulls often influence a philosopher’s definition and perception of his subject matter. Immanuel Kant lived in obedience to this professional philosophical calling. He lived up to his name as a ‘philosopher’. He never took any aspect of knowledge for granted. Every aspect of knowledge mattered to him. The result is a rich philosophy touching on human issues.

It is to this great philosopher and gentleman who resolved to clear a path through the labyrinth and maze of human existence we shall now turn our attention. However, this

attention will be primarily on Kant's moral philosophy – Kant's ethics. The ethics of Kant is his attempt to work out a generally acceptable moral guideline for all races of men. Kant's moral philosophy, both in its content and presentation is purely social. However, in all intents and purpose it appears as secularized version of the hardcore, puritanist Christian moral philosophy. It is nevertheless a social philosophy with universal agenda.

1.2 Kant: A Brief Biography

Every story has a beginning. That is a self-evident truth. The story of Immanuel Kant must as a matter of fact have a beginning. Kant's story is however a story of phenomenal success from a humble beginning. Kant's success can be measured by the mention he gets in science, law, politics and philosophy. Kant, through hard work erected monument for himself. Kant was born in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad in Russia) in East Prussia (Germany) on April 22, 1724. His father, a saddler in the city, was a descendant from a Scottish immigrant; his mother was a German (Adler, 1969: v). Had he kept the original spelling of his name as Cant, the citizens of Königsberg would have pronounced his name "Zand" (Runes, 1955: 642). Both parents were devout Christians, a factor which will later contribute to Immanuel's education. Both parents were devoted followers of the Pietist branch of the Lutheran Church, and it was largely through the influence of their Pastor that young Immanuel who was the fourth of eleven children but the eldest surviving son, obtained education. The parents' devotion to Christianity made an appreciable and lasting impact on him. Kant was practically brought up in the spirit of the Pietist movement. According to Copleston (1960: 209), both as a child at home and at the Collegium Fridericianum, where he studied from 1732 until 1740, he was brought up in the spirit of the Pietist movement. He continued throughout his life to appreciate the good qualities of

sincere pietists including hard work, long suffering, discipline and moral consciousness. But it is evident that he reacted rather sharply against the religious observances to which he had to conform at the college. Kant had courage and open mind-the disposition which made him an independent person with a broad mind later in life.

Kant entered formal school at the age of eight. He was admitted to the Collegium Fredericianum, at the time headed by his Pastor. Kant spent eight and half years in the school which was a Latin school. He acquired a love for Latin, the language of learning and scholarship of his time. The edifice of his philosophy would later be erected on the command of this language. He read as many Latin classics as were available to him. He also developed love for the works of Lucretius in particular and the ancient Greek thinkers in general. In 1740 Kant enrolled in the University of Konigsberg as a theological student. Though he registered primarily for courses in theology, he took courses in mathematics and physics. And because he was allowed access to the library of the professor of these courses, Professor Martin Knutzen, Kant read as widely and devoured the works of Newton and Leibniz. It is little wonder then that Kant's early writings were mostly of scientific nature and his interest in science never waned.

At the conclusion of his university education (undergraduate studies) Kant was driven by financial reasons to take post as a family (private) tutor in East Prussia, the job which took him to Arnsdorf sixty miles (about ninety kilometres) from Konigsberg. This lasted for nine years. This was Kant's farthest travel of his life. These nine years of sojourn in Arnsdorf saw him working for three different families. This time Kant had decided to remain in the academic. And with the help of a relative, he was able to enrol and complete

his doctoral programme in 1755. And he was qualified then to assume the role of *Private docent*, or lecturer. Kant never left Konigsberg again possibly out of fear of change. “All change frightens me”, Kant once wrote to a friend, declining an offer to leave Konigsberg for a more lucrative and exciting position at another university (Zweig, 1970: 13).

With the opening of winter term in 1755 Kant began his lectures at the University of Konigsberg. At first he restricted himself to mathematics and physics. And that year and the next he published several scientific works dealing with the different races of men, the nature of winds, the causes of earthquakes, and the general theory of the heavens. But he soon branched into other subjects, including logic, metaphysics and moral philosophy. Kant enjoyed great success and popularity as a lecturer. Various examples he gave in the classroom to buttress his points showed him as a man who is widely read. He read both English and French literature, geography, science and philosophy. For fifteen years as a *private-docent*, Kant’s profile steadily increased. He proved himself a brilliant man. In 1770, after years of poverty, Kant was finally awarded professorship at the University of Konigsberg (*Ibid*: 13). In later years he served six times as dean of the philosophical faculty and twice as rector. Of the eighty years he lived, he remained useful to the academic world. Kant died February 12, 1804. He was an accomplished academic and a complete gentleman who never was married. He was popularly called the ‘old bachelor’ although he was never known to be a misogynist.

1.3 Life and Philosophic Works

Immanuel Kant stands out as one of the philosophers whose contributions to knowledge permeate almost all fields of knowledge. He is famous for his *Critical* and Synthesizing

approach to philosophy. However, Kant lived a very quiet life, although he was friendly and compassionate. His quiet life however contrasts his works. Kant's life has been said to be uneventful (Miller, 1974: 333, Copleston, 1960: 209). We can say however, that he lived the life of a philosopher who faced his profession doggedly, his frail nature notwithstanding. His massive works are there to show for it. He was an active academic right from his youth till old age and death intervened.

Kant came from a humble background. With many children and a menial work, his father could not support him financially enough to meet with his education. Worse still, Kant did not enjoy a vibrant health. He was weak and frail in health. To everybody's surprise, fragility did not deter Kant from the discipline and hard work demanded by academic. Kant mustered enough mental stamina not common in his days. As observed by Adler (1996: vi) scarcely five feet tall, with a deformed chest, and suffering from weak health, he maintained throughout his life a severe regimen. Kant's life and living was arranged with such regularity that people set their clocks according to his daily walk along the Lime Tree Avenue which is still called in memory of him the 'Philosopher's Walk' (Aiken, 1956: 28). Kant maintained his discipline religiously even at old age. He lived as if he was programmed and kept time more than the clock. In short, people regulated their activities and set their clocks accordingly. But once upon a time he was said to have missed his regular routine. The incident was noticed by his street neighbours. This happened when he was 'buried' in the *Emile*, a book authored by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for several days. This book stimulated a lively interest in educational and moral reforms, besides helping to develop his political views in a radical direction.

Kant's life meant many things to many people who knew him. Many people saw him as a recluse. Some saw him as a sociable person. Yet others as friendly and compassionate. Kant was a fine conversationist and a good teacher. The poet Heinrich Heine has drawn this caricature of Kant thus:

The history of the life of Immanuel Kant is hard to write, inasmuch as he had neither life nor history, for he lived a mechanically ordered and abstract old bachelor life in a quiet retired street in Koenigsberg, an old town on the northeast border of Germany. I do not believe that the great clock of the Cathedral there did its daily work more dispassionately and regularly than its compatriot Immanuel Kant. Rising, coffee drinking, writing, reading, college lecturers, eating, walking, all had their fixed time, and neighbors knew that it was exactly half past three when Immanuel Kant in his gray coat, with bamboo cane in his hand, left his house door and went to the Lime tree avenue, which is still called, in memory of him, the Philosopher's Walk (Aiken, 1965: 27 – 28).

Although Kant may have pushed his discipline to the extreme, most things about him are exaggerated. For instance, Kant was a tea drinker and not a coffee drinker. Yet this does not make his life absurd, bizarre, weird, or out of the ordinary as many would think. All his life was goal-directed and he had to pursue the goal with all seriousness that was required of a philosopher of his stature who, after setting a target for himself must also accomplish such too.

It is usual that a person of Kant's stature would be seen differently by people depending on the colour of the lenses with which an individual views the man. Goethe, for example, calls Kant "the delightful man" (Rabel, 1963: vi). As for Rabel "Kant was a gay man" (*ibid*:vi). For Moses Mendelssolm "Kant is one who smashes everything to smithereens" (*Ibid*: vi); while Heine called Kant "the great destroyer in the world of thought" (Aiken, *Ibid*). Kant's attack on the arguments of other philosophers earned him the title of "the

Prussian Hume” (Zweig, 1970: 17). And the religionists call him all-devourer. Kant, the old bachelor was however, a husband of time. His contemporaries praised him as a witty companion and his pupils as fascinating teacher (Rabel, Ibid: vi). He was also disciplined, harmless and obedient. He lived a moral life and was always ready to defend the course of morality. In all his works there is always a space reserved for the defence of morals. We must say that these may represent extreme comments about Kant. But they equally support the fact that Kant has a history and a life - the story and record of his life and the events that surrounded them. The fact remains that one who saddled himself with the human problem must economize his time in order to devote it to solving the puzzles. According to Copleston (Ibid) “It is understandable, therefore, that with this heavy programme Kant had to husband his time”. Kant for us was a fascinating teacher; one whose writings had a human touch. But he cannot be called an iconoclast. He respected authority and was highly moral. According to Copleston, “the salient trait in Kant’s character was probably his moral earnestness and his devotion to the idea of duty, a devotion which found theoretical expression in his ethical writings” (Ibid: 213).

Kant’s works covering areas such as science, religion, philosophy, politics, law, etc., can be said to be phenomenal. This assertion is right considering that Kant started late in life. Aiken (1956) did observe that Kant’s intellectual development was unusually slow. According to Copleston, Kant was already fifty-seven years old when he published his first famous work, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781, and his literary production between 1787, when he attained the age of 64 years and the time of his death at the age of 80 years constitute an astonishing performance (Ibid). This is true if we consider the massive works that followed and the time they were published. These works include: *The Critique*

of Pure Reason (1781), (second edition 1787) (first Critique), *Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysic* (1783), *The Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) (second Critique), *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785), *The Critique of Judgment* (1790) (third Critique), *Preface and Introduction to the Metaphysical Elements of Ethics*, *General Introduction to the Metaphysic of Morals* (1797), *The Science of Right*, *On Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793) and *Perpetual Peace*, (1795).

Kant's astonishing performance can rightly be credited to maturity of mind and experience which helped to catapult him into the age of synthesis. His age helped him in removing the shackles of dogma and the spirit of analysis. To this David Hume and J.J. Rousseau gets motion. Here too Kant shows himself as a man of candour. He admitted his mistakes and never failed to give credit to those that influenced him.

Kant's philosophical career is conventionally divided into three periods: The first which is called 'pre-critical period', runs from 1747, the year of his first publication, 'On True Estimate of Living Forces' to 1770, when he published his Inaugural Dissertation, '*On The Forms and Principles of The Sensible and The Intelligible Worlds*'. The middle period 1771 to 1780 called the 'silent decade' because Kant published virtually nothing but was devoted to the study and reflection that led eventually to *The Critique of Pure Reason*. The third, or 'critical period' dates from the publication of the first edition of the first *Critique* in (1781), followed by the *Prolegomena* in (1783) and the rest of the works ending with *Metaphysic of Morals* (1795). This third period fell in Kant's old age which ironically was a plus to academic but a minus to his health. In the "Preface" to the second edition of the first *Critique* Kant wrote:

... I must hence forward abstain from controversy, although I shall carefully attend to all suggestions, whether from friends or adversaries, which may be of use in the future elaboration of the system of this propaedeutic. As, during these labours, I have advanced pretty far in years – this month I reach my sixty-fourth year – it will be necessary for me to economize time, if I am to carry out my plan ... (*Ibid*: 13).

Also in the *Critique of Judgment* (1996: 462), Kant reiterated the fact of advancing years, his failing health and the need to hasten up his writing: with this then, I bring my entire critical understanding to a close. I shall hasten to the doctrinal part, in order, as far as possible, to snatch from my advancing years what time may yet be favourable to the task. However, Kant continued to write important essays on metaphysics, science, morals, legal and political theories, and the philosophy of history. In addition, he published compilations of his lectures on anthropology, logic, and pedagogy. In his last years he devoted himself to a major revision of some of his basic views on metaphysics and the foundations of science. The work remained uncompleted at his death, but was edited and published under the title *Opus Postumum* (Honderich, 1995, 435; Copleston, op cit. 241).

In all, we say that as a mortal, Kant was a complete gentleman, a humane and law-abiding citizen, a man of civilized comportment, a concerned member of his state, a patriot, a nationalist and a progressive with a touch of discipline. As an academic, Kant exhibited candour amidst his great intellectual and cerebral capacity. He was a widely read man, sensitive to the cultural movements of his time (Miller, 1947: 348). When he adorned the toga of an intellectual, he exhibited a tremendous degree of cerebral stamina and the capability to delve into the highest level of abstraction in many fields of human endeavour. As a great conversationist and a good listener, Kant escaped from the cave of dogmatism and retraced his steps from the uncharted pathway of regional philosophy

where he groped for a long time, into the ‘virgin’ land of synthesis. He was an open-minded fellow who was ready to make contribution to the growth of ideas. But he was also firm and resolute in the defence of ideas for which he had strongest conviction. In the area of moral philosophy, Kant caused a stir and opened another chapter which has remained as new and fresh as ever. The seriousness with which Kant attached to moral issues only showed him to be a moral man. Kant never stopped to examine moral issues whenever any opportunity called for such. What can be called a summary of his moral philosophy is however contained in his *Fundamental Principles (Groundwork) of the Metaphysic of Morals*. The importance of this book has been captured in this caricature by H.J. Paton: “in spite of its horrifying title Kant’s *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* is one of the small books which are truly great: it has exercised on human thought an influence almost ludicrously disproportionate to its size” (Paton, 1964). After reading the book we were almost tempted to say that Kant has written *finis* to moral philosophy. According to Arnulf Zweig Kant had “built a philosophy that stands as one of the most ruthlessly questioning and ultimately inspiring statements of the human condition ever to profoundly shape man’s vision of himself” (Zweig, 1979: 1) In all of his career as a teacher, philosopher, statesman and scientist Kant was concerned with helping human beings realize what they are and to claim it. He worked for the realization of a better society where men and women will live in perpetual peace as rational beings in the kingdom of ends.

1.4 Major Influences on Kant

Kant’s intellectual development was unusually slow. As a student he had been indoctrinated in the eminently respectable rationalism of Christian Von Wolff. Only in

middle age did Kant manage to transcend that influence. He received help in this respect primarily from the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and David Hume, who together with G.W. Leibniz, may be regarded as the three major formative influences (Aiken, 1956: 28). However, Kant read many works both ancient and modern and they together form major influences on him. He was, like every other great thinker, a product of his time. His environment also contributed to the shaping of his philosophy. Something of the nature of these *influences must* be pointed out if Kant's own philosophy is to be understood.

Martin Knutzen's contribution to Kant as a student of philosophy must be given a prime place. Kant's Professor at Konigsberg, Martin Knutzen, had come under the influence of this Wolff-Leibnizian approach to philosophy, and inevitably Kant's University training laid much emphasis upon the power of human reason to move with certainty in the realm of metaphysics. Although Knutzen had thus slanted Kant's early thought toward the tradition on continental rationalism, it was also Knutzen who stimulated Kant's interest in Newtonian physics, an interest that played a very important part in the development of Kant's original and critical philosophy. According to Copleston (op cit. 214), Kant's interest in scientific matters was stimulated by Martin Knutzen at University of Konigsberg. Kant was to say with some respect that Wolff, whose Leibnizian metaphysics had influenced his pre-revolutionary thought, was "the greatest of all dogmatic philosophers" (Ibid: 306).

Christian von Wolff (1679-1754) was a German rationalist Enlightenment philosopher, and professor at Halle from 1706. His doctoral dissertation, presented at Leipzig in 1703 with the title 'Universal practical philosophy set out Mathematically' attracted Leibniz's

interest and the two corresponded until Leibniz's death in 1716. Wolff was a prolific writer whose philosophical writings covered virtually all branches of philosophy. He is said to have taught philosophy to speak German' (Mautner, 2000: 604). He was no doubt the most influential academic philosopher of the eighteenth century. He established thoroughness and accuracy as an important philosophical virtue, and his influence in this respect gave German philosophy a flavour different from the French blend of elegance and superficiality. Wolff's philosophical theories were hardly original, but his systematization of the various branches of philosophy was widely adopted and determined the structure of many later theories, including Kant's. According to Stumpf (1977: 304) Christian von Wolff was neither a great nor an original thinker but his achievement was that he stimulated philosophic activity by developing a comprehensive system of philosophy along the lines of Leibniz's rationalism. It is to be noted that Kant's early philosophical inspiration had been the system of Leibniz, as expounded by Wolff (Scruton loc cit. 13). According to Walker (1978: 2), when Kant was a young man the great figure dominating German philosophy was Christian Wolff. Wolff had a passion for system as it serves as a guarantee of proper order and completeness. This Kant was to inherit in his philosophic life.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646 – 1716) was the most important figure of the seventeenth century rationalism. Leibniz wrote on philosophy, theology, mathematics, physics, linguistics, etymology, genealogy, history, politics, medicine and economy (Mautner, op cit. 309). He shared with Newton the discovery of the calculus, and contributed the concept of kinetic energy and mechanics, made many incidental scientific discoveries of importance, was a tireless politician and courtier, founded the Academy of

Berlin, wrote fluently in French, German and Latin, corresponded with every man of genius from whom he could learn, and produced a philosophical system of astonishing power and originality, which provided the basis of German academic philosophy throughout the century following his death (Scruton, loc cit. 64). Leibniz published little during his life time, and his philosophical master pieces include the *Monadology*, *Discourse on metaphysics*, *The New Essays on the Human Understanding*, *The Theodocly*, and the correspondence with Arnauld, Clarke de Volder and Des Bosses.

The rationalist metaphysics of Leibniz and his epistemology had been taught Kant but in due course of time he would no longer be comfortable with them. He, having been woken up from slumber and now fully matured and awake, and also armed with the instruments of criticality. Leibniz is counted among the great continental rationalists. Although he had minor disagreements with Descartes and Spinoza, he nevertheless belonged to their group for which he fitted perfectly. For instance, Leibniz did not agree with Locke that there is no innate knowledge. Although sensory stimulation is necessary for the acquisition of knowledge as Locke had held, but, according to Leibniz, it is not by itself sufficient. The senses merely elicit or activate what is already in a certain sense residing within us – ‘living fires or flashes or light hidden inside us but made visible by the stimulation of the senses, as sparks can be struck from a steel’ (Cottingham, 1996: 32). Leibniz cited the necessary truths of mathematics as support for his version of theory of the innateness: the truth of such propositions does not depend on instances, nor consequently on the testimony of the senses’ (Ibid: 32).

Against Locke's image of the mind as a *tabula rasa* or blank sheet, Leibniz compares the mind to a block of marble one that is not homogenous but already veined in a certain pattern: the sculptor's blows (corresponding to the stimulation of the senses) are certainly necessary, but they serve to uncover a shape that is already present in the structure of the stone. For Leibniz, the cognitive activities of human mind seem to transcend entirely the straightforward 'stimulus-response' capacities of animals. The beasts, as Leibniz puts it, are like 'simple empirics'; their awareness of things are limited to particular sensory images and impressions. Humans, by contrast, are capable of demonstrative knowledge, that is, they can use their reason to establish universal and logically necessary truths (like those of mathematics). Leibniz's innatism thus proclaims the power of human reason to achieve knowledge that goes wholly beyond what can be derived from sensory data: what shows the existence of inner sources of necessary truths is also what distinguishes man from beasts (*Ibid*: 33). Kant's theory and conception of the mind wherein he achieved his Copernican Revelation was arguably informed by these thoughts of Leibniz.

David Hume stands out as one of the major influences of Kant. Great Kant, in his candour openly acknowledged the contribution Hume made in his philosophic life. It was to Hume he gave the credit for removing the shackles of dogma inflicted on him by Wolff and since after Hume he had acquired an open mind which was instrumental to his critical and revolutionary philosophy. This was when Kant had read Hume's epistemology contained in his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1751) wherein Hume put down his treatise on knowledge and understanding. In his *Prolegomena to Any future metaphysics which is to be a science*, Kant wrote:

Hume's attack on metaphysics struck a spark by which a flame could have been kindled. Hume proved irrefutably that Reason cannot possibly think *a priori* a connection between cause and effect, that this concept is not her own child but a bastard of the imagination fathered by experience, that the subjective habit imposed by the law of association is mistaken objective necessity (Rabel, 1963: 128).

Whilst this Hume's criticism was overlooked by many philosophers of his time, it was Kant who grasped the full implication of this criticism and it was because he comprehended Hume's teaching that he realized its inadequacy as a description of human knowledge, and set himself to correct or supplement it. Out of this effort grew the three great Critiques: *The Critique of Pure Reason*, *The Critique of Practical Reason*, and *The Critique of Judgment* upon which rest Kant's immortal fame. Kant is right when he said that:

It was David Hume's remark that first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and changed the direction of my inquiries into speculative philosophy. Beginning from a well-grounded thought bequeathed by another, we may get farther than he. I soon found that metaphysics is full of similar concepts thought *a priori*. I deduced a number of such concepts from one principle. This deduction never occurred to anybody else before; it was a most difficult task undertaken on behalf of metaphysics (Ibid: 129).

It is Hume's treatment of causality and metaphysics that so much attracted Kant. Before then Kant had been held by the spell of Wolff and the continental philosophical tradition. Hume had argued that metaphysics, as long as it grapples with the 'other-worldly' realities cannot give knowledge and that what we call *cause* and *effect* has been so because of our usual way of looking at things that are always constantly conjoined. Hume's most original and influential ideas deal with the problem of Causality. For Hume the idea of causality is suspect. Hume used his argument against the age-old belief in cause and effect to demolish the view that there are necessary connections in reality, and also to show that we

nevertheless have the idea. If ideas are copies of impressions, then they give us the idea of causality. His answer is that there is no impression corresponding to this idea. The idea of causality, Hume argues, arises in the mind when we experience certain relations between objects. When we speak of cause and effect, we mean to express that A causes B. But if A causes B, we cannot observe in the relation between the separate events A and B besides their contiguity in space and time. And the fact that A precedes B we say that A causes B only when the conjunction between A and B is constant: when there is a regular connection of A-type and B-type events, leading us to expect B whenever we have observed a case of A. It is experience that furnishes us these relations: a relation of contiguity, of priority in time, and of constant conjunction.

Kant was also to react against Hume's moral philosophy. Hume's moral philosophy rests on the 'nature of man'. Hume had argued that human nature has to take over where reason fails. Morality for him is founded ultimately on the natural feelings or sentiments we find within us. That is why *Reason* is and ought to be only the slave of the passions and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them. (Cottingham, Ibid: 375). On its own, Reason is inert and cannot provide any impulse or motivation to action. For Hume it is the natural sentiments of benevolence that elicits our moral impulses. According to Hume moral virtue is desirable because it contributes to individual happiness. For Kant however, *Reason* is the governor of passion and the purpose of moral virtue is not primarily the happiness of the agent. One must perform moral acts whether it will bring about immediate and personal happiness or not.

Kant's open acknowledgement of Hume has always tended to diminish the contribution of Leibniz and other thinkers. However, we cannot underestimate the contribution which Leibniz made to Kant's thought. Before 1768 when Leibniz's writings were published and in it containing also Leibniz-Clark correspondence, Kant had seen the thought of this great predecessor largely through the medium of the Wolffian philosophy, and it is clear that the fresh light shed on Leibniz (in the Duten's edition of Leibniz writing) had a profound effect on his mind (Copleston, op cit. 226). The first result of his reflections found expression in his inaugural dissertation as Professor entitled 'On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World' 1770. Kant, in the inaugural was convinced that Leibniz was right in maintaining against Newton and Clark that space and time cannot be absolute realities or properties of things-in-themselves. Kant had reasoned that Clark's position would only succeed in involving us in antinomies. He therefore accepted the view of Leibniz that space and time are phenomenal, and that they are not properties of things-in-themselves. At the same time, Kant was not prepared to accept Leibniz's notion that they are confused ideas or representations. For in this case geometry, for instance, would not be exact and certain science, which it is. Kant speaks therefore of space and time as pure intuitions. And in his first *Critique* this idea of space and time were further developed.

Jean –Jacques Rousseau also gets direct and equally important mention by Kant as one of those whose thoughts had direct influence on him. It was Rousseau who made Kant take another passionate and critical look at the nature of man. It was Rousseau who directed Kant's attention to the fact that even the so-called 'common man' might as well

hold the key to our knowledge of the world. Kant did not fail to acknowledge this contribution from Rousseau. In *The Beautiful and the Sublime* Kant had written:

I am myself by inclination a searcher after truth. I feel a consuming thirst for knowledge, a restless passion to advance in it as well as profound satisfaction in every forward step. There was a time when I thought that this alone could constitute the honour of mankind, and I despised the common man who knows nothing. Rousseau has set me right. This blind prejudice has vanished. I have learned to respect human nature and I should deem myself far more useless than the ordinary working man if I did not believe that this consideration could give worth to all others to establish the rights of man. (Written on the margin of *The Beautiful and The Sublime*).

Kant was drawn to Rousseau through his works *Emile* and *The Social Contract*. It was *Emile*'s content and curious hybrid form that disrupted Kant's regular time and punctuated his time-table at a point in time. This unusual happening has been captured by Russell (2005: 640) thus:

Kant was a man of such regular habits that people used to set their watches by him as he passed their doors on his constitutional, but on one occasion his time-table was disrupted for several days; this was when he was reading *Emile*. He said that he had to read Rousseau's books several times, because, at first reading, the beauty of the style prevented him from noticing the matter.

Also commenting on the excellent form of *Emile*, P.D. Jimack, in the 'Introduction to *Emile*' says "now quite apart from its subject matter, one of the most striking things about *Emile* is its form, half treatise, half novel; indeed, when one reads the love story of Emile and Sophie in Book v, it may well seem more novel than treatise" (Rousseau, 1974: vii). However, Rousseau most often referred to the work as '*mon Traité d' education*' (my treatise on education) (*Ibid*: 5). This 'Treatise on Education' also contains rich philosophy on human nature which attracted Kant. For instance, although Rousseau always called it

‘*mon Traite d’ education*, he also noted always the moral dimension of *Emile*. Elsewhere, Rousseau saw in *Emile* a work on moral philosophy, based on his belief that man was naturally good. “You are quite right to say that it is impossible to form an *Emile*”, he wrote to a correspondent in 1764, “but I cannot believe that you take the book which bears this name for a true treatise on education. It is rather a philosophical work on the principle that *man is naturally good*” (*Ibid*: ix). Rousseau described *Emile* as “merely a treatise on the original goodness of man, intended to show how vice and error, alien to his constitution, are introduced into it from outside and imperceptibly distort it” (*Ibid*).

Kant agrees with Rousseau’s famous principle of the goodness of natural man and the attainability of moral living. In Book 11 of *Emile* Rousseau asks: ‘What then is human wisdom or the path of true happiness?’ He answers:

The mere limitation of our desires is not enough, for if they were less than our powers, part of our faculties would be idle, and we would not enjoy our whole being; neither is the mere extension of our powers enough, for if our desires were also increased we should only be the more miserable. True happiness consists in decreasing the difference between our desires and our powers, in establishing a perfect equilibrium between the power and the will. Then only, when all its forces are employed, will the soul be at rest and man will find himself in his true position (*Ibid*: 44).

This is essentially a form of self-restriction based on enlightened self-interest: If man desires only what he can obtain and wills only what he can achieve, he cannot be unhappy. Happiness is founded on wisdom which is to will what is and to order one’s heart according to one’s destiny. Emile realizes this and tells himself in a manner resolute of a moral individual “In spite of all you have lost, what is real, what exists for you, is your life, your health, youth, your reason, your talents, your knowledge, and, if you choose, your virtues, and consequently your happiness” (*Ibid*: xiii).

In another work, *The Social Contract*, Rousseau had argued that the individual, while retaining his individualness, must also be part of the society such that while acting, his acts are binding on him and also a law for the larger society. In which case the *general will* is the will of the individual writ large. One who obeys the general will obeys also, by implication, his personal will.

A point must be made clear here: *Emile* started as a book on education and ended as a moral instruction, *The Social Contract* also stated as a work on Political Liberty but ended as an instruction of virtue. Maurice Cranston wrote in his ‘Introduction’ to *The Social Contract*:

The great themes of liberty and virtue were the themes of the *social contract*. This is why Rousseau attached so much importance to the book; and also, perhaps, why it got him into trouble. It might seem to the reader that Rousseau started to write the *Social Contract* as a book about liberty and ended up with a book about virtue; in truth it is the argument of the whole book that once men have entered into society, freedom comes to be inseparable from virtue (Rousseau, 1988: 25).

Although Kant did not mention Rousseau’s *Contrat Social* (*The Social Contract*), there is no doubt that he also read the work and it also influenced his moral philosophy just as *Emile* did.

According to Rousseau, men can both be ruled and at the same time be free if they rule themselves. For what is a free man but a man who rules himself? A people can be free if it retains sovereignty over itself; if it enacts the rules or laws which it is obliged to obey. Obligation in such circumstances is wholly distinct from bondage; it is a moral duty which draws compulsion from the moral will within each man (Ibid: 29). So, for Rousseau the

general will is by definition righteous and the law resulting from the general will is just.

The general will is also universal:

Does it follow from this that the general will is annihilated or corrupted? No, that is always unchanging, incorruptible and pure, but it is subordinate to other wills which prevail over it. Each man, in detaching his interest from the common interest, sees clearly that he cannot separate it entirely, but his share of the public evil seems to him to be nothing compared to the exclusive good he seeks to make his own. Where his private good is not concerned, he wills the general good in his own interest as eagerly as anyone else (Ibid: 150-151).

For Rousseau, the man in society must obey the general will since in doing so he obeys his own private will also. And the way it is, one cannot but obey the general will. A man acting contrary to the general will, is just evading it, he cannot extinguish it. This philosophy, no doubt appealed to Immanuel Kant and it reflected in his moral philosophy especially in his view of man as a *legislator of morality*.

It is pertinent here also to discuss **Nicolo Machiavelli** as another major influence on Kant's moral philosophy. Roger Sullivan (1994: 4) has observed that "one challenge Kant had to face originated with Machiavelli's infamous *The Prince* written in 1513". Machiavelli's advice to the Prince (the ruler) was accepted by the political lords of Kant's time including king Frederick the Great who flourished during Kant's active and lively years in Prussia. Machiavelli's advice to the prince was not a moral one for that matter. The ruler must act in strict adherence to personal gains. He could live a double life if it is what should keep him in power. It does not matter for one to do what ought to be done if what ought to be done is not expedient. "Because how one lives is so far distinct from how one ought to live, that he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done sooner effects his ruin than his preservation, for a man who wishes to act entirely up to his

profession of virtue soon meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil” (Machiavelli, 1993: 22). The Prince (the ruler) should not bother about public (political) or private (personal/individual) morality if he would not gain from doing so. The Prince therefore need not keep faith to his own detriment:

Everyone admits how praiseworthy it is in a Prince to keep faith, and to live with integrity and not with craft. Nevertheless our experience has been that those Prince who have done great things have held good faith of little account, and have known how to circumvent the intellect of men by craft, and in the end have overcome those who have relied on their word (Ibid: 25).

For a ruler to survive, according to Machiavelli, he has to be double-faced, not keeping faith, full of intrigues, deceitful, not open to agreement, not to keep promises, etc. What should matter to him most is his kingdom or the office of the ruler-to protect and to preserve it:

Therefore it is unnecessary for a Prince to have all the good qualities, but it is very necessary to appear to have them. And I shall dare to say this also, that to have them and always to observe them is injurious and that to appear to have them is useless; to appear merciful, faithful, humane, religious, upright, and be so, but with a mind so framed that should you require not to be so, you may be able and know how to change to the opposite (Ibid: 25).

The advice to the prince, if followed would not produce a moral polity. And yet, Machiavelli believed it to be the best thing to do. Although he claimed to be describing things the way they are, it nevertheless was an obvious immorality in political life. For him, a Prince, especially one coming to office first time cannot observe all those things for which men are esteemed, they, being often forced, in order to maintain the state, to act contrary to faith, friendship, humanity, and religion. “Therefore it is necessary for the prince to have a mind ready to turn itself accordingly as the winds and variations of

fortune force it, yet, as I have said above, not to diverge from the good if he can avoid doing so, but, if compelled, then to know how to set about it" (Ibid: 25).

Kant lived under political tyrants, most of it under Frederick the Great who ruled Prussia from 1740 to 1786. Before coming to the throne, and while still a Prince, Frederick the Great studied Machiavelli's book. And as a king, Frederick showed he had learned a good deal from his study of Machiavelli. Sullivan writes that "life under Frederick was harsh. He regarded all those under him as his charter, to be used as he liked. Publicly, he held that the sovereign should be the "first servant" of the people; privately he had only contempt for what he called the "rabble" (Ibid: 5). However, the nobles fared a little better than the peasants, but Frederick still allowed them only one choice of occupation: to serve as officers in his army.

Although Frederick's power was absolute, he still followed the Machiavelli's advice about cultivating a reputation as a benevolent and tolerant ruler, a reputation that survives to this day. Kant saw all these and lived in that fear of tyranny. He only praised Frederick for allowing freedom of discussion quoting him as saying "argue as much as you want and about what you want, but obey" (Ibid: 6). Kant's praise was not entirely misplaced for Frederick William II who succeeded Frederick the Great in 1786 was far less tolerant of freedom of opinion than his father. The fear of censorship made Kant to adopt thereafter, uncharacteristically self-deprecatory tone to his political writings. This affected Kant's political philosophy such that till date the importance of his political writings is often not recognized.

Finally, on the influence on Kant we must mention **The Enlightenment** period in Kant's Europe. Kant's intellectual world was also shaped by the Enlightenment, an intellectual movement promoted by profound advances of the "new" Newtonian Science (Sullivan, op cit. 6). Enlightenment was a current in the cultural and intellectual history of Europe that gradually gained influence from 1680s to the 1780s, characterized by belief in progress, expected to be achieved by a self-reliant use of reason, and by rejection of traditionalism, obscurantism and authoritarianism (Mautner, loc cit. 167). The period saw various traditional ways of thinking being subjected to more insistent criticism than before. This affected and also permeated all human endeavours in one way or the other.

In theology (religion) for example, religious doctrine had to be intelligible and rationally acceptable. In legal matters, there emerged strong opposition to judicial torture, to prosecutions for witchcraft, to wretched prison conditions, etc. In the natural sciences, the spirit of the enlightenment helped some sciences and scientists to reach a high degree of perfection (Newton), while others commenced their growth. In politics, great emphasis was given to the principles of natural liberty and equality, and to basic human rights, including religious toleration. In philosophy as well theories incompatible with traditional religious and moral ones, such as materialism, determinism, gained support. And in the field of education there was also a great revolution namely the pioneering efforts towards reform at all levels of schooling.

The new ideas of the enlightenment period found a location in the many academic institutions and learned societies that were founded in the eighteenth century. An outstanding one was founded in Berlin 1736 and it had its motto: *Sapere aude* – dare to

use your reason; dare to know; trust your knowledge. These words became the motto of the enlightenment itself. Kant praised the age of enlightenment because it embodies the spirit of freedom. In his *What Is Enlightenment* he wrote:

Enlightenment is escape from self-inflicted immaturity. An immature person lacks the courage to use his own intelligence without another person's guidance. *Sapere aude!*... Enlightenment requires *freedom*, the possibility of applying one's own Reason freely and publicly (Rabel, 1963: 140).

Kant stressed the importance of enlightenment to religion, to the individual, to society and to politics. The age of enlightenment is the age where human beings could exercise freedom of thought to the advantage of humanity. According to Kant:

When Nature, then, under this hard shell, has unfolded the germ for which she cares most tenderly, namely the urge and calling for *free thought* will slowly react on the character of the people until it becomes capable also of *acting* in freedom, and finally it will react on the principles of government so that the authorities will find it advantageous to themselves to treat man in a manner worthy of his dignity (Ibid: 142).

The enlightenment firmament saw the loosening of the authoritarian shackles and fetters in favour of progress in individual free thought. According to Erich Fromm (1947: 17), the ideas of the Enlightenment taught man that he could trust his own reason as a guide to establishing valid ethical norms and that he could rely on himself, needing neither revelation nor the authority of the church in order to know good and evil. It was this encouragement that fired Kant's intellectual growth – he dared to use his reason!

1.5 Kant's Revolution in Philosophy

Kant's contribution to philosophy is revolutionary. That is to say, Kant brought about noticeable changes in philosophizing such that philosophy and philosophizing after Kant cannot be the same. This is noticeable in the critical approach with which Kant

confronted philosophy making criticality and synthesis integral parts of philosophizing. For any philosophy to be situated aright therefore, it must have both critical and synthesizing effects being demonstrated by Kant.

Kant's revolution in philosophy, as noted in his epistemology and ethics, are comparable to the Copernican revolution in astronomy. Both Immanuel Kant and Nicholai Copernicus did cause revolutions in their chosen fields. Both men did leave indelible impressions on the sand of time – a feat that redirected human attention and challenged intellectual enterprise after them. Kant actually said that he had achieved for philosophy what Copernicus achieved for the science of astronomy. What is this Copernican revolution and how did Kant do a similar thing? In *The Critique of Pure Reason* Kant said that he had set out to achieve what Copernicus had earlier achieved:

We here propose to do just what Copernicus did in attempting to explain the celestial movements. When he found that he could make no progress by assuming that all the heavenly bodies revolve round the spectator, he reversed the process, and tried the experiment of assuming that the spectator revolved while the stars remained at rest. We many make the same experiment with regard to the intuition of objects (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1996: 7).

Copernicus had the boldness to extricate his thoughts from the shackles of the voice of his education and the tradition of his age and time. This rejection of age-long and popular opinion and the introduction of a better theory is what we call the Copernican Revolution.

We can now understand what Kant meant when he claimed to have made a revolution in philosophy like what Copernicus had earlier made in astronomy. The analogy is as follows: The apparent movements of the Planets in the sky are extraordinarily complex; each Planet appears not to move in any simple curve, and certain Planets seem to move sometimes in one direction, sometimes to stand still, and sometimes to move in the

opposite direction. Up to Copernicus's time it was commonly assumed that the earth did not itself move; and so long as this was assumed, no simplification or unification could be made in the movements of the Planets (Broad, 1978: 12). But Copernicus suggested that the earth is also moving, and that the apparent movements of the Planets are compounded out of their own proper movements and the movements of the observer who is carried with the earth. It was then found that all the appearances could be explained by supposing that the earth and the observer move in ellipses round the sun as focus. Kant argues that the older and pre-critical metaphysics is like the pre-Copernican astronomy. It regards our minds as mere mirrors which passively reflect things-in-themselves, just as the old astronomers thought that the earth was at rest and that the apparent movements of Planets were identical with their own proper motions. Kant's own view is that the objects of our knowledge are not things-in-themselves, but are manufactured products in which our minds play a part. Some of the properties which we ascribe to external objects are really due to the mental processes by which we have unconsciously constructed such objects out of crude sense-data.

We must also mention yet another equally important *contrast* which Kant does not mention. In the Pre-Copernican world man was made the center of nature, whilst Copernicus regarded the earth as just one moving Planet among others. Also the pre-Kantian world regarded man as a mere observer of nature, whilst Kant makes man a constructor, though not a creator of nature, thereby make man an active player in the universe of Being.

If we walk back in time to the pre-Kantian philosophy and indeed the major formative influences in Kant's thought, we come to grips with and appreciate Kant's revolution in

philosophy. As a student Kant had been indoctrinated into the eminently respectable rationalism of Christian von Wolff, the uninspired disciple of the great Leibniz. Kant must however, transcend the influence of Wolff in order for him to attain a ‘wakeful life’ in order to achieve the revolution in philosophy. This he did and the result was a revolution which has been beneficial to epistemology and philosophy of mind in particular, and to philosophy in general. The major importance of the revolution was in mediating and reconciling the two opposing schools of epistemology **rationalism** and **empiricism**. This reconciliation, which is also the breaking of the impasses between these two warring schools, remains the core achievement of the revolution even as it assigned the human mind an enviable role in knowledge acquisition.

The thesis of rationalism as a theory of knowledge is that reason is equipped with certain absolute principles or concepts which apply unfailingly and of necessity to every detail in particular fact. The empiricists, on the contrary, insist that natural knowledge is derived from experience, and consists of empirical generalizations summarizing observed particular facts. Their criticism of rationalism culminates in Hume, who concludes that even the best established principles of natural science fall short of absolute certainty, and possess only a high probability as habits of mind are determined by past experience. Kant however, identified the lapses in both the rationalists and empiricists theses on knowledge. Rationalism failed to explain such principles as the law of gravitation, which seems to be universal in scope although it is not a self-evident or rational principle, but is clearly derived from a study of observed facts. The empiricists did less justice to the rational element in science. After all, the whole of mathematical theory is somehow compounded into physical and other sciences and even the most empiricist scientist seems to be

dogmatic in his insistence that particular facts must conform to some theory. It would seem that the senses and reason somehow conspire to produce theoretical science. The task before a philosopher in the stature of Kant is to show how nature can be particular in all of its observed detail, and general or universal in its large structure. Empiricism and rationalism must somehow meet (Muller, Loc cit. 332). It was on this resolve that Kant concluded that there are rational principles of universal scope which quite vividly impose themselves upon experience; but these principles do not in themselves constitute knowledge of nature. To provide knowledge, they must be complemented by experience of fact, as well as knowledge of universal principles.

Kant did not share the view of the earlier empiricists that scientific method may be applied to human nature in order to produce a science of human behaviour. In his conception of science, he remained Cartesian and dualistic. There is physical nature, subject to mechanical law; and there is the human mind, which faces and knows a physical nature of which it is no part. Leibniz had earlier written, in criticism of Locke: “Yes, everything in the mind is derived from experience – except the intellect itself?” (Ibid: 335). Kant subscribed to this view. The mind is not merely a part of nature. It has its own constitution and its peculiar sort of activity and this intellectual constitution enters into all our knowledge.

Having matured through experience, hard work, and the influences, Kant became a major contributor to the philosophic knowledge such that after him philosophy became more critical and more universal. Kant’s contribution to philosophy stands out and is recognized. It is indeed revolutionary in most fields of philosophy.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy can be understood and better appreciated when we take a critical review of his works. In a no-holds-barred manner which is akin to his '*Critical Philosophy*', Kant poured out his moral philosophy, which he situated within the province of his metaphysics and epistemology. Kant was first concerned about founding a principle around which will revolve mankind's moral philosophy and moral practice. To do this, it was necessary for him to establish a principle that is, a *metaphysic of morals* which will serve as a template for all for moral judgments. In the review of relevant works, we consider original texts of Kant and those of his supporters and also his critics.

2.2 Kant's works

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, (1787) primarily devoted to epistemology but not without a word for ethics and metaphysics, Kant was essentially preoccupied with two questions:

1. Do we have the power to arrive at truth through the independent workings of our intellects?
2. Or are we total prisoners of our sensory apparatus; and our knowledge of reality a passive product of our sensations?

Kant answered that there is the possibility of knowledge from the intellect (pure reason) and from experience (the senses). He had agreed with Leibniz that everything in the mind is derived from experience – except the intellect. The intellect with its fixed principles combines with the empirical material provided by the senses in such a way as to do

violence to neither element. For Kant therefore, knowledge is the combination of both the intellect and the senses, this he calls synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

Nevertheless, although both the intellect and experience or the senses collaborate to give knowledge, Kant projected the primacy of *reason* in its pure form (pure reason) over experience. He argued that it is pure reason that can give self-evident and *certain* knowledge. This knowledge is what he called *a priori* knowledge. According to Kant, the whole interest of *Reason*, speculative as well as practical, is centred on the three following questions:

1. What can I know?
2. What ought I to do?
3. What may I hope (for)?

The first question concerns epistemology - the possibility of human knowledge; the second concerns the grounds of moral knowledge - that which we ought to do; and the third is purely speculative. The possibility of addressing the three questions lies on the practical and the objective use of pure reason. Kant maintains the ground that what is known *a priori* or by pure reason alone provides the basis for absolute, certain, knowledge of morals.

Kant's treatment of the knowledge of morals here shows that he never disconnects from the rationalist shackles of the ancient Greeks, especially the spell of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle who projected esoteric dimension to knowledge, an idea that does not give a chance for acquisition of knowledge to common, or ordinary people. To premise the knowledge of morals on pure reason or on the intellect, to make it primarily an intellectual

affair makes it far removed from the ordinary common sense experience which it should be in the first place. Kant's claim to conceive morality first from the point of view of common human reason here suffers a setback (Kant, *Metaphysic* 1996: 260).

Socrates started this journey when he claimed that self-knowledge is the basis of moral knowledge. He asserted that the true self is not the body but the soul. By the soul Socrates meant the seat of that faculty of insight which can know the good from evil and infallibly choose the good. The special name given to the true self in the later writings of Plato and Aristotle is the *nous*, a word commonly translated as 'reason'. Kant did only purify this *reason* in the pure reason which is intellectual faculty of the mind. And it does suggest that those who for any reason cannot appropriate intellectual prowess cannot also appreciate moral ideals.

In the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, (1783) a *Workbook* to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant tried to establish the possibility of metaphysical knowledge in preparation for his *Metaphysic of Morals*. In the work, Kant's preoccupation was to establish legitimate metaphysical knowledge to distinguish it from that kind of metaphysical knowledge which he believed to be impossible (metaphysics of schoolmen about reality and existence beyond experience).

However, legitimate metaphysical knowledge for Kant is possible and its task is to give us information about the world by means of purely rational (non-empirical) judgments which possess absolute, certainty and necessity. If metaphysics claim to give us knowledge of a reality beyond all possible experience, it is mere speculation and not legitimate knowledge at all. But if it claims to give us knowledge about reality within the limits of possible

experience, then it must be knowledge derived *a priori* from pure reason. Kant, in pushing this position further, condemned any appeal to common sense as possible ground of true knowledge which he had earlier agreed.

Kant has committed too much power and authority to reason. If metaphysical knowledge is knowledge within the limits of possible experience, then common sense could as well be a source of metaphysical knowledge. To limit true knowledge to *a priori* knowledge alone is like erecting a structure that has no foothold on the ground. Kant by granting excess authority or power to reason has deviated from his original position of possible knowledge from experience. Reason is just one aspect of the human many faculties. Human knowledge cannot come through the exercise of one faculty alone but through a complementarity of different faculties. Common sense which gives birth to moral sense is also a way about moral knowledge. If morals must be exercised by every human being, it is not the intellect or reason that has the final authority about morals. Common sense and experience also do grapple with the problem of morals. To remove common sense and experience far away from metaphysical knowledge as Kant would want us accept is also to follow the path laid by the schoolmen which he had earlier condemned.

In the *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, (1785) which is Kant's main work devoted to moral philosophy, Kant carried out an exposé of his moral philosophy. Kant said that the purpose of the work was nothing more than the investigation and establishment of the *Supreme Principle of Morality*. In the work, Kant tries to make explicit the moral concepts which are implicit in the ethical outlook of ordinary people in everyday life. The entire book is basically a study of the common idea of duty and of

moral laws. In the work, Kant tries to make clear to us the logical foundations underlying the way we actually do think about moral matters in our practical life. He tried to answer the question: ‘what is it that upon careful reflection all of us really believe to be the essence of our moral duty?’ Kant’s fundamental thesis is that moral knowledge is *a priori*, it is knowledge which rests solely on grounds of pure reason. This is what Kant meant by a *Metaphysic of Morals*, an account of moral principles which show them to be derivable from pure reason alone. He worked very hard to prove this by a detailed analysis of the meaning of moral duty. He began by considering what it means for an action of person to have moral worth: a person’s action has moral worth when that person has a good will, and a good will is the disposition to do our duty just because it is our duty. In other words, a person is motivated not by his desires or inclinations, but by his duty. The intention of the person not the consequences of his action is what is relevant to his moral act.

This duty which is simply obedience to the moral law can be derived from pure reason alone. Then the moral law must be both universal and necessary. It must apply without exception not only to all men but also to all rational beings: *to act in accordance with a universal rule or principle which applies impartially to all rational beings in the universe.* Thus each person is to act in the way that he would be willing as a rational being to have everyone else act. As Kant puts it, each person is to act so that he can *will* that the maxim of his action become a universal law. This is Kant’s *categorical imperative* or the *universalizability principle*. It follows that what is right or wrong for one person is right or wrong for everyone, for all rational beings in all places and at all times. The moral law

being a universal concept which applies to the world but is independent of all contingencies in the world can only rest on grounds of *pure reason*.

Here Kant's ethical or moral theory seems impossible to apply in a real life situation. There seem to be an attempt to separate man from moral knowledge especially when Kant's moral knowledge is premised on a *metaphysic that* is knowledge derivable from pure reason alone. This seems to create a situation that separates the person and the practice. There is also the evident dichotomy between our knowledge of what *is* and our knowledge of what *ought* to be. Kant here seems to be introducing us once again to David Hume's "*is*" and "*ought*" problem. Also Kant took the categorical imperative to be the representative of the universal law, but fails to consider the hypothetical imperative (if you want x do x) which is also an imperative and which represents the nature of man – to do something for the gain that awaits the doer is purely a human disposition.

Besides, Kant's idea of duty and the emphasis on duty for duty's sake presents men as robots or as programmed machines that must act mechanically. What happens in the event of a clash of duty? What happens to societies that do not place value on duty? What happens to duty to oneself? Kant may have overlooked the natural law of self-preservation. An attempt to universalise morals must also involve making rational beings operate on an equal pedestal of education, basic assumptions about reality, value system, attainment of civilised ideals, etc. With obvious differences in the world today a single moral principle for all men will be difficult.

There is therefore the obvious difficulty in going full swing with Kant who emphatically had asserted that empirical knowledge of the natural world is completely irrelevant to our

knowledge of what is right and wrong. And we ask: ‘if the empirical knowledge of the natural world is irrelevant what then is relevant?’ After all, the application of morals must be for man in his society and in the natural world!

To complete Kant’s project, it must be established that empirical knowledge of good and bad and right and wrong must form the basis of mankind’s moral evaluation. Moral knowledge and its attendant practice must be brought to the doorstep of man if we must achieve moral universalizability.

In *The Critique of Practical Reason*, (1788) Kant’s belief in the innateness of morals was brought to the fore. For instance Kant spoke of two things that are awesome, namely: the starry heavens above and the moral law within. These are so present that nobody would pretend to search for them: “I have not to search for them and conjecture them as though they were veiled in darkness or were in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence” (Kant, 1996: 360-361). The starry heaven begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense. The moral law begins from my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity, but which is traceable only by the understanding, and with which I discern that I am not in a merely contingent but in a universal and necessary connection, as I am also thereby with all those visible worlds, Kant reiterated. And so the moral law infinitely elevates my worth as an *Intelligence* by my personality and reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world, at least, so far as may be inferred from the distinction assigned to my existence by this law, a destination

which Kant says is not restricted to conditions and limits of this life, but reaching into the infinite.

This position of Kant is akin to the innatist argument of the rationalists, including Rene Descartes and Socrates. But it suffers from lack of wings to fly Kant home. For instance, the idea of the moral law within is like saying that certain, moral precepts, have been impressed on man or emblazoned in the intellect and the human psyche and as such moral actions should fall in line. The implications are:

1. morality would be simply thing to accomplish;
2. everybody would have agreed on what is good or bad without any evaluative problem;
3. Kant's moral universalizability theory would have been accepted by all and its application embraced with ease.

However, that there exists moral relativism, moral personalism, even moral nihilism, disagreement on moral principles and standards and moral phobia in society suggests that there is no moral law impressed on man the way Kant saw it. The fact remains that man is capable of both moral living and immoral living. Man harbours both rational and irrational characters and exhibits that which he feels favours him in any given occasion.

In Kant's *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, (1763) we discern elements of his moral philosophy that foreshadow attempts at critical philosophy. In the *Observations* Kant attempted to bring aesthetics and moral experiences as close as possible. Kant held that the feeling of the sublime makes one conscious of one's moral worth. For Kant, the sublime is related to the moral and the experience of the feeling of

the sublime makes us aware of our moral role in nature. The sublime is the doorway to the super-sensible. For instance, Kant gave some examples of the sublime: the sight of a mountain peak towering above the clouds, the description of a raging storm or Milton's portrayal of the infernal kingdom in *Paradise Lost* – these trigger the feeling of sublime. Hence, although the sublime is a pleasant feeling it arouses enjoyment but with horror. The beautiful, on the other hand, is occasioned by calmer sights such as flower strewn meadows, valleys with winding brooks and grazing flocks, or Vergil's description of Elysium. The feeling is joyous and smiling. As Kant puts it, the sublime *moves*, while the beautiful *charms*. The high point of the *Observations*, as it affects moral philosophy is that the Beautiful and the Sublime are feelings; they are subjective rather than objective. Yet they must expose the *moral feeling* in man. Kant may have meant an innate predisposition to moral action that is present in human beings (Kant would always defend this position). Yet there is the problem of *obligation* and that of *motivation*, that is to say, how is the will subjectively motivated to subordinate itself to an objectively conceived moral principle? Kant admits this problem even as he calls it the *philosopher's stone*. In reference to this problem the experience of the feeling of the sublime takes on its moral and metaphysical importance.

Now, the beautiful and the sublime are the feelings that occur in the subject rather than qualities in objects which are then perceived by a moral sense or a sense of the beautiful, as suggested by Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, etc. (Goodreau, 1998: 18). But Kant rejected this way of looking at the beautiful and the sublime (the moral sense or the sense of moral). He rather moved towards a rationalist account of morality *as to its grounds*. Instead of moral sense Kant opted for moral feeling which he called *finer feeling* which

consists primarily of the feeling of the sublime and the feeling of the beautiful which only an exceptional soul fixed on high intellectual insights might experience.

From his position Kant is obviously tending towards rationalist ethics. Moral feeling should not be subjectively approved but objectively accepted. But our problem is on how this moral feeling can be developed since Kant also talked about highly intellectual insights of which the common ordinary person may not be capable. The moral sense which he rejected would have been a better option since it is accessible to all rational creatures. His allusion to moral feeling makes morality more intellectual and far removed from the ordinary persons' grasp. Moral feeling here resembles Socrates' moral insight of which only the learned are capable. This is a threat to the quest for moral universalizability.

We must then reconcile the views of moral sense and moral feeling. We must show that both operate in man as reminders of his moral capability. Kant's refusal to accept the ideal of moral sense is purely dogmatic. The sense of the beautiful and the feeling of the beautiful can be brought to bear on human practical action. It is that relationship that even the ordinary people recognise and appreciate that Kant missed out.

In Kant's *Lectures on Ethics*, (1762-4) (notes by J.G. Herder), he also reacted to the question of the possibility of a disinterested feeling of concern for others in addition to our self-interested feeling:

- This disinterested feeling of concern for others is said to be universal although not everyone has it in the same degree.

- Both kinds of feelings are endowed by the creator. As needy beings the creator gave us self-interest in our own perfection, and as beings who have the power to be of service to others he gave us a disinterested concern for the perfection of others.
- He gave us a disinterested concern for the perfection of others. The former can be subordinated to the latter that is noble but we despise those in whom the concern for others is subordinated to self-interest.
- The disinterested feeling is like a force of attraction and the self-interested feeling like force of repulsion, and the two in conflict constitute the world.
- Human beings have a moral feeling which is universal and unequivocal.
- Moral feeling is unanalysable, basic and the ground of conscience.
- Moral feeling is compared to knowledge of truth and falsity, just as knowledge of the true and false is the final yardstick of the understanding. Moral feeling is the final yardstick of morality.
- The supreme law of morality: act according to your moral nature (evidently Kant means moral feelings).
- Reason can err, and moral feeling can also err when custom is upheld before “natural feeling”. The upholding of custom over natural feeling is described as a case of implicit reason, which is fallible and our final yardstick of morality remains moral feeling.

Interestingly, Kant admitted the dual aspect in man: the love of the self and the respect for the others. It would be difficult to be totally disinterested even to the detriment of the self. The ‘other’ is, because the ‘self’ exists. Yes, we know that altruism is a good quality, but when it is faced with the interest of the self, a difficulty arises. Kant did not seem to see

this difficulty especially in the practical lives of moral men. If the creator has provided both selflessness and selfishness, then Kant should expect the wrestling and no unbiased umpire would say ahead of time which wins. Again, we begin to see the “silent” voice of Rousseau even as Kant believed that culture and society can bring about what he calls “artificial” feeling against the natural feeling. If society and culture have become necessary as well as real, then, Kant should be told to build a moral system that is society or culture compliant and not on a metaphysic.

The gap created by Kant that all moral acts must stem from the air of disinterestedness is yawning. It must be asserted that the self is a veritable condition for moral action. There is no thorough-going altruism. We shall prove that all moral actions are geared toward bringing peace, order and stability in society for the good of both the doer and others.

In his *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics*, (1766) Kant also has some thoughts about morals. Although the work is a response to the Swedish religious visionary Immanuel Swedenborg’s alleged paranormal powers. Kant digressed in other to “preach” his moral philosophy which exercised a burning zeal in his heart.

In a part devoted to ethics, Kant agreed that there can be community between a spirit and a body, after all, the human soul, if it is a spirit, has a place in the material. He explicitly stated that he was inclined to assert the existence of immaterial natures in the world and to place his own soul in the class of these beings. But how can immaterial and material substances interact? Kant’s answer involves moral feeling. This is of interest to us.

First, Kant made bold conjectures which he however, admitted are far enough removed from self-evidence, but in spite of this it seems to give rise to conjectures which are not

disagreeable. These conjectures described the systematic constitution of the spirit world as moral and explained the possibility of communion between the immaterial and the material worlds in terms of moral feeling. Some of the powerful forces which move the human heart, Kant reminded us, seem to come from external causes. That is to say, there are forces which seem not to relate solely to our own self-interest; on the contrary, they are related to the interest of others. These forces cause the tendencies of our impulses to shift the focal point to their union *outside ourselves* and to locate it in other rational beings. Hence there is a conflict between the forces of egoism and altruism, and there seem to be a tendency to compare that which one knows for oneself to be good or true with the judgment of others. There is for Kant, therefore our dependency on the universal human understanding. By universal human understanding Kant had in mind a faculty of the mind that serves as means of conferring a kind of unity of reason on the totality of thinking beings.

Even more illuminating, Kant continued, is the fact that when we relate external things to our own needs, we feel ourselves limited by the sensation that there is an alien will operating within ourselves. Our will is directed towards the well-being of others or is regulated in accordance with the will of another even though it is contrary to our own desire to satisfy our selfish inclination. There are forces which move us and which are to be found in the will of others outside ourselves. This is the source of the moral impulse, which often inclines us to act against the dictates of self-interest. Kant sums his moral argument here with the *general will* idea which he took from Rousseau, that there is a strong law of obligation as against the weaker law of benevolence in which we recognize in our most secret motives that we are dependent upon the rule of the *general will*.

What Kant wants to explain away here in spiritual terms can as well be made intelligible in physical, human terms. Moral feeling can as well be the manifestation of the forces of human interaction. Kant was only trying to hang his moral philosophy on a metaphysic in order to defend his dogmatic position. Here also we see the great influence exerted by the Newtonian physics which sees the universal gravitation as universal activity of matter operation on itself. Another fact we cannot wish away is the ever interference of Kant's Christian religion. Kant, for that reason thought more of the 'other worldly' against 'this worldly' which ordinarily should have been the prop of morality.

We must however, separate religion from morality, although both can work together. As for us, however, a social based moral teaching serves society better. Often times, religion has failed to hold on to its moral goals even as people have done a lot evil things with religion. Instead of using the age old fear of the Gods to press home the importance of morality, we will rather opt for the life of society and the organisms in the earth as our basis for moral action.

In the *Lectures on Ethics*, (1784-5) (*Notebook Collins*) Kant addressed the problem of motivation. The question is what moves us to live according to moral law? Kant argued that motivation is not and should not be out of a pathological feeling. Morality cannot be grounded on the pragmatic principle or the principle of prudence since morality is independent of all inclinations, independent of all volitions and intentions. Motivation is not the feeling of the senses or the expectation of the personal gains. Once anyone appeals to a feeling, that person gives up all grounds of reason; and the method of appealing to feeling in a practical rule is wholly contrary to moral philosophy. According to Kant the

ground of morality must be an inner principle; it is *intellectuale internum* internal to the mind. It must be sought through pure reason in the action itself. Although Kant does not yet formulate the categorical imperative as we have come to know it, he did articulate the basic principle: morality is the conformity of action to a universally valid law of free choice. All morality is the relationship of action to the universal rule. The essential part of morality is that our actions have their motivating ground in the universal rule.

Sound as the above may appear however, there is a problem which Kant failed to address. For instance, how can the universal rule motivate the will? How can the rule of the understanding conceived objectively motivate subjectively, that is, become a principle of action? Kant elsewhere admitted this difficulty – the difficulty in comprehending how the understanding should have a motivating power – that brings us back once more to the “philosopher’s stone”.

Although we agree with Kant on the enviable role of pure reason, especially on morals, however, Kant has made the mistake of assigning Pure Reason a monopolistic role on morals. This gap we must fill by positing that the ground of morality must also be laid on other aspects of man and society including personal gains. If not there will be no natural motivation for morality, and moral action will lose its human touch since it will be applied as a matter of ‘can’t help it’. Kant failed to see this problem.

In his *Critique of Practical Judgment*, (1790) Kant links the path between the beautiful and the moral. He connects the beautiful to the super-sensible through the moral. What is beautiful is objectively of *interest*. This *interest* can be empirical or intellectual. By empirical interest Kant meant that the interest is based on some inherent inclination of

human nature. By “intellectual” interest he meant that the interest is based on the will’s property of being determinable *a priori* by reason, or, in other words, the will’s moral property. The beauty is a symbol of morality. Kant believed that the feeling of the beautiful is connected to the moral feeling. To take a direct interest in the beautiful forms of nature is always the mark of a good soul, and if this interest is readily associated with the contemplation of nature it indicates, at least, a mental attunement favourable to moral feeling. For Kant, the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good and, that it is only because we refer the beautiful as the morally good that our liking includes a claim to everyone else’s assent. The mind is conscious of being ennobled by this reference to rise above a mere receptivity for pleasure derived from sense impressions.

Kant is only saying that the beautiful is analogous to the morally good. Kant is not saying that the beautiful *is* morally good, but that the beautiful is *like* the morally good. It symbolises the morally good. The experience of the beautiful is like the moral experience. We can support this by the names that we use to describe beautiful objects: majestic, humble, or tender, cheerful. We use the above terms because beautiful objects arouse sensations in us (sensations which, as we have seen, are the result of a mental state) that are somehow analogous to the consciousness we have in a mental state produced by moral judgments.

The judgment of taste, in reference to the beautiful, is significant to Kant’s moral metaphysic in that it provides us with a transition from the sensible to the super-sensible realm of the morally good. However, Kant refuses to admit a place for “moral sense” as advocated by Hume, Hutchinson, Shaftsbury and Alfred Malthus. Doing so, Kant feared

would mean taking an empirical stance on morals, a situation that contradicts his moral position. Rather he would prefer “moral feeling” a feeling that touches on the sensible and the super-sensible, the empirical and the intellectual. This might as well be Kant’s sought after transition from the sensible to the super-sensible, which is the underlying problem of the *Critique of Judgment*. This problem Kant did not solve after all. This is because the attachment to the beautiful is subjective and empirical even when we apply it to society as Kant would like us to. Also the insistence on “moral feeling” as against “moral sense” may as well be “intellectual pride” because the difference might as well be the kind of difference that exist between “six” and “half-a-dozen” or “half – full” and “half – empty” or one saying “on the other side of the road” which meaning depends on the side of the road one stands.

Kant failed to give examples of how the beautiful will aid man’s actions. We shall show that the appreciation of the beautiful – beauty in nature and in man’s handiwork – has a way by which it helps man’s moral nature. For instance, he who appreciates clean environment, good landscape, beautifully laid- out structures, neatness and cleanliness, is most likely to appreciate morality also.

In the *Preface to the Metaphysical Elements of Ethics*, (date not stated) Kant talked of conscience as that natural disposition that is present in every being as moral being. Conscience for Kant is another ‘universal principle’ since it is ‘present’ in every rational, moral being. He defined conscience as the consciousness of an internal *tribunal* in man (before which his thoughts accuse or excuse one another’). Every man has a conscience and finds himself observed by an inward judge which threatens and keeps him in awe

(reverence combined with fear); and this power which watches over the laws within him is not something which he himself (arbitrarily) *makes*, but it is incorporated in his being. Conscience, according to Kant follows man like a shadow, when he thinks to escape. Kant argued that a person may indeed stupefy himself with pleasures and distractions, but cannot avoid now and then *this inner voice* coming to him or awakening him, and then he at once perceives its awful voice. In man's utmost depravity Kant argued he may indeed pay no heed to the voice of conscience but he cannot avoid hearing it.

We believe that Kant's conception of conscience is as a result of his Christian ('puritan') pietist education. This is to say that being good or acting morally is innate. There is always the voice of God talking to somebody who acts in praise for good acts and in condemnation for evil. But this is not true. People act and do not look back. Besides, who determines what is right or wrong? It is not in every issue that people agree on what is right or wrong. It is to be noted that there has never been any act that has no support or justification. So, what we call conscience may as well be a person's voice of education. This takes cognisance of a person's moral development which comes in stages according to the level of education, association, environment, culture, basic assumptions and experience, including, of course, natural disposition.

However, it would seem that conscience has become an over-flogged issue. It is not at all times that people apply their consciences for good deeds. That suggests that even if every human being has conscience it is not at all times that it is employed for moral purposes. The reason is that conscience can be deadened or rusted or shielded from the light of reason .At times its prodding may be ignored. The sadists and stiff-necked people in

society might as well have perverted their consciences. For conscience to remain attuned for morality there is the need for constant moral education and a robust moral environment supported by all rational beings for the good of all. Most civilised nations and societies today have achieved moral uprightness because of the support which they extend to moral beings and the agreement to belong to a moral society.

Kant, in his *Ideas For A Universal History Of Mankind With A View To World Citizenship*, (1784), a work that proposed a cosmopolitan plan for man, admitted what he called ‘Unsocial Sociality’ of mankind. Kant admitted also that man can be a funny lot. For instance, he observed rather accurately that since human beings act neither instinctively nor in accordance with an agreed plan, a systematic history seems to be impossible. He was of the belief that men cannot suppress a certain irritation hence we see on the great world stage a fabric woven together of stupidity, puerile vanity, childish viciousness and destructiveness displayed by our species which is so proud of its superiority. Kant also admitted that man’s unsocial sociality is the basis for antagonism of man in society. According to him man has an urge to form societies, but he has also an urge to isolate himself. He expects resistance from all sides, as he himself is always inclined to resist others. He feels driven by ambition, lust for power or greed to acquire for himself a status among his fellowmen whom he cannot easily endure but without whom he cannot live.

Here Kant admitted though strangely that man is not always patterned towards *reason* and that he is not always *naturally good*. He would admit also that there are forces including natural, social, economic, political, religious and even human, that pull and push him and

for which he must contend. That is to say, on man's journey to his goals, even moral goals, there can be bumps, some of which can overwhelm him. These produce irrational disposition in man, a disposition that will also affect his moral behaviour. Aside from rationality, there is also irrationality to which man succumbs. So, if nature originally intended man to be good it also provided for the opposite. Therefore we must not always expect that man must act always to meet our expectation of goodness when he has his own 'natural' pressure to the contrary. This is a truism which Kant did overlook. Kant identified this possible road block to morality without suggesting how it could be dismantled. We advocate moral *education* that starts from infancy as a weapon against man's "unsocial society". For us, education will help *Reason* realise its *human* moral goals.

In *Religion Within The Boundaries Of Mere Reason*, (1795) Kant identified the human moral predicament when he observed that we find ourselves in an *ethical state of nature* wherein we possess radical, innate, and irradicable tendency to resist the moral law. In this state we engage in an unrelenting hostility and neck-breaking rivalry with one another as if we are amoral beings in the Hobbesian world of unregulated conduct. We regard others as either instruments or obstacles in our quest for possessions and power and we must treat them accordingly. Kant held that children become moral beings only with the emergence of reason, which enables the moral law to appear in their self-awareness, inexorably commanding their obedience. Kant therefore argued that each of us has innate predisposition toward having a morally good character consisting of an irradicable recognition that we are obligated to respect and obey the moral law. In that sense Kant concluded, everyone can be considered originally morally good by nature. On that basis he

also held that human moral agents cannot be totally depraved and irrevocably evil, unable to do anything totally good, as portrayed in the belief that man suffers from original sin. On the position that man is evil by nature, Kant argued that it only means that man is conscious of the moral law, yet has admitted into his maxim an occasional deviation from it. He however argued that whatever man has to become morally, he must achieve it himself by his own free Will. Man, he said has been created *for good*, but he must freely decide whether or not he will follow his original disposition.

Kant's position here shows his appreciation of man's moral problems as never before appreciated. It is dawn on him that moral living is not an easy exercise. From experience he admitted that even the best of men cannot be expected to be free from the propensity for evil. This propensity for evil is what he referred to as 'radical evil' which haunts man. Yet Kant maintained the position that anyone who has respect for the moral law will weather any pressure to act otherwise. This respect for moral law is not enough to confront this radical evil in man. More is needed including the support of all moral agents and the moral environment in which to cultivate moral habits and to remain moral. The state of the environment whether economic, political, cultural, social, religious, educational, etc, is critical to the moral position of a person or even a group.

In his *On Perpetual Peace*, (1795) Kant tried to work out the condition for an enduring peace for man a task that leaned heavily on morals. However, he made cogent observations that impede and has impeded peace and peace efforts: the inclination of those in power which seems to be innate in human nature. It is a great obstacle to the quest for perpetual peace in the world. The condition of peace between men living side by side is

not a natural condition. In the state of nature hostilities were always either in full swing or at least threatening. Peace must then be contrived. Kant also observed that the difference between nations and races (for example, between European and American savage tribes) is very clear. He also argued that although Nature has provided that human beings *could* live everywhere, it also despotically ordained that they *should* do so. Nature chose war to achieve her purpose.

Kant is indirectly admitting that nature is not all good or is good only when it wants to achieve own goals. Human beings must work out their own acceptable conditions through striving and contrivance. But how universally possible and acceptable would that be? If one is striving to meet the opposite pole while there is an overwhelming force pulling him to remain with the *original* pole, then there is big problem on hand. Kant therefore has overlooked or down played the limitations of man and the imposition of nature against man. This is enough to punctuate or truncate man's moral quest.

Here it is noted that Kant left out the role of justice both in nature and in men's relationship. Justice for us will be established on the ideals of equality, equity, fairness and the respect and dignity of the human race. Perpetual peace as a moral category can only be achieved on the balance of justice created and supported by nature and man. Yet perpetual peace at the global scale may not be possible although it is desirable. It is at best an ideal yet to be fully realised.

In the *On The Different Races Of Men*, (1775) Kant gave the issue of the races of men some good space. He would agree that all human beings are of the same *genus* or *species*. Yet Kant identified four races of men, namely; (1) the white (2) the Negro (3) the

Humanih, Mongolian, or Kalmuch race (4) the Hindu race. However, these races are not equal as Kant drew a hierarchical chart of the superior to the inferior hues of the skin as follows:

- a) Stem Genus – white brunette. This represents the race of all races (the *Germans*)
- b) First race, very blond (*Northern Europe*) of damp cold – (the *Caucasoid*)
- c) Second race copper-red (*American*) of dry cold (Mongoloid/Asiatic race)
- d) Third race, Black (Senegambia) of dry heat (Negroid)
- e) Fourth race, Olive – Yellow (Indians) of dry heat (Red Indians of the Americas)

This stratification represents the superiority and inferiority in the races. For Kant, all races are superior or inferior as they approximate whiteness, with white brunette being the ideal and the most superior. The other colours can as well be the degenerative developments of the *original* or superior white.

We are not concerned here with the implication of racialism or raciological ideas, but on the moral. Kant, in disagreement with J.J. Rousseau (Rousseau's position is that human nature is fixed, unchanging and therefore enduring) had argued that human nature is not fixed or transcendental. Human nature is simply teleological, having a goal, purpose or destiny in view. It represents what human beings are out to become. Therefore human beings do not have an already given, static essence; there so called ethical or moral essence is at best transcendental and trans-cultural.

This position of Kant contradicts his racial hierarchicization. For example, when he posited that human nature depicts man's ethical and moral essence which is transcendental

and trans-cultural, we expected him to be fair-minded enough to treat the races as equal and to include them within this ethical essence. But that would not be even as Kant drew an anthropological divide among the races. If we want to universalise morals and the races have their marked differences which according to Kant ground their *feeling*, *talent*, and *rationality*, then our task may be made more difficult. If the human pigmentation determines their *person*, *self* or drives them, then morality can as well be grounded on the colours of skin. Then the quest for a universal morality for man becomes at best a mirage, an illusion. This Kant's recoil into archaic metaphysical thinking should be set aside and in its place establish the *oneness* of the human species. It is only on that that we must achieve our goals and complete the human moral project.

In his article On A Supposed Right To Lie From Altruistic Motives, (1797) Kant reaffirmed once more the unconditional duty to tell the truth. The article was written as a kind of reply to a certain Mr. Henri Benjamin Constant whom he identified simply as a French philosopher. Mr. Constant had taken the position that the maxim "It is a duty to tell the truth" if adopted and practiced singly and unconditionally would make any society impossible. Mr Constant's position is that to tell the truth is a duty; but it is a duty only in respect to one who has a right to the truth. But no one has a right to a truth which injures others, e.g. a murderer has no right to the disclosure of the hiding place of his would be victim.

However, Kant set out to prove the falsity of this contention by asserting that it is a duty to tell the truth *unconditionally*. His point is that if this cannot be regarded as a duty all declarations lose their credence, all contracts become insecure, then there is no basis for

society, for society depends upon the inviolability of contracts. Kant, with dubious accuracy, went on to observe that under certain circumstances even civil law punishes the benevolent liar. He turned the illustration of a murderer against Mr. Constant's interpretation. If the supposed murderer were to come into the house and be told that one's friend was not, while without one's knowledge the friend had in fact slipped out of the house, so that the murderer being turned away by the denial encountered the friend along the way and accomplished his purpose after all, the law would in fact regard the denial that the friend was in the house as establishing complicity in the friend's death. As Kant saw it, this legal provision is based upon the fact that the truth is a duty which admits of no exceptions. To be truthful, in his words, in all declarations, therefore, is a sacred and absolutely commanding degree of reason, limited by no expediency.

Kant's position, though logically sound, looks more of an ideal that may never be realizable especially in our quest for a universal moral principle. If we tell the truth to a murderer or a thorough-going racist who has no moral intentions, whose intentions we already know to be evil, and who has no right whatsoever to the truth, then we are not doing the society any good. Kant should have separated *duty* by *levels* or *types* to match with *goodwill* or otherwise. Not all duty can be acceptable. There can be *moral* duty, *evil* duty, *bad* duty, *good* duty. To separate this we go back to Kant's idea of Goodwill as the *grundnorm* of morals. The murderer has no goodwill at all and he should not be allowed to the right of the truth. Also, this position is universalisable, namely, that nobody with a *bad will* would have access to truth. So, this *proviso* on truth will leave society safe. Duty should not admit all manner of actions as if man is tied to duty instead of reason. Reason would not even accept Kant's position here. For if it did it means that it encourages all

manner of criminality and this will not be universalisable if we want a stable society. Of a greater blunder to humanity which Kant failed to take notice of is that to tell the truth unconditionally is an injunction which flies in the face of *Reason* because *Reason* is bound to recognise the good conditionally.

2.3 Works of neo-Kantians

Kant's philosophy have had tremendous support from Neo-Kantians especially those from the Marburg school and the school of Baden whose notable members include Otto Liebmann who in 1865 raised the cry 'Back to Kant', Herman Cohen, Ernst Cassirer, Hans Reichenberg, Paul Natorp and Leo Strauss; and later followers of Kant such as Robert Johnson, Lawrence M. Hinman and Matt McCormick. The neo-Kantian movement came at a time a powerful force in German Philosophy. It became in fact the academic philosophy or 'school philosophy' and most of the university chairs of philosophy were occupied by people who were in some degree at least representatives of the movement. Although most of their support for Kant was in epistemology and philosophy of science, there is however, a substantial support for Kant's moral philosophy (Copleston, 1963).

Ernst Cassirer in *The Myth of the State*, (1946) argues that ethical freedom is not a gift with which human nature is endowed; it is rather a task and the most arduous task that man can set himself. It is no datum, but a demand; an ethical imperative. To fulfil this demand becomes especially hard in times of a severe and dangerous social crisis when the breakdown of the whole public life seems to be imminent. At these times the individual begins to feel a deep mistrust in his own powers. According to Cassirer freedom is not a natural inheritance of man. In order to possess it we have to create it. If man were simply

to follow his natural instincts he would not strive for freedom; he would rather choose dependence. Obviously it is much easier to depend upon others than to think; to judge, and to decide for oneself. This accounts for the fact that both in individual and in political life, freedom is so often regarded much more as a burden than a privilege. Under extremely difficult conditions man tries to cast off his burden.

Unlike Kant, Cassirer admits that being moral is not a bread and butter affair. It demands extreme discipline, long suffering and self-denial. And again unlike Kant, Cassirer believes that moral living is a burden which, if you ask man, he would rather cast it off. This brings to question the much acclaimed good nature of man. Here we begin to note that man would rather choose to do things his own way. But the implication is that there would be no standard for measurement, judgment, in any of man's endeavours, including morals. This will only encourage chaos, a situation that will not encourage and support progress, growth, stability and development in society.

In his *Essay on Man*, (1944) Ernst Cassirer, clothed in his Marburg tradition of Neo-Kantianism developed a philosophy of culture as a theory of symbols founded in phenomenology of knowledge. Man, according to him is a symbolic animal. But whereas animals perceive their worlds by instincts and direct sensory perception, man has created his own universe of symbolic meaning that structures and shapes his perception of reality – and only thus, for instance, can conceive utopias and therefore progress in the form of shared human culture. In this Cassirer owes much to Kant's transcendental idealism, which claims that the actual world cannot be known, but that the human view on reality is shaped by our means of perceiving it. For Cassirer therefore the human world is created

through symbolic forms of thought which are linguistic, scholarly, scientific and artistic, sharing and extending through communication, individual understanding, discovery and expression.

Like Kant, Cassirer conceives man as an organizer of his world and by implication a *legislator* of morals. As beings who make meaning in their world, human beings have used the power of human transcendence and of the human mind to create forms and concepts with which to organise the world, a situation that is lacking in the world of the other primates and beings other than man. It is strongly asserted however, that it pays the human species to be organised morally. In spite of their many natures, their moral nature holds a better prospect for stability, a situation that encourages creativity. This is because solicitude with others which is the basis of human sociality is better encouraged in the exercise of moral powers.

An avowed neo-Kantian, Paul Natorp in his “Comments on Kant” (2009) maintained that Kant captured the very essence of morality giving no room for moral phobia. According to him if we are to avoid scepticism or even nihilism and our ethics is to be rationally based, it must be unconditional (i.e. have no exceptions) and be universal (i.e. be applicable to all human beings) that is where ethics, including its universalizability will have weight and become rational. For if a particular principle is to have a haphazard application, then, an invitation for chaos is courted. Of course, it would be the most frivolous endeavour of man. So whether in a club, state, school, moral universalism makes a lot of sense.

In his *Kant's Foundation of Ethics*, (1877) Hermann Cohen, a neo-Kantian, advances the basic ideas of Immanuel Kant. Kant maintained that the much that humans can know

about the world is how they systematically view it and behave in it. What human beings view and how they view it is their idea of reality. It does not mean that the world is actually the way they see it; that certainty of actuality transcends humans. If we know, however, how a reasonable person should view the world and behave in the world, then we, being reasonable, must behave accordingly. Thus we are obligated to live our lives by a set of universal imperatives which are clear and understandable to every reasonable human.

Cohen agreed with Kant that ethics had to be universal. Moreover, every ethical act had to, in the end, aim toward the entire society. We cannot rationally be content until there is complete social justice in the world. Therefore, striving for the ethical is an infinite process. In addition every time we use our minds to learn something, we are rationally aware of what we still do not know. The search for ideas (knowledge) is equally infinite.

Cohen noted an apparent conflict between the viewed natural world and the viewed ethical challenge. In the physical world, things are apparently ordered without the option of change. The sun comes up in the east, the seasons alternate. Yet the apprehended moral imperatives remain our choice to do or to discard. It would appear irrational for one part of an apprehended world to be voluntary (ethics) and another part involuntary (science), so there must be an idea that will allow two different ideas of rationality to exist at the same time and also be connected. The idea that enables us to view a physical world that is ordered and involuntary, while living life of ethics that is our personal voluntary option is God.

Moreover, since the goal of ethics is to achieve universal global justice we must have some hope of achieving that goal. But if we felt the goal were impossible we would just give up. Yet the world empirically threatens to fall into further physical randomness. Therefore the idea of God as a guarantor of an external world and our ability eventually to achieve ethical justice is necessary. Cohen called this world-view of ordered world and voluntary ethics integrated with the idea of God ‘religion of reason’.

If we take Cohen’s idea of *striving* then we will end up in a perpetual flux and the achievement of moral universality becomes a mirage. Besides, Cohen’s allusion to God makes his moral philosophy more of commanded ethics or a religious one which is out of tune with Kant whom he purports to represent. Kant only took God, freedom and immortality of the soul as postulates which are secondary to moral living not as primary as Cohen wants us to believe. If we follow Cohen then what will happen to atheists who also belong to the kingdom of ends? Although moral living involves a striving it is not a perpetual striving, but a pummelling and the disciplining of the self in order to fit well in to the universal moral mould.

In their contribution to the “Ethics of Kant” neo-Kantians Robert Johnson, Lawrence M. Hinman and Matt McComick (2009) examined Kant’s Idea of Freedom and Autonomy and tried to reshape it. Kant had viewed the human individual as a rationally self-conscious being with “impure” freedom of choice but with perfect control of the self. But according to Robert Johnson *et al*, for a will to be considered “free” we must understand it as capable of affecting causal power without being caused to do so. But the idea of

lawless free will, that is, *will* acting without any causal structure, is incomprehensible. Therefore, a free will must be acting under laws that it gives to itself.

Although Kant conceded that there could be no conceivable exercise of free will, because any exercise would only show us a will as it appears to us – as a subject of natural laws – he nevertheless argued against *determinism*. He proposed that determinism is *logically* inconsistent. The determinist claims that because A caused B, and B caused C, that A is the true cause of C. Applied to a case of the human will, a determinist would be arguing that the will does not have causal power because something else had caused the will to act as it did. But that argument merely assumes what it set out to prove, that the human will is not part of the causal chain. Secondly Kant remarked that the free will is inherently unknowable.

The issues of freedom and determinism have remained topical such that any argument about them will only and always lead us to infinite regress. Kant, although never advocated for determinism was aware of the problem of going full swing with freedom hence he placed it on the stable of postulate. It is only assumed in moral philosophy that man is free and that free will is possible. Yet nobody can totally wish away determinism in all of its spheres or shades – social, economic, racial, cultural, environmental, psychological, biological, etc, all of which cast their spell on man. But for the purpose of convenience and the smooth judgment of morals freedom is assumed.

According to Lander (2009) a defender of Kant, the idea of happiness as the end of human acts must be jettisoned. If the purpose of life were just to achieve happiness then we would all seek pleasure and gratification and hope that it would lead to happiness. The problem is

that happiness is not totally within our power to achieve, to a large extent, happiness is a matter of luck. Consequently being happy and being good are two different things. This agrees with Kant's position but then human beings should be assured of some measure of happiness, either their own or those of others. Happiness is an integral part of human existence and must not be wished away. If not the whole business of acting, either moral or otherwise will not be interesting and appealing. The pragmatic nature of man must necessarily be taken into account.

2.4 Some Criticisms of Kant and Other Works

The philosophy of Immanuel Kant attracts great measure of consistency and continuity going by his corpus and the works of neo-Kantians on him. It is this consistency that has made Kant's work both robust and connected. So, both the support and the criticism of Kant can logically be achieved within the consistency of Kant's corpus and the connectedness of Kant's thought.

John R. Goodreau (1998) in *The Role of the Sublime In Kant's Moral Metaphysic*, has observed that there is a continuity in Kant's thought on the sublime and its moral role that can be traced from his earliest writings to his last work, and there is no inconsistency between imputing moral and metaphysical significance to Kant's description of the experience of the sublime and the first two *critiques*. A continuity of ideas can be discerned through a study of the Kantian corpus, particularly his lectures on *Metaphysics* and *ethics*.

This consistency we have observed, places Kant as a consistent and a thorough-going moral man. We have observed too that most criticisms of Kant have resulted from the failure to read thoroughly Kant's corpus. Kant's moral philosophy as expected has

elicited a lot of reactions by way of criticism and also support which we shall consider, presently.

In his famous essay *Utilitarianism* (1961) John Stuart Mill the greatest defender of utilitarianism after Jeremy Bentham was one of the thinkers to take the first swipe at Kant and his moral philosophy. Mill referred to Kant as an *a priori* moralist, and a remarkable man whose system of thought will long remain one of the landmarks in the history of philosophical speculation. Mill took out Kant's *Metaphysics of Ethics* for criticism. According to Mill, Kant's universal first principle "So act that the rule on which thou actest would admit of being adopted as a law by all rational beings" fails almost grotesquely to show that there would be any contradiction in practical application. According to Mill it is possible that *all* rational beings can adopt the most outrageously immoral rules of conduct but Kant never foresaw this but only goes on to show the *consequence* of their universal adoption.

Mill therefore accused Kant and the deontologists of overlooking those generally agreed and never disputed basic grounds of organism's temperament namely their happiness. He noted that although the non-existence of an acknowledged first principle has made ethics not so much a guide as a consecration of men's actual sentiments, still, as men's sentiments both of favour and of aversion are greatly influenced by what they supposed to be the effects of things upon their happiness, the principle of utility, or as Bentham called it, 'the greatest happiness principle', has had a large share in forming the moral doctrines even of those who most scornfully reject its authority. Also Mill noted that no school of thought has refused to admit that the influence of actions on happiness is most material

and even predominant consideration in many of the details of morals, however unwilling to acknowledge it as the fundamental principle of morality and the source of moral obligation. Mill therefore concludes that all moral actions are for the sake of an end and that end must be self-evident and it is happiness and this happiness is founded on *utility* “The creed which accepts, as the foundation of morals, utility, or the Greatest-happiness principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness” (*Ibid*, 330).

To say that Utilitarianism is a rival moral theory to Deontological theory is to state the obvious. Utilitarianism ably represented by Mill is teleological and consequentialist in approach. That is it looks at the end, the goal, the result or the consequence. Here the goal or end is happiness. However, we must say that ethical deontology or non-consequentialist moral theory as ably represented by Kantianism is not averse to happiness. But whose happiness? What manner of happiness? If happiness is merited, so be it. As Kant put it, if we do something worthy of happiness we have it. It does not mean that doing good deed always brings the doer happiness. What matters is that one has acted according to duty and it does not matter whether his direct personal happiness is involved. We have an obligation, for example, to keep our promises even when more good or happiness or pleasure might be achieved by breaking them. If we always look at the good consequences, our moral feeling may be deadened somehow. Also there would be a problem calculating which utility is higher and more capable of bringing the much touted greatest happiness to the greatest number – society.

We argue that deontological ethics of Kant provides a superior principle of morals because the principles of morals which it pursues are evident *a priori* even as it is founded on a *metaphysic*. Finally, we say that Mill did not so much understand the details inherent in the categorical imperative. This is because no rational being, provided he is rational, would fail to adopt Kant's universalizability principle especially if he believes in the equality of all humans and their capacity for morals. Also we must remind Mill that moral acts are placed on the shelf of *ought* and so does not always look at individual benefit although it does take the interest of all into consideration. J.S. Mill, we must make bold to say, did not understand the full gist of Kant's moral philosophy. Understanding Kant is possible only by reading Kant's corpus. So, Mill's judgment of Kant on the account of *Metaphysics of Ethics* leaves his criticism on a wonky ground.

In his work the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*, (1817) Georg Wilhelm Hegel took a swipe on Kant. According to Hegel, *purpose* is the first phase of morality; the second is intention or more accurately, intention and welfare or well-being. Hegel assumed that intentions are directed to welfare or well-being. And he insisted that the moral agent has a right to seek his own welfare and the satisfaction of his needs as a human being. For Hegel a man has the right to seek his own welfare, meaning that the satisfaction of one's needs as a human being belongs to morality and is not opposed to it. In other words he is defending a point of view comprised in Greek ethics as represented by Aristotle and rejecting the Kantian notion that an act loses its moral value if performed from inclination. In his opinion it is quite wrong to suppose that morality consists in a constant warfare against inclination and rational impulses.

We must say that Kant never forgot the role of purpose or intention inasmuch as they are from goodwill. What he held is that the individual's consideration of his own gains in the scheme of things cannot give morality its much touted 'moral-worth'. For Kant, the purpose, the intention, whatever purpose and intention much as a matter of necessity take their origin from the goodwill even if the individual might lose while being moral. The idea of 'what is in my place for it' should be jettisoned, if morals must have their worth.

We must reconcile the two extreme views in order for our quest for universal morality to work. What we want to do is to show that the individual must be recognised within the larger society and that none should do harm to the other. And this is possible at the very idea of *General will*. The gains of both to the individual and society must be made to stand out.

In his *Principia Ethica*, (1922) George Edward Moore identified what he regarded as fallacies (errors in reasoning) in Kant's moral reasoning:

1. The fallacy of "supposing moral law to be analogous to natural law in respect of asserting that some action is one which is always necessarily done"; Kant identified what ought to be with the law according to which a free or Pure will *must* act – with the only kind of action which is possible for it. And by this identification he did not mean merely to assert that the Free Will is also under the necessity of doing what it ought; he meant that what it ought to do *mean* nothing but its own law – the law according to which it must act. It differs from the human will just that, what we ought to do, is what it necessarily does.

2. Kant's assertion of the 'Autonomy of Practical Reason', (following from the fallacy above) have the very opposite effect to that which he desired; it makes his Ethics ultimately and hopelessly 'heteronymous'.
3. Kant cannot reconcile his idea of moral law and that of freedom. He held that we can only infer that there is freedom from the fact that the moral law is true. He failed to see that on his view the moral law is dependent upon freedom in a far more important sense than that in which freedom depends on the moral law. If that 'This ought to be done', means 'This is willed by a Free will', then, if it can be shown that there is no Free Will which wills anything, it will follow that nothing ought to be done.
4. And Kant also committed the fallacy of supposing that 'This ought to be' means 'This is commanded'. He conceives the Moral law to be an Imperative. And this is a very common mistake. 'This ought to be', it is assumed, must mean 'This is commanded'; nothing therefore would be good unless it were commanded; and since commands in this world are liable to be erroneous, what ought to be in its ultimate sense means 'what is commanded by some real super-sensible authority'; with regard to this authority it is, then, no longer possible to ask 'Is it righteous?' Its command cannot fail to be right, because to be right means to be what it commands. Here, therefore, law, in the moral sense is supposed analogous to law in the legal sense, rather than, as in the last instance, to law in the natural sense (*Ibid*, 126-127).

We observe a misunderstanding of Kant by Moore. Moore's analysis of the Kantian language did not capture what Kant argued. Kant's allusion to moral law only suggested

an innate moral nature of man which underscores man's ability to identify and to appreciate the good, the bad and the ugly. That innate nature is operative in man does not make man as such programmed. Man still reserves the right to act rightly or wrongly, although he and others can naturally and objectively evaluate such acts. And also we must let Moore know that Kant's pure will is not a metaphysical *Being* but a projection of the human inter-subjective will.

Kant never alluded to commanded ethics or to divine command ethics. Although his ethics took its root and foundation in his Christian and Pietist conviction he however, presented a secularized form of Christian ethics, taking it to its highest level of abstraction and at the same time purging it of its religious fervour. For Kant all sensible and rational Beings including God are to be subjected to the moral law. An act is morally alright only when it is from the goodwill irrespective of the personality of the moral individual. It can be argued therefore that Kant did not appeal to theological considerations. He relied only on rational arguments, holding that *reason* requires that we always do that which is rationally defensible and objectively acceptable. For Kant there is no room for moral heteronomy or moral phobia. It is abnormal and unnatural.

W.D. Ross in his books *The Right and the Good*, (1930) and *Criticism of Kant*, (1965) did identify areas which he thinks Kant failed to make intelligible:

1. Ross argued that Kant's test as to whether our maxims be universal or not is rather teleological since it so much dependent on consequences of the action. Here he believes that Kant's moral philosophy is rather consequentialist or teleologist to which Kant is said to be opposed.

2. There is the possibility of conflict of duties. How? From promise keeping, can one arrive at a duty: “Don’t lie”, “Always say the truth no matter the circumstance”. But there are some lies that are necessary, given the circumstance. For instance, ‘A’ the racist wants to kill ‘B’ and ‘B’ runs to hide in ‘C’ house. If ‘A’ walks up to ‘C’ and says to him/her “Is ‘B’ here? If we take Kant for what he has said, ‘C’ is morally bound to tell the truth? But in this case can he? Which duty is higher: To tell the truth and kill ’B’ or to refuse to tell the truth and save ‘B’? According to Ross, most men would admit that ‘C’ has a higher duty to protect ‘B’ from being killed.
3. Following from the above, Ross argues that Kant’s ethics does not admit exceptions even when we are faced with complex and intricate situations.
4. Kant’s universalizability is bogus. It fails to take care of particular instances such as differentiating a lie told to a would-be murderer from other lies. Therefore the conditions under which lying would be acceptable should be spelt out unambiguously.

Ross’ observation is noted. But what makes Kant’s ethics non-consequentialist is not because he believes that every moral act would not have an after effect. That would be naïve. Kant’s position is that what matters is not the end or the result or the consequence provided the intention is rooted in goodwill which is good at all times. If we take goodwill – the good in itself –as our point of departure then whatever is the result does not perturb us.

On the supposed conflict of duty Ross took the wrong understanding or analysis or even meaning of Kant’s notion of duty. Ross understood Kant’s proposition, ‘it is my duty to

act A' to mean the same as 'it is my duty to do act A from the sense that it is my duty to do act A'. To this Ross objects first that if it is my duty to do act A simply it cannot also be my duty to act A from the sense of duty; and secondly that the definition leads to an infinite regress, since the notion of duty is defined in terms of itself.

While the objections against the above definition are justified, it is pertinent to point out that the definition is not Kant's. Kant is merely showing that using the notion of duty, even before philosophizing about it, we often distinguish between actions which externally conform to duty and actions done for the sake of or from duty. For Kant the distinction is no more than a step towards the clarification of the notion of duty. Kant's conception of a moral decision as a decision which is taken not merely *in accordance with* duty but *for the sake of it* shows how serious and important moral decisions can be. But that we have the concept of duty does not mean that we are sure to apply it correctly in actual situations. All that is being claimed by the Kantian theory is that in certain simplified typical circumstances we know what it would be like to do our duty. Besides, we must say that dutiful action does not imply gloomy state of mind. Virtue is the firmly rooted disposition to perform one's duty. Kant's universalizability principle is therefore consistent with the sense of duty (for) by all rational beings.

Bertrand Russell has also brought criticism against Kant's moral philosophy. In his book *History of Western Philosophy*, (2005) Russell agreed with Kant that following his *Categorical Imperative* actions such as borrowing money with the intention not to repay, theft and murder are immoral. These acts for instance, borrowing money without repaying are wrong because if we all tried to do so there would be no money left to borrow. One

can in like manner show that theft and murder are condemned by the categorical imperative. However, Russell argued that there are some acts which Kant would certainly think wrong but which cannot be shown to be wrong by his principles, for instance, suicide; it would be quite possible for a melancholic to wish that everybody should commit suicide. His (Kant's) maxim seems, in fact, to give a *necessary* but not a *sufficient* criterion of virtue. According to Russell to get a *sufficient* criterion, we should have to abandon Kant's purely formal point of view, and take some account of the effects of actions.

Secondly, Russell objected to Kant's 'respect for persons': that we ought so to act as to treat every man as an end in himself. But according to Russell if this injunction is taken seriously it would make it impossible to reach a decision whenever two people's interests conflict. The difficulties according to Russell are particularly obvious in political philosophy, which requires some principle, such as preference for the majority, by which the interest of some can, when necessary, be sacrificed to those of others.

In the first place, if we abandon Kant's formal point of view as Russell suggested, then we cannot claim to be criticising Kant. So we have to go full swing with Kant in order to prove him right or otherwise. We also must point out that a melancholic is out of Kant's moral picture. Kant's position is that only a being that is capable of adopting maxims can be moral or immoral. Beings who are mentally deranged, mad, insane, do not come into moral judgment or evaluation. Furthermore, a maxim is moral if it accords with the moral law provided that there is such a natural law. For Kant the morality of an action does not

lie in the desires and purposes of the doer or in its consequences. The morality of an action, according to Kant is nothing but its conformity to law in general.

On the possible conflict arising from making each person an end in himself, we restate Kant's position namely, of the rationality of human action based on the moral law. This does not depend on the utilitarian permutations. And of course it does not suggest that he is saying that each man is an absolute end, but that all men should count equally in determining actions by which many are affected. Kant's position here too is enough to introduce or to restate the ethic of government.

In his book *Situation Ethics*, (1966) Joseph Fletcher accused Kant of being legalistic; believing in rules more than human beings. According to Fletcher, Kant would rather give information to a murderer in keeping with 'you must not lie'. But in a dramatic recoil Fletcher acknowledged Kant's 'respect for persons' as a true representation of man as "*Imago Dei*" (Image of God) Fletcher agreed with Kant that personality is the first-order concern in ethical choices.

For Fletcher, we say that even his love-agape as the driving force of moral is also legalistic. And if Kant's *maxims* can be misapplied, Fletcher's *situations* can also be misapplied. Anybody can hide under the guise of situation to perpetrate all manner of immoral acts. Fletcher should be made to understand that Kant's universalisability of morality is not intended to breed moral absolutism. It is only a clarion call for man to live what he is, namely, a moral being with rationality. A pertinent question must be put to Fletcher namely, 'how can we evaluate moral acts from non-moral acts if we do not have a measuring stick that is already known and agreed by all?' If Kant's 'goodwill' should be

changed to ‘love’ as Fletcher has suggested, then the standard of love must be established in order for us to evaluate all acts that are said to result from love.

In his book *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, (2006), James Rachels noted that Kant’s *truth-telling* as absolute moral rule admits no exceptions did not take into account conflicts between rule and therefore is a challenge against the use of reason. Rachels took a particular concern on Kant’s argument of the inquiring murderer in the article “On A Supposed Right To Lie From Altruistic Motive” (1792) wherein Kant argued that lying is lying irrespective of the motive. Rachels argued that Kant’s example is fictitious and does not issue from good reason. Rachels painted a scenario which would be universalisable although it is full of lies: During the Second World War, Dutch fishermen regularly smuggled Jewish refugees to England in their boats, and the following sort of thing sometimes happened: A Dutch boat, with refugees in the hold, would be stopped by the Nazi patrol boat. The Nazi captain would call out and ask the Dutch captain where he was bound; who was on board, and so forth. The fishermen would lie and were allowed to pass. Now it is clear that the fishermen had only two alternatives: to lie or to allow their passengers (and themselves) to be taken and shot. No third alternative was available. They could not for example, remain silent and out run the Nazis.

Now suppose the two rules “It is wrong to lie” and “It is wrong to permit the murder of innocent people” are both taken to be absolute. The Dutch fishermen would have to do one of these things; therefore a moral view that absolutely prohibits both is incoherent. Of course this difficulty could be avoided if one held that only *one* of these rules is absolute; that would apparently be Kant’s way out. But this dodge cannot work in every such case;

so long as there are at least two “absolute rules”, whatever they might be, the possibility will always exist that they might come into conflict. And that makes the view of those rules as absolute impossible to maintain.

It has been observed just as Rachels did that what Kant started as moral formalism which is in perfect agreement with human reason almost ended in moral absolutism making man slave to his own rules. Kant so soon forgot that his moral consistency (the categorical imperative) would require rules with exceptions. But his insistence that consistency requires rules that have no exceptions pushed Kant to a wrong direction as though of derailment. All that is required by Kant’s basic idea is that when we violate a rule, we do so for a reason that we would be willing for anyone to accept, were they in our position. In the case of the inquiring murderer, this means that we may violate the rule against lying only if we would be willing for anyone to do so were they faced with the same situation and that position causes a little trouble. However, in the essay we will show that Kant’s moral philosophy can be applied rationally even as it can be made to admit flexibility for the good of all. We will show that there can be conditions under which rules can be set aside. We shall also show the folly of tying man to rules by himself.

In his *The Antichrist*, (1966) Frederick Nietzsche showed disdain for the person of Kant and for his moral philosophy. For Nietzsche, an attempt to fashion a universal moral code or principle or standard is against man’s quest for survival on the ‘will to power’. Therefore to talk of “virtue”, “duty”, “the good in itself”, “the good which is impersonal and universally valid” are for Nietzsche chimeras and expressions of decline, of the final exhaustion of life. For Nietzsche everybody must be allowed to invent his own virtue, his

own categorical imperative in keeping with the fundamental laws of self-preservation. For him human beings are on the brink of extinction when they confuse their duty with duty in general. Impersonal duty is ruination.

Nietzsche, perhaps because he was haunted by ennui, became rather nihilistic against society which made him call for the revaluation of all values even as he hated Christianity and whatever appears to support it. However, few societies, if any, can survive and endure without those values such as ‘virtue’, ‘duty’, ‘good’ and ‘fellow feeling’, ‘kindness’, ‘meekness’, etc. Even the law of self-preservation must be premised on sound morals in order for it to serve human purposes. For that reason, there is no way each and every one of us will be a moral law-giver to suit the self and self alone. That alone will bring humanity to the precipice because it is only an invitation to chaos and a relapse into Hobbesian ‘state of nature’. So, Nietzsche’s criticism against Kant is rather confounded.

In their book *Ethics of Health Care – A Guide for Clinical Practice*, (1999) Raymond S. Edge and John Randall Groves have raised the following objections against Kantian moral philosophy:

1. The exceptionless character of Kant’s moral philosophy makes it too rigid for real life. Real life situations are so varied that it is impossible to create rules that can guide us in all circumstances.
2. Morality cannot be derived from pure reason. The fact that we can feel pain and pleasure is central to morality. It is unlikely that we would care about morality if we did not feel pain or pleasure.

3. The disregard of the consequences of our actions can lead to disastrous results. We all have been hurt by well-meaning people who were overly concerned to “obey the law”. It is often the spirit of the law, rather than the letter that provides the arena for rational decisions. The Robert Bland proverb, “We may grasp virtue so hard that it becomes vicious”, captures the essence of not considering the consequences of our decisions.
4. It is possible to be faced with a conflict between two duties equally supported by an imperative. (The nurse who promises not to reveal that a patient has asked questions about euthanasia is asked by the family if the matter was discussed).

One who has read Kant very well would reply the above criticisms with the following justification as we do here:

1. To believe that one needs exceptions is to regard experience as central to morality, which is metaphysically incorrect. For exceptions are required only if one is led by experience to question the moral law. In other words, one needs exceptions to respond to non-maximal consequences. But consequences are in the realm of experience and so are irrelevant to morality.
2. That *morality* is indeed the basis of morality becomes clear if we imagine someone who has his pain receptors impaired so that he does not feel pain. Even though he may not feel pain of, say, losing an arm, one would still say that such a person was injured since he would be unable to pursue his goals and purposes effectively. Since interfering with someone’s goals and purposes amounts to a lack of respect for that person, any action which led to the loss of an arm, even painlessly, would be immoral.

3. Disregarding consequences does sometimes lead to unhappiness, but the world is full of unhappiness and even death, so the complain is not really against Kant's morality but against the suffering in the world. We cannot stop all pain; what is crucial is that we act with dignity and respect in the face of suffering.
4. Here, one who has read Kant would reply in two ways: first, there is often a way out of an apparent dilemma, sometimes by refusing to act in either of the two ways that would seem to violate a perfect duty. Second, life may very well be tragic in that we are sometimes obliged to violate the law. In such cases one would be obliged to choose the less egregious violation of our duties to others or ourselves. Duty-oriented theorists obviously wish to promote a good result; however, they feel that merely serving the good is not an adequate foundation for ethics. For these theorists the right action is one based upon a correct principle regardless of the results.

In his book *A Course Text on Ethics*, (2001) G.O Ozumba did raise some issues against Kant's moral philosophy:

1. That Kant was very rigid in his formulation (of moral theory). He did not provide for any exception to the rule which has been seen as hardly satisfactory. According to Ozumba, in every rule, there is always an exception, more so in ethical realm where value is the central figure.
2. That Kant failed to provide us with a moral code. He sees the individual as the moral giver. This means that a universal moral code is impossible since every moral situation is unique. The idiosyncrasies and mannerisms of men differ.

3. That Kant says an act can be good even if it does not flow from the agent's best motive. It is duty for duty's sake that should be regarded as noble. This view is difficult to accept because certain acts can be good even if it is not in response to the call of duty.
4. How can Kant reconcile the categorical nature of moral law with his presupposed acceptance of the autonomy of the will? Freedom is the key which explains the will's autonomy. Moral laws are of the form: 'Thou shall keep your promise always'. This type of command does not provide for choice and where there are no alternatives, there is then no freedom.
5. And, that since Kant's ethical theory is based on certain regulative concepts like freedom of the will, immortality of the soul and the existence of God, philosophically speaking, it can be stated that his ethical theory is anchored on quicksand. If the structure is weak, the superstructure cannot hold on for too long.

The thrust of this research is to affirm the following:

1. Kant's moral philosophy is not rigid per se, neither is it absolute. It is rather founded on a metaphysic which by its nature does not accept exception. Exception is only on the realm of experience and it defeats the quest for the universal application of morality.
2. Moral law is operative in all rational beings. The (natural) law is not a prescription as how something should behave, but a formula, a description of how something does behave. Another moral code is not necessary. There is already an innate moral *sense* or *feeling* graspable by all rational nature. Although it is in every individual, it however, translates to our own and becomes our will which Kant,

following Rousseau, called the *General Will*. If we go our own (various) way in moral matters, then there will be nothing as morality.

3. Doing good deeds is what matters most, irrespective of whether the doer is pleased or not. It should be taken as ‘duty’. By duty is meant that an act be performed whether it is in the best interest of the performer or not. A good act need not be pleasing to the person performing it. More often than not, a duty is not always pleasing but it is necessary that it must be performed.
4. Freedom is within the nature of things. Freedom is not to perform incredible things. For example, a man cannot fly like the birds of the air. Although there is the moral law, freedom here is the ability to obey or disobey the moral law. The choice to obey or not is part of the human freedom. There are always alternatives, if not, we would not talk of acts being good or bad, right or wrong.
5. Kant is aware of these, hence he called them postulates and according to him they cannot be proved through speculative reasoning. They are postulates of practical reason. They cannot be proved by any rational argument. Rather, it is morality that leads us to assume them. Kant was aware of the practical difficulty in attaining moral learning. A complete compliance or conformity to moral law is holiness, and holiness is a perfection which no human being ever attained in this life. Kant did not mince words here to tell us of postulates, axioms, or assumptions which although are not provable, are the props of morality.

According to Moritz Schlick in his book *Problems of Ethics*, (1962) the Kantian emphasis on duty is rather misplaced. In the place of duty Schlick would rather opt for ‘kindness’. He argued that the ethics of kindness is much higher than the ethics of duty. For Schlick

the ethics of duty arises from the desire to place the foundation of morals upon absolutely firm ground, or perhaps even to make a foundation superfluous by positing morality itself as absolutely certain. In real life and also in science, we deal always with probabilities only. Moral rules, too, must refer to the average. Schlick is of the view therefore that one who does the good because of duty stands on a lower level than he who does it because of an inclination, to whom it has become quite natural; and if we must speak of morality only in the first case, then all our endeavours should be bent upon making morality superfluous. Instead of going with Kant, Schlick would rather agree with Marcus Aurelius, who said: “in the stage of perfection ‘thou wilt do what is right, not because it is proper, but because thereby thou givest thyself pleasure’ ”.

The position of this thesis is that kindness will not be the best ground of judging what is right or wrong. To show kindness can as well be a matter of convenience. Besides, there would be no yardstick for measuring kindness. Schlick’s position that “acting from inclination to whom it has become natural suggests also that in the final analysis, morality becomes part and parcel of man, taking us back once more to the moral law which is duty bound. So, what he strongly believes has been sent out of the door is brought in through the window because he believes in morals absolutely but only would not accept it the Kantian way.

Samuel Enoch Stumpf and Donald C. Abel (1979) in their book *Elements of Philosophy: An Introduction*, are in agreement with Kant that the moral law is something that we can respect, something that inspires awe and obedience. According to them we cannot respect

inclinations, which are simply impulses but we can respect something that has the ability to overpower inclinations and command our obedience.

Evidently, if everybody behaves the way it is pleasing to him or her then there will be no judgment of morality. Because the principle or standard will be “everything goes”. This will breed chaos and a relapse into the state of nature. Morality involves weathering the storm of unpleasant alternatives. It must be likened to one performing his duty whether he likes it or not, morality is a necessity. It must be admitted that the obedience to moral law only agrees with what we are already namely, moral beings. So, the search for the intrinsic quality of goodness is a moral human task which he cannot but perform.

S. Korner, (1973) in his book *Kant* pointed out the fact that Kant tried to elicit the ordinary man’s view of morality in preparation for an inquiry into its conditions, its justifiability, and the modifications, if any, for which it may call. This also goes to show that man is a moral being. It underscores the assertion that there is a moral law permeating the lives of human beings. Kant here agrees with Rousseau that man is naturally good and is capable of moral goodness. For Korner, man’s awareness of morality constantly should make him examine his place in the moral scheme of things. Morality is not foreign to man neither is it strange to his person.

Richard M. Hare in his books *The Language Of Morals*, (1952) and *Freedom And Reason* (1963) agrees with Kant on the need for moral consistency or universalisation, and he adds, moral *prescriptivism*. For Hare, moral judgment should be clothed with universalizability feature and a prescriptive element. To say that “You ought not steal from your boss” entails, via the principle of universalizability (or consistency), that the

speaker believes that no one should steal in relevantly similar circumstances. Furthermore, for you to say that ‘I should not steal’ is to commit yourself to a principle of forbidding stealing, and it is from that commitment that you are *prescribing* that others live that way also. So, when we embark on a moral journey, we should look beyond our person. We should look at the global community. That for us is what gives impetus to the search for a moral order.

Milton A. Gonsalves (1989) in his book *Right and Reason – Ethics in Theory and Practice*, argues that there is a time when lying would be more helpful to humanity than telling the truth. According to him everyone recognizes the social value of speech and the need for trust among people. But the good for society may sometimes be promoted more by a lie than the truth, for instance, to save an innocent person’s life or to avert war. While this may be true, it is important to stress that lying is lying irrespective of the consequence. The moral worth does not sympathize with the consequence. However, Kant’s ethics should not be seen as absolute. It is not command ethics. It only asks us to weigh every practice in terms of its impact on society. So, lying to avert a war can still be made a universal practice. This way of looking at lying, shall be made clear in the course of the research.

Ralph C.S. Walker (1978) in his *Kant – The Arguments of the Philosophers*, acknowledges Kant’s enviable place among moral philosophers. He even said that when one considers its importance in the history of moral thought Kant’s moral philosophy is surprisingly under developed. For Kant the fundamental fact about morality is that its commands are direct and not optional. Morality is not to be pursued for the sake of

anything else; it does not owe its value to anything outside itself. Walker captures Kant's current of thought about morals. Moral actions are there irrespective of whatever one may think to the contrary. It is only human selfish inclination that waters it down. A proper placing of moral thought would not admit personal inclination.

Peter Singer (1993) in his book *Practical Ethics* agrees with Kant that ethical principle cannot be justified in relation to any partial or sectional groups. Ethics, for it to be, takes a universal point of view. This agrees with the position of the Stoics who held that ethics derives from a universal natural law. It is this that gives ethics its fervour. Some requirements of universalizability or impartiality are essential to ethics, otherwise there would be nothing like an objective moral judgment. Ethics or morality, based on Kant's view, gives no room for sentimentality. It is just as forthright as possible. Ethics will live up to its bidding only when it has a general application and enjoys an objective consistency. A situation where there are different strokes for same folks will not promote order but chaos and rivalry.

Henry D. Aiken (1956) in *The Age of Reason – The 19thth Century Philosophers*, maintained that the business of morality or practical reason, according to Kant, is never to describe or predict matters of fact. Its concern is merely to tell us how we ought to live and what we ought to do. Morality is all about *oughtness*. It admits of no discrimination. Otherwise there will be no objective judgment of moral acts. This no doubt is the prop on which Kant launched the search for his fundamental principles of morals. It is the firmness of the principle and the universalizability of the standard that gives morality its *worth-value*.

Frederick Copleston (1964) in *A History of Philosophy* posited that as Kant in the first *Critique* endeavoured to isolate and give a systematic account of the *a priori* elements in scientific knowledge, so did he also in his moral writings. He tried to isolate and to give a systematic account of the *a priori or formal elements in morality*. Thus he endeavoured to ground obligation and the universality of the moral law not on feeling but on the practical reason, that is, on reason as legislating for human conduct. According to Copleston, Kant only believed, and it is right, that in the moral judgment, there is, as it were, a ‘form’ which can be derived from the practical reason and which is applied to empirically given material. The situation in morals is thus analogous to some extent with that in science. Both in science and in man’s moral life, that is, both in theoretical and practical knowledge, there is the ‘given’, the ‘matter’, and there is the ‘formal’ and *a priori* element. It is only by this that we can attain objective evaluation especially in matters concerning morals. The point in this research is that, the meeting of morals and science is the categorical imperative, that is, the universalizability principle.

Ethel M. Albert et. al (1984) in *Great Traditions In ethics* observe that in his search for the grounds of the validity of ethics, Kant employed the same method by which he established the grounds of the certainty of science. A valid moral principle, he argued, must be independent of the empirical data of morality, for it to be binding upon all men. In short, a genuine morality, that is, a morality which is objectively and universally binding, requires an *a priori* foundation. We uphold this because ordinary moral consciousness, or conscience, reveals to every man that moral precepts are universal and necessary – they are valid for all rational beings. The universal basis of morality in people, we must admit, must lie in their rational nature, since this alone is the same in everyone. Individuals or

groups may wish to choke or stifle this moral nature but it must always find a window of expression.

Manuel G. Velasquez (1982) in his book *Business Ethics – Concepts and Cases*, posits that a more satisfactory foundation for moral rights is provided by the ethical theory developed by Immanuel Kant. Kant in fact argued that there are certain moral rights and duties that all humans possess regardless of any utilitarian benefits that the exercise of those rights and duties may provide for others. What impresses Velasquez most is Kant's categorical imperative which he argues, incorporates two criteria for determining moral right and wrong: *Universalizability* and *Reversibility*. ***Universalizability***: The person's reasons for acting must be reasons that everyone could act on at least in principle. ***Reversibility***: The person's reasons for acting must be reasons that he or she would be *willing* to have all others use, even as a basis of how they treat him or her.

This formulation of Kant's categorical imperative is attractive for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it seems to capture some fundamental aspects of our moral views. Frequently, for example, we say to a person who has done something wrong or who is about to do something wrong: "How would you like it if somebody else does it to you?" "Or how would you like it if you were in her place?" thereby invoke communication; something like reversibility. Or we may ask, "if everybody did that?" thereby invoke universalizability. The principle therefore brings about moral impartiality. And that is good for our moral quests. However, some difficulties have been raised or noted in the practical application of Kant's moral philosophy. Some have accused Kant of being vague while others have said that Kant is difficult to understand. We must say however,

that Kant never claimed to have written *finis* to moral philosophy, although his bold assertions could be suggestive of one who thinks he knows it all.

It must be posited however, that Kant's moral mission is just simple. It only tasks us to be patient and take the pain to accompany him on the moral pathway. Kant makes his *thesis* very simple and understandable. He says that a metaphysic of morals is indispensably necessary, not merely for speculative reasons, in order to investigate the sources of the practical principles which are to be found *a priori* in our reason, but also because morals themselves are liable to all sorts of corruption, as long as we are without that clue and supreme cannon by which to estimate them correctly. Also in order that an action should be morally good, it is not enough that it *conforms* to the moral law, but it must be done for the sake of the law, otherwise that conformity is only very contingent and uncertain; since a principle which is not moral, although it may now and then produce actions conformable to the law, will also often produce actions which contradict it. For us, Kant's position is simple. The moral worth of an action is measured by a principle which itself is moral and which is acceptable by every rational being in a sane condition.

Richard H. Popkin and Avrum Stroll (1979) in their book *Philosophy Made Simple* have levelled three major criticisms against Kant namely: The first holds that although Kant tried to prove that the moral worth of an action depends only upon the motive from which it is done, he in fact surreptitiously introduces considerations of the consequences, which an act has into a determination of its rightness or wrongness.

It must be said that Kant, in looking for *first principle*, is also aware of the social application of morality. His position is that the consequence does not and should not

determine the moral acceptedness of any action. The end does not justify the means. It is the means that justifies and moralises the end. An act can produce the greatest good for the greatest number, yet it may not pass the moral test.

The second major criticism which has been made of Kantian ethics is that it does not handle cases where we have **a conflict of duties** and these seem to be some of the most pressing and serious types of moral perplexity. Here, we talk of the difficulty and not the impossibility of resolving conflict of duties. There is always a higher duty. When two duties clash one must weigh much more than the other. And that is the moral duty. There is no two-way about it. There is not and there cannot be any short cut to moral living.

A third difficulty, analogous to the above, is that Kant is urging too strong a claim when he insists that we should never tell lies, or never break promises. For Kant a lie is a lie irrespective of the motive or the consequence. Admittedly, a lie can be told to save a situation, but it does not make a lie, truth. But are we prepared to universalize that? A point of observation is that Kant's moral theory is not an absolute theory. It is only a theory that tasks our reason to do those things or perform such acts or adopt those rules that benefits us all in the final analysis in order to establish and to sustain a suitable and stable society.

However, we must say that Kant was only looking out for the metaphysical basis of morality so that judgment of moral actions can be made with all manner of objectivity. He never was oblivious of practical moral problems. The end does not justify the means nor the consequence a justification of the means. Velasquez (1978) in his *Business Ethics* has also identified what he sees as "limitations and inadequacies" of Kant's Moral Philosophy:

the first problem is that Kant's theory is not precise enough to always be useful. It must be said however, that the general thrust of Kant's moral philosophy is usually clear. One only has to read and study the Kantian *corpus* thoroughly to appreciate the clarity of his thought. This is because Kant's ethics is not contained in just one work. But in each work where it appears, even in a small dose, it is always simply stated. Secondly, Velasquez disagreed with Kant that although we might be able to agree on the kinds of interests that have the status of moral rights, there is substantial disagreement concerning what the *limits* of each of these rights are and concerning how each of these rights should be balanced against other conflicting rights. Here, the point should be made that Kant's categorical imperative, for example, is not intended to tell us how conflicting rights should be limited and adjusted to each other. It is just an exercise in moral objectivity.

Thirdly, Velasquez argued that there are counter – examples, which show that the theory sometimes goes wrong. According to him most counter-examples to Kant's theory focus on the criticism of universalizability and reversibility. But Velasquez was shy enough not to give one of such examples here, for reasons we do not know. The point here is that it is the critics, not Kant, who are wrong. As rational beings, there is moral law in us. Because of this we formulate a maxim that is subjective but finds fulfilment in the objective maxims of each of the rest striking the cord of inter-subjectivity. That gives birth to universalizability and reversibility. Kant had expressed this fear emanating from his philosophy in a manner of a seer when he said that the danger is not that of being refuted, but that of being misunderstood; and also that of the reader not being kind and patient enough to accompany him on the hitherto untravelled route. It is strongly believed that Kant has grossly been misunderstood. Also there has been noted some manifest

impatience in the reading of Kant. A re-read of Kant's corpus and not a perusing is therefore advocated for proper understanding and appreciation of his philosophy especially as it relates to morals.

Kant's moral philosophy is plausible but is difficult to operate. It is like building an edifice intended for man but at the same time placing conditionality not easily attainable by man in this world. In order to make this edifice inhabitable by the mortal man, however, we elect to furnish it with the furniture compatible with man. In order to achieve this, some conditions under which Kant's moral philosophy can be operationalized must be given. First, this position has admitted the plausibility of Kant's moral philosophy and argues that it holds good for man's moral order even in the 21st century. However, the grounds for its launch and operation must be prepared for its take-off and continued and successful operation. This is what supporters and detractors of Kant have failed to do. They have rather engaged in war of words in highfaluting words and invention of terms as if the problem will be solved like the result of the debate therefrom or from showing their intellectual prowess or how far they can grapple with language **analysis** instead of looking out for the grounds of its social application.

However, contrary to Kant, the moral individual should be told what he or she stands to gain from any action or inaction. This is because both good and evil pay the individual although the good has a superior payment. And also it is not easy, nor is it convenient to be moral. And also a group or a people who have always been favoured by moral particularism or relativism should also be told what they stand to gain when they drop it in favour of moral universalism. Of course there is the need for education in order for the

people concerned to embrace the rational, objective and universal morality. Whether as a person, a group, a people, or a race there has always been some level of moral training or moral foundation grounded on their conception of human experience and on which they build their basic or primary assumption. All these must be reviewed and reversed through the “new voice” of universal, human education.

Godwin Azenabor in his article “The Golden Rule Principle In An African Ethics And Kant’s Categorical Imperative -A comparative study on the foundations of morality” (2008) has identified what he described as ‘limitation of Kant’ which threatens Kant’s prescribed foundation of morality. This flaw is ‘the idea that moral intentions can be fully grounded on reason’ (2008: 229). Taking opposing position, Azenabor argues that human interest or welfare is the basis for morality (Ibid). The refusal to see this wider horizon of morality, according to Azenabor, is precisely the limitation of Kant’s principle, which makes it quite insufficient as the foundation of morality. In place of Kant’s ‘Categorical Imperative’ that is, the ‘Principle of Universlizability’ which forms Kant’s principle or foundation on which morality ought to be erected, Azenabor makes a case for **empathy**. According to Azenabor, the principle of empathy agrees with both the Golden Rule principle and African Humanism which to him are other moral imperatives that accommodate primarily the interest of the individual and which unarguably is the Ultimate Moral principle. Whereas the Golden Rule states “Do unto others what you want them to do unto you” the Categorical Imperative says “Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law”. For Azenabor, the Principle of empathy which accords with the Golden Rule is more humanistic and African because the valuer or judge (of what passes as morality) has to place himself in

the position of those concerned, he or she must relate what is in question to himself, see if it can be done to him or her, if he could tolerate or accommodate the thing in question (Ibid, 235). This reliance or recourse to empathy has the singular most important role in Azenabor's view namely, to aid in the making of fair decisions and move from subjectivism to objectivism 'since whatever answer one gets from self-examination will be applied to those before them' (Ibid). For Azenabor the principle of empathy has with it also the "principle of initiative, co-operation, mutuality and mediation". Azenabor also identified a second foundation of the Golden Rule principle in African ethics; human interest. Morality is based on human interest and welfare.

However, good as the principle of empathy would seem, it still accommodates flaws for it to be made the ultimate foundation of morality. First, the principle of the Golden Rule on which it is anchored has identifiable flaws, one of which is that it can be used as a collaborative platform for evil purposes and also as a basis for argument against moral judgment. Henry Sidgwick, in *The Methods Of Ethics*, has since identified this gap when he noted that "one might wish for another's co-operation in sin, and be willing to reciprocate it". This weakness of the Golden Rule did not escape Kant's notice. In *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* he notices that "on this basis the criminal would be able to dispute with the judges who punish him", and "many a man would readily agree that others should not help him if only he could be dispensed from affording help to them" (Paton, 1958: 97).

Second, the principle of empathy is erected on emotion. For that, it will be difficult to capture the right 'situation' because of the difficulty in appreciating the situation. Morality founded on this empathy principle would also be too personalized and therefore less

objective and for that it loses the very ingredient of morality, namely, objectivity. Empathy is the understanding of another's feeling; the ability to identify with and understand somebody else's feeling or difficulties. The meaning of empathy raises an original difficulty of *knowing* what the other is feeling because 'clever and smart' people can feign anything and dramatically hold on to it as if it is the real. Another deficiency of the empathy principle is that it has the tendency for 'restricted morality' because it would resist the demand to widen out there by restricting its application to immediate neighbours, close associates and tribes people.

There is however a variant of the Golden rule principle that can form the basis of morality and also be universalizable. That variant is humanism that is, human interest and welfare. Humanism takes human interest or welfare as the basis of morality. It is this human angle that makes the Golden rule principle amenable to morality hence its appearance in its different forms, in the scriptures of all world religions and in the precepts of African Traditional Religion (ATR). Since the wellbeing and welfare of human beings form the point of departure of the Golden rule principle, it can accommodate the principle of empathy while it retains rational imperatives for the promotion of social wellbeing.

It must be clarified however, that Kant's Categorical Imperative, that is, the Universalizability Principle is not anti-human. It does not close eyes against human feeling as such. Kant well recognizes the sacred and elevated place of man among other primates. Kant remains an advocate of respect for persons. He even dreamt of a world where human beings will live in perpetual peace. His stand is that the road to morality should not be paved with emotion such that personal considerations take away the sense of good judgment.

Richard G Henson (1979) in his article “What Kant Might Have Said: Moral Worth and the Overdetermination of Dutiful Action” stated his purpose which according to him is to account for some oddities in what Kant did and did not say about moral worth, and for another in what commentators tell us about his intent. Henson claimed to be able to distinguish between two things Kant might have had in mind under the heading of ‘moral worth’. He however, identified only what he termed ‘a fact which he (Kant) did not seem to notice’, namely, ‘that dutiful action- action which, whatever its motive, fulfils a duty – can be over-determined, and determined in particular by both respect for duty and some consortium of inclinations and prudence’. In the *Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant had praised duty as the identifying mark of moral worthiness of an action. Kant however, according to Henson, did not take notice of what Henson has termed over-determination of duty to mean a phenomenon in which one has two or more logically independent motives for doing and for refusing, and would have acted from any one of those motives even in the absence of the others. Henson also argues that Kant is clear when he ascribed moral worth (or *intrinsic worth* or *moral import*) to acts only if it is done *from* duty. However, he noted what it is not clear at least to him (Henson) namely (a) what it means to ascribe moral worth to an act, and (b) under just what circumstances we are to say that one acts from duty.

That an act can be over-determined that is, have both respect for duty and at the time include a consortium of inclinations and prudence and therefore place Kant’s position in respect of duty to task is expressed in the example by Henson: When Kant performed his duties as professor at Konigsberg, he acted from duty. But according to Henson, Kant’s

appearances at the lecture podium were generally over-determined (he had several motives for getting himself to the lecture hall with a ready lecture:

- 1) he enjoyed lecturing;
- 2) he did not want people to think him irresponsible;
- 3) he was benevolently concerned for his students and felt that they needed to hear his lectures;
- 4) he recognised lecturing as a (moral) duty.

According to Henson any of these factors would have sufficed to get Kant to the lecture hall although he would have considered (3) and (40) which also is a combination. But one seems to be premised on duty the other is purely from inclination.

Kant's emphasis on duty can make sense to us when we appreciate dutifulness with all of its inconveniences. Acting from duty would mean acting without any *cooperating inclinations*, but with respect and reverence to moral law. Even when we are faced with *over-determination of dutiful action* the overriding motive should be duty against any cooperation inclination. Kant was aware of the difficulty in determining whether a person is inspired by duty or not. The emphasis on duty is to show that doing good acts is never an easy task although it is imperative. He was indeed troubled by the propensity toward hypocrisy and self-deceit, springs that could activate action and also becloud them.

Robert Johnson (2008) in his *Kant's Moral Philosophy* argues that moral requirements are based on standard of rationality and the categorical imperative. Immorality thus involves a violation of the categorical imperative and thereby irrational. He argues that a rational man is one who can take full control of this emotions, inclinations and motives and he who can resist any temptation to go contrary to the rational will. That is why it is fitting to

link duty and respect for moral law together and makes a case for ‘actions from duty’ even if they go contrary to the benefits of the moral agent. It is this action from duty that can guarantee the success of categorical imperative.

Lawrence M. Hinman (2002) in his Kantian *Ethical Texts* argues in agreement with Kant that moral man’s moral knowledge is *a priori* or existing before and in spite of the fact that there are moral precepts which determine how men ought to behave, and these precepts do not depend on actual behaviour. Instead, there are truths, moral precepts, which are to be applied to all behaviour. According to Hinman whether an act is morally right or wrong does not affect the principle of morality already existing in practical reason which is reason in its practical or moral function. That is why moral law, like physical law is universal.

Nicholas Fearn (2005) in his *Philosophy: Old Questions and New Answers* agrees with Kant that the moral man is one who controls his emotions as well as flesh, but at least the attitudes to these thoughts and feelings could remain untouched. Our vigour may be wasted by sickness, our solvency ruined by unemployment, but similar catastrophes cannot befall our moral worth. If the latter is debased – or enhanced – it can only be the result of our own will, our own decisions. The integrity of a good intention is invulnerable, no matter what its first contact with the world brings.

F.N. Ndubuisi (2008) argues in his book *Man and State* that although Kant’s categorical imperative makes human acts to be universalizable, that is, that one should not adopt principles of action unless they can without inconsistency be adopted by everyone. He however took the position that Kant’s moral principles are rather dogmatic and inflexible, factors that can make its real life application difficult. He specifically argued that such moral precepts as ‘do not lie’ may not be so easy to be carried by people in business

especially amidst the inquiry of close competitors. However, the primary concern of Kant is not in the difficulty or otherwise of a principle of morality, but on its ability to provide the basis for a moral society. After all good things of life are not easy to come by including morality.

In his *Kant on the Nature of Morality* Jorg Schroth (2010) argues that Kant sees human actions as a person's intention rather than as the person's behaviour and even intention has end and motive. The ability to control intentions and to keep it in line with the general good is what supports the quest for moral universalizability.

In his work fully titled Ethics, Demonstrated in Geometrical Order Benedict (Baruch) de Spinoza made the conquest of passion and emotion the central theme. Spinoza agrees with most moral philosophers that happiness is the end which man strives. He however believed that happiness ahs ills which becloud it. The removal of the ills which destroy happiness, therefore, can be accomplished only by freeing the mind from its bondage to the emotions which becloud it. This task and the way to go about it, according to Spinoza, remains the basic ethical problem for humanity. However, since human beings are essentially rational beings, only the life lived according to the dictate of reason is good for them. Spinoza equates the life of virtue with a life lived in accordance with our rational nature. When rational beings are thus pursuing what reason perceives as genuinely beneficial to us, we are acting freely and virtuously. But when we are in the grip of the passions and emotions we are like slaves acting at the behest of some external power.

Spinoza is not unaware of human tendency to want to exist. His concept of the *striving* (conatus) for self-preservation and self-perfection which characterises all things captures this essential human nature. For him however, the drive to preserve our existence and

perfect our essential nature is not only the basis of all behaviour, but it is also the foundation of virtue. And because our essential nature is rational, the preservation of our being prescribes obedience to reason, and thus constitutes virtue.

The use of reason for Spinoza is the remedy against passions because if will fortify our knowledge and make us understand the inevitable causes of all things. (Spinoza is a strict determinist) armed with maximal knowledge and understanding men can be said to be truly autonomous agents taking charge of their own lives; and act instead of being acted on Spinoza, though a strict determinist, Spinoza allowed man some measure of freedom, not in the sense of being outside of the chain of cause and effect, but free from the enslavement of passions. The only sense of freedom is that in which we act from internal rather than external causes. Moral action is acting for oneself rather than being in the grip of passions. The free man is the man who gains mastery over his emotions, transforming them into accurate conceptions of the world which he thereby demonstrates.

Spinoza like the Stoics before him equates the life of virtue with a life lived in accordance with man's rational nature. Spinoza moral philosophy is over-optimistic about reason. His emphasis on intellectual contemplation makes morals the exclusive reserve of the educated. He also denies man genuine freedom. Spinoza in some way announces the coming of Kant. Kant so much depends on reason as the true pointer to moral knowledge. Kant also emphasized on man's capacity to suppress passion. Passion for Spinoza and Kant must be suppressed by men in order for genuine morals to see the light of day. Spinoza's position on the autonomous capacity of man to perform moral act and the worthiness of happiness from moral acts were also taken up by Kant. However, Spinoza's failure to place everyone in the moral firmament is a deficiency on his moral thought. If

man is rational, it does not matter then whether he is educated or not. To argue that it is only one who is possessed of philosophical wisdom that charts the moral pathway is rather naïve and lastly a conclusion.

2.5 Kant and contemporary world

There is contemporary call that society should once more give renewed consideration on the philosophy of Kant especially his moral philosophy. This clarion call, ‘back to Kant’, has been consistent in recent times. Rossi S.J. (2010: 79) calls on the Catholic Church for renewed engagement with the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant. He argued that Kant’s critical philosophy, even his moral philosophy is compatible with principles fundamental to catholic accounts of human condition in relation to God. Obrien (2004) argues that Kant has grossly been misunderstood especially his ethics of War and Peace. He argued that the core propositions of Kant’s just war theory are consistent with his basic moral and political principles. For Orend, Kant’s highly significant contribution to the ethics of war and peace is only now becoming fully and widely known. Vilhauer (2004) has also argues that a careful reading of Kant, especially in this century is needed in order to make use of his thoughts to tackle contemporary moral problems. According to him, although Kant can be regarded as a compatibilist – a position that although determinism is true, (but that) we are nonetheless morally responsible – he (Kant) stood unwaveringly on the side of morality irrespective of whether determinism is real or not.

CHAPTER THREE

KANT'S PURE REASON: THE NEED TO ESTABLISH ETHICS ON A SECURE EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

3.1 Introduction

Kant's foremost preoccupation was not on epistemology or the problems of knowledge. He never intended, at least originally, to write a critique of pure reason. His early works were on science, especially physics. Kant had taken interest in those concerns of physics such as force, the nature of fire, planetary motion, etc. In fact, Kant studied physics more as a philosopher than as a scientist. This primary concern in physics was to discover how far physics rested upon metaphysical foundations and what these metaphysical foundations were (Walker, 1978: 1). Some form of the principle of sufficient *Reason*, according to which there is an explanation for everything that happens, seemed to be a presupposition of science and the physical concepts of force, matter, and space, appeared to be topics on which metaphysics also had something to say. But as time progressed Kant became more and more uncertain about the character and status of metaphysical claims in general. Kant must take another look at metaphysics and its underpinning for physics and the legitimacy of metaphysics itself. This diversion is understandable.

Secondly, philosophers put forward conflicting assertions, often with equal plausibility and equal show of rational argumentation behind them. But no satisfactory method existed for determining where the truth lay. So, for anything else to be done it seemed to Kant essential to put metaphysics itself on a secure foundation – to show how, or to what extent, genuine metaphysics is possible. And that is the task of his first *Critique*.

Similarly, when he first turned his attention to morals his principal interest was in the metaphysical assumptions on which he took morality to rest. These concerned the character of man as an agent who is at once both rational and subject to non-rational desires, and who is, above all, free: free in a sense which seemed liable to conflict with the demands of the principle of *Sufficient Reason*, according to which every act and every choice must be antecedently determined. But his project of writing a book on the metaphysical foundations of morality had to wait just as the book on the metaphysical foundations of physics was deferred until *Pure Reason* had been critically examined (*Ibid*: 2).

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is written to reconcile the extremities of rationalism and empiricism, and to remove the impasse on the way of knowledge erroneously concocted by the opposing schools of epistemology. It is only when this is done can we be assured of the possibility of indubitable knowledge in all of human endeavours, including morals. Kant asks in a manner to show that morality is a serious matter which must operate on human knowledge and understanding: "What use can we make of our understanding, even in respect to experience if we do not propose ends to ourselves? But the highest ends are those of morality, and it is only *Pure Reason* that can give us the knowledge of these" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 239).

Kant's conclusion is that knowledge requires both sensory experience and concepts contributed by the perceiver. Either without the other is useless. In particular, metaphysical speculation about what lies beyond the realm of appearance is worthless unless it is grounded in experience (Warburton, 2001: 132). An understanding of Kant's moral philosophy must be aided by the knowledge of his metaphysics which he laid out in his first *Critique*.

A firm grasp of Kant's epistemology will be helpful in the understanding of his ethics or moral philosophy. Kant's philosophy has a chain effect such that one needs to follow Kant into journey through metaphysics and epistemology in order to also understand his ethics and philosophy of infrastructure of disciplines. So Kant's *Pure Reason* is both metaphysical and epistemological and they both point the way to his *Ethics*.

3.2 The Meaning of Pure Reason

To situate morals aright, Kant established it on a metaphysic. And to understand morals, Kant explained it through 'pure reason' thereby creating an epistemic possibility. When we then follow Kant on the pathway of morals, having understood his metaphysics and his epistemology, his deontological ethical theorizing becomes clearer and better understandable. To understand philosophy one must take a holistic approach of the philosophy. This means reading the metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and logic which guides our reasoning for correctness. In order to fully appreciate Kant we must read his *corpus* which contains his philosophy and his thoughts.

We must say here that while metaphysics furnishes us with first principles on which we can stand and view the world, epistemology (as theory of knowledge and understanding) makes intelligible our conceptions in order for us to grasp our world and our state of affairs.

Kant's *Pure Reason* philosophy is an attempt to give back to man what belongs to him. It is the placing of man on the cognitive pedestal natural to him. This is premised on the *a priori* capacity for knowledge native to man. A priori knowledge allows man's logical deductions from general principles, that is, the grasping of knowledge independently of

our experience of it and not requiring empirical validation. This is Kant's contribution to epistemology, wherein he achieved his 'Copernican revolution' and there after resolved the Rationalism/Empiricism impasse as a critical mediator. He constructed a 'meeting house' for rationalism and empiricism, a feat that has benefited epistemology in particular and philosophy in general.

It would be naïve to argue against the possibility of knowledge and understanding for man. Even the most thorough-going sceptic would know that his own reality or existence is not in doubt unless he wants to be mischievous. And so, our being moral, and our acceptance of moral principles and the judgment and evaluation of morals will primarily depend on knowledge. The problem arises however, as to how we come to know knowledge and the certainty of our knowledge.

During the time Kant flourished there were basically two active schools of thought in epistemology. They are rationalism and empiricism. What would have served as the third school, scepticism seem to have been defeated or made moribund. The two schools had opposing and contrary views about knowledge. They however, agreed on the possibility of knowledge. For the empiricists (from the Greek, *empeiria*, 'experience') sensory experience is the basis of all knowledge. And the rationalists (from the Latin, *ratio*, 'reason'), it is the inner light of reason that enables us to acquire knowledge that is independent of experience. Although the two schools believe in the human capacity for knowledge and understanding they however, assign different faculties the role of making knowledge possible: the rationalists – intellect; the empiricists – the senses. But this seems to be fundamentally wrong. Human nature must work together if knowledge and

understanding must be acquired. To work together requires creating a balance through the participation of all faculties. That is to say, there must be complementary criteria where the senses, reason, experience, intuition and imagination contribute to human knowledge acquisition. The knowledge *mill* is not to be restricted especially as mind is part of it.

The idea of Pure Reason is therefore the mediation between the senses and reason. In his first *Critique* Kant exposes the ways of thinking and knowing. He attacks the idea that by reason alone we can discover the nature of reality. Kant's conclusion is that knowledge requires both sensory experience and concepts contributed by the perceiver, since "either without the other is useless" (Warburton, 2000: 132).

There is no doubt about the existence of the faculty of *reason*. This Kant alluded to in the 'Preface' to the first edition of the first *Critique*: "Human reason, in one sphere of its cognition, is called upon to consider questions, which it cannot decline, as they are presented by its own nature, but which it cannot answer, as they transcend every faculty of the mind (Ibid: 1). So, even *reason* as faculty of cognition has its own limitation just as the senses do also. Reason, according to Gonsalves, (1989: 121) means human consciousness including all of its ways of operating. Basically, reason is our capacity to behave consciously in terms of the nature of what is not ourselves, to behave in terms of the nature of objects and persons in the world. Thus reason includes all the feelings, emotions, and sensibilities, as well as the moods and desires, along with intellect (Ibid: 123). Reason cannot give us the much desired certain, pure, firm, universal, indubitable and cocksure knowledge unless it is purged of the human impurities. The same goes for the senses. The senses are also limited and at times incapacitated in the quest for

indubitable knowledge. A good example is ‘if you look at the world through rose-tinted spectacles, then everything will appear pink’ (Warburton, *Ibid*: 131)

For Kant, the critical mediator between rationalism and empiricism must be founded on the notion of pure reason. This is because both rationalism and empiricism must be accommodated as complementary theories of knowledge. For Chiedozie Okoro (2002: 7), both rationalism and empiricism are co-ordinate perspectives of knowledge. It is this that Kant noted when he wrote in the first *Critique* that although all our knowledge begins with experience, it by no means follows that all arises out of experience (*op cit.* 14).

Pure Reason, according to Kant, is a faculty of knowledge. It is the faculty that has the *a priori* contents of cognition. It is different from the faculty of the senses (empiricism) and the faculty of the intellect/reason (rationalism). What then is *a priori* knowledge? How is it possible? To this Kant replies: a knowledge that is not derived from experience – and experience – is *a priori* knowledge (*Ibid*). As Kant puts it: by the term “knowledge *a priori*”, therefore we shall in the sequel understand, not such as is independent of this or that kind of experience, but such as is absolutely so of all experience. Opposed to this is empirical knowledge, or that which is possible only *a posteriori*, that is, through experience (*Ibid*). Knowledge *a priori* is either pure or impure. If pure knowledge *a priori* is possible, then its seat is at pure reason. Kant in exposing this argues that reason is the faculty which furnishes us with the principles of knowledge *a priori*. Hence Pure Reason is the faculty which contains the principles of cognizing anything absolutely *a priori*. According to Kant an *organon* of pure reason would be a compendium of those principles according to which alone all-pure cognitions *a priori* can be obtained (*Ibid.* 20).

3.3 Mind and Its Functions

Kant's thought about the human mind was the Copernican revolution which he achieved in philosophy. His was a reversal, of the age long belief that the mind is a docile faculty that takes in ‘things’ as presented to it. Kant reversed this belief by positing that the mind is an active faculty that conditions ‘things’ according to its purposes at every point in time. This discovery is the much talked about Copernican Revolution.

While embarking on his mind-project, Kant had reminded his readers of the celebrated achievements of Nicolai Copernicus. He said in the Preface to the second edition of the first *Critique* “we have proposed to do just what Copernicus did in attempting to explain the celestial movements. When he found that he could make no progress by assuming that all the heavenly bodies revolved round the spectator, he reversed the process, and tried the experiment of assuming that the spectator revolved, while the stars remained at rest (Ibid: 7). Taking a cue from the success achieved by Copernicus, Kant then argued that we may make the same experiment with regard to the intuition of objects. If the intuition must conform to the nature of the objects, I do not see how we can know anything *a priori*. “If, on the other hand, the object conforms to the nature of our faculty of intuition, I can then easily conceive the possibility of such an *a priori* knowledge” (Ibid. 7). For Kant, we cannot legislate for or interrogate experience if the mind is not an active partner in the *Reason project*. According to him:

Reason must approach nature with the view, indeed, of receiving information from it, not, however, in the character of a pupil, who listens to all that his master chooses to tell him, but in that of a judge, who compels the witnesses to reply to those questions which he himself thinks fit to propose (Ibid: 6).

The mind does not function with an empty data. It functions with data which it got from experience. It must interrogate experience, legislate for experience and even shape and reshape experience. That accounts for the increase and the growth in knowledge. The mind, in experiencing the world, necessarily interprets it or ‘processes’ it in terms of certain structure. The mind comes to the world already armed with *a priori* concepts of the understanding. The concepts of the understanding are derived from certain fundamental categories which are presupposed by experience. For that Kant said:

...that all our knowledge begins with experience there can be no doubt ... But, though all our knowledge begins with experience, it by no means follows that all arises out of experience. For, on the contrary, it is quite possible that our empirical knowledge is a compound of that which we receive through impressions, and that which the faculty of cognition supplies from itself (Ibid: 14).

The mind is that faculty of cognition and understanding that makes knowledge possible and brings about all of its increases in time. The mind can be likened to a large factory with a large process line capable of processing raw materials into finished products of different kinds, shapes, and sizes. What is put into it is not what it exactly brings out because a ‘processing’ has taken place which has turned the input (raw material) into a useable output (finished goods).

That the mind is the ‘factory of knowledge’ is acknowledged by Kant. And as we have said elsewhere, this ‘factory’ called mind is not docile; it is active and like the colours of our spectacle or lenses, it shapes and reshapes experience as well as perception. Kant then said:

Our knowledge springs from two main sources of the mind, the first of which is the faculty or power of receiving representations (receptivity or impressions); the second is the power of cognizing

by means of these representations (spontaneity in the production of conceptions). Through the first an object is given to us; through the second, it is, in relation to the representation (which is a mere determination of the mind), thought. Intuition and conceptions constitute, therefore, the elements of all our knowledge, so that neither conceptions without an intuition in some way corresponding to them, nor intuition without conceptions, can afford us cognition (Ibid: 24).

The reality of mind is no longer in dispute. The mind has its own powers too. But these powers or faculties must be exercised by the conscious individual. With that Kant replied the innatists like Descartes and Plato who had before him suggested that the mind was simply endowed (by God, or from a previous experience) with a range of non-empirical concepts and truths. For Kant the mind has certain fundamental categories of understanding. It is here that Kant offers a compromise between, or rather, a synthesis, of the empiricists and the rationalists approach to knowledge. Knowledge involves a kind of fusion of ‘intuitions’ (sensory representations) on the one hand, and the concepts of the understanding, on the other. As Kant puts it:

Thoughts without content are void; intuitions without conceptions, blind. Hence it is as necessary for the mind to make its conceptions sensuous (that is, to join to them the object in intuition), as to make its intuitions intelligible (that is, to bring them under conceptions). Neither of these faculties can exchange its proper function. Understanding cannot intuit, and the sensuous faculty cannot think (Ibid: 34).

It is the mind that holds the aces of knowledge, and of the development of the world. It is the mind that embodies man’s non-physical (mental) powers. It is the mind that has brought order out of chaos. Mind, in the sense in which we understand it, is a faculty that only human beings have and it constitutes one basis for the distinction we all make between man and nature. According to Louis Halle mind is a faculty for bringing order

out of chaos (Halle, 1977: 505). Human civilization would not have been possible without mind. Halle puts it thus:

The advent of mind seems, at least, to have introduced something new. We get the impression that mind seeks order for its own sake rather than for the sake of some practical advantage associated with it. Not only is it moved to seek order in nature, it imagines order beyond what it is able to find in nature. And it does not only imagine order but, having done so, proceeds to represent it – in myths, in the graphic arts, in music and poetry, in dancing and ritual. Mind, in a word is creative in itself. It creates an imagined order, which may correspond more or less, or not at all, to external reality (Ibid: 272).

To separate mind from the world is to invite chaos. All of human knowledge – in the arts and in the sciences and in the non-arts and non-sciences, has been possible because of mind. We must say therefore that every civilization is the product of an inspiration associated with some normative order of the mind that takes the form of a religion, ideology etc. Such an order inspires men to strive for its realization in the world external to the mind. It inspires them to create a culture that represents it in the formalities governing social relations and in a variety of other forms- political, literary, artistic, etc. It is the mind that organizes experience and brings order amidst flux and chaos.

The human mind is as elastic as it is wonderful. It stretches out far and wide and when it does stretch out, it never returns to its original length. As Oliver Mendel Holmes succinctly puts it, man's mind stretched to a new idea never goes back to its original dimension. There lies its power of transcendence. Transcendence, as defined by Unah (2002: 83) is the voyage of the human mind into the region of *nothingness*. It is the exploration of the wilderness of thought by human reason. In this voyage of the mind, in this exploration of thought, there is always a movement from hither to thither, a movement

from here to there. For Chiedozie Okoro (*Ibid*: 218), transcendence or beyondness means the native ability for creativity, invention and discovery latent in man. It is this power or capacity that makes us metaphysical entities that are endowed with the skills for meaning-making, an act by which we proceed to development. This power of transcendence in man is the brain behind man's transiting from the *now* to the *not now*, from *what is* to *what is not* and *what would be*. This is possible because the mind is active and has *principles* under which it works (Unah, 1997: 35). Everything that comes into the mind is transformed and organized by the mind itself, which in this way transmutes fragmentary and chaotic sensations into an intelligible design (Miller, 1947: 338). The mind can therefore be likened to a Librarian upon whose desk pours an avalanche of book materials of all sorts, and who, in receiving these books catalogues and shelves them according to a preconceived plan.

3.4 Metaphysics of Pure Reason

Metaphysics is one term in philosophy that has been greatly and erroneously misconceived and misrepresented. A mention of metaphysics sends 'cold' reaction on some people who associate it with the occult, the esoteric, and the mysterious. It must be admitted however, that the term metaphysics has a curious origin and an unusual history (Beck & Holmes, 1952: 269, Barry, 1980: 349). It arose with Aristotle, who wrote a series of essays on fundamental problems about the classifications or categories of *being*. He called his discussions '*First Philosophy*', because they were about the basics. Later philosophers noticed that these essays came after Aristotle's book on Physics and some other empirical disciplines. The disciplines outside physics came to be called in Greek *ta meta ta physika biblia*, that is, "the books that come after the physics". Andronicus of

Rhodes, who edited Aristotle's works in 170 BC is credited with this term (Omoregbe, 1994). Metaphysics has come to be associated with subjects that transcend physics, and erroneously labeled the supernatural, the occult, and the mysterious. In ordinary usage a theory or view is called 'metaphysics', if it seems complicated beyond comprehensibility (Popkin & Stroll, 1982: 91). That is however, naïve, pedestrian, and man-on-the-streets' understanding of metaphysics.

However, Metaphysics, for the philosopher as a professional thinker, is and remains the core branch of philosophy. How then can we understand the term metaphysics? Actually, metaphysics does not refer exclusively to a single field or discipline. It encompasses a number of problems whose implications are so broad that they affect just about every other field of philosophy. Specifically, metaphysics is an inquiry into the first principles of being, that is, the attempt to discover the most pervasive characteristics that underlie all our knowledge of and reasoning about existence. Metaphysics is also about subjects that are non-empirical and non-scientific (Barry, Ibid).

Metaphysics may be roughly described as a serious intellectual attempt to describe the general features of reality, to see them in their relation to our knowledge and experience of values, and to apply inquiry, which is usually directed to particular kinds of events and things, to the whole of everything (Beck & Holmes, Ibid. 270). Alfred North Whitehead succinctly defines metaphysics as "the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted" (Whitehead, 1929). It is for this we say that metaphysics is like a pivot around which revolves our comprehension of reality. It is like a hub of activity in the intellectual enterprise. That is why metaphysics remains central to philosophy and it is

philosophy's balancing scale. For Kant, metaphysics consists of what can be known *a priori*.

Now, when we talk of the metaphysics of pure reason, we mean the ground and the soil on which pure reason germinates and is nurtured. It is the foundation on which stands the human pure reason. Metaphysics of pure reason gives pure reason its contingent props even as it continues the supporting role. Metaphysics of pure reason generalizes human pure reason, even at the highest level of abstraction and at the same time makes it intelligible. Just as Kant founded his ethics and moral philosophy on a firm foundation called *metaphysic of morals*; he, at the same time founded the idea of pure reason on a metaphysic. As such the reality of human pure reason, pure intuition and pure imagination cannot be faulted even by the most consistent and thorough-going sceptic. In the Preamble to the Prolegomena, Kant had argued that the peculiarity of metaphysics is that its sources must never be taken from experience; its knowledge is purely *a priori* (Rebel, op cit. 13). That reason can accompany man in a journey into transcendence is a time-tested truth. It is from pure reason that pure conception of the understanding apply to objects of intuition in general. That is why Kant calls metaphysics the science of the first principles of human cognition (first *Critique*, loc cit. 246). This is the rational and philosophical justification of grounding ethics/morals on a metaphysic. It is also what makes the universalizability of morals intelligible and applaudable.

3.5 The Categories of Human Understanding

Kant enumerates the framework of cognition, understanding and judgment within and around which human cognition revolves. The categories are likened to a 'software', or 'programme' that human reason naturally has. They are the 'native' programme of the

human reason. It is the categories that guide and determine the operations of the various faculties of human reason; the faculties of pure reason, cognition, understanding, judgment, imagination, memory, etc. According to Kant, there is no other function or faculty existing in the understanding besides those enumerated in the table of categories.

Kant gave the following table:

1 Of Quantity	2 Of Quality
Unity	Reality
Plurality	Negation
Totality	Limitation
3 Of Relation	4 Of Modality
Of Inherence and Subsistence	Possibility – Impossibility
Of Causality and Dependence	Existence - Non existence
Of Community	Necessity - Contingence

Kant calls the table of categories “a catalogue of all the originally pure conceptions of the synthesis which the understanding contains *a priori*, and these conceptions alone entitle it to be called a pure understanding” (Ibid: 42). The pure conceptions of the understanding or categories apply to objects of intuition in general, through the understanding alone, whether the intuition be our own or some other, provided it can only be sensuous, but are, for this reason, mere forms of thought, by means of which alone no determined object is cognized. The categories apply to the manifold of intuition in general, prior to all sensuous intuition of objects. “Categories are conceptions which prescribe laws *a priori* to phenomena, consequently to nature as a complex of all phenomena” (Ibid: 57). Accordingly, Kant argues that “we cannot think any object except by means of the

categories; we cannot cognize any thought except by means of intuitions corresponding to these conceptions" (Ibid: 58).

If we look up once more on the table of categories, we notice that it contains four classes of conceptions of the understanding. The table can be divided into two classes: Nos. 1 & 2 can belong to one class and a look at them shows that their contents relate to objects of intuition – pure as well empirical. Kant says that this class can be entitled the *mathematical*. *The Mathematical* class categories have no correlates; these are only to be found in the second class, the *dynamical*. This difference must have a ground in the nature of the human understanding. A further look at the table shows that the number of categories in each class is always the same, namely, three. And as Kant explains, the third category in each triad always arises from the combination of the second with the first. Thus, *totality* is nothing else but *plurality* contemplated as *unity*; *limitation* is merely *reality* conjoined with *negation*, *community* is the *causality* of a substance; reciprocally determining, and determined by other substances; and finally, *necessity* is nothing but *existence*, which is given through the *possibility* itself, (Ibid: 43). The conjunction of the first and second, in order to produce the third conception, requires a particular function of the understanding, which is by no means identical with those which are exercised in the first and second. The human reason has a structure primitive and native to it. And it is only within this structure and framework that it operates. So, human understanding both pure and empirical must be made intelligible with this given structure – the categories of human understanding.

3.6 Human Imagination and Intuition

The discourse on the power of the mind and the human reason to grasp knowledge *a priori* and within the principles already existing in man can be further discussed under intuition and imagination. Intuition, according to Gonsalves (op cit. 114) is a Latin word meaning *insight*, a looking in, and therefore a very appropriate word for the direct activity of the intellect in grasping self-evident truths. Intuition can be pure as well as empirical, just like imagination can also be pure as well as empirical depending on the operation of the faculty of cognition and the objects of sensation that accompany it.

Kant has expressed the indispensable role of intuition in knowledge acquisition:

In whatever mode, or by whatever means, our knowledge may relate to objects, it is at least quite clear that the only manner in which it immediately relates to them is by means of an intuition; to this as the indispensable groundwork, all thought points. But an intuition can take place only in so far as the object is given to us (first *Critique*, op cit. 23).

Through the exercise of sensibility, the mind is affected with objects. That sort of intuition which relates to an object by means of sensation is called *empirical intuition*.

What then constitutes pure intuition? Kant says:

I call all representations *pure*, in the transcendental meaning of the word, wherein nothing is met with that which belongs to sensation. And accordingly we find existing in the mind *a priori*, the pure form of sensuous intuitions in general, in which all the manifold content of the phenomenal world is arranged and viewed under certain relations. This pure form of sensibility I shall call *pure intuition* (*Ibid*).

The mind has the power of receiving representations – receptivity for impression; it also has the power of cognizing by means of these representations – spontaneity in the production of conceptions. It is this second operation that is aided by the faculty of

intuition. Intuition and conceptions constitute the elements of all our knowledge, so that neither conceptions without intuition in some way corresponding to them, nor intuition without conceptions, can afford us cognition. Intuition is empirical, when sensation (which presupposes the actual presence of the object) is contained in them; and pure, when no sensation is mixed with the representation.

Intuition is a purely human activity. Kant argues that: “our nature is so constituted that intuition with us never can be other than sensuous, that is, it contains only the mode in which we are affected by objects. On the other hand, the faculty of thinking the objects of sensuous intuition is the understanding” (*Ibid*: 34). It happens then that without the sensuous faculty no object would be given to us, and without the understanding no object would be thought. Hence Kant argues that thoughts without content (if this can be possible) are void; intuitions without conceptions (if it can also ever be possible) are blind. It is from the united operation of both can knowledge arise.

We now turn our attention to the faculty of imagination. Imagination is the faculty of representing an object even without its presence in intuition. The exercise of imagination causes images, whether real or not, to be formed. We can say therefore that the faculty of imagination and the faculty of intuition interface (*Unah*, 1997: 51). Unah stresses that imagination is the mediating factor between phenomena as encountered by pure intuition and phenomena as processed by thought in relation to time. Imagination is an operation of the understanding to objects of possible intuition, and at the same time the basis for the exercise of the other functions of that faculty. The ‘objects’ of imaginations – the images – may not exist after all. Where the object of imagination does not exist, we talk of pure

imagination. That is to say the images stem from the *a priori* content of the mind. Kant calls it *productive* imagination. However, imagination becomes *reproductive* and *empirical*, as well, when it stems from empirical laws, that is, those of association. That is why imagination is said to be malleable. I can mentally “dismantle” an image and reconstruct it in a new way which may exist in my mind only. In imagination, the subject may intervene, changing the spatial and temporal distribution of the images, or inverting the order of succession of events. In the act of imagination, the spatiality and temporality of the image is more undetermined than in sensation.

Imagination enhances our power of finite transcendence. Through imagination we can order and reorder experience thereby better our world. According to Louis Halle, “the lives we know directly, as experience of the here – and – now, represent chaos in the absence of a context. So our imagination bodies forth the form of things unknown out of a need to resolve the chaos, to discover order” (Halle, 1977: 265). Imagination exercises its freedom even as it engages in shaping, comparing, differentiating and synthesizing images whether perceived, or not perceived. The faculty of imagination is rightly called the *formative* faculty or power. This *schema* of the conception of the understanding with its attendant procedure called *schematism* is the props of human imagination. As Kant expresses the marvellous ways in which this *formative* faculty operates: “this schematism of our understanding in regard to phenomena and their mere form, is an art, hidden in the depths of the human soul, whose true modes of action we shall only with difficulty discover and unveil” (first *Critique*, op cit. 62). It happens therefore, that to the *Homo sapiens*, imagination has at last gone off the edge of the knowable world into what lies beyond.

3.7 Kant's Pure Reason: Resolution of Ethical and Epistemological Impasse

In Kant's study of science, for instance, he did arrive at certain absolute principles, although he strictly limited the application of these to observed facts; but he finds no corresponding set of moral axioms. He therefore came to the conclusion that there exists no moral science after all. This seems to be the most revolutionary conclusion, because everyone, (before Kant) except Hume and his utilitarian followers, had believed in absolute moral principles. Kant finds no *a priori* and synthetic moral truths that correspond to those of mathematics in science. “Because he had established all scientific knowledge upon this basis of *a priori* and synthetic principles, he is compelled to deny the possibility of every sort of moral science, especially an empirical moral science such as the utilitarians pursued” (Miller, 1947: 349).

Now, if there is neither a rational science establishing absolute moral principles, nor empirical science deriving moral knowledge from experience, what then is moral insight? Does that not leave moral judgment arbitrary and irrational? Kant replies that moral judgment, on the contrary, is the only judgment that can be called absolute and wholly rational. Moral judgment, Kant argues, penetrates through the curtain of phenomena which veils us from reality-in-itself, and really grips, in full and naked immediacy, its noumenal object in reality (first *Critique*, loc cit. 349). Kant is recognizing here that although we may fail to describe ultimate being in conceptual formulae, we are ourselves real and ultimate in our movement and conduct. Correct moral judgment is therefore right conduct, intelligent practice, etc. An act is right, Kant believes, if it is motivated wholly by good will; and in our conscience, we have awareness of motives. Kant argues that there is an individual's moral insight which is never duplicated. This the individual

carries in his conscience and when conscience is activated, it comes to know the difference, for example, between honesty and dishonesty, kindness or cruelty, etc.

Yet this uncompromising moral individualism does not issue in moral isolationism; and it consequently generates certain universal principles. The individual is the seat of moral judgment and of moral or immoral choice. The individual is also in possession of ultimate and inalienable value; and this fact imposes upon each individual certain principles of conduct. We should act, Kant concludes, in such a way that we might wish our act to be a law henceforth for all mankind.

Another point we must stress about Kant and the epistemology of morals is that he maintained that true knowledge cannot transcend or go beyond experience. Still, for the sake of religion and morality, we need such concepts as God, soul, freedom and immortality. To satisfy these demands of human nature, Kant wrote a second *Critique*, the *Critique of Practical Reason* in which he acknowledged the necessity and validity of these values. Kant's conclusion is that universal moral laws do exist, but that they are to be found within the structure of the human mind. Just as $7 + 5$ is always 12, it is *a priori* knowledge, yet applies to the real world – there are, Kant holds, “moral rules of thought” which are *a priori* and therefore universal (Christian, 1981: 327). This also accounts for the reason why Kant after taking us through the *Categorical Imperative*, concludes his discussion on morality by assuming for the justification of morality the postulate of freedom – a postulate however, which affords us no knowledge of such an idea (Cahn, 1985).

Kant is now set to address the source of moral knowledge in order to accommodate both the empiricist school of thought as well as the rationalist school of thought. Kant would argue that the moral knowledge of mankind is better founded on pure reason and for that reason its native grounding would be on a metaphysic. Kant would argue also that an empirical grounding of morals would make morals open to abuses. But when the metaphysical grounding has been successfully achieved, then the empirical application would also be achieved.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF KANT'S

ETHICS

4.1 Introduction

Kant is not the originator of ethics nor is he the first moral philosopher. Before Kant there had existed moral philosophers who also defended their preferred moral principles. We start with the ancient Greek philosophers including Socrates who is arguably adjudged the first moral thinker and continued by Plato and Aristotle. In this chapter we examine some moral philosophies that were already prominent in Kant's time against which he reacted. We also examine Kant's presentation of the universalizability criterion which he takes to be overriding in man's moral quest. Kant's moral philosophy differed from those before mainly because of the emphasis he placed on the universalizable principle.

4.2 Ethics before Kant (Classical Moral Outlook)

There are ethical and /or moral orientations before Kant. Philosophers before Kant had pontificated about the nature of morality and the result was their position which they made known, most of them in a no-holds-barred manner.

4.2.1 Socrates/Plato: Virtue

The first moral principle we will consider is what we will call **Platonism**. It is on record that Plato did not put forth philosophical views under his own name, since his writings appear in 'Dialogues', that is, conversations. These Dialogues are conservations between his mentor Socrates and other Greek philosophers of the 5th century B.C., some of whom appeared as interlocutors. That is why there is always some controversy about whether it

is Plato or Socrates who actually held the positions in the Dialogues. This is even so when Socrates has been adjudged the greatest and the foremost moral philosopher who ever lived. However, he never left any work in print to the best of our knowledge. Most of what we know about him is from the writings of his admirer, Plato.

Nevertheless, certain views are often attributed to Plato as his own. However, it remains controversial as to whose position is that ‘if a man knows what the good life is he will not act immorally’ (Popkin & Stroll, loc cit. 2). We can therefore merge the moral views of Socrates and Plato since there is always agreement of the duo on morality. In what follows, we will present the Socrates-Plato moral position under the name Platonism. The major thesis of Platonism is that if we know what good life is we will naturally act in such a way to try to achieve it. This position presents evil as resulting due to lack of knowledge or ignorance. If a man can discover what is right or ‘the good’, he will never act otherwise. This leaves us with the task of finding the nature of the good life. To do this requires an intellectual task very similar to the discovery of mathematical truths. This requires rigorous training in such disciplines like mathematics and philosophy. The implication of this position is that untrained people or those who do not possess the capacity for intellectual development cannot attain the ‘good life’. Even when the untrained mind tries to do good, he does it mechanically and haphazardly. What intellectual development and training does is that it helps in the appreciation of moral virtues. According to Platonism the one who is so developed will in turn posses the capacity to also **develop** virtuous habits of behaviour and mental powers. But although those who lack intellectual capacity may not be capable of attaining good life on their own, they can still attain it when they emulate and are guided by those people who have

knowledge of the good and who act virtuously. They, too, will act virtuously even though they do not understand the essential nature of the good life (*Plato* op cit. 3). This is the reason behind the argument for the leadership of society by the *Guardian* class – the specially gifted people – whose mental powers must be further developed and who in addition must undergo rigorous intellectual, physical and moral training which will, not only enable them develop virtuous habits but will also serve as moral guides of the people. This is so because these exceptional people must finally be the rulers of the ideal society. In such a society, the rulers, having developed their intellectual capacities, would also have acquired knowledge, and having acquired knowledge, they would understand the nature of the good life. This would guarantee their acting rightly and morally, hence would ensure them as good rulers (*Ibid*: 77).

A second feature of Platonism is **absolutism**. According to Plato there is one and only one good life for all men to lead. This is so for the simple reason that goodness is something which is not dependent upon men's inclinations, desires, wishes, or upon their opinions. Goodness in this respect resembles the mathematical truth, for example, that four plus four equals eight. This truth is self-evident and absolute. Its truth is absolute and also universal whether men like it or not. It is so even if we are ignorant of mathematics.

Here morality is objective. It cannot depend on the preference or opinion of people. Certain course of action is right or wrong, good or bad, absolutely and independently of anyone's opinion. Moral standards, for Plato, were superior even to God; it is anterior to God, and God is good if and only if he acts in accordance with such a standard.

What then constitutes good life? The answer is *arête* or *virtue*. Socrates-Plato's moral philosophy represents aretaic or virtue ethics which was the dominant spirit of their time.

To be good is the same as being virtuous. A virtuous person is a morally good person, and virtues are the good traits. The opposite of virtue is vice. Loyalty is a virtue, and so is honesty, hard work, respect for authority, patriotism, etc. Stinginess is a vice, and so is laziness, lying, etc. Virtue ethics is all about developing good character in the individual. ‘What should I be?’ is the central question of virtue ethics and not “what should I do?” It is taken for granted that a good person, out of the abundance of his heart always will do good deeds. The good life is the moral life which duty is about determining what are the ideals of human life and try to embody these ideals in one’s life. The virtues are then ways in which we embody these ideals.

For Socrates-Plato the good life will mean knowing and complying with the virtues, that is, acting right always. That is why Socrates held that ‘virtue is knowledge’, ‘No one does wrong willingly’. A man who exercises the power of insight can know the good from evil and infallibly choose the good (Conford, 1966: 51). He who chooses the good and shuns the evil will be happy. The good life will therefore culminate in a life of happiness from good deeds and the knowledge of the good such that a virtuous man fits into his society perfectly and never falls for or partakes in evil.

4.2.2 Aristotle: Happiness (The Doctrine of the Mean)

Aristotle shows that we have reason to be moral. One task of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is to support Plato’s claim in the *Republic* that we are better off being just and concerned with the interests of others, than being unjust (Irwin, “*Introduction*” to *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1985: XX). Aristotle is more concerned with identifying the right states of character than with specifying the range of actions associated with them. He thinks

detailed ethical instructions require reference to social and political conditions; and these are discussed in the *Politics*. Aristotle's scientific and empirical approach to ethical problems tallies with the ordinary man's way of looking at moral life.

Instead of trying to discover the nature of the good life for all men by reflection alone, like Socrates and Plato before him did, he examined the behaviours and talks of various people in everyday life. He noticed that plain men regard some people as leading what they call 'good lives' and others as leading what they call 'bad lives'. That is to say people, irrespective of their class and calling, they being human beings, already know what is 'good life' and 'bad life'. That is, they can differentiate virtue from vice and judge which is better. Further, Aristotle noticed that the various lives which men of common sense consider to be 'good' in its entirety contain one common characteristic, namely, **happiness**. On the contrary, the lives which the ordinary people also consider to be bad lives have **unhappiness** as their *end*. In answer to the moral question: 'What is the good life for man?' Aristotle says 'it is a life of happiness'. Every craft and every investigation, says Aristotle, and likewise every action and decision, seems to aim at some good; hence the good has been well described as that at which everything aims (Aristotle, 1985: 1). This *Good* which is the *end* is happiness and this happiness expresses Perfect Virtue. Aristotle then defines happiness as an activity of the soul expressing complete virtue (*Ibid.* 89). This means that even happiness for him is not 'static' since it is an *activity*. But happiness remains the final tape to be embraced and it is that *end* of all *ends*. Happiness meets the criteria for completeness, but other goods do not:

Now happiness more than anything else seems unconditionally complete, since we always (choose it, and also) choose it because of itself, never because of something else. honour, pleasure,

understanding and every virtue we certainly choose because of themselves, since we would choose each of them even if it had no further result, but we also choose them for the sake of happiness, supposing that through them we shall be happy. Happiness by contrast, no one ever chooses for the sake or for the sake of anything else at all (Ibid: 14).

The purpose of the good life for man is to attain the life of happiness and to remain happy always. Therefore, ‘the good life for man is a life of happiness’. Happiness is complete, it is self-sufficient, and it is most choice-worthy. “Happiness, then, is apparently something complete and self-sufficient, since it is the end of the things pursued in action” (Ibid: 15).

However, it will be mistaken to think that happiness is something we arrive at – a certain fixed goal which awaits us if we behave in certain ways. Happiness is not an object of some sort. Happiness is an *activity* – it is something which accompanies certain activities (Popkin & Stroll, op cit: 8). It is a characteristic inherent in men’s lives.

If happiness is the *end* of the good life for men, then how ought men to behave so as to achieve happiness? To answer this question Aristotle introduces his readers to the *Doctrine of the Mean* or what has also been referred to as the ‘Golden Mean’. He writes:

In anything continuous and divisible it is possible to take a part which is greater or less than, or equal to, the remainder; and that in relation either to the thing divided or to us. The equal part is a sort of mean between excess and deficiency; and I call mean in relation to the *thing* whatever is equidistant from the extremes, which is one and the same for everybody; but I call mean in relation to *us* that which is neither excessive nor deficient, and this is *not* one and the same for all (Ibid: 100).

Being happy is taking the pathway of moderation, or of the middle course, that is, the mean. For instance, being well fed requires *enough quantity* of food. However, what is enough is determined by the individual capacity which is further determined by the state

of health. This can be rationally determined. "... every knowledgeable person avoids excess and deficiency, but looks for the mean and chooses it – not the mean of the thing, but the mean relative to us" (Ibid: 100). So, virtue is a purposive disposition, lying in a mean that is relative to us and determined by a rational principle, and by that which a prudent man would use to determine it. It is a mean between two kinds of vices, one of excess and the other of deficiency. Aristotle observes that to be happy we must be courageous, liberal, proud, witty, modest, etc. But all these virtues are virtues of moderation: courage is the mean between cowardice and rashness, liberality between prodigality and frugality, pride between vanity and humility, etc. So, happiness is attainable through the exercise of the mean through life of moderation and a striving after the mean, between two extremes.

Unlike Plato whose moral philosophy ended in absolutism, Aristotle's is both relativistic and empiricist. Aristotle's golden mean, at first glance appears plausible. This is because it is natural for people to reasonably follow the middle course between certain kinds of activities. However, there seem to be situations where middle course will not be plausible or even possible if we are to pursue virtuous cause. For example, there is no middle course between keeping a promise and not keeping one, telling the truth and not telling the truth. And so, not every action or every emotion that admits of a mean state. There are some actions and some emotions whose very name implies wickedness. For instance, we may not determine the mean state of malice, shamelessness, and envy, among emotions; or theft, murder, adultery, among actions. These are intrinsically censured as being wicked, not merely the excesses or deficiencies inherent in them. It does not mean

whether we commit them at the right time, right place, right quantity, right manner, and with the right person, as the case may be.

4.2.3 Epicurus Hedonism

Epicurus, (341-270) like Aristotle, identified morality with the ordinary practical affairs of men. He was a practical philosopher. He held that ideas should have as much effect upon the control of life as medicine has upon the health of the body. For this reason he considered “philosophy as the medicine of the soul” (Stumpf, 1977: 117)

For Epicurus, the chief aim of human life is pleasure. This view has been called **Hedonism**; the doctrine that pleasure is the sole good. For Epicurus, it is in the nature of man to seek pleasure. Pleasure is the standard of *goodness* and all men have an immediate feeling of the difference between pleasure and pain and of the desirability of pleasure. “For we recognize pleasure as the first good innate in us, and from pleasure we begin every act of choice and avoidance, and to pleasure we return again” (Ibid: 119). The immediate test of pleasure is feeling. It is feeling that tells us of the goodness or badness of pleasure, suggesting that not all pleasure can be good. However, bad pleasure results from the means for securing it. “No pleasure is a bad thing in itself: but the means which produce some pleasure bring with them disturbances many times greater than the pleasure” (Jones, *et al* 1977: 81). Epicurus bifurcates pleasure into *dynamic* and *passive*. Pleasure is dynamic when it is accompanied by pain. Such pleasures include sexual love, gluttony, fame and wealth. On the other hand pleasures are passive if not accompanied with pain, such as friendship and love of neighbour. Epicurus advocated and indeed also led austere and ascetic life-style. This is in keeping with the advice to always avoid pain

and its agents and to keep a date with pleasure always. He was said to have lived frugally, allegedly drank only water, and, in general, lived a highly abstemious fashion.

It is ironic however, that the name of Epicurus has been associated with indulgence. Of him many have painted a picture of a gourmand or a voluptuary, as if he advocated the pleasure of eat, drink and be merry. Epicurus is far from the modern sense of an ‘epicure.’ He could never have been a gourmet, having delight in the enjoyment of exotic foods and wines. For Epicurus, what is intrinsically valuable is pleasure – a life of tranquility devoid of pain and disturbances of life. All of human activities must quest for this. In his *Letter to Menoeccus* Epicurus made this point clear: “The pleasant life is not the product of one drinking party after another or of sexual intercourse with women and boys or of the seafood and other delicacies afforded by a luxurious table. On the contrary, it is the result of sober thinking” (Solomon, 2002: 261). If pleasure is the *sole good*, as Epicurus wants us belief, at what cost then do we achieve or attain it? Definitely it is through pain. Austere life, that is, the life of denial and of lack – is itself a life of pain. Even to keep friends, fend for them and care for them, at times brings pain. So, Epicurus himself was exposed to pain as he tried to achieve the sole good. Besides, there are many activities that although painful, bring pleasure later. For instance, sexual intercourse at times results in child bearing which is joyous. Reading, work, philosophical thinking, are initially painful but the end result is pleasure. In fact, if one advocates for pleasure, especially initially, that individual will be greeted with perpetual pain. So, pleasure must result from pain in order for it to be sustainable.

4.2.4 The Stoics: Morality as Consolation

Stoicism is qualified to be described as the most influential ethical doctrine of the ancient Western world before Christianity. It spread across Greece after the fall of Alexander the Great, and dominated Roman thought until it was superseded by Christianity. The founder of Stoicism was Zeno (not Zeno of Elea, famous for logical paradoxes) who assembled his school on the Stoa (Greek for *Porch*, hence the term *Stoic*). His school attracted many prominent men of his time. He was an admirer of Socrates who had faced death with serenity and courage. Stoic moral philosophy is a practical advice on how to cope with the world – to control that which lay within our power and to accept with dignified resignation what had to be. The death of Socrates adds vim and vigour to all stoics. Socrates could not but accept the cup of hemlock when it could not pass by him.

In their moral philosophy, the stoic aimed at happiness. This happiness is however, sought through wisdom. Wisdom is said to be the best ‘instrument’ with which to confront the brute existence of life. Armed with wisdom, one can ably deal with the vagaries of human existence. Although a man may not order events, but he can be in control of his emotions and his attitudes can aid him defeat the world. According to one of the popular Stoics, Epictetus, “demand not that events should happen as you wish; but wish them to happen as they do happen and you will go on well” (Stumpf, loc cit. 122). This advice is aimed at making men have the ‘right’ kind of attitude about life – fortitude, bravery, courage.

With the right attitude, a man achieves ‘freedom’ as he already has become wise. Freedom is only accessible to a sage, a virtuous man, and all the others are slaves as they

are deprived of the possibility of acting independently (Nersesyants, 1979: 185). However, the wise develops “apathy”, that is, positive and rational indifference. But this cannot be seen as *Lack of Will*, but indifference to things which, however, may be valued in life, are amply and trifling in terms of universal reason (Ibid. 185). It is the belief of the Stoics that good or evil depends on oneself. Man must therefore ‘know himself’. He must know that he can alter state of affairs, if possible, or leave it in the hands of the divine if it is beyond the mortal man. A man must, when things are beyond him, act like a little dog tied to a moving chariot; of necessity he must follow because resisting will be disastrous. But the power to do good or bad, right or wrong, depends on man who is also a member of society.

4.2.5 Christian Ethics: The Divine Will

Christian ethics or moral philosophy has had tremendous influence on people for many years. Although there are many Christian sects and denominations, each having its set of codes, creeds, doctrines, and moral outlook. Christian ethics remains that which has held Christendom together just like the body of Christ Jesus. It is also the moral code that have distinguished Christianity from other religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and even Judaism from where it took its existence.

First, Christian ethical views assume the existence of a Divine Being, God. Jesus, the Christ is the Son of God. God made Himself and His Will known through or by means of Christ. For that reason, Jesus’ teaching about the good life for all men and how men ought to live their life are expressions of the **Divine Will**. As such, it is held that Christian moral code is given by God through Jesus the Christ. Any behaviour is right, that which is

in accordance with the code; and wrong insofar as it violates the code. Disobedience to the code is disobedience to God and it is immorality. This moral code is the Bible – the Christian scriptures, both the Old and the New Testaments. Anybody who violates any of its provisions such as ‘you shall not steal’; ‘you shall not kill’, etc (Lev. 20:13-15) is acting immorally. These moral codes are absolute even as they are given by God, the Divine Personality. The view that there is a Being who has laid down certain rules for moral behaviour is quite Christian. The right conduct therefore is that which is in keeping with the Divine Command, otherwise it is bad or wrong. The good life for men is the life of obedience to the Divine Will. The Divine Will is absolute. It is also infallible. It is objective since it is for the good of mankind. The code is not subject to change since God the giver does not change. He is for eternity. Christians are agreed that the written words in their holy scripture, the Bible, are the guide towards the attainment of Good life – the life lived in accordance with the directives of God, the Divine.

There is no doubting the fact that Christian ethics is commanded ethics, (religious ethics). The *voice* is said to be that of God, the Supreme Deity, believed to exist. However, the problem with the Divine Command moral theory is that whatever is claimed to be of the Divine is absolute and therefore taken to be good even when the contrary may be the better option. Besides, unscrupulous people may take advantage and introduce immorality and claim that such is the voice of God. Experience has shown this to be true. For that reason, the Divine Personality must be a subject of morals so that when God commands, the command must be obeyed not because it is Divine Command, but because it is morally acceptable. The divine personality must also be a moral personality if not the supposedly Divine Command may be used to perpetrate immoral acts.

4.2.6 Moral sense Theory

The view that the perception of moral good and evil is the work of some faculty distinct from the intellect or reason was held by a group of British moralists. This moral sense position dominated moral philosophy in the late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century. This special faculty they called *moral instinct*, *moral intuition* or *moral sense* (Gonsalves, op cit. 112).

The moral sense is conceived in analogy with our sense of beauty in the writings of Shaftesbury (1671 – 1713) and Hutcheson (1694-1746). In the same way that the sense of beauty enables us to discern beauty in an object and produces a special kind of pleasure at the sight of a beautiful object, so the moral sense enables us to discern virtue at the sight or thought of an action or character and produces a special kind of pleasure at the sight or thought of a virtuous action or character (Mautner, op cit. 368).

The moral sense theory came as a reaction against Hobbes's interpretation of man as essentially egoistic and with all authoritarian conceptions of the moral law and of moral obligation. But against Hobbes's idea of man as purely egoistic, the moral sense philosophers insisted on man's social nature; and as against ethical authoritarianism especially as propagated by Locke, they insisted on man's possession of a moral sense by which he discerns moral values and moral distinction independently of the expressed will of God, and still more of the law of the state (Copleston, loc cit. 171 & 172).

The major thrust of the moral sense thinkers is to set ethics on its own feet. It is for this reason they merit our consideration in moral philosophy. The moral sense argument gave a social interpretation of morality, in terms of a social rather than of a private end. And in

the eighteenth century moral philosophy we can see the beginning of utilitarianism which is associated above all with the name of J.S Mill in the nineteenth century.

Anthony Ashley, the third Earl of Shaftesbury is the leading philosopher of the moral sense moralists or school. Shaftesbury was influenced by Aristotle and not by Locke his tutor. In agreement with Aristotle, Shaftesbury argues that the human *end*, which sets a standard for the distinctions between good and evil, right and wrong, is a social end, and in virtue of his nature man has a natural feeling for these distinctions. This is not to suggest that morality is innate to man. Rather, it is that man's nature is such that in due course moral ideas of moral values inevitably arise in him. The ideas of morals arise in man because man is what he is: a social being with a moral end which is social in character. Moral ideas are 'connatural' rather than innate. Connatural knowledge is knowledge of nature to man. According to Gonsalves, connatural knowledge is knowledge through a primitive way of knowing. It is *knowledge through connaturality, through union, through inclination or through congeniality* (Gonsalves, loc. cit 115). This knowledge is a self-awareness that reveals our own nature to ourselves; it is a direct and immediate perception of the powers we possess, of their clamour for exercise and of the appropriate objects on which they are to be exercised.

Shaftesbury premised his moral sense theory on his speculations on the beautiful. He argued that besides other forms of beauty there is also moral beauty; that moral life is really a beautiful life. The sense of beauty he considered a special faculty of the mind, and when applied to the moral beauty it becomes the moral sense. Moral beauty consists

of a proper balancing of public and private affections, of selfish and social impulses, resulting in a well – rounded and harmonious life (Ibid: 112).

Every man, Shaftesbury considered, is capable, to some degree, at least, of perceiving moral values, of discriminating between virtue and vice. This is because all men possess conscience or the moral sense, a faculty which is analogous to that whereby men perceive differences between harmonies and discords, proportion and lack of proportion, etc. For Shaftesbury the sense of beauty is natural to man, though custom and education may lead people to have false ideas of what is right and what is wrong. In other words, there is in all men a fundamental moral sense or conscience.

The ideas of Shaftesbury were later to be systematized and developed by Francis Hutcheson who bore a strong influence of the latter and a genuine support of the idea of moral science' (Scruton, 1995: 109). Hutcheson, despite his empiricist bias and the consequent emphasis on the question 'how do I know?' shared with other eighteenth-century naturalists the view that there is a common body of moral knowledge and that it is available to everyone whatever the state of their education. It is part of human nature to acquire and exercise this body of knowledge. According to Hutcheson, each of us possesses a moral sense, which compellingly delivers to us through experience, the moral ideas that prompt our actions. Hence these ideas are intelligible in the manner of all ideas – by virtue of an intrinsic connection with the experience from which they derive (Ibid).

Hutcheson the empiricist was aware that the word 'sense' is ordinarily used with reference to vision, touch and so on. But in his opinion the *extended* use of the word is justified. This is because the mind can be passively affected not only by objects of sense in the

ordinary meaning of the term but also by objects. He makes a distinction, then, between the *external* and *internal* senses in the aesthetic and moral orders. By external sense the mind receives simple ideas of single qualities of objects. By internal sense we perceive relations, which give rise to a feeling or feelings which are different from the seeing or hearing or touching of separate related objects. And internal sense in general is divided into the sense of beauty and the moral sense. By the moral sense we perceive pleasure in the contemplation of such (good) actions in others, and are determined to love the agent (and much more do we perceive pleasure in being conscious of having done such actions ourselves) without any view of natural advantage from them (Copleston, loc cit. 179). For Hutcherson, we do not contemplate innate ideas in the exercise of moral sense, nor do we draw ideas out of ourselves. The sense itself is natural and inborn; but by it we perceive moral qualities as by the external sense we perceive sensible qualities. In his *System Of Moral Philosophy* Hutcheson describes the moral sense as the faculty of perceiving moral excellence and its supreme objects; and the primary objects of the moral sense are the affections of the will. He insists that the object of moral sense is not any external motion or action, but the inward affections and dispositions which by reasoning we infer from the actions observed (Ibid: 180).

The views and stand of Joseph Butler (1692-1752) the immediate contemporary of Hutcheson and a closer ally of Shaftesbury will also merit our mention here. Butler's ethical ideas are conveyed with great clarity and economy of exposition in his *Fifteen Sermons* (1726). Indeed, he specifically advocated directness and simplicity in ethical reasoning, claiming that morality must appeal to what we call plain common sense. For Butler human nature is adapted to virtue in the way in which the nature of the watch is

adapted to measure time. However, man's virtuous nature is founded on the principle of conscience without which morality would not be possible or taken seriously. For any rational agency to be intelligible, the principle of conscience must be an active principle, raised to the level of a faculty:

The very constitution of our nature requires that we bring the whole conduct before this superior faculty; want its determination; enforce upon ourselves its authority, and make it the business of our lives, as it is absolutely the whole business of a moral agent, to conform ourselves to it (Scruton, op cit.112).

Butler's description of conscience is extremely interesting, partly because it foreshadows, and to some extent, gives content to Kant's later reflections on the nature of practical reason. Butler says that the object of the faculty of conscience is "actions comprehending under that name active or practical principles; those principles from which men would act, its occasions and circumstances gave them power; and which, when fixed and habitual in any person, we call his character" (Copleston, loc cit. 188). Conscience does not only offer itself to show us the way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own authority with it. Conscience is steady, immovable, and makes itself felt even in the act of disobedience. It is therefore both the maker of law and the motive to obedience; it has both power and authority, telling us what is good while at the same time motivating us towards the good.

Moral sense theory has persisted till date under the guise of ethical 'intuitionism'. However, the naturalist's investigation of the moral life (that is, what moral sense advocates share in common) did lead eventually to utilitarianism. However, moral sense only reminds us that man is a moral agent who cannot by his very nature escape from the burden of morality; and not that there is a special faculty of *sense* possessed or possessable

by everyone on which morality can be aided. If men were to possess moral sense faculty, then everybody would have been morally upright. But unfortunately that is not the case.

4.3 Kant's Criticism of Earlier Moral Philosophies

Kant was aware of the many systems of morality before and during his time (the major ones have been discussed above) all of which he found somewhat wanting. In a no-holds-barred manner Kant admitted their existence and their deficiencies. In his *Metaphysic of Morals* Kant observed:

We need only look at the attempts of moralists in that favourite fashion, and we shall find at one time the special constitution of human nature (including, however, the idea of a rational nature generally), at one time perfection, at another happiness, here moral sense, there fear of God, a little of this, and a little of that, in marvellous mixture, without occurring to them to ask whether the principles of morality are to be sought in the knowledge of human nature at all (which we can have only from experience); or, if this is not so, if these principles are to be found altogether *a priori*, free from everything empirical, in pure rational concepts only and nowhere else, not even in the smallest degree; then rather to adopt the method of making this a separate inquiry, as pure practical philosophy, or (if one may use a name so decided as *Metaphysic of Morals* (*Metaphysic*, loc cit. 263)

The first of these moral principles tackled by Kant is that of happiness also known as eudaemonism. Ought happiness to be the prop of human moral action? In Kant's first *critique*, he quite agreed that people act in order to be happy at the end. Happiness is therefore crucial to man since it may as well be the end of man's practical acts, and since his welfare and well-being produce happiness. Kant argued that the whole interest of reason, speculative as well as practical, is centred on the three following questions:

1. What can I know? (what are the things that I can know as a human being?)
2. What ought I to do? (what is it that is demanded of me as a rational being?)

3. What may I hope? (and when I shall have performed my duty what will be my reward?)

The third question, Kant, answered in one word *happiness*. Yes, if I have acquired knowledge, practical and speculative, and have done that which I ought to do, then I am worthy of happiness, in short, I should be happy. “For all *hoping* has happiness for its object and stands in precisely the same relation to the practical and the law of morality as *knowing is* to the theoretical cognition of things and the law of nature (Ibid: 236).

Happiness is the satisfaction of all our desires: *extensive* in regard to their multiplicity; *intensive*, in regard to their degree, and *potensive*, in regard to their duration. Happiness, according to Kant, must then be earned in a worthy manner. Our acts must be such that they desire happiness. It is not merely exercising our volition or inclination or desire in order to be happy. For instance, Kant poses this question to buttress the relation of act and happiness: If I conduct myself so as not to be unworthy of happiness, may I hope thereby to obtain happiness? (Ibid: 237). The answer lies in the relation of an act and happiness, because happiness stands in strict relation to morality (as the worthiness of being happy). Although morality per se constitutes a system, it will however, be difficult to form a system of happiness, except in so far as it is dispensed in strict proportion to morality. To be in complete happiness, the act must be a moral act. In the first *Critique* Kant wrote:

Happiness alone is, in the view of reason, far from being the complete good. Reason does not approve of it (however much inclination may desire it), except as united with desert. On the other hand, morality alone, and with it mere *desert* is likewise far from being the complete good. To make it complete; he who conducts himself in a manner not unworthy of happiness must be able to hope for the possession of happiness (Ibid: 238).

To be happy is to be moral in action and in deed. Happiness must be in exact proportion with the morality of rational beings for it to constitute the supreme good. “For a disposition which should require the prospect of happiness as its necessary condition would not be moral and hence also would not be worthy of complete happiness – a happiness which, in view of reason, recognizes no limitation but such as arises from our own immoral conduct” (*Ibid*). In his *Metaphysical Elements of Ethics* (1996: 366), Kant disagreed that happiness ought to be the motive for acting virtuously. For him, when the thinking man has conquered the temptations to vice, and is conscious of having done his (often hard) duty, he finds himself in a state of peace and satisfaction which may well be called *happiness*, in which virtue is its own reward. Kant then warned that if *eudaemonism* (the principle of happiness) is adopted as the principle instead of *eleutheronomy* (the principle of the freedom of inner legislation), the consequence is the *euthanasia* (quiet death) of all morality.

On the doctrine of the mean on which famous Aristotle advocated moderation, Kant noted some shortcomings too. For instance, Kant reasoned that moderation which is not founded on goodwill cannot pass the test of morality:

Moderation in the affections and passions, self-control, and calm deliberation are not only good in many respects, but even seem to constitute part of the intrinsic worth of the person, but they are far from deserving to be called good without qualification, although they have been unconditionally praised by the ancients. For without the principles of a goodwill, they may become extremely bad, and the coolness of a villain not only makes him far more dangerous, but also directly makes him more dangerous, but also directly makes him more abominable in our eyes than he would have been without it (*Metaphysic*, loc cit. 256).

Kant also addresses the issue as it pertains to the role of reason and passion in morality. The question which was dominating the moral philosophy at the time is: what role should reason then play in our quest for morality? Should reason be subservient to passion as Hume had posited? For Kant, human reason in its totality has been directed to the *moral* alone. Reason should therefore be the governor, the guide, the director and the legislator of moral. Kant argues that:

All the powers of reason, in the sphere of what may be termed *Pure* philosophy, are, in fact, directed to three things (problems) alone: the freedom of the will, the immorality of the soul, and the existence of God. These again have a still higher end – the answer to the question, *what we ought to do*, if the will is free, if there is a God and a future world. Now, as this relates to our conduct, in reference to the highest aim of humanity, it is evident that the ultimate intention of nature, in the constitution of our reason, has been directed to the *moral* alone (Ibid: 234-235).

According to Kant the end of Reason is the attainment of *Summum Bonum* (supreme good). It is the quality quest which practical reason makes its ideal. As Kant would argue, the highest ends are those of morality, and it is only pure reason that can give us the knowledge of these (Ibid: 239). Reason therefore is not subservient to moral, rather reason is absolutely necessary in moral affairs. Therefore Authority of reason must be respected. Nature did no mistake in assigning reason as the governor of our will (Ibid: 256).

Kant's grouse against earlier moral pontifications is rested on the contention that those moral systems were derived from examples. According to Kant resting morals on example makes it fatal. In the *Metaphysic* He argued:

Nor could anything be more fatal to morality than that we should wish to derive it from examples. For every example of it

that is set before me must be first itself tested by principles of morality, whether it is worth to serve as an original example, i.e., as a pattern; but by no means can it authoritatively furnish the conception of morality. Even the Holy One of the Gospels must first be compared with our ideal of moral perfection before we can recognize Him as such: and so He says of Himself “Why call ye me (whom you see) good; none is good (the model of good) but God only (whom ye do not see)”. But whence have we the conception of God as the supreme good? Simply from the idea of moral perfection, which reason frames *a priori* and connects inseparably with the notion of free will (*Ibid*: 263).

Against the Bentham/Mill and Epicurus moral philosophy Kant identified the deficiency and the poverty of happiness and pleasure as with their foundation on self-love or private happiness and argued that they belong to sense (feeling) a condition that is subjective and never universalizable. According to Kant since susceptibility to pleasure or pain can be known only empirically and cannot hold in the same degree for all rational beings, a principle which is based on this subjective condition may serve indeed as a *Maxim* for the subject which possesses this susceptibility, but not as *Law* even to him (because it is wanting in objective necessity which must be recognized *a priori*). It follows, therefore, that such a principle can never furnish a practical law (*Critique of Practical Reason*, 1996: 298).

Kant argues that we will fall short of the objective moral mark if we follow Epicurus and his likes to make virtue determine the will only by means of the pleasure it promises. So sharply and clearly marked are the boundaries of morality and self love—that even the commonest eye cannot fail to distinguish whether a thing belongs to the one or the other.

Kant also did not over look the argument on moral sense as posited by the likes of Shaftsbury and Hutchinson. Although the argument is plausible, Kant never failed to spot some fallacies in their position:

More refined, though equally false, is the theory of those who suppose a certain special moral sense, which sense and not reason determines moral law, and in consequence of which consciousness of virtue is supposed to be directly connected with contentment and pleasure; that of vice, with mental dissatisfaction and pain; thus reducing the whole to the desire of private happiness (Ibid.: 306).

The moral sense argument, for Kant, is fallacious because to imagine the vicious man as tormented with mental dissatisfaction by the consciousness of his transgressions, is to also say that he is in some degree morally good. Just as he who is pleased with the consciousness of right conduct must be conceived as already virtuous. A man must first appreciate the importance of what we call duty, the authority of the moral law, and the immediate dignity which the following of it gives to the person in his own eyes in order to feel that satisfaction in the consciousness of his conformity to it and the bitter remorse that accompanies the consciousness of its transgression (Ibid.). Kant therefore argued that it is impossible to feel this satisfaction or dissatisfaction prior to the knowledge of obligation, or to make it the basis of the latter. A man must be at least half honest in order even to be able to form a conception of these feelings.

On Christian moral philosophy Kant noted some encouraging position for the foundation of morality. He argued that the Christian conception of the *Summun bonum* tallies more with practical wisdom. According to Kant “the doctrine of Christianity, even if we do not yet consider it as a religious doctrine, gives, touching this point, a conception of the *summum bonum* (the Kingdom of God), which alone satisfies the strictest demand of

practical reason” (Ibid: 346). The moral law is holy (unyielding) and demands holiness of morals, although all the moral perfection to which man can attain is still only virtue, that is, a rightful disposition arising from respect for the law, “implying consciousness of a constant propensity to transgression, or at least a want of purity, that is, a mixture of many spurious (not moral) motives of obedience to the law, consequently a self-esteemed combined with humility” (Ibid: 346). In respect, then, of the holiness which the Christian law requires, this leaves the creature nothing but a progress *in infinitum*, but for that very reason it justifies him in hoping for an endless duration of his existence. The high point therefore of Christian morality is the ‘making’ of the world in which rational beings devote themselves with all their soul to the moral law, as a *kingdom* of God, in which nature and morality are brought into harmony foreign to each of itself, by a holy Author who makes derived *Summum bonum* possible:

Holiness of life is prescribed to them as a rule even in this life, while the welfare proportioned to it, namely, *bliss*, is represented as attainable only in an eternity; because the *former* must always be the pattern of their conduct in every state, and progress towards it is already possible and necessary in this life, while the *latter* under the name of happiness, cannot be attained at all in this world (so far as our own power is concerned), and therefore is made simply an object of hope (Ibid: 347).

Kant defended Christian morality by arguing that although it is theological (so as to be heteronomy), but it can be defended on the grounds of autonomy of pure practical reason, since it does not make the knowledge of God and His will the foundation of these laws, but only of the attainment of the *Summum bonum*, on condition of following these laws, and it does not even place the proper *spring* of this obedience in the desired result, but solely in the conception of duty, as that of which the faithful observance alone constitutes the worthiness to obtain those happy consequences.

The Epicureans and the Stoics, also did fall short of hitting the moral mark entire in their conception of *Summum bonum*. The two prominent but opposed Greek schools, according to Kant, misfired when, though, they identified *Virtue* and *Happiness* as elements of the *Summum bonum*, and consequently sought the unity of the principle by the rule of identity; however, they differed as to which of the two was to be taken as the fundamental notion. The Epicureans for instance, held that “to be conscious that one’s Maxim lead to happiness is virtue”; the Stoics on the other hand argued that “to be conscious of one’s virtue is happiness” (Ibid: 339). With Epicureanism, *Prudence* was equivalent to morality, but with the Stoicism, who chose a higher designation for virtue, morality alone was true wisdom.

The problem with the two great Greek Schools, Kant noted, was that their acuteness was unfortunately misapplied in trying to trace out identity between two extremely heterogeneous notions, those of happiness and virtue. While both schools sought to trace out the identity of the practical principles of virtue and happiness, they were not agreed on the way in which they tried to force this identity, but were separated infinitely from one another, the one placing its principle on the side of sense, the other on that of reason; the one in the consciousness of sensible wants, the other in the independence of practical reason on all sensible grounds of determination. The Epicureans had indeed assumed as the supreme principle of morality a wholly false one, namely, that of happiness and had substituted for a law a Maxim of arbitrary choice according to every man’s inclination. The Stoics, on the contrary, had chosen their supreme practical principle quite rightly, making virtue the condition of the *Summum bonum* but not without erroneous conclusion:

when they represented the degree of virtue required by its pure law as fully attainable in this life, they not only strained the moral powers of the man whom they called the wise beyond all limits of his nature, and assumed a thing that contradicts all our knowledge of men, but also and principally, they would not allow the second *element* of the *Summum bonum*, namely, happiness, to be properly a special object of human desire, but made their *wise man*, like a divinity in his consciousness of the excellence of his person, wholly independent of nature; they exposed him indeed to the evils of life, but made him not subject to them (Ibid: 346).

Kant had however, noted in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that the conception of the *Summum* itself contains an ambiguity which might occasion needless dispute if we did not attend to it. For instance, the *Summum* may mean either the supreme (supremum) or the perfect (consummatum). The former is that condition which is itself unconditioned, that is, is not subordinate to any other (originaruim); the second is that whole which is not a part of a greater whole of the same kind (perfectissimum). The first and second meaning must be merged in a dialectic of Pure Reason if we must achieve rational morality. For instance, it has been shown that *Virtue* (as worthiness to be happy) is the *supreme condition* of all that can appear to us desirable, and consequently, of all our pursuit of happiness, and is therefore the *supreme* good. But it does not follow that it is the whole and perfect good as the object of the desires of rational finite beings; for this requires happiness also, and that not merely in the partial eyes of the person who makes himself an end, but even in the judgment of an impartial reason, which regards persons in general as ends in themselves. For to need happiness, to deserve it, and yet at the same time not to participate in it, cannot be consistent with the perfect volition of a rational being possessed at the same time of all power, if, for the sake of experiment, we conceive such a being (Ibid: 338). Now inasmuch as virtue and happiness together constitute the possession of

the *Summum bonum* in a person, and the distribution of happiness in exact proportion to morality (which is the worth of the person, and his worthiness to be happy) constitute the *Summum bonum* of a possible world; hence this *Summum bonum* expresses the whole perfect good, in which, however, virtue as the condition is always the supreme good, since it has no condition above it; whereas happiness, while it is pleasant to the possessor of absolutely and in all respects good, but always presupposes morally right behaviour in its condition. The Stoics and the Epicurians did not fully grasp the very gist of the *summum bonum*, hence their failure to place their moral philosophy on an unshakable ground.

4.4 The Ontological Foundation of Kant's Ethics

Kant is experienced enough to have founded his moral philosophy on a metaphysic. This has the obvious implication of establishing his moral philosophy on a solid, firm, and universal ground. The metaphysic that ably captures the pure moral philosophy for Kant is *ontology*. This is because ontology involves also in the study of *a priori* principles. Kant believes that ontology, not anthropology, is the rational and the philosophical basis for morals. However, the ontology which Kant dwelt on is ontology of man. This we can also call the philosophy of man, the metaphysics of man or the Being of man. The reasons are not farfetched.

Ontology, for the purpose of definition, is the study of Being. It is the strictest sense of metaphysics (Unah, 2005: x). The purest sense of metaphysics is ontology which means the study of Being in its pure form. It is the ultimate or the final purpose in pure philosophy. For Kant, ontology (*ontologia*) presents the system of all the conceptions and principles belonging to the understanding and the reasons, and which relate to objects in

general, but not to any particular given object (second *Critique*, *loc cit.* 247). This agrees with the definition of ontology as the study of Being *qua* Being, the study of Pure Being. It also underscores the revelation of the possibility of ontological knowledge which must become an elucidation of the essence of pure reason. We begin to notice why Kant in his physical and intellectual maturity, armed with philosophical cerebral stamina, founded his moral philosophy on a metaphysic-ontology. This has the primary advantage of producing an enduring and a universal moral philosophy that stands the test of time.

We have said that ontology is the study of Being in general. However, we want to address the ontology of man on which Kant founded his *Metaphysic of Morals*. Ontology of man is the study of the Being of man. Here, ontology is reduced to the study of *Being of entities*. Ontology of man is the philosophy of man as an entity, the metaphysics of man, the universal phenomenological ontology of man, the science of man. According to Unah the task of the ontology of man is the determination of the metaphysical capacity and capability of man which makes all other forms of human activity possible. This endeavour, this search, is humble intellectual effort to make the Being of man stand out in bold relief. Ontology of man is the holistic study of the Being of man. Not this man or that man, not a particular man but men in general (generic man). It is a study of the human species in its pure form without an admixture (*Ibid:* 42-43).

Kant's resolve to establish morals on the ontology of man finds anchor on the assertion of the Sophist, Protagoras of Abdera in Thrace (C. 481 – 411 B.C) that "Man is the measure of all things, of the existence of things that are, and of the non-existence of things; that are not (Nersesyants, op cit. 73, Abel, 1976: xxi). Unfortunately, however, this maxim has

seen erroneously misunderstood by Plato to mean subjectivist sensualism and relativism (Plato *Theaetetus*). Also Unah has followed in this mistaken interpretation in arguing that Protagoras meant human subjectivity (Unah, Ibid. 35). However “man” in Protagoras is not an empirical individual, but a human as such, synonymous with mankind. Nersesyants has rejected the insinuation of human subjectivity in Protagoras’ ‘man is the measure’ thus:

Asserting the relativity of sensations and of human knowledge in general, Protagoras proceeds not from the uniqueness of each individual and peculiarity of his perceptions, but from the specificity of human consciousness, the attitude of humanity to the surrounding world... Relativity and changeable, according to Protagoras is not the measure, but what is being measured (op cit. 73).

The misunderstanding which Protagoras has suffered has been noted by Abel who, in his *Man Is The Measure* argues as follows:

My intention, rather, is to put forth a philosophical point of view about man and the world – a point of view boldly stated a long time ago by Protagoras, but perhaps never fully grasped, nor properly applied. We can best make sense, I maintain, at the great human enterprises by taking into account the fact that it is peculiarly and unavoidably human. All our attempts to understand the world, to “grasp this sorry scheme of things entire”, - all of science, metaphysics, poetry, history, art, and religion – depend upon certain distinctive characteristics of *Homo sapiens*. And, it would be misleading to speak as if man were clearly fixed datum. What man is can best be understood in terms of how he came to be what he now is and what he can make of himself in the time to come. The human endeavour to apprehend the world is an open-ended process (Abel, Ibid. xxi).

For us man is the source and carrier of the measure of all things. Man here embodies the *universal character*. This agrees with the Kantian treatment of man, making man a universal being that he is. Later ontologists like Heidegger, recognized the efforts of Kant on man as a universal Being. For Heidegger, man - *Dasein* - became the human being, the

mankind that must be studied ontologically. And as such, the ontology of *Dasein* became the foundation of Heidegger's *Daseinanalytic* (Heidegger, 1965: 27).

Kant, in his wisdom was aware of the possible shortcomings of erecting a philosophy, especially moral philosophy, on the basis of the anthropology of man. This would have been empirically limiting and a metaphysical blunder. The whole edifice of his moral philosophy would have crumbled, like pack of cards, even before he finished the business of erecting it. But Kant erected his philosophy on the human pure reason which is universal, asserting that all moral philosophy rests wholly on its pure part. When applied to man, it does not borrow the least thing from the knowledge of man himself (anthropology) but gives laws a priori to him as rational being" (*Metaphysic*, loc cit. 254). In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant had held that the metaphysic of ethics is the only pure moral philosophy, as it is not based upon anthropological or other empirical considerations (loc cit. 246). To erect and establish moral philosophy on the ontology of man is therefore cogent and it supports the quality quest of universalizing morals.

4.5 Kant's Ethics (Kant's Moral Philosophy)

Kant took morality seriously. In almost all his works, he always has a space reserved for discourse on moral issues and he worked very hard to drum home the importance of morality on the existence of rational beings. Kant differed from other moral philosophers in the sense that he wanted to discover that criterion – the supreme principle of morality-around which the moral worth of human act revolves. His quest was informed by the contention that morality is liable to corruption and confusion if what constitutes moral worth is not established. Kant's *Fundamental Principle (Groundwork) of the Metaphysic*

of Morals is the summary work of this moral philosophy. This culmination of Kant's moral philosophy has been described by H.J. Paton (1964: 8) in the following words:

In spite of its horrifying title Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* is one of the small books which are truly great: it has exercised on human thought and influenced almost ludicrously disproportionate to its size. In moral philosophy it ranks with the *Republic* of Plato and the *Ethics* of Aristotle; and perhaps – partly no doubt through the spread of Christian ideals and through the long experience of the human race during the last two thousand years – it shows in some respects a deeper insight even than these. Its main topic – the supreme principle of morality – is of utmost importance of all who are not indifferent to the struggle of good against evil. Written, as it was, towards the end of the eighteenth century, it is couched in terms other than those that would be used today; but its message was never more needed than it is at present ...

This handbook of moral philosophy would however, *not* be read in isolation but with other works of Kant in order for us to grab his moral gist. Kant presented his moral philosophy in three stages. The first stage or division is ‘Transition from the Common Rational Knowledge of Morality to the Philosophical’. The first division takes cognizance of human moral knowledge taken for granted by Kant including the expectation of happiness as the *end* which Plato and Aristotle had asserted. For that reason he had to proceed analytically from common knowledge to the determination of its ultimate principle, and again descending synthetically from the examination of this principle and its sources to the common knowledge in which we find it employed. Kant agrees with Rousseau that even the common man has knowledge of good and evil. It is fitting then to premise his moral philosophy on the common knowledge native to all men.

Kant begins his discourse with rather unassailable position:

Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good, without qualification, except a good will. Intelligence, wit, judgment, and the other *talents* of the

mind, however they may be named, or courage, resolution, perseverance, as qualities of temperament, are undoubtedly good and desirable in many respects; but these gifts of nature may also become extremely bad and mischievous if the will which is to make use of them, and which therefore constitutes what is called *character*, is not good (*Metaphysic*, loc cit. 256).

According to Kant, it is under one condition that anything can be said to be good at all – it is insofar as it is conjoined with something that is unqualifiedly good – a good will. Goodwill, to Kant represents the effort of rational beings to do what they ought to do, rather than to act from inclination or self-interest (Albert et. al 1984: 202). Without the principles of good will, even the best of character may become extremely bad. Pure moral philosophy for Kant lies wholly on good will:

A good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition; that is, it is good in itself and considered by itself is to be esteemed much higher than all that can be brought about by it in favour of any inclination, nay even of the sum total of all inclinations (*Ibid*: 256).

The good will is not good because it achieves good results. A good will may fail to achieve the goal it seeks yet, it would still be good in itself and have a higher worth than the superficial things gained by immoral actions. The *Summum bonum* (the supreme good) is the good will. It is founded on good will, erected on good will and thrives on good will. Like the Stoics, Kant argues that men may not always have control of events. But they have control of their motives. Unlike the utilitarians, morality is not to be judged on the consequence, but on good motives. Goodwill, for Kant is like a jewel that shines always and never veiled irrespective of the weather:

Even if it should happen that, owing to special disfavour of fortune, or the niggardly provision of a step-motherly nature, this will should wholly lack power to accomplish its purpose, if with its greatest efforts it should yet achieved nothing, and there

should remain only the good will then, like a jewel, it would still shine by its own light, as a thing which has its whole value in itself (Ibid).

However, goodwill, upon all of its intrinsic qualities would not be left alone. Good will cannot always stand on its own without “duty”. Kant then proceeds to explain what good will and duty share in common – the notion of duty includes that of goodwill. In the second *Critique* (loc cit. 327) Kant had eulogizes and personifies duty, thus:

Duty! Thou sublime and mighty name that dost embrace nothing charming or insinuating, but requires submission, and yet seekest not to move the will by threatening aught that would arouse natural aversion or terror, but merely holdest forth a law which of itself finds entrance into the mind, and yet gains reluctant reverence (though not always obedience), a law before which all inclinations are dumb, even though they secretly counter-work it; what origin is there worthy of thee, and where is to be found. The root of the nobly descent which proudly rejects all kindred with the inclinations; a root to be derived from which is the indispensable condition of the only worth which men can give themselves?

The idea of duty is behind the obedience to the moral law backed by goodwill. Acting for the sake of duty makes the difference between the moral worthiness or otherwise of our actions. Kant argues that “the notion of duty, therefore, requires in the action, *objectivity*, agreement with the law, and, subjectively, in its maxim, that respect for the law shall be the sole mode in which the will is determined thereby” (Ibid). However, some actions can conform to duty but at the same time have some selfish inclination. “It is to be distinguished then whether the action which agrees with duty is done *from duty*, or from a selfish view” (Ibid). Kant gives examples of actions which in their face value seem to be in response to duty but are not. For instance, a business man who employs all manner of civilized Public Relations approach in order to keep his customers have not acted from duty nor from direct inclination, but from selfish motive.

For example, it is always a matter of duty that a dealer should not overcharge an inexperienced purchaser; and wherever there is much commerce the prudent tradesman does not overcharge, but keeps a fixed price for everyone, so that a child buys of him as well as any other. Men are thus *honestly* served; but this is not enough to make us believe that the tradesman has so acted from duty and from principles of honesty: his own advantage required it (*Metaphysic*, op cit.258)

Kant also weighs on duty scale the actions of those who are trained to perform particular acts and they actually perform them and those who are *naturally* disposed to performing good acts because it is in their *character* to show kindness and spread joy:

There are many minds so sympathetically constituted that, without any other motive of vanity or self-interest, they find a pleasure in spreading joy around them and can take delight in the satisfaction of others so far as it is their own work. But I maintain that in such a case an action of this kind, however proper, however amiable it may be, has nevertheless no true moral worth, but is on the level with other inclinations (Ibid: 258)

Many acts of men may deserve praise and encouragement, but if they are not performed *from duty* but from inclination, will deserve no esteem. For example, the philanthropist passes no moral test when he helps those in need and the poor as it is in his character or because he will be praised by the public. However:

Put the case of that the mind of that philanthropist were clouded by sorrow of his own, extinguishing all sympathy with the lot of others, and that, while he still has the power to benefit others in diverse, he is not touched by their trouble because he is absorbed with his own; and now suppose that he tears himself out of this dead insensibility, and performs the action without any inclination to it, but simply from duty, then first has his action its genuine moral worth (Ibid).

From this Kant formulates his first proposition namely: that action which agrees with duty is done *from duty*, not from inclination (Ibid: 58). Kant argues that it is on this

propositions that one begins to understand those passages in the Bible (Matthew 5: 44) in which we are commanded to love our neighbor, even our enemy:

For love, as affected, could be commanded, but beneficence for duty's sake may; even though we are not impelled to it by any inclination – nay, are even repelled by a natural and unconquerable aversion. This is *practical* love and not *pathological* - a love which is seated in the will, and not in the propensities of sense – in principle of action and not in tender sympathy; and it is this love alone which can be commanded (Ibid: 259)

The second proposition which Kant thinks, is agreeable to his moral philosophy is this: that an action done from duty derives its moral worth, *not from the purpose* which is to be attained by it, but from the maxim by which it is determined, and therefore does not depend on the realization of the object of the action, but merely on the *principle of volition* by which the action has taken place ... (Ibid) The moral worth of our action lies in the *principle of the will* without regard to the ends which can be attained by the action. The will stands between its *a priori* principle, which is formal and its *a posteriori* spring which is material, as between two roads. It must be determined by the formal principle of volition when an action is done from duty, in which case every material principle has been withdrawn from it (Ibid). The third proposition in support of duty as the supervening criterion of moral action is: *Duty is the necessity of acting from respecting the law* (Ibid: 259). Respect for moral law does not recognize what is favourable to my own interest as the drive of moral action. What constitutes genuine respect for me is only what is connected with my will as a principle, by no means as effect – what does not subserve my inclination, but overpowers it. Kant therefore maintains the position that an action done from duty must wholly exclude the influence of inclination and with it every object of the will, so that nothing remains which can determine the will except objectively the *law*, and

subjectively *pure respect* for this practical law and consequently the maxim that should follow this law even to the thwarting of all my inclinations (Ibid). Thus the moral worth of an action does not lie in the effect expected from it, nor in any principle of the action which requires to borrow its motive from this expected effect. The moral worth of an action lies in the conception of law in itself which certainly is only possible in a rational being, in so far as this conception, and not the expected effect, determines the will (Ibid). This law, the conception of which must determine the will, even without paying any regard to the effect expected from it, according to Kant, is “nothing but the universal conformity of its actions to law in general” (Ibid: 260). The formulation of this universal law of moral conformity which alone is to serve the will as a principle is: I am never to act otherwise than so that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law (Ibid. 260). Kant tests this *law* out. He uses the example of lying, falsehood and deceit and failure to keep promise intentionally. He gives example of someone who makes false promise: May I when in distress make a promise with the intention not to keep it? (Ibid: 260). According to Kant, this deceitful promise cannot promote trust and good social and economic relationships even as it cannot be made a universal law. Should one now be content that his maxim (to extricate self from difficulty by a false promise) hold good as a universal law, for the person as well as others? Can it now be agreed upon that everyone may make a deceitful promise when he finds himself in a difficulty from which he cannot otherwise extricate himself? This only shows that one can *will* the lie, but one cannot *will* that lying should be a universal law. Lying promise will destroy promise and trust and even the one making a lying promise will be repaid in like manner. So may maxim ‘never to fulfill my promise’ will be rejected because it cannot enter as a principle into a possible

universal legislation. According to Kant, acting from *pure* respect for the practical law is what constitutes duty and it is this that gives morality the worth which far outweighs all worth of what is recommended by inclination. So far Kant believes he has painted a picture known by rational beings even if they are the commonest of men:

Thus, then, without quitting the moral knowledge of common human reason, we have arrived at its principle. And although, no doubt common men do not conceive it in such an abstract form, yet they always have it really before their eyes and use it as the standard of their decision (Ibid: 260).

Although men already possess rational knowledge of morality, Kant believes he has given them compass with which to distinguish, in every case that occurs:

What is good, what bad, conformably to duty or inconsistent with it, if, without in the least teaching them anything new, we only, like Socrates, direct their attention to the principle they themselves employ; and that, therefore, we do not need science and philosophy to know what we should do to be honest and good, yea, even wise and virtuous.

This position of Kant finds support in the marvel which he expressed in the third *Critique*, (loc cit. 260) about the reality of moral law:

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: *the starry heaven above and the moral law within*. I have not to search for them and conjecture them as though they were veiled in darkness or were in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence.

The human person, irrespective of the circumstance of birth is the embodiment of morality. “Morality began with the noblest attribute of human nature” (Ibid. 361). In *Lectures on Ethics*, J.G. Herder quotes Kant as saying that human beings have *moral feeling* that is universal and unequivocal. Goodrean (1998: 25) opines that moral feeling for Kant is unanalyzable, basic and the ground of conscience. In the *Dreams* Kant talks of

man's *moral impulse*, which often inclines us to act against the dictates of self-interest?

And in the *Observations* Kant argues that the feeling of the sublime makes one conscious of one's moral worth (Ibid: 18). These are pointers to the argument that Kant denoted most of his academic and intellectual work in the pursuit of moral knowledge. However, in spite of all natural moral dispositions in man, Kant noted that man tries to circumvent this law to the dictate of his inclination:

Against all the commands of duty which reason represents to man as so deserving of respect, he feels in himself a powerful counterpoise in his wants and inclinations, the entire satisfaction of which he sums under the name of happiness (*Metaphysic, loc cit.* 261)

When this is the case, man finds a way of defending himself:

Hence there arises a natural *dialectic*, i.e., a disposition, to argue against these strict laws of duty and to question their validity, or at least their purity and strictness; and if possible, to make them more accordant with our wishes and inclinations, that is to say, to corrupt them at their very source, and entirely destroy their worth ... (Ibid: 261).

To guard against this, there is required the grounding in philosophy to remove any possible equivocation which will provide escape route to one relapsing into the morals of immorality. Kant argues that:

... when practical reason cultivates itself, there insensibly arises in it a dialectic which forces it to seek aid in philosophy, just as happens to it in its theoretic use; and in this case, therefore, as well as in the other, it will find rest nowhere but in a thorough critical examination of our reason (Ibid: 261).

With this Kant brings to the end popular moral philosophy. It is to be followed by the metaphysic of morals. The second division of Kant's moral philosophy is titled: "Transition from Popular Moral Philosophy to the Metaphysic of Morals".

In the first section or division, we noted that Kant started his moral philosophy by establishing the fact that even the commonest of men have at least vague average understanding of morality and they do apply it in their everyday existence. Accordingly, he argues that the idea of good, evil, duty, in short, morality, is quintessentially human. In the opening paragraph of the second division, Kant noted that leaving morality on experience and empirical facts of life would be short of founding it on a metaphysic. The reason is that there is always the possibility of a counter example. For example he observed that:

If we have hitherto drawn our notion of duty from the common use of our practical reason, it is by no means to be inferred that we have treated it as an empirical notion. On the contrary, if we attend to the experience of men's conduct, we meet frequent and, as we ourselves allow, just complaints that one cannot find a single certain example of the disposition to act from pure duty. Although many things are done in *conformity* with what *duty* prescribes, it is nevertheless always doubtful whether they are done strictly *from duty*, so as to have moral worth (Ibid: 262).

This doubt whether there can be disposition to duty strictly speaking, has led some philosophers of ethics "to deny that this disposition actually exists at all in human actions, and have ascribed everything to a more or less refined self-love"(Ibid.). Although the philosophers do not question the soundness of the conception of morality, on the contrary, they spoke with sincere regret of the "frailty and corruption of human nature which though noble enough to take as its rule an idea so worthy of respect, is yet too weak to follow it and employs reason, which ought to give it the law only for the purpose of providing for the interest of inclinations, whether singly or at the best in greatest possible harmony with one another" (Ibid). Kant argues that it is absolutely impossible to make out by experience with complete certainty a single case in which the maxim of an act, however

right in itself, rested simply on moral grounds and on conception of duty. He reasons that sometimes it happens that with the sharpest self-examination we can find nothing in duty's sake to move us. He noted also that there is always some secret impulse of self-love, under the false appearance of duty, in our actions. For an action to have moral worth therefore, "those inward principles of them which we do not see" are the determining criteria (Ibid.) By the 'nature' of 'secret springs of action' which propel human action, it would seem that there could never be any genuine action that has moral worth. This is the thinking of "those who ridicule all morality as a mere chimera of human imagination overstepping itself from vanity" (Ibid). According to Kant, although most of our actions, on their face value are correct, there is always the angle of the dear self which is always prominent. For this reason it remains doubtful whether true virtue is actually found anywhere in the world. But be that is it may, Kant argues, the way out of this seeming dilemma is to secure firmly our ideas of duty and the respect for its law. We must nurse the clear conviction that "although there should never have been actions which really sprang from such pure sources, yet whether this or that takes place is not at all the question; but that reason itself, independent of all experience, ordains what ought to take place" (Ibid). Kant gives the example of friendship as that which, although its feasibility might be doubted by one who founds everything on experience, but is nevertheless inflexibly commended by reason. According to Kant, "even though there might never yet have been a sincere friend, yet not a whit the less is pure sincerity in friendship required of everyman, because, prior to all experience, this duty is involved as duty in the idea of a reason determining the will by a priori principles" (Ibid). Kant argues then that if we believe that the notion of morality has any truth or reference to any possible object, we

must admit that its law must be valid, not merely for men but for all *rational creatures generally*, not merely under certain contingent conditions or with exceptions but *with absolute necessity* (Ibid: 263). This conception of morality suggests that no experience can furnish us its ground. It only agrees that morality ought to take its origin wholly *a priori* from pure practical reason. Also, morality would not be derived from examples, “for every example of it that is set before me must be first itself tested by principles of morality, whether it is worthy to serve as an original example” (Ibid). According to Kant, when the Holy One of the Gospels (Jesus Christ) said “Why call ye Me (whom you see) good; none is good (the model of good) but God only (whom ye do not see)?” (Luke 18: 19). The conception of God as the Supreme Good is simply from the idea of moral perfection which reason frames *a priori* and connects inseparably with the notion of free will. Accordingly Kant, posits that “imitation finds no place at all in morality, and examples serve only for encouragement, but they can never authorize us to set aside the true original which lies in reason and to guide ourselves by examples” (Ibid).

In order to secure morality, Kant posits that “we first found ethics on metaphysics and then, when it is firmly established, procure a hearing for it by giving it a popular character (Ibid). This method has not been favoured by many because they see it as unsatisfactory. In its place, many moralists have favoured examples hence they have premised morality variously on:

... the special constitution of human nature (including, however, the idea of a rational nature generally), at one time perfection, at another happiness, here moral sense, there fear of God, a little of this, and a little of that, in marvelous mixture, without its occurring to them to ask whether principles of morality are to be sought in the knowledge of human nature at all (which we can have only from experience); or, if this is not so, if these

principles are to be found altogether *a priori*, free from everything empirical, in pure rational concepts only and nowhere else ... (Ibid)

All these positions, according to Kant, would not yield a sure ground for morality unless and until the moralists “adopt the method of making this a separate inquiry, as pure practical philosophy, or as metaphysic of morals” (Ibid). Kant maintains that such a metaphysic of morals, completely isolated, “not mixed with any anthropology, theology, physics, or hyperphysics, and still less with occult qualities (*Hyperphysical*), is not only an indispensable substratum of all sound theoretical knowledge of duties, but is at the same time a desideratum of the highest importance to the fulfillment of their precepts (Ibid. 264). In a footnote Kant supports his position by an allusion to some of our disciplines which we often times divide along *pure* and *applied* lines:

Just as pure mathematics is distinguished from applied, pure logic from applied, so if we choose we may also distinguish pure philosophy of morals (metaphysic) from applied (viz., applied to human nature). By this designation we are also at once reminded that moral principles are not based on properties of human nature, but must subsist a priori of themselves, while from such principle practical rules must be capable of being deduced for every rational nature, and accordingly for that of man (Ibid: 264).

From all inquiries of morality, strictly speaking, Kant argues that all moral conceptions have their seat and origin completely *a priori* in the reason.

Having established morality on a metaphysic, that is, made all moral conceptions and origin completely *a priori*, Kant begins to show how man can grapple with morality. This he can do by the exercise of his *will* which he also equated with practical reason. If reason infallibly determines the will, according to Kant, the actions of man which are recognized as objectively necessary are subjectively necessary also. The will is described as a faculty

to choose *that only* which reason independent of inclination recognizes as practically necessary, that is, as good. However, since it is not all the time that the will obeys the dictate of reason, the notion of *obligation* is introduced by Kant. Obligation compels the subjectively contingent actions to fall in line with objectively necessary actions. Kant argues that “the conception of an objectivity principle, in so far as it is obligatory for a will, is called a *command* (of reason), and the formulae of the command is called *imperative* (Ibid: 265). All imperatives are expressed, according to Kant, by the word *ought* (or *shall*), and it indicates the relation of an objective law of reason to a will, which from its subjective constitution is not necessarily determined by it (an obligation).

However, imperatives according to Kant, does not hold for Divine will, or in general for a holy will. Imperatives are only formulae to express the relation of objective laws of all volition to the subjective imperfection of the human will. Imperatives command either *hypothetically* or *categorically*. But categorical imperative would be that which represented an action as necessary of itself without reference to another end, that is, as objectively necessary. That is to say, all imperatives are formulae determining an action which is necessary according to the principle of a will. If now the action is good only as a means to *something else*, then the imperative is *hypothetical*; if it is conceived as good in *itself* and consequently as being necessary and also springs from the principle of a will and conforms to reason, then it is *categorical*. Categorical imperative is the imperative of morality because it is formal imperative:

... there is an imperative which commands a certain conduct immediately, without having as its condition any other purpose to be attained by it. This imperative is *categorical*. It concerns not the matter of the action, or its intended result, but its form and the principle of which it is itself a result; and what is

essentially good in it consists in the mental disposition, let the consequence be what it may (Ibid: 266).

Categorical imperative as imperative of morality has the features of *commands* or *laws* of morality; its conception is an *unconditional* and objective necessity and consequently it is universally valid. It is moral imperative because it belongs to free conduct generally. And since the categorical imperative is an exercise in conformity to a universal law, it can be expressed only in this: *Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law* (Ibid: 268)

How is the imperative of morality possible? In short how can our actions have moral worth? In order to answer these questions Kant brings his moral metaphysics to bear on real, practical lives of men in the universe of being. He gave few examples on which we can test actions as to whether they are in line with the dictates and tenets of morality laid on a metaphysic. But to do that Kant wants us to know that we have duties to ourselves and to others. The duties, he divided in duties to *ourselves* and to *others*, and into *perfect* and *imperfect duties* (Ibid: 269). In the *General Divisions of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant, under Perfect Duty, talks of duties that recognize the Right of Humanity in our person and the Right of Mankind in others. Although these duties are primarily juridical duties, they are however, duties from one person to himself as well as to others. Under Imperfect Duty, Kant enumerated Ethical Duties and classified it under the End of Humanity in our persons and the End of Mankind in others. Here also the duties recognize the individual and others. In the third *Critique*, Kant argues the inviolability of humanity. He writes: The moral law is holy or inviolable. Man is indeed unholy enough, but he must regard humanity in his own person as holy (op cit. 328). In the examples that

follow Kant wants our recognition of duty to humanity to serve as maxim of our action so that it can be adopted as a universal law. Hence he advised: Act as if the maxim of thy action were to become by thy will a universal law of nature. A maxim is some sort of general principle under which we *will* a particular action. Kant wants this imperative of duty to guide us when we embark of acting. He however gave four examples, that whereby perfect and imperfect duties and duties to oneself and duties to others can be weighed on the moral scale:

First a man reduced to despair by a series of misfortunes, who feels wearied of life, but is still so far in possession of his reason that he can ask himself whether it would not be contrary to his duty to himself to take his own life. Now he inquires whether the maxim of his action could become a universal law of nature. His maxim is: “From self-love I adopt it as a principle to shorten my life when its longer duration is likely to bring more evil than satisfaction” (Ibid: 269). It is asked then simply whether this principle founded on self-love can become a universal law of nature. Kant answers that it is against nature to destroy life but to improve on it, “hence that maxim cannot possibly exist as a universal law of nature and, consequently, would be wholly inconsistent with the supreme principle of all duty” (Ibid: 269).

Second, a man finds himself forced by necessity to borrow money. He knows that he will not be able to repay it, but sees also that nothing will be lent to him unless he promises stoutly to repay it in a definite time. Assuming he has his conscience intact as he contemplates this venture and decides to ask himself “Is it not unlawful and inconsistent with duty to get out of a difficulty in this way?” Suppose, however, he resolves to borrow

the money: then the maxim of his action would be expressed thus: "When I think myself in want of money, I will borrow money and promise to repay it, although I know that I never can do so" (Ibid: 269). The question that Kant wants answered is "How would it be if my maxim were universal law?" This definitely will never hold as a universal law of nature, but would necessarily contradict itself. The implication is that if lying were to become a universal law, all human relations based upon trust and the keeping of promises would become impossible.

Third, assuming a person who prefers to indulge in pleasure rather than pains refuses in enlarging and improving his happy natural capacities. This person is a lover of comfortable circumstance, because of which he has refused to make contribution to the rest of the people, since he has suppressed his creative talents. He asks, however, whether his maxim of neglect of his natural gifts and talent besides agreeing with his inclination to indulgence, agrees also with what is called duty. Will it agree with the universal law if one should let his or her talent rest and resolve to devote their lives merely to idleness, amusement, and the pursuit of enjoyment? Kant reacts: "For, as a rational being, he necessarily wills that his faculties be developed since they serve him and have been given him for all sorts of possible purposes" (Ibid: 269).

Fourth, Should a prosperous person help those who contend with great wretchedness? Or should he refuse to help them and say:

What concern is it of mine? Let everyone be as happy as heaven pleases, or as he can make himself; I will take nothing from him nor even envy him, only I do not wish to contribute anything to his welfare or to his assistance in distress! (Ibid: 269).

This way of looking at things violates the universal law. The natural disposition for sympathy and love would have been sacrificed on the altar of selfishness. Therefore this maxim cannot be universalized. Kant is therefore of the view that all acts should be entered into as if they were to become general laws – this is what the ‘categorical imperative’ posits. If an act which one or a group commits can pass the test of thus being universalized, that is, it holds the same for all in the given circumstance, then it will be a moral act. Otherwise, such acts must be thrown overboard, for not having moral worth. We must be *able* to *will and at all time too* that a maxim of our action, should be a universal law. This is the canon of the moral appreciation of the action generally.

Kant sees his examples as representing “a few of the many actual duties, or at least what we regard as such, which obviously fall into two classes on the principle that we have laid down” (Ibid: 270). He then argues that we must be able to *will* that the maxim of our action should be a universal law. All duties, whether they appear strict, rigorous, and inflexible or laxer and meritorious, should depend as regards the nature of the obligation on the same principle. If now we attend to ourselves on occasion of any transgression of duty, we shall find that we in fact do not will that our maxim should be a universal law. We can only dubiously assume the liberty of making exception in our own favour. That would be inconsistent, and contradictory that we consider all cases from one and the same point of view, and will that a certain principle should be objectively necessary as a universal law, and yet subjectively should not be universal law, but admit exceptions. Kant argues then that “If duty is a conception which is to have any import and real legislative authority for our actions, it can only be expressed in categorical and not at all in hypothetical imperatives” (Ibid: 270). Duty, for it to be a practical, unconditional

necessity of action, should not have respect for the particular attributes of human nature, but must be a law for all humanity.

Kant argues in a no-holds-barred manner that in practical philosophy which is well represented by the metaphysics of morals, it is not what happens that concerns us, but what ought to happen, even though it never does happen. It does not matter whether it pleases or displeases, or obeys desires and inclinations. Of concern however, are the objective practical laws and the relation of the will to itself so far as it is determined by reason alone. Interestingly, Kant argues that the whole issue of morality, originates from *reason* and have its final destination is the *end* which also must hold for all rational beings. In the first *Critique* he had argued that the highest *ends* are those of morality, and it is only pure reason that can give us the knowledge of these" (loc cit. 239). These *ends* he sums up as absolute ends and not relative ends. Absolute ends are the prerogative of *beings* whose existence has in itself absolute worth, they being an end in itself could be a source of definite laws. This being is man: man and generally any rational being exist as an end in himself (Ibid: 271). Non rational beings, Kant calls things. Rational beings he calls persons. Persons, according to him posses *nature* which points them out as ends in themselves and for that they must not be used merely as means, *rational nature exists as an end in itself*. This assertion rides on the practical imperative: So act as to treat humanity, whether in their own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end without, never as means only (Ibid: 272). On this assertion Kant reviews once more the duties previously enumerated along the practical imperative as follows:

Firstly, under the head of necessary duty to oneself: He who contemplates suicide should ask himself whether his action can be consistent with the idea of humanity as *an end in*

itself. If the man in question destroys himself in order to escape from painful circumstances, he uses a person merely as a mean to maintain a tolerable condition up to the end of life. Since a man is not a thing, or something to be used merely as a means to an end, even I cannot in anyway dispose in any way a man in my own person so as to mutilate, damage or kill him.

Secondly, as regards necessary duties, or those of strict obligation towards others: He who is thinking of making a lying promise to others will see at once that he would be using another man merely as *a mean*. The man to whom I am making a lying promise cannot possibly assert to my mode of acting towards him. Thirdly, as regards contingent or meritorious duties to oneself. It is not enough that the action does not violate humanity in or own as an end in itself, it must also *harmonize* with it. One who neglects the development of his gift of nature or talent might as well have acted consistently with humanity as an end in itself, but not with the advancement of this end. Fourthly, as regards meritorious duties others: The natural end which all have is their own happiness. Society and humanity indeed might subsist, even if no one should contribute anything to the happiness of others. This will only in the end harmonize negatively not positively with humanity as an end in *itself*. The *end* of one ought to be or be equated with the *end* of others if that conception is to have its *full* effect with one and all.

The idea of humanity as an end in itself is universal, applying to all rational beings whatever; it does not present humanity as an end to men, not as subjective end, to be used by men, but on the contrary, objective end which must as a law constitute the supreme limiting condition of all our subjective ends. This agrees with Kant's third practical

principle: the idea of the will of every rational being as a universally legislative will. Here, Kant takes cue from Rousseau's General Will – the will of all in a common pool. Accordingly Kant argues: On this all maxims are rejected which are inconsistent with the will being itself universal legislator. The will is not subject simply to the law, but so subject that it must be regarded as itself giving the law and on this ground only subject to the law (Ibid: 273). According to Kant the plausibility of this possible is the reason for the failure of other attempts by moralists to grab the moral gist entire. He argues therefore:

Looking back now on all previous attempts to discover the principle of morality, we need not wonder why they all failed. It was seen that man was bound to laws of duty, but it was not observed that the laws to which he is subject are only *those of his own giving*, though at the same time they are *universal*, and that he is only bound to act in conformity with his own will; a will, however, which is designed by nature to give universal laws (Ibid)

*According to Kant, the previous efforts by moralists failed to provide a generalizable moral principle and could be likened to labour irrevocably lost because, they (the moralists and great philosophers who had pontificated on morality) conceived man only as subject to a law, which law required some interest, either by way of interaction or constraint since it did not originate as a law from *his own* will but from *something else*. The moralists never elicited duty, but only a necessity of acting from a certain interest. Whatever prods the interest, whether it is private or public, in any case, the imperative must be conditional and could not by any means be capable of being a moral command.*

However, instead of external lawgiver, Kant talks of internal lawgiver, which he equates with the *autonomy* of the will. The autonomy of the will contrasts with the *heteronomy* of the will. By autonomy of the will, Kant means the *self*, from within, the individual as the

moral law giver; acting from his personal conviction. In the second *Critique* Kant links *autonomy* with *personality* and argues that it accords with freedom and independence that go with it. Kant contrasts autonomy with heteronomy which is equated with receiving order from outside, acting from outside prodding or from fear from without. Kant summarizes then that morality is the relation of actions to the autonomy of the will and to the potential universal legislation by its maxims.

If reason directs the individual moral will to meet with the general moral will of all, then, man overcomes the situation which Kant calls “ethical state of nature” (*Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*) wherein man possess a radical, innate and irreducible tendency to resist the moral law. Earlier in *Ideas for A Universal History Of Mankind With A View To World Citizenship*, Kant had observed what he called ‘unsocial sociality’ of mankind as roadblock to morality. The *ethical state of nature* and *unsocial sociality*, are *forces* that must be conquered if man must attain universal morality. Kant then offers a way out. This is the idea of a *society* which is founded by all for the wellbeing of all. This society is *the kingdom of ends*. Kant defines the kingdom of ends as the union of different rational beings in a system by common laws. Unlike Rousseau whose society only corrupts man’s natural goodness, Kant’s society is founded by man to further the quest for his goodness. In the kingdom of ends, all private ends, all personal differences are to be reconciled in a combined system of ends where no one will be treated never merely as means, but in every case at the same time as ends in themselves. The result is a systematic union of rational beings by common laws. Kant thinks of an egalitarian society where social justice and equality will be the culture. A rational being, Kant argues, belongs as a *member* to the kingdom of ends when, although giving universal laws in it, he

is also himself subject to the laws. He also belongs to as *sovereign* when, while giving laws, he is not subject to the will of any other (Ibid: 274). In the kingdom of ends, man then pursues *dignity* as that which has intrinsic worth. Autonomy is the basis of dignity of human and of every rational nature. *Autonomy* of the will holds the supreme principle of morality. On the contrary, heteronomy of the will is the source of all spurious principles of morality. In concluding the second division Kant says he has only demonstrated that the development of the universally received notion of morality is synonymous with the autonomy of the will, inevitably connected with it or rather is its foundation (Ibid: 279).

In the third section which is entitled “Transition From the Metaphysic of Morals To the Critique of Pure Practical Reason”, Kant takes the issue of freedom of the *will* as the key that explains the autonomy of the will of rational beings. The issue of freedom must be resolved before the idea of morality can be intelligible. The problem of freedom can be regarded as another “philosopher’s stone” which, Kant in the *Lectures on Ethics* – Notebook Collins regards as a problem to be addressed in the future. Like the problem of Moral Motivation, the problem of freedom confronted Kant. This problem of freedom caused the delay of the treatise on ethics because the epistemological difficulty must first be dissolved. Following Newtonian physics, the world is antecedently connected making causality an idea that frustrates the notion of freedom. How can one talk of freedom in a world in which experience has shown interconnectedness of events? The answer to the problem of freedom however, will begin with David Hume who woke Kant from dogmatic slumber and whose empiricism denies freewill. Hume’s denial of free will was at least partly responsible for Kant’s turning attention to the problem of causality, for

without free will Kant wouldn't bother about morality. In a letter to Christian Garve (September 21, 1798), Kant writes that the antinomies of reason, especially with regard to the possibility of freedom is what roused him from his dogmatic slumber (Goodrenu, loc cit. 61-62). Antinomies of reason are for Kant the antitheses of pure reason which are self-contradictions of seemingly dogmatical cognition. They are conflicts of transcendental ideas. Kant gives four of these which he also argues represents the four transcendental ideas. They are:

- i. **Thesis:** The world has a beginning in time, and is also limited in regard to space
Antithesis: The world has no beginning and no limit in space, but is, in relation both to time and space, infinite.
- ii. **Thesis:** Every composite substance in the world consists of simple parts; and there exists nothing that is not either itself simple, or composed of simple parts.
Antithesis: No composite thing in the world consists of simple parts; and there does not exist in the world any simple substance.
- iii. **Thesis:** Causality according to the laws of nature is not the only causality operating to originate the phenomena of the world. A causality of freedom is also necessary to account fully for these phenomena.
Antithesis: There is no such thing as freedom, but everything in the world happens solely according to the laws of nature.
- iv. **Thesis:** There exists either in or in connection with the world – either as a part of it, or as the cause of it – an absolutely necessary being.

Antithesis: An absolutely necessary being does not exist, either in the world, or out of it – as its cause (*Critique of Pure Reason* Ibid: 135 – 145).

Kant had been disturbed by the antinomy of freedom and determinism: ‘there is freedom in man’ versus ‘there is no freedom in man only the necessity of nature’. This led Kant to the critique of reason and the resolution of this challenge will pave the way for a quality discourse on morality.

In the third division of the *Metaphysic* Kant opened the discourse thus: The *will* is a kind of causality belonging to living beings in so far as they are rational, and *freedom* would be this property of such causality that it can be efficient, independent of efficient causes *determining* it (*Metaphysic*, loc cit. 278). However, the idea of freedom must be presupposed. Kant takes it as postulate in order not to involve in unnecessary argument. In a footnote he explains that he adopted the notion of freedom as an assumption, which rational beings already suppose in their action (Ibid: 280). This assumption however, agrees with common reason and it is on it can morality make sense. Kant observes that “all men attribute to themselves freedom of will. Hence come all judgments upon actions being such as *ought to have been done*, although they have not been done (Ibid. 283). The practical use of common human reason confirms the reasoning based on freedom of the will and it agrees also with the autonomy of human personality. It would not be in the interest of morality to argue away freedom. Philosophy should of necessity assume that no real contradiction will be found between freedom and physical necessity of the same human actions, for it cannot give up the conception of nature any more than that of freedom.

In concluding the treatise on morality Kant claimed that the whole effort is to produce in us a lively interest in the moral law by means of the noble ideal of a universal kingdom of *ends in themselves* (rational beings), to which we can belong as members then only when we carefully conduct ourselves according to the maxims of freedom as if they were laws of nature.

4.6 Analytic Summary

Many people have found it rather difficult to understand Kant's philosophy, his ethics inclusive. His ethics is a philosophical response to the moral problem of his time including race hate, disenfranchising minorities, forced labour, despotic and autocratic government, political oppression, etc. Even if one does not agree with Kant, it will be difficult to fault his logic. The logic of his discourse, with all its propositions, is just valid. He only answered the two pertinent ethical questions in his humble manner: What is the good life for man?' And 'How ought men to live their life?' The good life for every man is a life lived in moral observation. This moral observation is taken as a duty, an obligation, such that no one does things as he likes but as duty demands. Doing good deeds demands on us the obligation as though of duty. For that reason, it is not how the individual decides to live or what he wants to achieve; but according to the obligation laid before him. That is to say, whether the act favours him or not, whether it is to his advantage or not, he just has to do it as duty demands. The serenity of mind is genuinely achieved when one does that which he ought to do, notwithstanding the gains or losses to the contrary. One is duty bound to observe what is right. That is the best alternative to human beings. Whenever one is performing moral act, it must be seen in the line of duty. This is what gives any act its moral worth. Here the self is detached, the self is distanced,

the self is made to count only as one performing the act. His gains or otherwise is not the first or primary consideration. In this wise, his intensions for doing the act must be the right of intension, his volition must be propelled to obey the ‘voice of duty’. It is from this that one can beat his chest and say ‘I have done it and it is right’ and ‘I can recommend it to others also’.

The implication is that one who is acting as duty commands is acting objectively. His act has no ulterior motive. He acts, not for personal gain, but his acts are in the line of duty; in accord with duty. The goal is not immediate personal gain in terms of pleasure, or happiness, but of public gain in terms of creating an enabling human environment for peace, harmony, good relationships and equal treatment. What Kant says is that to act morally, one should not do so because it is convenient for him or because it pleases him. Rather one does good acts because good acts are good irrespective of whether they please the doer or not. Even when doing that which is good becomes painful, one should not drop it because it is the right thing to do. When doing good deed places one on a disadvantaged position, one has no other option but to go ahead since it emanates from good will. The *will* must be put to task, even an ‘inconvenient’ task, in order to act right. That is why Kant calls the doing of good act an imperative, an obligation, a duty, for which one cannot renege if one is to be adjudged to have performed a moral act. Actions performed for the personal, sectional or ethnic gain, cannot be said to have moral worth. Moral living is not a convenient pass time. It requires the pummelling of one’s body in order to do so. And if it is seen or equated with duty, then it is obligatory. Yet, it is in keeping with the moral law within. Men have the rational disposition for doing what is good. They should therefore recognize what is good. They should as well appreciate

what is good. Men should as well be helped and when need be compelled to do what is good, although there could be forces militating against him. These include his selfish inclinations and his passions. But he can suppress them and make them to obey him. So, the good life for man is a life of moral observation. This is in keeping with the obedience to moral law. Like any other law, its obedience is not always convenient. But as a matter of duty, one has to obey, one has to perform the task before him whether it is convenient or personally rewarding or not. Reason must give command and assume control of passion.

On how men ought to live their life, Kant says it is by doing moral acts and wishing that such acts be done by all and sundry. Whatever one does, one should also wish same to be universalizable. For Kant, human beings should behave such that their behaviours become law on to themselves. If my acts are not universalizable, if my acts cannot be made a universal law, if it cannot be recommended for everybody in the same situation, then, I should forget it. For instance, Kant says if I am lying because I am in a kind of trouble, should I say that whenever one is in trouble, that person must also lie? When I breach a contract or renege in an agreement, should I also say that people should not honour agreements? And if I do so, what would happen to trust, to contracts, to human relationships, etc. So, if I cannot make my act a law, if I cannot objectively recommend my acts to all in similar situation then I should quit doing such acts.

In our daily existence Kant advises that our acts should be made a universal, generalizable law and as we do we seat back to observe its implication on humanity at large. What Kant says is that there is no short cut to moral living. He believes in moral law within us. And

for that reason, we can also make moral laws through our acts hence he talks of universalizability of morality. This universalizability has with it the respect for all men. Man is a being-of-dignity. Man is an end in himself. All men put together make up a kingdom of ends. For that reason, our acts should be towards uplifting the dignity of man. By that we should not use one another to achieve our selfish ends. But whatever we do, we should also expect the same to be done to us in return. Popper (1963: 102) has argued that Kant's advice that we should "always recognize that human individuals are ends and do not use them as mere means to your ends" has become overriding thought such that no other has been so powerful in the moral development of man.

It is in doing this that we exercise our freedom as autonomous individuals. So, another ingredient of morality is acting out of freedom. If I am free to act and also free not to act, then when I choose to act or refuse to act, the responsibility is on me. I have made a choice. The reality of our freedom is founded on our moral acts. To really act in freedom is also to be in perfect and total control of our emotions and passions. It is all about enjoying authentic existence. It is for this reason that Kant emphasizes on the Will – the power to accept or reject that which militates against the moral law within or that which inhibits the doing of what is right. For Kant the onus is on the individual to freely decide, out of the respect for a moral demand, to act morally independently of any external incentives. As Kant holds, moral decisions are purely personal decisions with the *caveat* that the person, by doing so, also has become a moral lawgiver.

Kant's moral philosophy is objective, natural and with a no-holds-barred approach. His argument is that for an act to have a moral worth, there must be some *natural* and *human*

conditions that must accompany or be present in it. That is to say, there must be necessary and sufficient conditions and grounds which the act must furnish or which the person acting must comply with. This position of Kant stems from the assertion that human beings are moral agents who are capable of knowing and doing good. And also, in order for moral acts to be objectively evaluated, there must be such conditions that will apply to all and acceptable to all also rationally and objectively failure which there will be hotchpotch approach to moral evaluation and judgments, a situation that will not augur well for morals and for man.

Given that every rational being knows what is good and bad, given also that every rational being is a rational agent, morally speaking, then there is the innate ability to act along the line, or in obedience to laws or principals. With this Kant argues that no person, provided he or she is a rational *personality*, should be exempted from acting morally. There can be no genuine excuse for one who is guided by reason to act immorally.

But what gives an act its moral worth? Kant reels some preconditions: the act must originate from ‘good will, it must be out of duty, it must be in reverence to law, it must not be from selfish inclination, not from personal gain expected, not from sectional or group gain or well-being. It must be as though of obedience to law or command; not always convenient to the agent, must be from imperative of duty, and also must be universalizable. Although originating from a person, an individual, it must be made to be a law of universal practice and must result from a principle or a maxim which the individual agent must be ready to make a universal law. In a nutshell, for every rational act to pass the moral muster, the result should not, and must not, place the agent or the one

acting on an unnecessary, unmerited, undeserved and unworthy reward, happiness, pleasure and gain.

What we understand here is that Kant is saying that when we base any practice on personal or sectional happiness or pleasure, it loses its moral worth. For an act to be moral, it must be such that the first *motive* is not the personal satisfaction the individual agent gets, but how good and morally acceptable the action is and how it promotes the general wellbeing of society. If I work to satisfy myself and you work to satisfy yourself also, then, there will be no meeting point in moral practice. Morality becomes relative or particular. While I seek my happiness, you also seek your own, and things will fall apart.

Kant's moral philosophy seems to be difficult to put in practice. It seems to be out-of-this-world. Yet it captures what morality should require. For human beings to capture the essence of morality in practice there is no doubt about the *efficacy* of Kant's ethics. So if we must tell ourselves the true moral position, there is the need to listen to Kant. Unless, of course, we want to toy with morality or we have developed moral phobia. For any group to survive, they must hold on to morality as though of duty, command, law and imperative. Otherwise we are open to a hypocritical application of moral principle which frustrates our moral quests. Kant, we must say has given us the starker moral philosophy, making an individual the active partner in the business of moral and yet not isolating him from the rest, such that the individual must submit himself to the social court with reason as the incorruptible judge. There lies the plausibility of Kant's universalizability theory of morals.

4.7 The Universalizability Theory

Kant's moral philosophy is built around a universal theory or principle. It is a principle that ought to hold in our ordinary, everyday commerce with the world. A theory or principle is meant to guide practice hence the universalizability theory is meant to guide morals for it to attain universal morality. In Kant's view, the universalizability theory is meant to guide moral practice so that in the final analysis, whatever becomes a moral act and is so judged to be a moral act would have been 'standardized', so that it applies to all with equal force. This would bring about the culture of fairness, impartiality, consistency and objectivity in moral application, appreciation, evaluation and judgement. Universalizability, for Kant, carries the weight of equality, consistency and impartiality since moral beings are rated the same and moral acts are for all men and women irrespective of their status, their calling and geographical location. Kant's universalizability theory carries with it the necessary and sufficient condition for morality and for moral evaluation and judgment. It is a criterion that makes the determination of the moral worth of an action or inaction easier and objective without recourse to bias.

Kant holds that universalizability is both necessary and sufficient for moral rightness (Honderich, 1995: 43). Although morality is first and foremost an individual affair, that is, personal and therefore autonomous act, yet the *willing* must be founded on principles or maxim which is capable of being made universal law. It is the fact of *universalism* that makes an act a moral act. The universalizability principle therefore carries the notion of generalizability. What this means is that everyone who acts or who proposes to act must weigh his acts in the universal, general, human scale such that what I elect to do must be acceptable to everyone in that same condition and be made a general law. There would be

no special condition that gives me an edge over others or others over me. All acts are adjudged right or wrong for the same people in the same condition at the same material time. So, in a given point in time, consistency, impartiality and fairness will reign for all in a given condition and at a given point in time. There will be no influences as regards to culture, religion, status, material position or geographical location. There will be no privileged group or class. It will be a case of ‘all animals are equal and no animal is more equal than others’. When we give consideration to the above, then the idea of morality acquires its value naturally because there would be impartial and consistent criteria for judging what is right or wrong, good or bad, acceptable or not, commendable or condemnable, since no person would want to make his or her individual case a special one where there is no rational need for it. And then the moral quests of mankind would find a rational stronghold and all efforts at judging or evaluating what is right or wrong would not be problematic, neither would it be given to any form of frustration.

For Kant, moral philosophy is best founded and established on the universalizability criterion. The basis for morality is its being made generalizable. Kant’s universalizability theory is also the same as his categorical imperative. This is Kant’s most important feature of moral philosophy as it is based on moral equality, impartiality, and consistency (Mackinnon, 1998: 58). Kant believes that every rational being must be guided by maxims (intentions) which are subjective principles of volition that conform to universal laws, and it is this conformity alone that the imperative properly represents as necessary. Universalizability principle therefore is the conformity of moral principle’s rationality and its capacity to be generalized for everyone, everywhere (Solomon, 2002: 279).

The universalizability theory, for Kant, is captured in his categorical imperatives which he formulated variously and severally, thus:

1. Act only on that maxim (intention, principle) whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law;
2. Act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a universal law of nature;
3. Always act so as to treat humanity, whether in yourself or in others, as an end in itself, never merely as a means;
4. Always act as if to bring about, and as a member of a kingdom of ends (that is, an ideal community in which everyone is always moral) (Solomon, op cit.278).

The universalizability principle, captured in the four categorical imperatives (which however, mean the same thing) holds that an act, any act, by the individual must be made to conform to a universal law or principle such that it in itself is made a law for all. “Let the principle on which you act always be such that you are at the same time able to will that it be a universal rule of conduct” (Mautner, loc cit. 580). All moral acts must conform to this generalizability principle. The moral worth of any act, provided that the act is by a rational individual, living in the human community (kingdom of ends) must be tested on this ‘standardized’ universal scale in the context. Any act that does not conform to this universalizability principle cannot pass moral test. According to Kant, any rational being is a ‘legislator’ of morals and the end result of this legislation (*law*) must become universal and in conformity to *nature*. In our individual capacity, Kant argues that our acts should be such that it becomes a universal ‘maxim’: “Always so to choose that the same volition shall comprehend the maxims of our choice as a universal law”

(*Metaphysic*, loc cit. 277). This maxim should be seen as a principle which determines the will (of all rational beings).

For Kant, the universalizability principle is what every ordinary and common people apply in the ordinary course of relationships and acts in their everyday existence unless they want to be mischievous. Hence, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant advised the obvious: ask yourself whether, if the action you propose were to take place by a law of the system of nature which you were yourself a part, you could regard it as possible by your own will”(loc cit. 320). By our actions and/or inactions, Kant posits, we are enacting laws that have far-reaching universal implication. The position we have taken remains that everybody in the same situation in which we have found ourselves should also act in the same way we have acted. As rational beings of moral nature, we expect others to follow our ‘mind’ even when we do not say so expressly. However, as moral beings living in the community with others, we must constantly subject our acts to universal rules and then weigh the implication to society. Kant writes:

Everyone does, in fact, decide by this rule whether actions are morally good or evil. Thus, people say: If *everyone* permitted himself to deceive, when he thought it to his advantage, or thought himself justified in shortening his life as soon as he was thoroughly weary of it; or looked with perfect indifference on the necessity of others; and if you belong to such an order of things, would you do so with the absent of your own will? Now everyone knows well that if he secretly allows himself to deceive, it does not follow that everyone else does so; or if, unobserved, he is destitute of compassion, others would not necessarily be so to him, hence, this comparison of the maxim of his actions with universal law of nature is not the determining principle of his will (Ibid: 320).

In all of mankind’s acts, Kant posits, a picture of the universal, the global, the general, must be painted in the mind. If the maxim of the action is not such as to stand the test of

the form of a universal law of nature, then it is morally impossible. This is the judgment even of common sense.

Kant used this as a negative criterion: an act that fails to satisfy this principle is not morally right. In particular, it is not right to make exceptions and ‘cut corners’ in one’s own favour. Humanity and generally every rational nature is *an end in itself*; that is the supreme limiting condition of every man’s freedom of action. For humanity to maintain their objective ends which must as a law constitute the supreme limiting condition of all over subjective *ends*, there must be a principle built on the idea of the *will* of every rational being as a universally legislative will. On this principle, all maxims (intentions) are rejected which are inconsistent with the will being itself universal legislator. “Thus the will is not subject simply to the law, but so subject that it must be regarded *as itself giving the law* and, on this ground only, subject to the law (of which it can regard itself as the author) (Ibid: 273).

Kant’s universalizability theory is a reinstatement of his position that the will of every rational being is a *universally legislating will*. Thus the *principle* that every human will is a *will which in all its maxims gives universal laws*, provided it be otherwise justified, would be very *well adopted* to be the categorical imperative in this respect, namely, that just because of the idea of universal legislation it is *not based on any interest*, and therefore it alone among all possible imperatives can be *unconditional* (Ibid: 273).

The principle of universalizability is a sole condition under which a will cannot contradict itself. This is because of its ability to apply to everyone without exception: if an act is right (or wrong) for one person in a situation, it is right (or wrong) for any relevant similar

person in that kind of situation. Universalizability principle is a principle of consistency that aims to eliminate irrelevant considerations from ethical assessment. William Penn alluded to this position when he argued that right is right even if everybody is against it, wrong is wrong even if everybody is for it.

R.M. Hare's notion of universalizability and his notion of prescriptivism align with Kant's position. In *The Language of Morals* and *Freedom and Reason*, Hare analyses moral statements as prescriptive statements, that is, statements which provide answers to the question of what one ought to do. The moral statements differ from the non-moral prescriptive statements in that they are universalizable. Hare maintains a position similar to Kant's that moral statements have a universalizability feature and prescriptive element (Pojman, 1989: 379; Mautner, loc cit. 580). To say that 'you ought not to steal from the state treasury' entails via the principle of universalizability (or consistency) that the speaker believes that no one should steal in relevant similar circumstances. Furthermore, for you to say that 'I should not tell a lie' is for you to commit yourself to a principle of forbidding lying, and it is from that commitment that you are *prescribing* that others live that way also. Not only does ethical language mean that you are prescribing it universally, also being willing to commit yourself to that prescription is a necessary and sufficient condition for the justification of that principle. Hare therefore takes the position that all descriptive judgments are universalizable, and he then goes on to show that all moral judgments are *in the same sense* universalizable.

Also in his '*A Philosophical Self-Portrait*', Hare argues that the notion of universalizability stems from a higher or critical level of moral thinking and it holds good

for humanity: we accept only those moral prescriptions which we are prepared to prescribe for all similar cases, no matter what position we ourselves occupy in them. This is a version of Kant's categorical imperative and it makes us treat all others on equal terms with ourselves and seek the good of all equally (Mautner, Ibid: 234). Another support of Kant's universalizability theory is that given by Marcus Singer who in his book *Generalization in Ethics* argues extensively in favor of what he calls 'generalization principle'. Generalization principle is another formulating of the universalizability theory or principle. The principle, according to Singer, is premised on the following assertion: What is right (or wrong) for one person must be right (or wrong) for any similar person in similar circumstance (Singer, 1961). This assertion, as agreed by Singer tallies with the age-old principle of fairness or justice or impartiality. What is right for one person must be right for anyone in the same circumstances. The generalization principle is not vague, useless and inapplicable. According to Singer this principle is presupposed by every genuine moral judgment, for it is an essential part of the meaning of such moral terms as "right", "wrong", and "ought", in their distinctively moral senses.

It must be noted also that John Rawls' 'veil of ignorance' agrees with Kant's categorical imperative and represents the universalizability or generalizability principle. The principle of veil of ignorance ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances (Rawls, 1999: 11). The veil of ignorance is a condition of the 'original position' of men who are to enter into social relationships freely with *themselves* and who must do so for their benefit without recourse to taking advantage of the others or of the prevailing circumstances. "They do not know how the various alternatives will affect

their own particular case and they are obliged to evaluate principles solely on the basis of general considerations” (Ibid: 118). The veil of ignorance is so natural a condition that it merits to be called a ‘universal law’. The parties in the original position, who are both rational and free must choose principles the consequences of which they are prepared to live with whatever generation they turn out to belong (Ibid: 119). The veil of ignorance, like the Kantian *maxims* and the *categorical imperative* furnish the principle that free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association.

We must assert therefore that Kant’s universalizability approach to moral principle is a theory that brings to the fore moral imperative. It is a theory that projects to the fore the objectiveness of moral action. It makes unacceptable the subjectiveness of morals and not in agreement with moral relativism and moral particularism – the view that limits moral concerns to a particular group or class, society or nation. Rather, moral universalizability agrees with moral universalism – the view that all human beings are morally equal in the sense that membership of a certain tribe, class, caste, nation, race, etc. as such neither justifies special consideration nor excuses lack of consideration. It is on this basis that the notion of universalizability takes its cue and is firmly established. In a nutshell therefore, we say that universalizability of morals is its capacity to be generalized for everyone, everywhere. What this also means is that one and the same *set* of moral principles will apply to every person, in every society, at every time in history, regardless of the particular circumstances and interests of individuals or different societies. This principle can also be extended to the members in state, society, group, institution, association, etc. Whatever moral principle they adopt, whatever norms or mores they agree upon should

apply to all who member and number. That is to say, the same set of rules must apply to and be observed by each and everyone provided he/she belongs to the said group, irrespective of status, education, background, etc. There will not be admitted any special consideration whatsoever, unless they want to punctuate the moral balance. This is where the principle of *generalization* takes its root, namely, from a premise true of any arbitrarily chosen individual, to a conclusion about every individual. If this individual and that individual are duty-bound to observe the moral precepts, then, every individual in that society or association also duty-bound to observe the moral precepts. This *universal generalization* of morals is what will bring order and stability in any human arrangement.

4.8 The Ontological Basis of Universalizability Theory

In order for Kant's universalizability principle to pass the test of time and to remain intelligible, it must, as a matter of necessity be grounded on ontology. It is the ontological grounding that gives a metaphysic its essence and makes it defensible. Kant took notice of this. The ontological grounding or basis of the moral universalizability theory is akin to its metaphysic. It furnishes us with its *a priori* foothold as against the mere appearance in experience. That provides the grounds also of its eternal and enduring nature (stance).

Kant has observed that the nature of morals makes it susceptible to abuse especially in the event that its principles are left to be applied haphazardly and selfishly. For Kant, "morals themselves are liable to all sorts of corruption, as long as we are without that clue and supreme cannon by which to estimate them correctly" (*Metaphysic*, loc cit. 254). This problem however, is to be solved in the criteria of universalizability. In order to capture this aright, Kant reminds us that morality is "not merely for men but for all *rational creatures generally*, not merely under certain contingent conditions or with exceptions but

with absolute necessity" (Ibid: 263). The necessity for acting morally is laid on any sensible and rational being, without exception. The first ontological basis of moral universalizability is that morality is that which both human and rational beings must prize. Besides, Kant also argues that morals is 'innate' in man, not in the sense of it being emblazoned in this soul of man, but in the sense that man has the natural capacity to identify the morally good and also to follow. In "The Conflict of Faculties" Kant stood for his firm belief in an innate human predisposition (Goodreau, 1998: 161). He also maintains that there is a moral law operating within man and all rational beings – "I have not to search for it and conjecture it as though it was veiled in darkness or was in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see it before me and connect it directly with the consciousness of my existence" (third *Critique*, *op cit.* 360-361). According to Kant, moral law within "begins from my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity, but which is traceable only by the understanding, and with which I discern that I am not in a merely contingent but in a universal and necessary connection, as I am also thereby with all those visible worlds (Ibid: 361). This moral law operates in every rational creature. That being the case, the test of morality is in its universalizability. This is because its moral application will not be discriminatory, partial or inconsistent. Rather, it must follow from a generally agreed standard, norm or yardstick, so that it becomes devoid of any discrimination and any disagreement when it is operationalized. Besides, it avoids the problem that is always associated with application since people already have the knowledge and the understanding of their moral requirements. And since moral law holds good for all rational creatures, anybody in a sane state and sound mind would appreciate the 'moral result' or 'moral outcome'

prevalent in the ‘kingdom of ends’ because it tallies with agreement about goals. In the third *Critique* Kant insists that man enjoys what he calls “the original moral bent our nature” (*Ibid*: 593).

The notion of kingdom of ends also fits perfectly as an ontological basis of universalizability criterion. A society survives and thrives according to its agreement about morals, otherwise, it perishes. In fact, there should always exist in the society a bond of morality. This Kant asserted when he favoured the idea of kingdom of ends, that is, the human community, which satisfies human nature. “By a *kingdom* I understand the union of different rational beings in system by common laws” (*Ibid*: 274).

In order to get the best out of the community arrangement that satisfies the human nature, obedience to moral laws is imperative. In the kingdom or community there must be laws made by the members in their rational capacity as being capable of protecting them and serving their individual and collective ends. In the kingdom of ends, a member is both a law maker (law giver) and also subjected to the law (of his own will). “A rational being belongs as a member to the kingdom of ends when, although giving universal laws in it, he is also himself subject to these laws. He belongs to it as *sovereign* when, while giving laws, he is not subject to the will of my other” (*Ibid*: 274).

Kant’s mention of ‘rational being’ shows a true picture of humanity. Human beings, irrespective of where they live are capable of morality. Moral living is spatio-temporal dimensional. That is the strength of the universal moral argument - the generalization of morality such that human beings enjoy the same moral rating in the same given situation. It is this moral capacity, moral capability, moral equality, and moral ability, stemming from the moral law within, coupled with the freedom of the will, that makes human beings

morally responsible. And in their rationality, they make use of morals in protecting their species – the human species. According to Kant “morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in himself, since by this alone is it possible that he should be a legislating member in the kingdom of ends. Thus, morality, and humanity as capable of it, is that which alone has dignity” (Ibid: 274).

The ontological basis of Kant’s universalizability theory presents a conception of man and morality that generalizes and carries to the higher level of abstraction the familiar moral theories found in the earlier moral theories. To accomplish this Kant had to jettison all empirical examples directed at an individual and to the satisfaction of his self-love via his volition or intention. Kant gives the reason:

For with what right could we bring into unbounded respect a universal precept for every rational nature that which perhaps holds only under contingent conditions of humanity? Or how could laws of the determination of our will be regarded as laws of the determination of the will of rational beings generally, and for us only as such, if they were merely empirical and did not take their origin wholly a priori from pure but practical reason? (Ibid: 263).

Kant frowns at any attempt to make morality relative, sectional, egoistic, situational or even consequential. At the same time, he finds no place for *moral phobia* because every rational being is capable of morality. These are fatal to morality because they are not capable of furnishing us the true moral standard capable of satisfying the true moral nature of mankind. According to Kant:

Nor could anything be more fatal to morality than that we should wish to derive it from examples. For every example of it that is set before me must be first itself tested by principles of morality, whether it is worthy to serve as an original example, that is, as a pattern, but by no means can it authoritatively furnish the conception of morality. Even the Holy one of the

Gospels must first be compared with our ideal of moral perfection before we can recognize Him as such (Ibid: 263).

Kant's universalizability principle has effectively been erected on a firm ontology – the ontology of man, the philosophy that captures the essence of man. The ontology of man captures, in real term, the universal nature of man. It shows that human beings are equal and are capable of morality. That is why what is good or bad, right or wrong, for one man is also right or wrong, good or bad, for another man in the same situations. This brings about equality, impartiality and consistency in moral actions. It also makes the determination of what constitutes the moral worth of an act an easy task. This has implication for the quest for a universal new moral order especially in a globalized and pluralistic world.

4.9 Universalizability Principle and the Quest for New Moral Order

Kant's universalizability moral principle has the desired level of generality necessary for the global new moral order. Kant was not the first individual to pontificate on the universalizability of moral principles. Prior to Kant, there had been people like Confucius (551-479 BCE), Jesus Christ and Richard Cumberland (1631 – 1718). These men presented universal moral principles which like Kant's later position, maintained logical consistency with an appeal on moral agents to avoid self- contradiction. For instance, in his *Analects*, Confucius wrote: “do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire” (Barcalow, 1994: 132). That is to say, before embarking on any act whatsoever, one must be resolved to accept such act in return and then make it acceptable to all. This is in agreement with the universalization principle. In the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ Jesus said “always treat others as you would like them to treat you” (Matthew, 7:12). This ‘Golden Rule’, as it is popularly referred, is universal and general and can be so interpreted

because it prescribes that what is right or good for one person is right or good also for another, in a relatively similar situation. There are no privileged persons; other people's welfare is just as important as ours. Richard Cumberland (1990: 146), who also maintained that universality, is an essential feature of moral laws once wrote:

Whoever judges truly must judge the same things which he thinks truly are lawful to himself to be lawful to others in like case. In the same manner, whatever assistance any man rightly and truly believes he may or ought to demand according to right reason, it is equitably and consequently a dictate of right reason that he should think that any other in like circumstances justly may or ought to demand the like help of him.

The above supports the assertion by Kant that moral claims have a logical feature called *universality*. If something is morally acceptable for one person, it is also morally acceptable for everyone in the same circumstance. If it is morally acceptable to perform action X in circumstance A, then it is morally acceptable for anyone to do action X in circumstance A. It is only by this principle that we avoid self-contradiction, which is a minimal requirement for rationality, namely by acting only on maxims that we can consistently will to be universal laws.

The moral order is maintained, according to Kant, through the universal or general, impartial and consistent application or enforcement of moral standard. We have said that the whole talk about universalizability is the practice of making moral generalization for everyone, everywhere. What this also means is that one and the same set of moral principles will apply to everyone, in every social setting, at every time in history, regardless of the particular circumstances and interests of individuals or different societies. That is to say, morality must be the same everywhere. Any discrimination will only cause chaos and social instability, a situation that will only punctuate the moral

balance of human society and also frustrate the realization of new moral order. To make ethics intelligible and to succeed in the business of moral regeneration, it is the universalizability principle that must be invoked. In short, there would be no ethics without universal touch, without general conformity. Soren Kierkegaard, in *Fear and Trembling* (1946: 129) posited that the ethical as such is the universal, it applies to everyone, and the same thing is expressed from another point of view by saying that it applies at every instant.

Kant reiterated again and again that the only path to a moral order is the part of universalism. He also asserted that an ethical principle cannot be justified in relation to any partial or sectional group, not even built on individual preferences. Ethics, therefore takes a universal point of view. The theories of *veil of ignorance*, *impartial spectator* and *ideal observer*, all point to the universalizability of morality, making the individual see himself in the general picture of the universe and as an active player in the universe of Being. This is the beginning of the much desired new moral order on which will be erected the equally desired social, political and economic new order. The high point of universalizability in our moral quest is that in accepting that ethical judgments must be made from a universal point of view, ‘I am accepting that my personal interests cannot, simply because they are my interests, count more than the interests of everyone and anyone else. Thus, my very natural concern that my own interest be looked after must, when I think ethically, be extended to the interest of others. This captures the principle of *ethical altruism*, which holds that people *ought* to act with each other’s interests in mind. So, what is objectively good for me as a human being, should also be objectively good for

you as a human being. No one human being should count for two or less than one but one, like every other human being else.

We cannot however, apply the popular saying that ‘one man’s meat is another’s poison’ in moral matters. It only applies when we want to make choice based on our individual differences. For instance, the choice of food, dress, location and environment in which to live, the school to attend, the course to offer, the choice of job, etc, are in some way personal. They can admit our individual differences and by that too our preferences. But in the issue of morality, individual differences, intentions, volition, preferences, choices – are not given first line consideration. If the individual is given first line or prime consideration then, there would be no basis for evaluating morals and in a society that allows this impartiality there will be *moral-chaos* because there will be a lot many yardsticks – as many people there are as possible-for measuring right and wrong. In fact, the very idea of morals would not be taken seriously. So, moral universalism, rather than moral particularism, remains the best approach to morality.

4.10 Human Beings as the Legislators of Morality

To legislate is to enact laws, rules and policies. Laws in particular are promulgated for social stability. Human positive laws are enacted in order to control behaviour and to streamline conduct. The reason behind the idea of laws is that not every conduct or behaviour is acceptable and not all can be in the best interest of society. The need for laws, rules, policies therefore comes naturally. That is the reason obedience to laws takes universal and general point of view. Both the common law and the moral law are made for social cohesion and stability. Moral laws are the handiwork of human beings who are moral agents by their nature. Laws of morality are not sent from heaven however. But

they are legislated by men in keeping with their experience that not just any way of behaving is acceptable, that there is a right and a wrong way of conducting ourselves. Moral legislation is involved in accepting the good and rejecting the bad. In their capacity as free moral agents – beings whose nature involves morality – humans have come a long way in making moral decisions. Over the ages, men have been involved in *reflective morality*. Reflective morality emerges when a person attempts to find general principles by which to direct and justify his or her personal behaviour. It is this reflective morality that has given rise to the *oughtness* in our moral contemplation.

This oughtness is not from the deity or the divine (although their authority, whether they are real or imaginary, may be invoked) but from the human experience over the ages, in keeping with man's moral nature. For instance, without morality, the human society will relapse into chaos, a situation that will be unbearable, making human life uninteresting. We exist as individuals, no doubt. But we live in a world peopled by so many others. It is in our nature to be sociable. We live and act out our lives in the company with many other persons. And when we subject our actions to rational examination, we discover that not just any action is good, not just any conduct is acceptable. Then we begin to winnow our various conducts with the purpose of removing the chaff out of it.

It is in our efforts to strike a moral balance that moral laws are made. They stem from social realities. That is why society is also called a *moral being*. It is an enduring union of a number of persons morally bound under authority to cooperate for a common good (Gonsalves, loc cit.310). Every member of the society is a legislator of morals; hence obedience to moral laws is also demanded. There can be no strangeness of morals and moral phobia cannot even be imagined whatsoever because man has moral law within and

is also a legislator of morals. This creates a moral bond on which society thrives and is also sustained.

In their rationality, from socio-historical experience and their moral nature, human beings know the ethically good. They are at home with what is ontologically moral. The knowledge of good and evil is human common knowledge. There is no doubt about that. On a regular basis, human beings have the capacity to identify that which is good and that which is not good. They are the very legislators of morality.

Morality is a set of principles or rules that guide us in our actions. Moral rules whether stated as law or not – form the basic structure of every society, defining the limits of what is permitted, and defining what is expected too. The key to morality, as Kant would argue, is *duty*, that is, doing what you *ought* to do. And that is purely social and societal, and of course, human.

However, acting morally, although human, is not always easy, not even possible at all times. The idea of *duty* expresses the difficulty and the challenges of being moral. That one is aware of the moral law within does not suggest that acting morally comes cheap. It can also prove to be difficult. There can be forces against the attempt to be moral for instance, human weakness (*akrasia*). There are other contending motives which intend to frustrate the march towards moral acts. Human beings do not possess holy will either. That is why to live a moral life requires striving and pummeling the self and a great level of discipline in order to accomplish it. That is where the idea of duty makes sense. It does not matter whether it pleases or not, or whether it is easy or difficult, but that which must be performed even at a great discomfort, dissatisfaction and even great loss to the self.

4.11 Deconstruction of Kant

We have not taken Kant's philosophy as if he had no flaws. One who had read Kant's *Anthropology* and *Observations* would think that there are many Kants; that Kant of the *Critiques* and of the *Groundwork of Metaphysic of Morals* is different people. Or can one talk of early Kant and later Kant? We must try as much then to deconstruct some of his positions, especially those positions that only projected the German and the white races as only those capable of comprehending true essences and realities. By that one would make bold to argue that Kant, who held himself 'prisoner' in Konigsberg, an arm chair researcher on races and geography would only grant the European and the German in particular the powers which he claimed issued from reason and consciousness. Kant's knowledge of man since he never travelled outside his native land is unarguably not universal. He only knew the Germans and perhaps their European neighbours. In his hierarchy of races, Kant never allowed the Blacks, the Red Indians any full participation or identify (see *literature review*). These were not human beings in the real sense of the word. They have not attained humanity (and cannot). That is why he gave tacit support to colonialism by producing the manual that guided the exercise. This he did in response to the directive by the German government who saw him as a brilliant scholar, to produce the metaphysical roadmap for colonizing those races that were not regarded as human beings. When Kant exclaimed *sapere audre* (dare to use your reason) the Enlightenment slogan, he unarguably meant that Europeans should dare to use their intelligence to subdue the world (Okoro 2002: 227). That Kant came to be regarded as the champion of the Enlightenment is unconnected with the fact that he used the period to kindle or to awaken the European through a philosophy that emphasized human freedom. So when Kant

spoke, it was as if the oracle has spoken. When Kant's philosophy saw its use in the social economic and political lives of Europeans with Eurocentric gains, he came to be loved and admired such that, even as a bachelor and childless, his funeral attracted many people never witnessed in the history of funeral procession then.

Friedrich Gentz, an expert in Kant argues that if the goal of Kant's anthropological theories were realised, it would compact the whole species into one and the same form. This is a threat to diversity and free movement of spirit. Anyone who disagrees with Kant's compact would be treated as a rebel against fundamental principles of human nature (Eze, Ibid: 131)

Okoro (2002.225) has observed that Kant is guilty of double-dealing. On one hand Kant talks of man to imply living beings on earth, who possess reason, but on the other he makes "reason" the sole possession of the European which is another way of saying that the European represents "man" in his most ideal sense and therefore epitomizes 'mankind' in its finest essence. The ambiguity in Kant has made scholars such as Michel Foucault query Kant's true meaning of terms like 'reason', 'man', and 'mankind' (Okoro, Ibid). If these terms refer to the European, then, the attainment of Kant's moral universalizability principle would be impossible.

According to Earl W. Count (Eze 1997: 103) Kant produced the most profound racial thought of the eighteenth century. In the *Anthropology* and the *Observations*, Kant drew a hierarchy of races: white (Europeans), Yellow (Asians), black (Africans) and red (American Indians). Whereas in the Anthropology he had promoted the European as the special and superior race, in the *Observations* he placed the Asians and the blacks at

the foot of moral ladder showing that their customs and mores are barbaric, primitive and immoral. According to Eze (*Ibid*: 115) Kant held that it is customary to permit theft in Africa, or to desert children in China, or to bury them alive in Brazil, or for the Eskimos to strangle them. Kant erroneously held that non-Europeans were unreflective in their cultural practices and mores. He posited that non-Europeans act on natural impulses, are inclined to evil, are always towing the command of authority, do lack ethical principles and are therefore not properly, that is, essentially human. One who held and taught this philosophy of race hate would have to convince his readers that his latter thoughts have been purged of its racial biases. This is because the ideas he expressed will not promote his philosophy of moral universalizability.

In the first *Critique* Kant also made a claim that flies in the face of commonsense experience of men. He elevated *Reason* beyond any other fundamental structure of man. For him *reason* is all there is. For that reason is authoritarian, autocratic, impositional. This glorification of *reason* and its elevation over say, emotion, passion, sentiment, is not synonymous with freedom which he (Kant) also believed to be essential factor in moral action. J.F. Lyotard (Okoro 2002) argues that taking reason the Kant's way will only create, as well, the culture of consensus instead of disensus. Consensus means that everybody, every race must agree. That is the end of freedom. But disensus allows opportunity of all races, all stakeholders to dialogue, to be heard. In the world of men this promotes stability and a sense of belonging. It reduces the feeling of superiority over other races or groups and makes imposition of ideas archaic. Projecting *reason* beyond what is moral is also a roadblock to moral universalism.

It can also be deduced that for Kant, reason is not for all. It is for the educated, those capable of attaining abstract knowledge, like Socrates' intuition. One needs to be elevated to a certain plane in order to attain it. Therefore, there are classes of people who may never attain it including children, idiots, imbeciles, etc. this also is a problem that will make moral universalizability impossible. Also reading Kant's racialistic texts, the human being he meant is the European. If reason is that which only human beings are capable of, and Europeans are the only human beings, then how can moral universalizability be truly universal?

However, if we reasonably allow reason as natural to humanity – all races of men – then, Kant can be applauded because, reason in its pure form, is the true starting point for mankind. Any moral principle that makes it the basis will be in keeping with human nature. It is on this premise we can go with Kant in the quest for moral universalism.

4.12 Limitation/Critique

The fact that moral principle must be considered universal does not entail that they must be considered absolute. A universal principle is founded on agreement on goals rationally arrived at and it is made to apply to everyone. In other words, universal morality must have a human face and must surrender to the service of humanity. On the other hand, an absolute moral principle does not permit exceptions; it is blind in its application and lacks human face. The picture of an absolute moral principle is as if people have been tied to the law – a situation where man is made for law and not the law for man. Besides, a moral principle that is seen in its absolute terms always comes from outside man, possibly from a supposedly divine being. To make it explicit; to say that 'stealing is wrong' is universal

moral principle means that it applies to everyone. But to say that it is absolute is to say that there are for instance, no circumstances in which stealing would be wrong. There would be no difference, for example, for someone who steals a beggar's purse for his personal gain and the person who steals a suicide bombers bomb in order to prevent him from blowing a crowded church on a Christmas Eve. Or to someone lying to a racist that a person who is marked to die as a result of ethnic cleansing does not belong to the hunted tribe or race and by so doing prevents him from destroying a whole generation. Both stealing a terrorist's bomb and frustrating the evil desire of a racist by lying can be universalizable. But to make lying or stealing an absolute wrong means that there is no circumstance in which stealing and lying would not be right. The moral law of man would be such to protect and preserve society. The society must take the first line of consideration because it is the arrangement that is made for the good of all.

However, Kant's universalizability principle or the categorical imperative appears to be clothed in the garb of moral absolutism or so it seems. It does not seem to take human limitations into considerations. The fact of *akrasia* or human weakness has been overlooked by Kant even though he was aware of it (*Metaphysic, loc cit.* 265). The application of moral universalism should allow the caveat that we should not treat one person differently from another *when there is no good reason to do so*. This will be the *caveat* on which the human face of the categorical imperative is etched. It must be appreciated that circumstance alters causes. The most important thing is that we must go beyond our own likes and dislikes. It must be noted that there could be 'external circumstances'. So, we can say then that what is right for one person must be right for any *similar person* in similar circumstance. For example, the rule to rescue a drowning child

cannot hold for a blind man, an amputee or a person who does not know how to swim. What this means is that there are special considerations such as abilities and physical challenges that must be brought to bear on the agent in our evaluation and judgment of moral acts. So, while it is the duty of a good swimmer to save a drowning child, the blind man stands no chance at all.

Another way of looking at the universalizability principle is that it can easily be misapplied. For instance, a thief will always want another's cooperation in stealing or defrauding people. Also a pathological liar would want people to cooperate with him in the business of lying and both would be willing to reciprocate. Similarly, a masochist and a sadist would have others torture them since they would be enjoined to torture others. This poses a danger as Kant noted: "on this basis the criminal would be able to dispute with the judges who punish him", and "many a man would readily agree that others should not help him if only he would be dispersed from affording help to them" (Paton, 1948: 97; Singer, 1977: 467). This shows that literal interpretations of the rule can bring about misrepresentations of what is intended by it. What this suggests is that the universalizability rule can at times be imprecise and therefore is in need of qualification. Yet the limitations do not take the very substance of the universal rule. For instance, if we take human considerations and/or special circumstance into account we can as well universalize them. While on the other hand the masochist and the sadist have psychological problems and their 'special' conditions does predispose them to being morally and ethically 'independent'.

Another problem that can limit the march towards attaining a universal moral code is regional biases fuelled by experience and culture. C.S. Momoh has emphasized the strong

grip of culture and cultural experience in time and space. No matter how genuine a philosopher or piece of philosophy may be, it is clothed in culture and cultural experience, the interpretation of experience and the perception of the world. According to Momoh, “the greatest minds in philosophy – African, occidental or oriental – whether they proclaim it explicitly or not always remain children of their cultures, times, history and experiences” (Momoh, 1991: 2). The implication of this is that although the whole world may be confronted with a problem, interpretation and urgency of solution may not gather the same momentum. Even their approach to solving the problem may differ. This is because of the regional or racial differences. While some may have a quick reaction time or even become proactive, others might have a *sidon look* (state of inaction) attitude and expect things to work out ‘naturally’ or even *muzzle* it, so to speak. This accounts for the reason; despite the good that morality holds for human kind, many still do not take it seriously. There seem not to be agreement on the approach or method despite agreement on goal.

CHAPTER FIVE

FACTORS THAT SUPPORT AND /OR MILITATE AGAINST MORAL UNIVERSALIZABILITY

5.1 Introduction

A universal new moral order is attainable in this world. It is not a mirage, an illusion or utopia. Rather, it is an ideal to be realized in this world provided certain conditions are met. The possibility of a universal moral new order rests on man who is a moral being. However, human beings must first resolve to fashion a rational moral order and erect it on a system of morality that has universally acceptable standard which is also operationable and then work towards achieving it. It is worthwhile for men to agree on moral goal because of the benefits by way of social stability, peace, and harmony which the society needs. To achieve universal moral order, human beings, who are naturally good and capable of morality, must prepare the ground for it. First, they must resolve to belong to a global community, guided by a single moral principle. This means embarking on a moral ‘phenomenological journey’ – a journey that looks at concrete issues without bias, prejudice, presupposition or sentiment. To achieve a universal moral order, there must be an objective appraisal of moral precepts. If human beings are moral beings, capable of attaining morality, then they are capable of objective judgment of what is right and what is wrong. However, since morality is judgment of conduct and behaviour, it requires us to work out what is generally acceptable. To do this we must go beyond our personal likes and dislikes. We must consider the rest of humanity. In order to establish a universal moral order we must prepare the grounds that will make such a condition not only possible but also useful and satisfying. To do so we must re-examine our basic beliefs in order to

bring them in line with civilized qualities. Our moral consciousness has to be rekindled. The *voice* of our education must be clear in order to train our mind so that our total self is shaped and molded in a universal contraption. All these are possible in any organized society and in the globalized world. We must reject being shielded by our culture, tradition, religion, race or other inhibiting factors such as can serve as *idols*. We must refuse moral phobia in any guise. We must accept society, not to reject it. Our social nature must be projected so that we make the world accommodating and conducive for all.

5.2 The Primacy of Universal New Moral Order

Morality occupies enviable place in the affairs of men and has great value to their existence. It must be asserted that morals can only be meaningful when it is generalized or universalized. To say that universalized or generalized moral order is highly prized is to state the obvious. A workable moral system cannot be relative in application if it must achieve the desired objectives. That is to say, a moral principle cannot be justified in relation to any group. To make morals serve the desired purposes, it must be such that its principles must be ‘standardized’, made to fit into a universal scheme of things. Moral partiality will make the quest for the attainment of new moral order rather difficult. But universalizability of morality requires impartiality, equality of treatment and general application of moral principles and practices, tasking us to go beyond thinking only about our own interests, and leading us to take a point of view from which we must as well give equal consideration to the interests of all affected by our actions. A person’s ethical principles must not be whatever he or she takes as overridingly important or that which works for him. Any ethical principle founded on this philosophy will frustrate the quest for the new moral order. Rather, a person’s ethical or moral principle must be in

conformity with the universal and objective moral principle adopted by others in the same community. Whatever therefore we accept as our ethical principles must not be non-universalizable. It is not ‘what benefits me’ but ‘what benefits us’. We must follow reason which is universally and objectively valid. Reason should be the governor of morals.

This is where Rousseau’s *General Will* idea makes sense even as it lends support to the idea of moral universalism. The individual’s *will* should as a matter of necessity agree with the *General will* of the others in order to attain a moral principle acceptable by all for the general interest and wellbeing of all. Kant borrowed this Rousseau’s idea as the basis for driving home his moral universalism. There must be agreement on goals and agreement also on the method or approach for the attainment of the goal. This will promote order, stability and plural accommodation which are the ingredients for the survival and continued existence of the society.

This calls for the suppressing of individual’s self-serving motive, volition, passion, emotion and all forms of irrational and anti-social behaviours. Where selfish inclination is allowed to drive morality, as Nietzsche would suggest, the best we can get is transvaluation of all existing and society-protecting values. That means living in a chaotic, unstable society which is always at precipice. We agree with Nietzsche that emotion, passion and feeling are human psychological drives. We argue however, that they must be checkmated or suppressed in order for us to attain ‘public morality’ which finds its expression in the *general will*. Man’s rational nature must therefore override his

irrational nature for him to enjoy a moral life and living (cf Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, 1966: 577-8).

Now, if we embrace universal moral principles and make them our own, we will experience a social, political, legal and economic order that promotes stability, harmony, sustainable development; that which also supports the respect for man. Universal moral principle goes beyond racial, geographical, religious and political boundaries. The advantage is that it makes moral judgment objective even as it streamlines our personal actions with the actions of others. It makes us think before we act, not to act before we think, or to act mechanically. It also makes our actions altruistic .In fact, it makes us take our pride of place as human beings who are rational and who can choose the best when alternatives are presented to them.

Our claim of belonging to a global village cannot be a quality claim in the absence of universal, global moral principles where morality is grounded on the altar of reason. It is obvious that to toy with morals is to court chaos at every level - local, regional, global - irrespective of the structures and ideas on ground. Mark Bell has expressed it thus: “without a sound moral basis, a society cannot be civilized. A society may have good laws, a just constitution, regular elections, well organized courts and an efficient structure of government and administration, but, if it has a weak moral basis, the qualities of a civilized society will nevertheless elude it” (Bell, loc cit. 19).

The precondition for an enduring society is morality. The prerequisite for the success of any society is also morality. To universalize morals is to allow moral principles permeate the actions of the individuals in society. This is how to achieve the much quested new

moral order. Milton Gonsalves have observed that society, any society, is held together by bonds, *moral bonds* of means and ends. Since it is only rational and free beings who can form society, then, every society must be seen as an *enduring union of a number of persons morally bound under authority to cooperate for common good* (Gonsalves, loc cit. 310). That is what makes morality a prized privilege of rational minds. The world, taken both globally and at the country level cannot see the full light of civilization if there is no moral consideration given to the schemes in any state of affairs. The test of validity should be on the reliance on morals. A robust moral attitude on the part of a society's citizens is needed if the world must attain civilized standards. Most of the terrorist attacks and anti-racial, anti-religious and anti-people activities being experienced today including acts of genocide ethnic-cleansing, protests and civil disobedient would be eliminated if both the people and the authorities embrace a universal *moral* language – the language of moral universalism. Most agitations and demonstrations about regime change, resource control are also always because of immoral polity. The world, including its regions, states, zones, territories, societies, communities, associations, etc., would be an arrangement for the good of mankind when private and public morality is maintained.

5.3 The Level of Moral Consciousness

One identifying characteristic of man is consciousness. Consciousness is a state of being aware of the world around you. Consciousness drives man to self-recognition. Descartes, in the *Meditations*, addresses consciousness in the formula “I think; therefore I am” *cogito ergo sum* (Descartes, 1997: 146). This is an awareness of self-existence and self-knowledge of the self. This self-recognition is also self-reflective and it is purely human. Sartre reiterates the importance of consciousness. In his *Being And Nothingness*, Jean-Paul

Sartre wrote: “the very nature of consciousness is such that to be and to know itself are one and the same. Consciousness of an object is consciousness of being conscious of an object. Thus by nature, all consciousness is self-consciousness” (Sartre, 1966: xi). Sartre agrees with Husserl that all consciousness is consciousness of something. Consciousness is intentional and directive, pointing to a transcendent object other than itself. This is the germ of Sartre’s assertion of man as a Being-in-the-world (Ibid: xii).

The role of consciousness in morality is that through consciousness we become aware of what we are. This is because we are not only conscious, but we are also conscious of being conscious. Our consciousness drives us to claim our freedom which is another characteristic of being human. But what we do with our freedom is our own. It is the exercise of our freedom that makes us to choose and when we choose, we should claim responsibility. It is for that reason, we cannot separate experience from consciousness just as we cannot separate knowledge from experience. It must be said here therefore that our *altered* or *elevated* or *heightened* consciousness comes from our experience and it causes changes in behaviour which in turn alter our moral outlook.

We must however, emphasize moral consciousness, that is, human conscious awareness of their capacity and capability for moral living. By moral consciousness we mean that man harbours in his person the capacity and capability for moral awareness and also exhibits same. Moral consciousness is part of his nature and he cannot afford to run away from himself. Moral consciousness presupposes that we all as human beings recognize the good and the bad, the right and the wrong, when we meet one. There is no pretending about the knowledge of good and evil. Just as we cannot deny our rationality, our

freedom, our consciousness, we cannot also deny our moral consciousness. Man's moral consciousness starts when he reflects on his conduct, actions and behaviours. He immediately appreciates the good or otherwise in his actions. And immediately his conscience is activated to judge the act. There is no sitting on the fence or being neutral about it. The truth-value of every human action stares him on the face. This agrees with the fact that morality is natural to the rational man.

When we talk of conscience, we indirectly imply the activity of consciousness. Conscience is the power to do evaluative judgment of moral acts. Conscience is the conscious self attuned to moral values and disvalues, to right and wrong, good and evil, in order to apply them to practical acts. That is why some have called conscience an 'inner voice' while to others it is the 'voice of God'. Conscience is a practical function of the intellect, under the impulse of the desire, to do the right and good; that which judges the concrete act of an individual person as morally good or evil. Conscience functions as a guide to future acts and as a judge of the past acts. However, one can deaden his or her conscience and refuse its light to shine on his/her evaluative judgment. We can then argue that a *correct* conscience judges good as good and evil as evil. An *erroneous* conscience judges good as evil and evil as good. A *certain* conscience judges without doubt or fear that the opposite is true. A *doubtful* conscience either makes no judgment or judges with fear that the opposite is true. Conscience is said to be *strict* or *lax* according to how it tends to perceive or overlook various values. All these happen in consciousness, in man's full awareness of himself and of others around him.

Moral consciousness is at the basis of man's moral appraisal. It is this moral appraisal that gives birth to men's moral *ought*, that is, the acceptance and/or rejection of a particular mode of behaviour or conduct. This is one of the qualities that demarcate the being of man and the *being* of entities – man's moral capacity, in other words, man's moral consciousness. It is for that that we posit that moral universalizability is not a mirage, not utopia, but a reality attainable in this world.

5.4 Basic Assumptions of a People About Reality

Akin to moral consciousness is 'knowledge consciousness'. Man's cognitive consciousness takes him far beyond what his present or what his *current* capacity can attain. In an attempt to know knowledge, to understand understanding and to have an insight into insights (Ruch, 1977: 13), man goes beyond the given, beyond the obvious, walking, as it were, through the labyrinth, through the maze of uncharted course. The effort so dissipated is worth the while, namely, to know man's placing in the scheme of things hence, the quest to know *reality*, *the really-real*, the *it is*. Even in his existential *thrownness*, man wants to know whence he was thrown. So he grapples with the gamut of existence. The universe stares him at the face. He is faced with the problem of the *origin* of God, man, spirit, society, evil, disease, death and decay. He is also faced with man's irresistible and irreversible final journey after his commerce with the world. But his greatest marvel is his very existence and the web of relationships thereof. So, closely linked with reality is the challenge of knowledge – for to know *reality* involves knowledge; and to construct a system of *reality* also involves knowledge. Our conception of *reality* drives our motives and the picture we paint of the world. Our conception of reality gives us the materials with which to construct the furniture of the 'universe'. Even

our metaphysical tools are fashioned in the mould of reality which we have accepted as the ground of our being. So, we can therefore say that the way we conceive the *it is*, the *really-real*, the *rationally real*, informs also the way and manner we approach basic issues even in the life – world. Philosophy (ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, logic) is propelled by that which we accept as *reality*.

In order to sustain our conception of reality; in order also to stand it on a firm footing, we must do so on what we have called *basic assumptions*. According to Anyanwu (2000), human beings interpret what they claim to know, and they interpret it with certain assumptions, concepts and worldview. The world in which culture lives is a reconstructed world; reconstructed with language, assumptions about reality, expectations, desires, mindset, etc. Basic assumptions, by their nature are metaphysical and epistemological axioms and postulations that prod human action. Either knowingly or unknowingly, basic assumptions serve as a guide to action and form the basis under which actions are either explained or explained away. According to Godwin Azenabor, basic assumptions are really suppositions, postulates that are explained through some acceptable ways and principles of reasoning (Azenabor, 2004: 72). We can then say that basic assumptions are *primary*, *initial*, and *foundation* assumptions or postulations around which reality is made intelligible and *operationable*. It informs the spirit of the time, directing a people's action, but it also transcends the time in which it is cut out. It serves as a lexicon from which behaviours can claim their meaning with a resounding authority. Basic assumptions often time take control of the subconscious of a people, leaving lasting impression on their *psyche*. The collective psyche of a people can always be shaped by their basic assumptions. More often than not basic assumptions serve as the seat of motivation even

as it operates from the sub-conscious. And all the actions of a people can be interpreted via their basic assumptions about reality.

We make bold here to argue that basic assumptions ground a people's perception of beliefs about things generally. It gives them the tools of interpretation of experience and the building blocks of their philosophy and the grounds for meaning making. Whether a people are active or passive players in the game of life, whether they are conquerors, colonizers, or people who take other men into slavery; whether their philosophy tilts towards humanism, holism, idealism, spiritualism, or materialism; whether they want to conquer nature, submit to nature, or coexist with nature, basic assumptions take the building blocks of these attitudes and dispositions. A people's moral consciousness can be *enlivened* or *deadened* by their basic assumptions since they set the basis for actions and for relationships. For instance, a people's business transactions, their relationships with other people, even their conception of the good, the bad, and the ugly, find their foundation in their basic assumptions. This accounts for the reason why a people who live in a particular area or who trace their origin to a common ancestry, or who have a common experience would behave almost alike. The observed and obvious collective consciousness stems from a people's basic assumptions about reality which serve as the 'voice' of their education and as a determinant of their worldview. It is like a lens of a particular colouration which paints, as it were, the 'picture of reality' and like the voice of a commander, enjoins the people in question to fall in line, to see things alike, behave alike, act alike and accept alike.

We now begin to see why we can say a people are so and so and properly label them with every amount of correctness. Basic assumptions can work for good and for evil purposes. It can direct people rightly or wrongly. In fact, it holds the aces of a people's moral outlook. Francis Bacon may have alluded to the negative side of basic assumptions in his *Idols*. Bacon argued that men's senses and understanding were beset by four sorts of idol: the idols of the tribe arose from erroneous methods of thinking common to humanity as a whole; the idols of the cave from those of the individual; idols of the market place from popular language and communication; and Idols of the theatre from erroneous philosophies (Bacon, 1985: xii). These idols of the mind are capable of corrupting human minds. They are false phantoms that cause distortions of the mind, like distortions of beams of light reflected from an uneven mirror (Stumpf, 1977: 234). These idols or false opinions, dogmas, superstitions, myths, tribal mindset, are errors which distort knowledge. They must be corrected through balanced education, the kind of education that works on the minds of men and make them open and receptive of civilized qualities. The educated mind must be put to the task of winnowing basic assumptions in order to allow the light of reason to bear on them.

Basic assumptions are primordial assumptions that may be fraught with dangers. What is required for them to attain civilized standard is to subject them to second-order analysis where the art of winnowing will be carried out for public good. Let us test our understanding of the above by examining the basic assumption about reality in African (Bantu) philosophy and worldview. In Africa, as noted by Placide Tempels, taking a cue from Bantu ontology, the driving force of philosophy or the basic assumption about reality is force – vital force or vital spirit. That is why in Africa, force, the potent life, vital

energy, are the object of prayers and invocations to God, the spirits and to the ancestors, as well as of all that is usually called witchcraft, sorcery, magic and magical remedies (Tempels, 1953. 44). African behaviour is therefore centred on ‘single value’ – vital force. Force is the supreme value and it permeates all beings in the universe – human beings, animals, trees, insects, animate as well as inanimate beings. Every being have been endowed by God with a certain force, capable of strengthening the vital energy of the strongest being of all creation: man (Ibid: 46). Forces are dynamic. Forces can influence and can also be influenced. That is to say forces can interrelate, interact, interface, interpenetrate, intertwine, and intermingle, each with another, although they are in hierarchical order. Although they may be enfeebled or strengthened, they cannot be destroyed. Writing, with particular reference to the Bantu, Tempels argued that:

For primitive peoples the highest wisdom consists in recognizing a unity in the order of beings in the universe, from which they do not idiotically exclude *a prior* the spiritual world. Their whole ontology which can be systematized around the fundamental idea of “vital force” and associated ideas of growth, influence and vital hierarchy, reveals the world as plurality of coordinated forces. This world order is the essential condition of wholeness in human beings (Ibid: 120)

For the Bantu, objective morality is ontological, immanent and intrinsic morality. Bantu moral standards depend essentially on things ontologically understood. Knowledge of a necessary natural order of forces forms part of the wisdom of primitive peoples. From that we may conclude that an act or usage will be characterized as *ontologically good* by Bantu and that will therefore be accounted *ethically good*; and at length, by deduction, be assessed as *judicially just*. The moral conscience of Bantu, their consciousness of good or bad, of acting rightly or wrongly, the knowledge of moral and legal obligation - all stem from their *first principles*.

In Africa, as well represented by the Bantu, recognition and consideration is given to forces which exist in all things. It is this that is at the seat of motivation and at the basis of actions, whatsoever. Relationships are engaged on the firm belief that forces *interface*, each with another. This idea of forces becomes the contingent prop of relationships at all levels and between and among all beings, both visible and invisible. This is the foundation on which the idea of plural accommodation and the respect for other *beings* is laid.

In Africa and anywhere else, we argue that a people's basic assumptions about reality have a way by which they shape their relationships, moral practices, politics, economies, principles and standards. It is strictly and obviously at the basis of relationships – social, political, economic and religious, both within and without. And every people have their own conceptions about reality. This is purely human and natural. Most behaviours and conducts of human are guided by basic beliefs about reality. It serves as guide post of activities and of behaviour. Therefore the moral appreciation of a people is a function of their basic assumptions about reality. Basic, primary or first assumption about reality is however, relative. That is why it is always a stumbling block to universal morality. But if all human races come to entertain similar basic assumptions about reality especially in this age of knowledge and information, then the universal moral code can be attained.

5.5 The Age of the People in the Scheme of Things

In mankind's existence life and living is dynamic, and not static. Man experiences a dynamic force that moves and brings about change. However, whether the movement is forward or backward, progressive or retrogressive, lateral or sideways, diagonal or

otherwise, it has impact on moral perception of a people. Any period in a people's life is always fully loaded with experience and this experience in turn produces the scheme of things around which a society is organized. Every age or period or epoch in the life of men has its value orientation that it pursues and promotes. This value can be a civilized one, promoting relationships and encouraging plural existence, or a primitive, backward one promoting primordial sentiments, war, hate and an atavistic urge. If a people choose an age of civilization, they promote moral qualities. However, if a people allow themselves to relapse into barbarism, then, they must be prepared to be treated as a pariah and then suffer isolation.

A people's value system is a function of the age in which they live. An age can be primitive or civilized. A primitive age will replicate the Hobbesian state of nature where they shun reflecting on morals because they cannot see beyond their nose and as a result fail to take morals seriously. On the other hand, a civilized age will be accommodating, appreciating to the fullest civilized qualities and reflective moral consciousness. Since human beings are not always static, the dynamism in their character makes them move from one stage to another. A primitive society today can be a civilized one tomorrow. All that needs to be done is to resolve to make progress in a civilized direction; to move away from primitivity. This might take a gradual process but its success depends on how ready and steady a people are prepared to go. Also how a people interpret their past experience and how they allow it to affect them. It is a function of how they apply themselves to the present existential experience, either to tackle their problems head on through civilized methods or remain trapped in the quagmire of primordial sentiments and *static motion*. On

the other hand, a civilized society today may descend into primitivity tomorrow because of the inability to manage experience or the temptation to follow the vogue.

So, the age of a people will determine whether a universal moral principle and standard is attainable. However, the ability to achieve a great leap is with man and so moral universalism is possible. This can be done, first by establishing a moral firmament around which will revolve any meaningful civilization and sustainable development. We are a fortunate age, because *ours* is a global village with education and knowledge explosion. The concept of a global village means that people should set aside their differences and see the larger human community as a *village* or even a *household* wherein people live close to one another, share with one another, enjoy with one another, and of course, suffer with one another. Because of the close nature of the village system, members of the village have common experience. This *commonness* of experience makes rational and civilized people to think twice before they act out their lot. If every member of the village is exposed to the same vagaries of nature, then efforts should be made to protect the village. The ideal of global village takes the world, especially with modern communication and transportation, as having a village – like structure or arrangement. In fact, there is no far distance place any more in our universe. Somebody who catches cold in London this morning, for example, can spread it in Lagos this night and in New York or Beijing the following morning. So, the earth has become more of a *boat* which occupants have common destiny even as they sail onward, together.

The conception of the world as a global community has positive and far reaching implication for our moral quest. It promotes relationships, democratic culture and plural

existence. The fact that our world could be dangerously exposed will mean that all men of good will always rally round themselves to protect the earth. The global village idea suggests that there is no longer any person belonging to the ‘other side’, no more the notion of *outside they*. It is no longer the problem of ‘we’ and ‘them’. It is now ‘we’ and ‘us’ – a case of *onward together*, as the Navy would have as their motto. The age we should operate is that which deemphasizes racial or regional or religious differences. Our age should be that which takes human species as ontologically given and then works towards the promotion of sterling human qualities which will in turn promote the dignity and respect for mankind. Our resolve to treat humanity as a kingdom of ends should make our age a different one.

So, we cannot wish away the collective resolve of men in our quest to attain a universally acceptable and operationable moral principle. Our collective ugly, unpleasant and unwholesome experiences – slavery, racism, wars, terrorism, religious bigotry; and of natural ‘evil’ such as death, disease, disaster – are enough to prod us to chart a civilized moral pathway. And because we are involved, it behooves on us to embrace the age of moral reorientation and moral rearmament. That age is with us. It is now.

5.6 The Level of Aesthetic Appreciation of a People

Aesthetics is the appreciation of the beautiful, the good and the ugly as they exist in the universe. But it has implication on the appreciation and evaluation of morals. If a people know that which is objectively beautiful and can develop a liking for it; if a people can also know that which is objectively ugly and develop a dislike for it, then, they are on the pathway of moral evaluation and appreciation. The objectively beautiful is universal and it

leaves its impression on our surroundings: the landscape, human and material environment, on hygiene and on various layouts and arrangement of things about and around us. This as such promotes the spirit of neatness, rubbing off on our acceptance of what is good and by extension the moral. A people who do not see anything wrong in bad surroundings, ugly and polluted environment, haphazard layout, unplanned towns, estates and other living places including estates, filthy parks and roads, dirty and littered houses, are most likely to shun moral principles. There is to us a direct correlation between the objectively beautiful and the moral. This agrees with the popular saying that ‘cleaningness is next to Godliness’.

Immanuel Kant in *The Critique of Judgment* posits that “the beautiful is that which, apart from concepts, is represented as the object of universal delight” (loc cit. 479). To say that something is beautiful is to be objective about that which is adjudged to be so beautiful. It is not taste which judgment is always subjective. So, the beautiful is that which, apart from a concept pleases universally. Kant also argues that “the beautiful is that which apart from a concept is cognized as object of a *necessary* delight” (Ibid: 493).

Let us take a practical example which is self-evidently true. Look at a people who live in clean and beautify environment and who also appreciate nature and things well laid out. A people who attained the level of appreciating their flora and fauna; who keep filth out of their environment; who detest what is ugly, are most likely to embrace the universal moral culture. For it is akin to the good which is universally and objectively cognized. It equally rubs off on their social culture, social relationships and economic activities.

But on the other hand, a people who do not appreciate beauty in nature, even in the arts, whose aesthetic spirit have been deadened, are most likely to pay less heed to the quest for morals, not to talk of universalizing it. It takes the mind of a concerned people to appreciate the beautiful. Moral living has much in common with the beautiful and efforts put in appreciating the good and the beautiful is equivalent also to that which is put in the appreciation of morals.

Mark Bell observes that there is a linkage between the appreciation of beauty and the building of a civilized society. And we also say that it takes a civilized society to adopt a sound moral principle. According to Bell:

Ugly surroundings do not produce vicious people; and virtuous people are not the exclusive product of beautiful places. But the human spirit is oppressed by ugliness and uplifted by beauty; ugliness and vice often tend to be partners. A civilized society depends on the staunch spirit of its citizens; and this in turn is greatly strengthened by the quality of their environment. Each of the senses is affected by people's surroundings. What they see may be attractive or repellent; and the visual quality of the environment has perhaps more immediate impact than any other... Foul air affects their sense of smell, while their sense of taste reacts to impact water. If they are surrounded by grit and grime, all that they touch has the feel off filth (Bell, loc cit.199-200).

Bell captures the poverty of an existence devoid of the appreciation of beauty. There is no doubt that the human spirit is uplifted by beauty and oppressed by ugliness. The beautiful agrees with the moral. Aesthetic appreciation also promotes the moral 'spirit' in man.

Mankind's aesthetic appreciation predisposes them to quest for the objectively beautiful; the objectively beautiful in real sense of the word. According to James Feibleman (1949: ix) things are not beautiful because we appreciate them but rather we appreciate them

because they are beautiful. Human beings have the capacity to appreciate beautiful and to resent the bad and the ugly. Aesthetic disposition is therefore ontologically ingrained in man and it is the first step towards upholding moral principles. This position finds support in the Feibleman's two realistically metaphysical postulates:

One, that there is a value in the world corresponding to what we experience as the feeling of the beautiful, responsible for the aroused of that feeling but at the same time ontologically independent of all such effects or interactions with human beings; two that such independent aesthetic value is analyzable into relations of structure and function, so that for every value there is a relation, or structure or function, or a set of them, and conversely (*Ibid*: viii).

Our position is that part of our moral make up owes it a debt to aesthetics: the way we appreciate beauty in nature and in everything that is beautiful. So, for a people to accept to join others in adopting a universal moral principle, they must have a measure of the culture to differentiate what is beautiful from what is ugly and make the beautiful their own.

5.7 The Resolve to Belong to a Civilized Society

Human beings, for them to embrace moral standards, must, as a matter of necessity, resolve to establish a civilized society. A society is said to be civilized when it has or shows a general respect for the well-being, happiness and freedom of all the individuals who comprise it (*Bell, loc cit. 13*). At the heart of a civilized society is respect –respect between different callings and categories of individuals and between individuals and social institutions. Respect should permeate both treatment and relationships. Respect for human beings, for authorities and for institutions. It is this respect that distinguishes civilized people from barbarians.

Although a civilized society may be difficult to attain, it is however an ideal that is worth attaining and it is attainable in this world. A civilized society is established as such by members who show dedication to the pursuit of qualities which, although not easy to attain, but is possible in this life, for the good of man. To found a civilized society presupposes agreement about goals and common purpose agreeable to all.

The respect which grounds a civilized society is mutual. It is the kind of respect that is significant and compelling. It must not be one –sided nor capricious; and it should be active and practical. Mutual respect presupposes a certain measure of civilized self-denial: respect for one person’s interests necessarily calls for the surrender of part of another’s. “A man should be willing, when others are so too, to be contented with so much liberty against other men as he would allow other men against himself. What you do not wish to have done to you yourself, you should not do to another” (*Ibid*: 14). The wellbeing, happiness and freedom of individual citizens are conditions for which, in a civilized society, there is a general and common respect. The implication is that in founding a civilized society, we must embrace such metaphysical and/or basic assumptions such as moral universalism, categorical imperative, and the Golden Rule. These are the assumptions around which impartiality, equality, conformity, etc. are established. Human sterling ideas such as ‘social contract’ and ‘general will’ stem from the resolve for mutual existence. However, they can only be sustained by morality. It is the basic principles on which a society functions that qualifies it to be either a civilized society or an uncivilized one. Yet, a civilized society must of necessity be a moral society. Without a sound moral basis, a society cannot lay claim to being civilized. A society that is morally lax will never be said to be civilized not minding her political,

scientific and technological advancement. This is because, without a sound moral basis, all other structures and achievements will sooner than later, come down crumbling. For instance, a people who encourage their youths to engage in violence, use them to unleash mayhem and employ them in killing others are not yet civilized. As a people, we should teach our youths the sacredness of life, respect for life so that we can experience peace, now and in the future; and also in order not to continue to waste them (Nnabuihe, 2001: 478).

We must also say that a society where parents encourage all manner of examination malpractices ranging from buying and the cheating that go with them, is not a moral society (Azenabor, 1998/1999). Also a people whose police force has perfected extortion even in the full glare of school children and youths is not also a moral people (Adeyanju, 2008). The same goes for a society where young people and children are used to rig elections in various ways including engaging them in thumb-printing ballot cards, that society is also not a civilized one. A society must be prepared to be a moral society where each member maintains integrity.

Since a civilized society is better than the uncivilized one, and since the benefits of a civilized society far much supersede those of uncivilized one, a people should therefore strive to establish civilized society. And on a larger scale, the world, our global village, can as well be turned into a civilized society. This is possible if we all resolve to do that which is required of us, to be morally conscious and morally active, ready to always tread the moral pathway. That requires from us sincere efforts in order to stem down the ugly tide of selfishness which is dangerous to morality.

5.8 The Level of Education and Civilization of a People

Another important factor which we must consider in our quest for moral universalizability is education. Education is a moving force in shaping a people's character and behaviour. Education works on the mind of man, making the mind so broad and open that it becomes receptive to new ideas. An educated mind appreciates what it takes to be a *person* and that is the beginning of moral consciousness. By education we do not mean the traditional reading, writing and arithmetic; the traditional 3 'R'. Education goes beyond the 3 'R'. Education embraces the whole human person. It is a process of personal improvement, something which helps develop the innate characteristics of a person. Education process embraces the human person in all of his aspects; it involves the development of a person's freedom and his capacity for love (Ede & Ogbu, 2002: 7). Education can be described as a process of acquiring ideas, skills and values that assist the recipient in contributing significantly towards the growth and development of the self and society. An educated person is better positioned to make positive contribution to his society. This is because through education necessary knowledge of the world is acquired. Social reforms and social development have been possible because of education. Education allows man into the knowledge house of values which are ideal for society. Education is a process that takes the recipient from a lower state to a higher state of existence.

Now, what is the relationship between education and morals? In his article 'Philosophy of Education' Godwin Azenabor wrote that "generally, the aims of education have been further identified as *moral*, as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle give a moral aim to education. Education for them aims at producing good citizens" (Azenabor, 1988: 162). The relationship is direct, one on one. Education causes development of man – social, physical,

mental and emotional. Education allows the recipient to acquire knowledge and to appreciate knowledge in order to face squarely the day to day problems. Through education one accesses the pool of the wisdom of the ancients in order to apply them to the problems of the present. Education supplies the intellectual framework necessary in the understanding and tackling of man's existential problems. At the basis of education is morality. This was what Plato was convinced of when he established his *Academy*. He was of the opinion that education should aim at making a person virtuous, desirous and worthy of being a good citizen of the state. And an ideal citizen must have good leadership and followership qualities. An educated man should be morally good, and ready to observe the values, norms and ideals of his society. An educated man does not observe moral precepts mechanically, but knows why he or she must perform a particular act. The education of the Athenian Youths, which Socrates embarked upon, was to achieve this, namely, not only to be morally upright, but also to know why and to be able to question any received moral precepts in order for its adoption or rejection to be defendable on rational grounds. It is valuable to be educated. The educated man is always easy to identify because he exhibits qualities that are glaringly moral. To say that one is educated means that one has both head knowledge from learning and character also. But it is character that makes one outstanding as an educated person. It takes the educated mind to appreciate civilized qualities; it takes the educated mind to apply self to the universal moral laws. It is easy to organize educated people and employ their knowledge into meaningful ventures.

Morality is better appreciated by educated and informed mind. An ignorant person cannot rationally apply universal, general moral standards. It is only the educated person that will

be able to understand, appreciate and apply the full knowledge of what he has been thought. The level of education a people or society has attained is therefore very important in their understanding of moral principles. Any one obeying moral rules should be able to explain why he is doing so. Otherwise, obedience to moral rules would be mechanical, an approach that will not make society to endure morally. But an educated person will understand concepts, be able to analyze them, and to apply them properly. An educated mind will be able to appreciate the importance of morals and to apply morality universally. A society that hosts educated men and women would have attained a level of civilization necessary for human development even in its diversities and complexes.

The role of education in the appreciation of the ethical and the moral cannot therefore be overstressed. In his book *Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, G.F. Kneller (1964: 26) noted:

No matter how important theories of knowledge are for actual classroom instruction, the need for strong social and ethical theory is readily conceded to be foundational to educational practice. In fact, many view character education as more important to youth than the teaching of cognitive subject matter. They are concerned more with how schools most effectively can impart moral and spiritual values to make the world a better place to live in than with questions about content of subject matter.

It is when we have had a balanced and rounded education that we can appreciate situations and also react positively to the moral demands. The rational and objective appreciation of situation comes only to the educated mind who already has the tools to do so. On a daily basis, at regular intervals, there is evolution of policies, practices and situations that task our moral capacity and capability. The answer to these situations is not off-the-shelf, such that one can go out there and grab them. Their answer requires a deep moral reflection. It

requires comparing and contrasting. It requires our understanding of the contending situations and of their balanced and rational and objective reconciliation. In a nutshell, it requires man creative thinking and critical thinking which only education can kindle.

Education also helps in building intra- and inter-personal; intra – and inter-ethnic and intra- and inter-regional relationships. It also helps in building the blocks of understanding among the races of the world. Our quest for a universal ethical standard cannot be feasible without education. Education brings to the fore and lays bare also the fact of *oneness* of the human race. It tells us that human beings, irrespective of where they live and their civilization, have one ontologically binding factor namely, that of human species. The human species are clothed in rationality, consciousness, and endowed with brain that makes them think out their thoughts, fashion tools, develop language and speech, found society, establish political community, promulgate laws for social control, engage in religion and more than all, are endowed with the knowledge of good and evil. The development of human *nature*, in order to meet their ever dynamic environment, depends on education.

Plato was aware of the importance of education, especially moral education. He even argued that moral teaching should come only after people had been educated, for the simple reason that the illiterate, the ignorant, cannot get along with moral standards, principles and practices. Plato in *The Republic* rightly compares education to light. In his Allegory of the Cave, he illustrated that the uneducated, the unenlightened, the ignorant is comparable to a person in an underground cave, a dungeon. Plato showed in the parable the limitations of the untrained mind, which is shut in the cave of its own environment of

customs, opinions, basic assumptions and the ‘spirit’ of the time (Conford, 1967: 227).

These can serve as agents or *idols* of darkness. Education is therefore light which drives away darkness and illuminates the mind. It is only the educated mind that can appreciate morality; the educated will identify moral issues and address moral problems.

5.9 The Practical (Existential) Experience of a People

Human experience can pose a serious roadblock to moral universalism. Experience comes from a constant or recurring event or activity which affects a people and shapes their behaviour. Experience is a sum total of knowledge shared by the members of a group. It is capable of affecting the way they do things, including their moral evaluation. Human beings are products of their experience. Experience plays a laudable and obvious role in the behaviour of man. Experience can be past, present or even future. The way human beings act and react can be traceable largely to their experience. What they hold on too dearly, what they treat with levity, what they do and refuse to do, arises out of their experience. From past experience, a people learn. From present experience, people guard their various dealings because of what the events or activities of the day have proven to be. And a peep into the future from the aperture of the present informs their preparation towards the future. Human experiences shape their action and reaction towards and against the society their fellow human beings. What this translates to is that even the much celebrated human reason can be negatively affected by ugly or bad experience. Human experience cannot therefore afford to be neutral. It can be bad or ugly or good although its degree of badness, goodness or ugliness can be a function of the individual and his/her interpretation of the experience. Experience is both individual and collective. Yet, its impact is first on the individual and thereafter on the community.

The implication of human experience is that it can make a people to lose confidence in their system or society or government. It can create a situation of loss of confidence in the authorities. It can also cause the feeling of *ennui* (world-weariness) and encourage moral nihilism against society. In the final analysis therefore, a not-so-good experience or a harrowing experience can punctuate the moral balance and cause some level of dislocation in the moral psyche of a people. A collective experience of a people, when it is bad breeds a ‘new morality’ capable of punctuating the rational and objective moral principle that has hitherto impressed obligation on the people. It breeds ‘anything goes’ kind of morality. For instance, a people that does not frown at pervasion of justice, human rights abuses; a society that does not encourage integrity, that tramples on the down-trodden, only leaves her people with confused social morality.

We have not here advocated for the neglect of the self in our moral quest. To neglect the ‘self’ and all its gains and benefits from the moral sphere is to commit morality to a great deal of frivolity. It may also expose morality to a cold environment and remove that vibrancy and that personal touch that heats it up. Moral living and acting should not be a mechanical affair, but should result from a rational, active and discerning mind which is also aware and conscious of that which is being performed. The self must be factored into the gain-formula or the benefit-formula of morality, if not initially, then it can be much after. What Kant and the other *obligation moralists* are saying is that the self should not lead the moral train and not that it should not account at all. After all, a better society will always benefit all the members.

The assertion here is that a people can be made to acquire unwholesome moral principles due to the treatment meted out to them by their society, culture, tradition, government,

religion, social institutions, corporate organisations and social systems. That is to say a people who have constantly been cheated and lied to by their government, deceived by their priests, short-changed by their business people, exposed to backward methods and archaic practices; where criminal justice system promotes injustice and abuse of human rights; where the light of reason has been obstructed; where justice and judicial matters have produced crass injustice instead of justice, then, it is enough for the people to acquire an unwholesome moral practices; in fact, the people will sooner or later become colour blind in matters of morality. For them, black will be taken as white and red as yellow, a situation that will not produce the right atmosphere for moral universalism. For example, a people whose pension funds, insurance schemes and various sinking funds as contributed are trapped in individual pockets never to be accessed; where the government lacks the political will to reduce suffering; where there is no social welfare package for the distressed, the aged, the displaced and the physically, the mentally and the psychologically challenged in society, then there is an invitation to moral anarchy. Such a society is at the brink of announcing the ‘obituary of morals’.

The point to be made is that man is not only a being of reason alone, man as a complex being is also a being of emotion, passion and selfishness. Man is a being who cherishes self protection, a being who is always aware of his environment, who interprets experience and who works out plans for any form of adaptation for future occurrence either for or against, depending on where the pendulum of threat or of safety swings. Man is at best a being who is plastic. Man is also elastic and therefore refuses to be straight-jacketed. And that is why man is creative and on a daily basis creates terms, concepts, and invents novel avenues for organising the world via the knowledge of the experiences.

It is therefore asserted without any fear of contradiction that a people's 'moral faculty' can be prevented from seeing the light of day or perverted by the experience of the people in question. Experience can deaden conscience and replace positive values with negative ones. Where that is the case then experience has announced the obituary of morals and before long the nails of moral coffin will be driven in and the end of morals will be experienced. And where that is done, the rational man acquires irrational nature and relapses into the morass of immorality.

So, experience from events and happenings around man including wars, disasters and their management, politicking both at the local, regional and global levels, and every aspect of human verses human and human verses natural relationships bring about experiences that shape and reshape the human moral foundation. It can tamper the 'original' structures. It also enforces or reinforces or strengthens the moral strings and threads for a better moral living. It can also weaken the moral fabrics, rendering them vulnerable to all sorts of weakness that threaten man's moral capacity and capability.

Our assertion therefore is that human beings cannot completely run away from the voice of their experience. It follows them like shadow. This experience is harboured on man's subconscious. Experience forms part of the raw material from which the building blocks of basic assumptions are moulded. Experience is always at the driving seat of human behaviour. It touches the heart and motivates action and/or inaction depending on its interpretation. Where minor offences attract major punishment and major offences attract minor punishment; where justice is for the highest bidder; where criminals are allowed to make away with their spoil and use it to buy political power during elections that are

neither credible, free nor fair and thereafter influence legislation to their advantage and launder their image and get the highest state (national) awards available; in such society the moral landscape would be punctuated and a threatening imbalance created.

5.10 The Universalizability Problematic in Nigeria

Although human beings are capable of doing good and acting morally, yet it does not make moral living a cheap and common commodity. Morality, as Socrates once said, is a serious matter and not an easy pastime. To act morally requires pummeling of oneself and denying oneself a measure of comfort. It requires the knowledge of what is good and what is bad and the appreciation of such. It also requires a universal outlook, that is, one must first weigh the implication of his or her actions on the global scale. That means self-denial. It also demands on us to shun any public criticism to the contrary. There are therefore a lot of problems to be encountered on man's way to moral living. Although human beings are hosts to morality, even as it is in their character, the difficulty of moral application and the ease with which immorality is perpetuated, including the perceived benefits of immoral living, makes immorality attractive.

May we examine some of the moral problematic as they are presented in the Nigeria moral firmament. We are talking about the difficulty with which moral living can be countered in Nigeria. These we will discuss under: moral consciousness of the people; moral appreciation of people; political leadership; political and social history; the place of wealth and affluence in the scheme of things; the culture of gratification, the conception of power and the use of public property; and the “labeling” of ethnic diversities.

For instance, a people's moral consciousness is the sum total of their moral awareness and their readiness to wake up from moral slumbers. A people may know morality and fail to apply it simply because they feel that it does not matter for now. And so they keep on "sleeping" on their morality. It is not enough to know morality. What matters most is to practice it and to apply oneself to it. Morality is not theoretical, it is practical. Its power lies in acting. If a people have failed to be morally active, it is not because of their moral ignorance, but it is because they have allowed their moral consciousness to wane. Nigeria is suffering from this type of situation. The moral consciousness of the people has been damped. There is a growing moral numbness in the land supported by what has been called NIGERIAN FACTOR.

Akin to moral consciousness is moral appreciation, that is, moral understanding and moral evaluation. There is the need to separate what is good from what is bad and to identify each. But in Nigeria moral appreciation seems to be a difficulty. People pay lip service to moral issues and then create a situation whereby there is confusion as to what is moral and what is not. In that case, there is always a problem of moral application since there has been failure to separate the good from the bad and clearly label them. The traditional African values of integrity, honesty, hard work, truth telling, respect for life and property and for authority seem to have been set aside.

Morality should be the business of everyone – both human beings and institutions, established and operated by them. Personal morality should align with public morality. The social forces must be taken into account in the appreciation of morals. Here, the political leadership comes to full glare. The contemporary society is in the firm grip of

political leadership which enjoys legitimacy, power and authority. As such we cannot wish away the role, importance and influence of political leadership even on moral issues. There are moral demands on the institution of government just as it is also on the individual. The laws of the land, the institutions of the land, the distribution of social benefits and burdens, the provision and distribution of the common good of society, the obligations demanded of citizens, must be such that morality is taken into consideration in their establishment and operation. So, political leadership has the burden to facilitate the moral consciousness and awareness and appreciation of a people for a better moral society. This is because of the enormity of power and authority granted to it. The power to enforce justice, equity and fair-play has been granted to the political authority so that the government and the state become morally responsible as legitimate *moral agents* of society.

To say that institutions are also morally responsible is to say that behind the institutions are moral beings. Human beings should carry their moral duties to anywhere they are engaged – both as individuals and as public officials. It is the individual that organizes society. To say that the state, the government, corporate organizations, etc. should exhibit morality and make it their own is also to charge human beings behind them to always observe morality. So, in the final analysis man is constantly being reminded to always be moral. It is that burden and duty which he will never escape if he wants to remain rational.

In order for all to embrace morality there should be some level of support and encouragement. Although the moral person is not a seeker after reward, yet he or she

should be supported so that he or she does not relapse into immorality. In a country where immorality pays better than morality, where the immoral man gets away with his immorality and publicly flaunt the gains of immorality, then the moral person might start to think that the best course of life is the immoral life. How far have the moral person been supported in Nigeria? How far have we made immorality unattractive? What have we done to raise the morale of the moral man? These questions are pertinent because man harbours both rationality and irrationality. Human beings have some selfish and pragmatic tendencies in them. While they are moral beings they can also be immoral beings, after all, man is a free moral agent.

With particular reference to Nigeria, have the moral person been rewarded in this life? What manner of encouragement is there for that individual who always wants to live a moral life? Or is the moral person made to regret his/her moral living? Irrespective of the answers we give to these questions, the fact remains that the moral person is in need of support and the political leadership should take the lead. Although the political history talks about a fusion of different peoples, that even in itself should be a support to moral universalism. But the reverse is the case. As Azenabor (2007: 16) has observed, a major difficulty in the application of moral behaviour is this question of a multi-cultural and multi-racial society that is bereft of nationalistic and patriotic orientation as in other societies. For that reason the concept of the ‘immoral man’ is no longer there. This is because the immoral man may be a political heavy-weight, a government strong supporter, a man loved by his people, or a kingmaker.

We can as well see a moral problematic in the way a wealthy person is treated in Nigeria and the culture of gratification. In Nigeria no one wants to know the source of one's wealth. You can make money; that is your luck. One would be accused of being envious if he probes into another's source of wealth. Besides, Nigeria has this culture of giving gifts and receiving gifts and for that there seems to be difficulty in drawing a line between a morally acceptable gift and an immoral gift. 'Accept the gift first and later ask the reason for it'. Even if the gift is a whole building or an estate, it does not matter.

That takes us to the issue of position and power, especially political power. If you are in a position of authority it is expected that you maximize the largesse of your office and that includes the power to be immoral and to get away with it. As long as one remains in power or 'position' one is expected to act like a god or goddess. One can be called a "failure" if he or she fails to appropriate the gains of his office while it lasts because there may not be a 'second time' to correct the 'first mistake' of looting a little or nothing. The value of integrity has been sacrificed on the altar of impunity and crass corruption.

We can see that the business of arriving at a universal moral agreement may not be so easy in Nigeria. Not because the people are not human beings capable of morality, but that the moral pathway is fraught with a lot of thorns and thistles. However, we must say that the ability of the individual to overcome the obstacles is what qualifies his/her acts as morally worthy. If morality is all about treading on a wide road, open and well laid out, then we would not applaud the moral person in the first place. It is the difficulty in moral application that makes a moral person the society's 'preferred person'. However, one needs support and encouragement in order to act morally and remain there always. This

can be achieved through recognizing the person as a moral person and then accord him or her respect.

5.11 African Perception of or Belief about Things Generally

We have elsewhere noted the ‘strong voice’ of basic assumptions. This metaphysical *first principle* is a strong influence in human beings’ existence. Basic assumptions, we have noted, provide the ‘voice of education’. And we have also noted the role of education. A people’s education enters and permeates their psyche which afterwards shapes their entire existence. Basic assumptions eventually give birth to metaphysics which according to Alfred North Whitehead is “the endeavour to form a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted” (Whitehead, 1929). A people therefore build their whole life on the basic assumptions which is their metaphysical platform. Basic assumptions are built in an attempt to grasp experience of the world and to interpret this experience. This gives rise to perception of or belief about things generally with the implication that a people begin to build their existential beliefs and practices around them.

Now, how do basic assumptions about reality and the universe affect our moral quests? The fact of the matter is that if we get a wrong *metaphysic*, and a set of wrong basic assumptions, then we have started our moral quests on a very wrong note. Armed with a wrong compass, a wrong direction is headed also. Every step of ours would always be put wrongly. For instance, the conception of man and the subsequent treatment stems from the basic assumptions about man. The same is true of the conception and treatment of the *summum bonum*; the conception and treatment of the environment, the conception and

treatment of society, of relationships, etc. A wrong basic assumption becomes the bane of morality. If we have a wrong conception of the environment, for example, and see it as something we are given to plunder, conquer and subdue, then we will lose respect for the environment. What this will mean is that the abuse, the degradation, the pollution, of the environment will not bother us since we are doing our bidding. If we see ourselves as better breed and blueblood and others as inferior, then we set out to conquer them and to subdue them. That done, then slavery and colonialism become something that is not evil, not bad, in our eyes. If we also have the assumption that we are higher than others, then we begin to show disrespect for them and for their lives. Also, if life to us is cheap, then killing, maiming, maltreatment, abuses of different kinds will be taken for granted. The disrespect for human dignity will then be seen as an act of heroism. But if we see man as worthy of respect, we will show respect and do everything in our powers to uplift human life. Also, the way we treat society is a function of our conception of society. If it is worthy of sustained existence then we make sure it is supported morally. All hands must be on deck, as it were, to protect it. And so, social relationships, social structures, social harmony and cohesion, must be kick-started and strengthened. At that level society will be protected by all since it holds good for all. But where the reverse is the case, society will be made to suffer in the hands of individuals who plunder it for their selfish aggrandizement. So, the disrespect for human life and for human society will create a situation whereby we make fake goods, substandard goods, fake drugs including fake baby food; contaminated water, milk and beverages for sale to the public just to make loot. Even when it means destroying human life and society, we do not give a hoot provided our own pockets and bank accounts are filled with money. Even trafficking in human

beings, pirating other people's intellectual property, and the sale of babies and ritual killing, stem from this extreme selfishness and lack of respect for human life, especially the lives of others.

Akin to this is a wrong basic assumption about the *summum bonum*, the supreme and the perfect good. It is impossible to apply the right kind of moral standard and moral principle if we have the wrong kind of moral theory and moral conception. Moral theory guides moral action backed by moral principle. A wrong moral principle will be disastrous to morality. If what constitutes the *summum bonum* is the *self* and its satisfaction, if it is a person's happiness or pleasure, if it is the satisfaction of a group's or race's interests, then, morality will remain relative and dangerous and will fail the test of universalizability. To have the right kind of *summum bonum*, we must have at the back of our mind *plural accommodation*. We must be reasonably and rationally altruistic such that the interest of the *others out* there must be factored into our actions.

Some of our basic assumptions and metaphysical foundations cannot promote moral universalizability unless we alter them and redesign them to meet with the global stance. For instance, there is this thinking in Nigeria that 'government or public property' is nobody's own. For that reason, anything can happen to it. Parents tell their children that if they take public property or steal public funds it is not stealing in the real sense. It belongs to all and to no one in particular. A people whose treatment of public property is this naïve are less likely to have a strong and universally approvable moral standard. This accounts for the level of corruption in Nigeria. If one is allowed, permitted and encouraged to take public property without approval, then that individual or the people

who enjoy this tacit support will not see anything wrong in looting public treasury and converting public property for private use. To safeguard public property which is the stock of the common good would be the *immoral act*. One who acts contrary to this ‘wrong’ view, who wants to treat public property with the care and attention deserving of it would rather be denigrated. So, at the slightest opportunity public property is converted to personal property. This practice cannot produce a universalizable moral code.

Another attitude supported by African perception of or belief about things generally is that whatever position one occupies in life, it is God that has given it to him. ‘If it is your turn, make use of it; it is turn by turn; ‘every dog has its own day’; ‘wait for your turn’. With this kind of thinking, public office holders and indeed those who find themselves in positions of authority do not believe they owe allegiance to anybody else. They are enjoying the blessing from God. And since this blessing has a way by which it goes round (or it must go round somehow) the person enjoying today must make good use of the time. For this reason people must wait and watch and *pray* for their own turn. This does not promote public morality one bit. Rather it encourages immorality. It promotes abuse of civilized and due process. It also encourages unethical practices. However, it is unfortunately applauded as **NIGERIAN FACTOR**.

Another issue which we must look at is the place we reserve for the *others* in our national life and body politic. If we promote the idea of a people as ‘minority’ ‘slaves’ or the idea of ‘son-of-soil’ ‘indigene’ and ‘settler’ or even of the ‘caste’, then we are not likely to treat that ‘other’ with respect, justice and fair play. In fact, it promotes this idea of the ‘inferior’ and the ‘superior’. But it is wrong to treat a people *sui generis*. But in a

situation where we imbibe the idea of ‘majority’ tribe and ‘minority’ tribe, ‘settlers’ and ‘sons-of-the-soil’ such that the minority tribe and the settlers are treated as sub-human beings who are not qualified for top positions in society, or maltreated at will, then a society would have murdered her sleep.

We have examined a few wrongly placed basic beliefs that do not promote moral living. They are impediments to moral acts. But they are at times taken for granted as if they can pass moral muster. Until and unless they are set aside, the quest for a universal morality will remain a mirage. This is because, our conception of man is at the basis of our ethical practices. If we treat humanity as worthy of dignity and deserving of honour, then every human being will be respected and treated fairly as a member of the *kingdom of ends*.

5.12 “Negative Humanism” as Roadblock to Moral Universalizability

Ordinarily, there is nothing wrong with the practice of humanism. By humanism, as we use it in this work, is meant showing respect for man, upholding the dignity of man, believing in man and man’s rights to exist and to enjoy life. In Africa, this practice is carried to its superlative degree. However, humanism conceived and executed in Nigeria (Africa) is more of a ‘closed humanism’. The term ‘closed humanism’ is used because of the area it is meant to cover. A look around us and indeed the experience we have is that African societies have always been organized in communities, clans, hamlets and tribes (ethnic groups). The clan or village or community has always been stronger in terms of ties of blood relationships. What this means is that there is always the problem of *stereotype* and *labeling*, creating the dichotomy between *in-group* and *out-group*. This makes the humane treatment restricted to people of close blood affinity. That is why the

concept of ‘brother’ is applied only to tribesmen thereby making persons of other tribes ‘foreigners’. The type of society brought about by industrialization, urbanization and the colonial ‘new state’ formation was strange to Africans. And that is why even amongst our fellow Africans, there is ‘xenophobia’. That is the reason for most conflicts and wars in Africa because of our inability to forge a common human political ground based on the ontology and common destiny of man.

Now, how does this cause or bring about ‘roadblock’ to moral application? The fact of the matter is that, in seeing one as ‘my own person’, ‘my brother’, ‘my tribesman’, the application of morality is either watered down or set aside. Everything is done to help the person seen as ‘my own person’ including bending rules and withholding punishment and sanctions. People begin to show sympathy even in the face of obvious breach of moral rules. That is what we have called it “negative humanism”, that is, over-protecting a person, or even guiding the person through unethical pathway. Rules are set aside, or people look the other way when their ‘person’ is involved. This is a way of frustrating moral universalism, and in its stead, enthroning moral relativism and also creating a situation of double application of morals. ‘Yes, if he does it and he is my brother, we can as well look the other way’. That is why you see people coming to beg for ‘forgiveness’ on behalf of somebody known to have obviously, knowingly and flagrantly violated moral rules. This happens all over the place in Nigeria. This kind of cover up or applying the same rule differently because of blood relationships is a minus in our quest for moral universalism. This is common in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Most of Nigeria’s socio-political and economic problems are as a result of this negative humanism.

It promotes immoral practices and corruption even in high places. It makes the task of punishment a difficult one.

To solve this problem, there is the need to see everybody as one and to create an equal morally conformable atmosphere. When something is wrong, it should be wrong objectively and be seen to be so. The recourse to ethnic cleavages is rather wrong. By the time every tribe sees nothing wrong in the unethical acts of its people, then we have succeeded in creating a society where ‘everything goes’ and that would be introducing ‘moral anarchy’, a situation that will not bring about a civilized society. That is perhaps a situation that has been openly but shamelessly referred to as ‘Nigerian factor’. This is nothing other than the refusal to enforce rules on the ground that those involved are related to me one way or the other.

To achieve our resolve for a universal community that is organized on moral principles every rational being in society must bear the ‘moral torchlight’ whenever and wherever he works, walks, sits down, eats, drinks, and does other activities. Moral principle should be strictly and impartially applied in such a manner that emotions are set aside. Moral universalizability is all about being impartial, consistent, and straightforward in our application of moral standard. It is all about bringing moral conformity to bear on all and sundry irrespective of one’s status, background, place of origin and other mundane factors.

That brings us to yet another ‘roadblock’ to moral universalizability, namely, the *will* to dominate others and the *spirit* of dominion over others. In his *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche expressed the human desire to always dominate, conquer, and to be master over others. The will to dominate seems to be present in all of us. We always want to give

orders and commands and to see others obey them. While in return we resent taking orders and obeying commands from others. This air of superiority, this spirit of disobedience, has a way by which it can punctuate our march towards morality. It creates an unnecessary feeling of ‘superman’ in us and makes us feel larger than life. We then begin to see others as herds and we as master. But unless we are humble, and not haughty, we will find it difficult, if not, impossible, to submit to the universal moral demands. This is because we see ourselves as ‘untouchable’, ‘God father’, ‘kingmaker’, ‘power broker’ who is high up there and above others, who will always refuse to submit to any generally agreed, objective, moral principle.

5.13 Some Sharp Practices that Stunt Moral Development

Here we will discuss some of the sharp practices that are wrong but have been taken for granted. We are of the opinion that when they are taken to be the usual practice and/or given tacit support, they have a way by which they corrupt the moral psyche of a people, especially the youths who are the leaders of the future. These practices as we shall identify and itemize them have corrupting influence especially on the young people and also have the power to erode their moral foundation.

The first we shall look at is the promotion stunt found in the promotion mix of some business organizations. Most times, children especially, are asked to buy products for which they will win prizes. As they buy they are asked to gather wrappers, corks or raffle numbers of the products up to a certain number. Then, the corks or wrappers are to be presented at a redemption centre advertised ahead of time in various locations in exchange of items announced also ahead of time. We find out, more often than not, that the

redemption is never fulfilled. While the children have gone through pains to buy and/or gather the required number, the business organizations would fail to give (redeem) what they have promised. Parents and guardians would go to the redemption centres only to be told that there are no items to be changed even well before the expiration of time. The children go home frustrated. And what do they say when they go back home? ‘They have done us *Ojoro*’ (unjust and dubious act, to cheat one out). The children live with the experience that people can renege in their agreement. The organization is allowed to get away with the *abrakataba* (deceitful act; shady). The society looks the other way. Some see it as normal with business. But this is wrong. Promises made to children should be fulfilled. That is the best way to teach them to keep to contract agreement when they grow up. But when the society fails to teach by example; when raffle draws are manipulated; when children are denied their promised items for which they have worked, then there is a problem. When they grow up they will not see anything wrong in failing to keep promises.

This was the fear expressed by Socrates in his Athenian community, the reason he opted to focus on the youths in his moral teaching. He was of the firm belief that for society to be moral, the young ones must be educated on moral issues. By the time the young ones know what is good and what is bad, then the future of the society would be bright. Socrates had to isolate the youths from the already corrupted adults for moral training (Plato, *Apology* 1969: 45). Although he was accused and condemned in a trumped up charge of corrupting the Athenian youths, the points had been made clear, that the sponge-like mind of the young ones (including the infants) should be allowed to soak up the moral waters of rational humanity. We should then be careful of the promises we make because

the children are watching. Both in our claims at miracles in churches and religions places; of the efficacy of drugs or medicaments, of the efficiency of some other things we produce or market etc. All these have the implication of getting back at us, in due course of time. We should not start out children on lies. This will have far reaching moral implication which society will regret in no distant time.

Another practice which can directly affect the youths is the lies told about the status of lectures in the universities during the National Universities Commission's Universities accreditation visitations. The students are aware that their schools go out there, borrow some lecturers and claim that they are full-time employed staff. These lecturers are paid off after accreditation and returned to their base. This is lying to get accreditation. The youths are seeing. Their eyes are open. Worst of it is that it is perpetuated by professors whom they hold in high esteem. Of serious consequence is that it is taken for granted as a 'standard' practice. The youths are being told, by that 'maxim' to borrow lecturers or falsify records when accreditation panel or team visits. But it does not augur well for the university system in particular and the society in general. It is part of the shady deal. It only succeeds as make-believe.

The same is also the case with the banking industry. In presenting to the Central Bank, the regulating bank that they are healthy even when they are not, some banks approach other banks for money to shore up their financial base at the end of the financial year. At the end of the inspection of books in the financial year ending, they return the money. They have succeeded in deceiving the Central Bank by lying. The youths in the banking industry and other financial institutions are aware of this practice of lying and deceiving

the investing public. This is another roadblock to moral behaviour. The same is true of audited books of companies. Reports are doctored to evade tax, deceive investing public and shareholders. The true state of the company is hidden away from the public.

We must look at this other practice also. A government project, say, water supply have been completed or so it seems. The local government chairman, or state governor or minister in charge has advertised for its commissioning. But it is not true. It is all fake. It is another *ojoro*. What happens? A water tanker is used to bring in water at night. The water project reservoir is filled with water brought by the water tanker. During the commissioning exercise, water rushes out of the taps. The people are happy. This happens in the full glare of people, including the children. But alas! That is the only water available. As the commissioning officer (local government chairman, the state governor or the president) goes, the water also goes. It is finished!

Now, what would the people, and the youths especially, say? For the elder ones it is ‘politics’ or the ‘Nigerian factor’. It has been taken for granted. But what about the children? We have opened another vista of corruption. We have fed the children, the youths, with the spoon of immorality. This is a wrong moral foundation.

Close to the above is the practice of electricity authorities supplying power to a particular area because the president or the head of state is visiting that area. The area that have not enjoyed electricity supply for months, gets it regularly during the week of the visit. But as soon as the visiting ‘*big oga*’ (the person in power and authority) returns, the electricity supply is cut off. The people go back to their usual blackout. The action has been taken to cover some corruption or embezzlement. How can you convince the president, for

example, that the budget for electricity in that area is not well utilized? The same is also true for roads. Roads are graded and/or given face lift on the visitation of the president or governor, trees and capes are painted, beggars are removed from the streets, refuse are cleared, etc. Everywhere is made to be neat. But this is another make believe. Everything comes back to square one shortly after.

This is not how to train the youths on moral matters. All these constitute ‘road blocks’ to moral regeneration and ethical orientation. But, unfortunately, it has become standard practice in most places. The result is that every group will come and hold on to the sharp practice simply because it pays those perpetrating it. But it is to the detriment of a society. Any society that wants to embrace a universal moral principle should shun, in its entirety, such practices. So, any society that wants to universalize morality should distance itself from the aforementioned shady deals. This is because they can never be universalizable especially in a civilised society.

5.14 Achieving Breakthrough in the Quest for New Moral Order

We have said elsewhere that the human quest for a universal new moral order is not only a quality quest but also achievable in this world. Our proposal is not like painting a moral *el dorado*, neither is it utopian, nor a mirage. It is possible even as it is the best thing to happen to man in a civilized society. Moral anarchy would be a backward and an unprogressive thing to happen to man in the 21st century especially as the global village ideal has been realized and the old, archaic, primordial sentiments between and among the races and regions of the world are fast giving way to a pluralistic, yet compact, society,

were ontological grounds of relationship are being established. Moral phobia on its own cannot be imagined or contemplated because man is a moral being capable of morality.

Having established that moral universalizability is possible and that it is the best thing to happen in man's moral quests, then, efforts should be made to achieve it. How then do we achieve this breakthrough? First, we should enhance those conditions that will support moral behaviour. It is believed that when we become moral, then applying it universally becomes less cumbersome. For instance, our moral consciousness should not only be rekindled but also sharpened in readiness for moral practices in all our dealings. Moral practice covers a broad spectrum of human activities. Only a few human practices, if any, may escape moral searchlight; only a few practices may be morally neutral. Most of our practices have moral value: they are to be adjudged right or wrong, good or bad, praiseworthy or blameworthy, acceptable or unacceptable, commendable or condemnable, and moral or immoral. And although acting morally may not always be easy, it nevertheless builds a society which is conducive for human beings.

Having resolved to be moral, the next thing to do is to bring our belief system and orientation in line with civilized opinion and practices. Our guiding principles in life, and our initial beliefs should be such that promote moral living. They should be such that open avenues for close ties with the rest of the people out there; the assumptions that uphold the principle of equality and respect for others. The recognition of the *other* and the resolve to cooperate with one another; to see the other in the same boat conveying humanity to their end and in the saying: 'onward together'.

The resolve to apply morality on a universal scale can also be supported by the age in which we live. The world has moved and is constantly moving. It is high time we came out of tribal cocoons in order to reach out to others. Ours should be a civilized society, a global village, an age that shows respect for human rights, that promotes the dignity of man; an age in which men must recognize the humanity of the rest men and imbibe the culture of plural accommodation. We live in an age where man shares common destiny. That age must also be the age of moral consciousness. The ugly experience of the human past: slavery, colonialism, pogrom, world wars, holocaust, inquisition, racism, and religious bigotry, are instances of our primitive past. To avoid their repeat, to avoid a relapse into primitivity and atavism, even at the national level, all efforts should be made towards achieving moral universalism.

In order to achieve this much desired breakthrough there is the need of re-education. Here, we do not mean reading, writing and arithmetic. We are talking about a well intended education that develops the mind of men to make them receptive to moral matters, we must avoid moral phobia in any of its guise, we must also shun nihilism against our society. Despite its shortcomings society has come to stay. And man is a social being who cannot afford to be a recluse or a hermit or an island onto self. We must embrace that kind of education that positions us to recognize moral principles and to follow them wherever they lead us. A well balanced education will also position us aright to appreciate moral principles, to recognize them, to practice them and to make them our own even if they appear to be to our disadvantage especially initially.

We argue that our quest for a universal morality is in order as well as human. It is a desire that is supported by our nature. It is in the human character to be good, to recognize the good and act to right. It is not foreign, neither is it strange. Rather it is human – all too human. All that is needed is to train the mind and discipline the body. A moral order is a good prize that must be realized if we as humans must enjoy a life on this earth. Therefore, to live in an orderly society and to achieve tranquility of mind and body, moral living must be highly prized.

5.15 Within the Realms of Application

For human beings, to perform good acts is a possibility founded on their natural capacity. Moral acting, moral living, doing of good and shunning of evil are acts that can be executed by humans here on earth. So, when Kant proposed universalizability of moral actions, he was not building a castle in the air. He was only stating what is humanly possible. No society can survive without moral acts. The whole of human species would be threatened in the face of moral failure. The benefits of moral living therefore rubs on all of us. Everybody stands to benefit from moral living. And we repeat without any fear of contradiction that moral living is possible and humanity is capable of it. By their nature, human beings are moral beings, they have the idea of good and bad, right and wrong, and they always identify one from the other. And also a sane, psychologically balanced person is always happy when he/she gets face to face with the good. Normal people frown at bad and evil. It is a fact of life that human beings cherish what is good and right, and condemn what is bad and wrong. This shows that mankind is at home with the knowledge of good and evil, right and wrong. This common knowledge is what drives the moral quests and challenges men to act right too. We therefore assert that morality is

not strange to man and not foreign to humanity. Rather, it is so natural that no room is allowed for moral phobia. Moral phobia in any guise would mean running away from oneself, an act that makes one inauthentic and hypocritical, too.

We must admit that although moral living and the observation of ethical principles is possible by man in this world, it does not come so easy. To live a moral life requires some efforts from the individual who is expected to act right and also from the larger society which will benefit from the moral acts of the individual. There should then be an enabling environment conducive for moral living. The individual should be supported as he or she strives to do what is right. Moral acting is comparable to ordinary day to day living. To live one must depend on some certain things which the natural environment provides. For instance, one needs air, land, food, water, to survive and to continue to live. Besides, living a healthy life requires that the environment is not degraded and polluted. This analogy can be brought to bear on the human quest for moral living. The moral environment should be made to be conducive and enabling. Like a person going to work, the tools and implements should be such that help produce the right kind of result – the expected output. Even the best trained artisan or professional would require the best kind of environment, tools and motivation in order to perform optimally.

How does this reflect on the human quest to do what is right? Elsewhere, we did talk of the negative role of ‘mis-education’, fundamental or basic assumptions about reality, and ‘negative humanism’. These produce untoward effects on moral living as they tend to deaden people’s moral consciousness or ‘swap’ the civilized morals with primordial ‘moral’ principles that will not pass the test of time. To help the individual rekindle moral

consciousness there is need for instant moral education. This will serve as reminders to the rational and morally capable individual. What moral education means in this direction is to promote moral awareness through moral orientation, moral re-orientation and moral regeneration. Ethical and moral re-orientation arms humanity with the tools of morality. It also reminds them where they are in the ethico- moral scheme of things.

Human beings acquire their moral principles from their culture, tradition, parents, religion and association. Most of the things that they are thought or which they imbibe cannot fit into the universal and civilized mould. It is education that helps to re-orientate the moral stand of the individual. The idols and caves of traditional morality can be disturbing. And so the need arises for moral rearmament in order to light up the firmament of morals. The aim of moral orientation and regeneration is to assert once more the many gains and benefits that observing moral principles will bring to man and his society. It must be reiterated that morals pay at all times. It pays both the individual and the society. The opportunity of this orientation is to express in a no-holds-barred manner that universalizing morals is a quality quest which every rational being must embrace. In the global village, human species share a lot in common. What seem to separate races is just artificial, man-made structures. Human problems and predicaments are the same all over and as such universalizing morals is all that is needed to bring about stability which eventually paves way for sustainable development. The best way we can promote commerce, business, travels, and other relationships between and among the races and regions is to agree on principles of moral that are universal. This makes moral evaluation and judgment of human action objective. It provides us the tools with which to streamline the moral system for the benefit of all. So, in spite of the difficulties on the way to moral

living: natural selfish interests, pressure from society, voice of cultural education, the seeming non-profit nature of moral living, and the attractive and profit from immoral/unethical practices, and the ease with which wrong and bad practices are perpetrated, is still not a better excuse for us to set aside morals living. As human beings the need to have a universal moral precept can no longer be wished away. And the time is now! All that is needed is for man to resolve to be moral of which he is capable. Man has to rekindle his natural goodness and obey the moral law within him.

In order to adopt the much touted universal moral precept and to give morality a single human voice, some conditions must be stressed, globally and locally. In other words some enabling grounds must be prepared for a smooth, successful and sustained universal morality. The first thing to do is to deemphasize the idea of racial, religious, regional, and colour ‘superiority’ and ‘inferiority’. The human race, the human species should see themselves as a people who are engaged on an *ontological project* – a project that demands equal commitment from every rational being. The differences in human existence should be seen in terms of comparative advantage, after all no people can be self-sufficient; no group can fill their needs through and through. This will bring about human disposition of equality, which is the starting line of moral universalizability.

Secondly, there is the need to reexamine the moral standards that we have imbibed earlier, and be prepared to jettison them when they are no longer in tune with universal demands. Most of our moral precepts come from our culture, religion, parents, society, interaction with peer group and other relationships. This we have discussed under: African perception of our belief about things generally, education, aesthetic appreciation, and the

period or age in which we live. There however, is nothing wrong in making amends, in joining forces with the contemporary if the contemporary gives the civilized method and approach. Moral relativism may as well be a child of necessity for a purpose at a particular point in time. But with enlightenment, interaction across borders, education, science and technology, most positions we hitherto held can as well be set aside for stronger positions that are supported by rational logic. So, to be fixed and rigid is not to help matters especially on moral issues. To be flexible and ready to shift ground, to follow the voice of right reason and to follow the truth wherever it leads is the superior human disposition. Even if we have imbibed a practice over the ages, it does not mean that when the need arises, we cannot drop those practices and pick the ones that are in agreement with our nature as rational and moral beings. In the light of superior logic, we can set aside archaic cultural heritage and pickup a new culture which agrees with civilized and universal best practice.

Thirdly, the human race, having seen themselves now as one, should bear with one another, accommodate one another and give help to one another. This is because since the wealth of the earth is not evenly distributed, the intelligence in men not equally distributed, the gifts and talents from nature not also equally distributed; and since some areas are prone to natural disasters and others to diseases and yet others to drought and desertification, then it behooves on humanity to render help to one another when the need arises. The help or aid should not be attached any strings which will expose the recipient to more hardship. In the event of earthquake, typhoon, landslide, hurricane, drought, tsunami; flood, desertification, etc., the human society should rally around the victims and show fellow-feeling. This will quickly bring about a balm-effect to massage the frayed

and jaded nerves of the victims instead of presenting life as absurd. This makes the business of rehabilitation a lot easier and promotes the spirit of cordial relationships. And so there will be no animosity or resentment. This love shown brings smiles back to the faces of the victims with the effect that one appreciates humanity, and would be ready to cooperate with the race of the human species. Disasters should therefore be seen as an affront to man, as a challenge to humanity and as an invitation for human beings to act right. Akin to this is that the rest of humanity should share the burden of the weak, the sick, the poor, the infirm, the physically and mentally challenged ones among them. The notion of *shared-problem* should be addressed and made to be a universal human culture. For less developed countries and economies, efforts should be increased in creating the enabling environment for people to release their potential for the good of humanity. In that wise respect for human life should be the utmost government policy. This will bring about the security of lives and property. Also the building of infrastructures such as roads, electricity, schools, colleges, tertiary institutions; the provision of water and health institutions should be the primary concern of government. When people are enabled to bring out their creative prowess, the tendency to run quickly to criminality is less. Attached to this is the institution of social benefits (social security) in terms of pensions, gratuities and living wages to the workers and creating job opportunities for the jobless, giving scholarship to indigent students; subsidizing medical expenses of the aged and the jobless; and encouraging micro and cottage business ventures. This also means that governments should make good laws and quicken the dispensation of justice while the structuring of the state should be such that the institutions are made to respect human dignity and carry out plans and policies that have human face, including taxes.

Kant's universalizability moral principle can then be adopted for Nigeria to address the country's numerous vices. These vices include corruption, examination malpractices, kidnapping, suicide bombings, smuggling, armed robbery, ethnicism, looting of public treasury, deceit by people in government, etc. First we see Nigerians and indeed Africans, as communal people who must always co-exist with one another. The culture of fellow-feeling is Africans. Also a person is only recognized as a member of society. For that reason society must be made conducive for all. It can be said that the only guarantee for social stability is the observance of moral tenets. If we apply Kant, we begin to embark on moral regeneration, ethical reorientation and build the culture of integrity. That means that everybody in Nigeria would not take advantage of his position or condition to oppress others, or to do acts that are dehumanizing. If we see morals in terms of duty for duty sake, as categorical imperative, then we begin to work towards attaining sound moral life. When we realize that a single immoral act has the force to destabilize society and punctuate the spiritual and moral balances, then we do well to act morally. In African metaphysics, nothing stands alone. Everything that is existing does so in relation to others. Since forces interact, one act has chain effect. When one loots public treasury, for example, that singular act puts society in pains. Funds that would have employed in providing infrastructure and other developmental and social projects would have been stolen by one man or a group of men. This means that there will remain unmotorable roads that cause accidents; hospitals that will be mere consulting clinics, ill-equipped schools, etc. Society will be the loser. But with Kant's principle, we begin to take morality as *personal* and then without exception, all of us embrace sound moral tenets, both young and old, rich and poor, leaders and followers.

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

Conclusion

This research has exposed obvious deficiencies in the exiting moral order hence, the proposal for its replacement. The existing moral order lacks the objective canon with which to bring morality in unison with all rational creatures acting from right reasons. Rather, it presents morality haphazardly and also confusedly. The disservice to morality lies in the fact that it encourages moral relativism even as it creates different moral standards, principles and rules for the same human beings. This leaves mankind with the problem of lack of agreeable standard or principle with which to appreciate, evaluate and judge the morality of human acts. The result is partiality and inconsistency that has trailed the judgment of acts of men. The plausibility of the proposed *new moral* order however lies first in its force to create objectively acceptable moral template on which human actions can be evaluated and which is agreeable to rational minds acting from right reason. It builds on the vague average understanding of morality existing already in the minds of man. It however, universalizes and brings it to the level where it caters for the moral demands of all rational beings irrespective of their various social, political, economic, religious, cultural, racial and regional differences. It emphasizes the assertion that every rational being is capable of moral act. And because moral living may at times require efforts beyond what is normal it should be taken as duty in which case doing what is right would no longer depend on the convenience, comfort or personal gain but because it is the right thing to do and because one is duty bound to do so. All the trouble of our labour in moral philosophy agrees with the contention that our knowledge of human nature does not

lead to any form of ethical relativism or moral nihilism but, on the contrary, to the conviction that the sources of moral norms for our conduct are to be found in human nature itself; that norms of morality are based upon man's inherent qualities which violation results in mental and emotional disintegration and social instability. This is the deontology of morality on which the universalizability principle is established.

Recommendations

Two issues are critical in the quest for universal new moral order. The first is moral education and moral training for infants and children. The purpose is to lay a solid moral foundation and prepare them for moral life in society. The second is to establish the culture of social, institutional and official support system that promotes and encourages morality. Although possession of moral disposition is innate, it is however, enhanced through **moral education** and **moral training**. Through moral education and moral training, we begin to learn and to appreciate the benefits of morality. Moral education impresses on us the gains of morality both to the self and to the society. Moral education and moral training always bring about the knowledge and understanding about morals and issues thereabout. It is therefore recommended that serious attention should be paid to moral education and moral training in order to raise moral conscious awareness in man especially the young people and make them to appropriate moral problems and moral issues when they meet any.

Moral education should start from the cradle, that is, from infancy. This is because of the role of foundation in any building as such. When the foundation is of the right kind of soil and the right kind of materials at the very beginning, then the structure will be firmly

erected and it will stand the test of time. Most of mankind's moral decadence results from the wrong kind of foundation. Although moral education should start from the cradle and continue through to the grave, it is its starting point that matters most. For that reason, right from home and at the **Nursery** and **Primary** schools, moral training should be made compulsory. At home, parents, guardians and older folks should take charge of inculcating moral consciousness in the children. To do so however, they themselves must be upright in their dealings because they must lead by example. They must accept that dignity is a sterling quality of rational beings which they must first embrace and internalise. At school, however, the **INSTITUTE OF MORAL EDUCATION** should be established at both the federal and state levels and should direct the moral training and education. A subject to be called **CIVICS AND MORAL EDUCATION** should be introduced with curriculum adapted to the needs of the children preparatory to adult life. The reason for civics is that the knowledge of good and evil, right and wrong, should go hand in hand with the love of the state. So, Patriotic and Nationalistic spirit as well as the respect for man and the performance of good acts should be made the foundation of knowledge. Here, the capacity of the infants to absorb knowledge should not be under-cited. The spongy nature of their brain is what the teachers should keep in mind.

At the secondary and vocational levels, there should be a follow up to this moral education. At this stage the task will be to inculcate in the young adults the spirit of integrity, respect, fellow-feeling, and diligence. The subject that is expected to do this job is to be called **STUDIES IN HUMAN SPECIES (Ontological Affinity Of Mankind In Rights, Respect and Dignity)**. The curriculum of this subject will be to inculcate in the young ones the *ontology* of man, emphasizing the common human heritage of the human

species and the need to respect the dignity of man. The major benefit would be that the young ones would have been told that whatever affects one man in the world, also affects the other, almost immediately. These young ones will be told the truths that as the people of the world human beings have more in common than they have in conflict. The human species, irrespective of their background have the same common problems of death, disease, disaster, decay, etc. This will create the condition of being better citizens of the state and of the world.

At the tertiary level, a course to be titled **MORAL PHILOSOPHY** should be introduced. This is expected to build on the moral knowledge gathered from the family, nursery/primary and secondary/vocational schools. As mature minds and future leaders, various moral/ethical theories and thoughts should be introduced and deliberated upon. At the end of this deliberation they are expected, as mature adults, to perform moral acts from their moral conviction and be in a position to defend their moral acts. They are no longer to be mechanical in their acts but become reasonable and able to defend their actions and/or inactions on moral grounds. This is the reason it is called moral philosophy: the fact of appreciation and the defendability of one's action and /or inaction.

There should also be rational and civilized censorship of materials consumable by children and students. Materials both in book, electronic and pictorial forms should be adapted for the young minds with their moral upbringing in view. A situation where children are exposed to war films, pornographic materials, gambling and business promotions that promote get-rich-quick syndrome, instead of the culture of hard work, does not augur well for the upbringing of children. It will be dangerous to society to underestimate the

capacity of young ones to learn what the adults know and do. {This is not to say that the adults are exempted or encouraged to engage in immorality}. It will also do society a world of good not to tell the young ones, infants, and the children that there are no easy means of success other than hard work. It is even more dangerous to society to impress on the minds of the youth that when they drop out at school they can take to music, comedy, dance, sports, *loto* and chance related games and still be rich. The initial training of a child should be on the values of hard work and long suffering with endurance and diligence. Parental guidance is very necessary. Parents and older folks should not shirk this duty of making young ones morally conscious.

Moral education and moral training will be enhanced by the way the society is operated. Since the one receiving moral education lives in society and sees the happenstances around, there should be a friendly moral environment in which to operate. Therefore the larger society with its institutions which have been granted power and authority (especially the government) should make sure that criminals and offenders of the laws of the land, no matter how minor the offences, and those who disrespect morals (moral having been accommodated in the civil laws) be punished accordingly. The situation where people are allowed to flaunt their ill-gotten wealth or enjoy the fruit of laziness (not of labour) or get away with crime and use their criminal wealth and criminal-aided high position to oppress the rest of the law-abiding citizens, spells doom to society. So, all forms of corruption and corrupt practices should be punished. There should be no ‘sacred cows’ or ‘untouchables’.

There should however, be encouragement to those who have kept moral rules. This can be by way of national awards, promotion in their places of work or service, erecting

monuments for them, taking care of their offspring or other forms of social security or support. This will encourage moral living in society especially when the moral person is made to benefit from his moral actions especially while alive. The adult society should as a matter of necessity lead by example. No matter what we teach in classrooms and write in books, the practical aspect is more important. Failure to lead by example will leave us at the level of theory alone and no practice at all, this means nothing. If we apply the above recommendations, it will help in our quest to universalize morals because we would have both trained the man to be moral and also encouraged him to so remain.

Another thing we must take serious is how to reward moral people. The few moral people today will point the way for the many tomorrow. For that reason to make them remain in order to influence others they must be encouraged. To do this is to reward them in various ways including pecuniary rewards and building monuments and awards in their name. This is very important. It will mean that their efforts do not go without notice and they are not alone, in their own world but are the conscience of the yet-to-be-formed many.

The state authority should make good laws, formulate good policies, establish strong institutions, design social benefit scheme, including pension and other welfare packages that give hope to the people. Every human being is always by his environment. The environment has to be prepared to encourage morality and not to be hostile to it. Even if one has moral ‘seed’ in his person, it could be prevented from germinating, sprouting and growing by the scorching heat of moral phobia due to inclement moral weather.

Society should shun celebrating immorality including its temporary, flash-in-the-pan successes, fame, wealth, and attractions. State authorities should query some sources of

these ‘successes’ in order to ascertain whether they are worthy and merited. If the immoral person is allowed to overshadow and oppress the moral person, time comes when the quest for immorality becomes social culture and then there would be confusion as to what really constitutes morality and immorality.

Morality, although primarily individual, gets to social, communal and through to national and then international. Since all human beings are capable of it, every effort should be made to encourage it. When that is done and when it is adopted as a way of life for all, then human beings will benefit from it. This is open to Nigerians who belong to the human species and to comity of nations.

Contributions to Knowledge

This work contributes to knowledge from the substantive and practical perspectives:

1. The study has provided a profound platform for universalization of morals/ethical principles necessary for a new moral order. By emphasising ‘Duty for Duty’s Sake, Kant’s universalizability moral principles can serve as the basis of a new moral order.
2. It shows that Kant’s moral principles when applied in contemporary society guarantees the continued survival and existence of human species.
3. It posits a better understanding of what constitutes genuine morality as against what appears so on the surface.
4. Its comparative insights broaden our understanding of morals. The work therefore provides a better understanding of what constitutes morality, strictly speaking, as against what appears to be morality. That which passes for morality must also be objective, rational, universal and acceptable.

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