

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**HARMONISING KANT'S DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS WITH UTILITARIANISM: AN  
INTEGRATIVIST APPROACH.**

**BY**

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## **DECLARATION**

### **Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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### **Supervisors' Declaration**

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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## ABSTRACT

The study attempts to create a synthesis between two seemingly opposing ethical theories. The theories are Kant's deontology and utilitarianism. Kant's deontology urges that moral actions be assessed from the motive. In his view the motive for such an action is nothing else but the motive of duty. By duty, he means the necessity to act with respect for the moral law that is innate in all rational beings.

Utilitarianism takes a consequentialist position on moral assessment. On utilitarianism the good action is whatever gives the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people. A happy life according to the utilitarian is a life full of pleasure. Bentham (1789) saw pleasure mainly in quantitative terms but Mill (1863) recognised two forms of pleasure; qualitative and quantitative pleasures. By quantitative pleasure, we mean sensual pleasure. Qualitative pleasure involves pleasure that encompasses intellectual, self-improvement and the rule of reason in enjoying happiness. In this vein, the best moral action is one that produces qualitative pleasure. The theory recognises the role qualitative pleasure plays in determining the morality of an action.

The fundamental postulations of these two theories pose some challenges for integration. Kant's a priori conception of duty makes it impossible for moral agents to act when duties conflict. For utilitarianism, the conception that pleasure alone is the highest good has created a lot of problems such as the conception of lower and higher pleasures. We therefore modify Kant's concept of duty in order to allow his theory to make room for consequentialism. Also, pleasure alone is not the good, for there are other things which are not the product of pleasure but are intrinsically good.

On the basis of these modifications, we recognise a logical space for reconciling the two theories. As a result, we create our synthesis called humanised deontologism which defends the position that the determination of a moral action is based on both motive and consequences and that these complement each other. Thus, the principles underpinning moral actions might be both *a priori* and *a posteriori*. In other words, ethical values are synthetic *a priori*. The synthesis therefore becomes possible because further analysis reveals a convergent point of the driving assumptions of both theories. That is they all propose for the achievement of intellectual virtue as the highest good.

## **DEDICATION**

To the Supreme Being for the favour and protection, to my family for the care, to my mentors for the exemplary life and to my friends for their companionship.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
Background to the study	1
Statement of problem	9
Objective of the study	11
Theoretical framework	11
The scope and method of the study	12
Organisation of the study	13
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>MAIN ISSUES IN KANT'S DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS.</b>	<b>33</b>
The aim of Kant in his deontological ethics	36
The good will and its autonomy	38
The concept of duty	45
Duty as an absolute rule	49
Duty as an absolute rule: a reflection	53
The categorical imperative	55
The formula of universal law	58
The formula of the end in itself	59



The formula of the law of nature	59
The formula of autonomy	60
The formula of the kingdom of ends	60
A summary of Kant's basic ideas	62
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>AN ANALYSIS OF UTILITARIANISM: A LOOK AT JEREMY BENTHAM, J. S MILL AND G.E MOORE'S VERSIONS.</b>	<b>66</b>
Utilitarianism as a consequentialist theory	67
Bentham's utilitarianism	68
John Stuart Mill's version of utilitarianism	69
G.E Moore on (ideal) utilitarianism	78
Some problems with utilitarianism	90
A summary of the core concepts in utilitarianism	98
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>ACHIEVING A HUMANISTIC DEONTOLOGISM THROUGH INTEGRATING KANT'S DEONTOLOGISM WITH UTILITARIANISM.</b>	<b>101</b>
Categorical imperative and qualitative pleasure	102
Consequences and conflict of duties	118
Means and ends in Kant's deontology and utilitarianism	124
Kantian duty and the utilitarian's concepts of desire and reward	129
Humanised deontologism: the integrativist position	142
Conclusion	155
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>162</b>

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background to the study**

Morality is conceived as comprising sets of rules that ought to be obeyed. These rules tell us what is right or wrong. In analysing the way people live, we find lots of differences in what everyone sanctions and approves. Some people are of the view that it is, for instance, always wrong to lie, cheat or steal; to others, it is acceptable to lie in some instances. In contemporary moral discourse, people hold divergent views on issues like, abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, etc. These disagreements on ethical systems or rules have dogged moral philosophers since time of old. For instance, during the post-enlightenment era, British philosopher, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) propounded the theory of utilitarianism; the principle based on the happiness of the majority. Frederich Nietzsche also saw moral systems to have emanated from the interests of social groups. For Karl Marx, moral values were part of the bourgeois ideology. That is, they were a set of ideas that does not consider the economic exploitation of societies. In his contribution to the ethical discourse, Immanuel Kant also propounded his deontological ethics as an alternative theory to some ethical theories like consequentialism. Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), with his existentialist thoughts was, however, pessimistic about the possibility of universal moral systems.

In the face of these incredible diversity of ethical opinions, it became apparent that it was virtually impossible to elicit a universally correct and acceptable answer to a given ethical question or problem. In other words, it became increasingly difficult to develop any legitimate universal ethical standard. The corollary was that a philosophical problem emerged. As a result, there was the need for legitimate universal ethical standards to be created and justified.

This work is committed to analysing two main divergent ethical theories which have created a sharp division among moral philosophers since time of old. It is the hope of the researcher to find a meeting point for these two theories, canvassing the possibility of each complementing the other. The theories are Deontological Ethics as proposed by Immanuel Kant, on the one hand, and Utilitarianism by Bentham and later J.S Mill, on the other hand. The import of this research is therefore, to propose a meeting point for these theories to, firstly, bridge the sharp division and secondly, to make the theories as appealing and practicable as possible. The researcher, thus, wishes to introduce what we call Humanised Deontology, which would, in other words, be a deontological synthesis that appeals to real life situations as a result of a fusion of Kantian Deontology and Utilitarianism.

To begin with, it is important to state that ‘deontology’ as a word, upon which Kant’s ethics is based, was derived from the Greek word ‘*deon*’ or ‘*dein*’ which means ‘duty’ or ‘to be obligated.’ Deontological theory posit that an act or a class of actions are not justified by showing that it has good consequences but rather by showing that the action is done purely on the motive of duty (Onora, 1975). Kant is seen as the primary and most vocal proponent of deontological

ethics. He begins his ethics by enlightening us on what he calls *The Good Will*. Kant defines *The Good Will* as the only thing that is good without qualification (Kant, 1959). In other words, it is a will that acts for the sake of duty and it is good-in-itself.

In daily parlance, we refer to some actions as being good, for instance, honesty, intelligence, generosity etc, but the '*The Good Will*', in Kant's view, is not the same as these notions, rather, it is the good will which controls these notions. The basic idea in Kant's thought is that what makes a person good is his possession of a will that is independently good and acts in accordance with the moral law. And so, whenever we say of a person that he possesses *The Good Will*, what we mean of that person is that he makes decisions that are morally worthy since the action is being controlled by a will which is unconditionally good. In this sense, actions are morally good or otherwise according as they are motivated by duty to act from the good will.

Furthermore, Kant does not make room for deciding on what is moral based on the consequences of the action because he believes that the outcome of our daily actions is always beyond our control (Kant, 1975). What we can control is not the result the action produces but rather, the will behind the action and so, we can will to act in a certain way but we cannot determine the end results of that action. Thus, the morality of an action must be assessed in terms of the motivation behind it and not the desired or anticipated results to be derived from that action. For instance, if two people perform the same action in accordance with the same conception of the law or based on the motive of duty, but events beyond one's control prevents him from achieving his aim while the other does, in Kant's view, the one who is not successful will not be blamed,

even though he did not succeed and the other did. And the reason is that it is the motive behind the action that matters and not the consequences.

In Kant's view, the goodness of an action cannot come out from acting on impulse or inclination for desire, even if impulse or sensual inclination coincides with what duty requires. He argues, "it is not sufficient to do that which should be morally good that it conforms to the law; it must be done for the sake of the law" (Kant, 1959). In this vein, Kant believes that the kind gesture of the person who has no natural inclination of sympathy for other people but does good out of the motive of duty and respect for the moral law has greater moral worth than the same kind gesture from the person who naturally takes pleasure in doing good. The import is that, the moral worth of a person's actions cannot be dependent on what nature endowed him with, like the naturally kind person whose actions are subjective and based on his own desired ends. Rather the moral worth in an action lies in a person's ability to act from the good will motivated by duty.

Duty, in Kant's deontological ethics, is the necessity of acting out of reverence for the moral law (Kant, 1959). The principle underpinning this view is that what gives an action the moral worth is strictly the motive behind the action and not the outcome that is achieved by the performance of that action. Kant explains this by invoking the principle of the Categorical Imperative which states that, act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law (Kant, 1959).

The categorical imperative is, however, different from Kant's idea of the hypothetical imperative. Hypothetical imperative is a conditional imperative which commands a person to do something which is a means to an end (Louden

2000). Thus, it is a command of reason that holds when we desire an end or we want to achieve a particular end. For instance, statements like, be honest, so that people will think well of you.

As far as the moral law is concerned, there are some categories of living species, divine or otherwise, that it is applied to. Moral action does not apply to animals who are purely sensual beings and subject to causal determination. That is why we do not morally fault the lion for killing the antelope or even its young. But the actions of purely rational beings are perfectly in accord with moral principles and these principles do not make such a being culpable to falter. This is because its will must always conform to the dictates of reason. This attribute, thus, suits the divine and not any earthly being. Naturally, we can group human beings as lying in between these two groups; we are both sensual and intellectual. For we are neither wholly determined to act by natural impulse nor on the strength of reason alone, as a result we need rules of conduct. In other words, we need a principle that declares how we ought to act when it is in our power to choose. The composition of humans, thus, allows us to choose different moral principles to guide our actions. Kant, therefore, recommends that in this case it behoves on us to exercise our reason by acting out of the good will which is the capacity to act according to the principle provided by reason.

Generally therefore, Kant's categorical imperative is summarised in one famous example. Consider the person who needs to borrow money and is considering making a false promise to pay it back. The maxim that could be invoked is 'when in need of money, borrow it, promising to repay it, even though you do not intend to.' But when we generally apply the universality test to this maxim, it becomes clear that if everyone were to act in this way, the

institution of promising itself would be undermined. The borrower would always make a promise, willing that there be no such thing as promises (Kant, 1959).

This is the introductory summary of Kant's deontological ethics. However, we must note that the most basic aim of Kant's moral philosophy and also of the *Groundwork* is to establish the foundational principle of morals. He, thus, sought to analyse the common sense aspect of morality. By this, he wanted to come up with a precise system of principles on which all of our ordinary moral judgements are based. By these judgements, Kant believes, it should be those that any rational human being would generally accept. In addressing the general moral question, what ought I to do? Kant employs his finding from the *Groundwork* and offers a categorisation of our basic ethical obligations to ourselves and others. Moral philosophy should also characterise and explain the demands that morality makes on human psychology and social interaction and also be dedicated to saying something about the ultimate end of human endeavour, the highestgood and its relationship to the moral life (Kant, 1959). In Kant's bid to establish a fundamental relationship between these, he argued in his *Critique of Practical Reason* that this highest good for humanity is complete moral virtue together with complete happiness, the former being the condition of our deserving the latter (Kant, 1959).

It is undeniably clear that Kant's deontological ethics runs counter with the views held by teleological ethicists. Teleology is derived from the Greek word '*telos*' which means 'end'. And it is a theory of morality that derives duty as moral obligation from what is good or desirable as an end to be achieved. There is a sharp division between teleologists and deontologists, like Kant's claim that the basic standards for the moral rightness of an action are

independent of the good or evil generated by the action. The most influential of teleological theories in modern ethics is Utilitarianism which has been a prominent candidate in the distinction between deontology and teleology. Having looked at Kant's deontological ethics, we will take a look at Utilitarianism as an ethical theory and also as an offshoot of teleologism.

Utilitarianism in British philosophy can be traced as far back as William Paley (1743-1805). Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) is, however, considered the father of modern Utilitarianism in the proper sense. He is considered as such because he was responsible for making the utilitarian principle serve as the basis for a unified and comprehensive ethical system that applies, at least in theory, to every area of human life.

Bentham (1789) begins the ethical part of his work, *The Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789) with a straight forward statement that, "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure" (Bentham, 1789). By this anything that seems good must either be pleasurable or thought to be a means to pleasure or to the avoidance of pain. Conversely, anything that seems bad must either be directly painful or thought to be a means to pain or to the deprivation of pleasure. From this proposition, Bentham further argues that the words 'right' and 'wrong' can only be meaningful if they are used in accordance with the utilitarian principle, so that whatever increases the net surplus of pleasure over pain is right and whatever decreases it is wrong (Bentham, 1789). To him we must calculate the amount of pleasure to be derived from an action before we act. In this way, we use the hedonistic calculus to consider the nature of certain pleasures and pains by looking at their intensity, how long they last or their duration, purity,



propinquity, fecundity and whether they tend to give rise to further feelings of the same kind.

It is possible to think that Bentham did not really aim at propounding a theory that was to explain or justify ordinary moral view but rather, develop a system that was to reform ordinary moral behaviour. The striking fact about Bentham's theory is that, instead of deriving the concept of human nature from the ultimate end of human activity, he draws the ideas of human ends from the real nature of man.

For Bentham, utility is the normative link between our conception of humans and the desired end of human actions directed towards the happiness of all those directly or indirectly affected by the action. Thus, the principle of utility demands that an action is right or wrong according to the tendency of the action to advance or thwart the production of the happiness of the party whose interest is in question, be it individual or collective.

Bentham's position was criticised for being fit for the pigs, especially, when he reaffirmed that all pleasures are equal but only differ in quantity. In other words, a child's play is equal to reading poetry. Mill (1863), the leading proponent of the utilitarian theory after Bentham, in his work, *Utilitarianism* made several modifications to the theory, all aimed at establishing a broader view of what utilitarianism really stood for and also to make the theory less vulnerable to criticisms. We, however, note that Mill reaffirmed the basic tenet of utilitarianism as Bentham (1789) had outlined. He thus said:

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 tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By

happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure (Mill, 1863).

Although his position is also based on the minimisation of happiness, which consists of pleasure and the absence of pain, he distinguishes between pleasures that are higher and/or lower in quality. Thus, he said that it is “better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied” (Mill, 1863).

Mill (1863) also sought to show that Utilitarianism is compatible with moral rules and principle relating to justice, honesty and truthfulness. This he did with the argument that moral agents should not attempt to calculate the pleasure to be derived before an action is taken. Instead, they should be guided by the fact that an action falls under a general principle, such as the principle tends to increase happiness (Mill, 1863). However, we may consider whether exceptions can be made but it might seem possible under very necessary and specific circumstances.

### **Statement of Problem**

In their quest for a standard justification for moral judgments, moral philosophers have assumed that there are moral principles which are universal and objective. On this assumption, theories have been propounded, including Utilitarianism and Deontology as proposed by Bentham and Kant respectively, to establish the foundation of moral discourse. For Kant, individuals should perform their duties purely out of the good will. Thus, an act is not based on any external influences or consequences. And so, he posited a fundamental principle of morality; the categorical imperative which states that “act only on that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law”

(Kant, 1959). This notwithstanding, we seem to face great problems when we strictly follow this theory. There is the problem of its application to practical life situations, especially when duties conflict. Let us consider, for instance, the Dutch fisherman smuggling Jewish refugees out of Nazi territory. Here, we are faced with conflicting rules: do not lie and do not let innocent people be killed. Would we tell the truth so that innocent people are killed or do otherwise? We, however, have to choose either of these rules and Kant's deontological ethics did not show the way to handle such situation. This shortcoming opens up other views worthy of consideration such as Utilitarianism.

Utilitarianism posits that the good is whatever gives the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people. In other words, the morality of an action is determined solely by its consequences. The criticism Kant and other deontologists raised against this theory was that it ignored the respect and dignity of humans since it treated humanity as a means to an end and not as an end in itself. To avoid the problems of Utilitarianism individuals were urged to embrace Deontology. However, Deontology fails to take into account the imperfect nature and the limited capacity of humans and other practical life situations, especially when duties conflict. We then encounter a problem, how then do we answer the question, 'how ought I to live'? Each of these two rival theories has its attractions and drawbacks. Thus, it seems that neither theory offers an adequate framework for moral guidance. On closer examination however, it seems that there are convergent points on the assumptions driving these rival theories. These convergent points do not seem to have been adequately appreciated by philosophers or commentators of our time. It is being suggested that if there is a logical space for reconciling the two theories as the

researcher believes there is, it should be possible to flesh out a more comprehensive moral theory that would offer an adequate moral guidance for human behaviour.

We, therefore, wish to propose for Humanized Deontology which merges the attractions of both theories, taking into consideration the imperfect human nature and natural circumstances that, more often than not, hinder our quest to do what we ought to do.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The researcher is driven by certain objectives to be achieved at the end of the research. It is the hope of the researcher to find a meeting point for Kant's deontological ethics and utilitarianism by developing another ethical consideration that would be able to respond to some complex contemporary ethical issues and human behaviour. Generally therefore, the researcher hopes that at the end of the work the following objectives would be achieved:

- A further understanding of Kant's deontological ethics
- An additional insight into Utilitarianism
- A reconciliation of the two theories by crafting humanistic deontology that takes into account the (core) maxims of the two theories.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is guided by the dialectical framework of Hegel. This is the framework for guiding thoughts and actions into conflicts that leads us to a predetermined solution. It also draws strength from the Hegelian process of change in which a concept or its realization passes over into and is preserved by

its opposite. It is a development through the stages of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. In other words, it is a systematic reasoning, exposition or argument that juxtaposes opposed or contradictory ideas and usually seeks to resolve their conflict through synthesis. Thus the researcher analyses propositions (theses) and counter propositions (anti-theses) in an effort to generate a synthesis. In this regard, we develop a synthesis called humanised deontology out of Kant's deontology and utilitarianism. Therefore, we employ dialectics which is often described as consisting of thesis, antithesis and synthesis as the theoretical framework of the study.

### **The Scope and Method of the Study**

The study would first and foremost concentrate on ethical arguments only, ignoring in the main other metaphysical or epistemological interpretations that might be given to the works of the philosophers under study. The researcher wishes to unearth most of the arguments raised concerning Kant's deontological ethics as well as utilitarianism. The study therefore limits itself to these two ethical theories and other commentaries made by other philosophers on these theories. In examining utilitarianism, we limit ourselves to the views of Bentham, Mill and Moore who profess act utilitarianism, rule utilitarianism and ideal utilitarianism respectively.

The research adopts a content analysis approach in examining the core texts. We employ Hegelian dialectics as the methodological approach. The dialectical approach creates a synthesis between seemingly contradictory positions. By this approach we achieve an integration of the two apparent opposing theories. In other words, we make a careful enquiry with the ultimate

end of systematic and purposeful welding of ideas, interpretations of facts and the explanation of present realities. Again, through dialectics, we take the good sides of theories to form a systematic whole.

We make use of classical works of the main authors under study. These authors are Immanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and George Edward Moore. Quite apart from this, the researcher also makes use of secondary sources which include critical commentaries, articles, conference papers that have been published on the subject-matter.

### **Organization of the Study**

The Chapter one is made up of a general introduction and a methodological framework. It also includes; the statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, the scope and method of the study, the organization of the study and finally the theoretical framework.

The chapter two consists of a review of related literature. In this chapter, both primary (classical) and secondary sources would be reviewed, showing how relevant these sources are to the study. The next chapter, which is chapter three, would be an in-depth study of Kant's Deontological ethics. Here, the researcher would find out about Kant's early influences, aims and what he sought to achieve as well as the tenets of his moral philosophy. By looking into Kant's moral philosophy, the researcher hopes to bring to bare Kantian interpretation of The Good Will and its autonomy, the Categorical Imperative and its meaning and then Kant's concept of duty.

Chapter four examines the ethical views of Utilitarians. In this chapter, we delve into the utilitarian theory by highlighting the core propositions and

evaluating them. The major works by Bentham, Mill and Moore are subjected to critical examination. In chapter five, we attempt a harmonisation of the two theories. The integrativist framework is used in the harmonisation effort. Here, the chapter will focus on analyzing Kant's deontological ethics in the thought of the integrativist. That will set the stage for proposing a unified theory that blends Kantian deontology with the human happiness principle of utilitarianism. Here, the researcher wishes to introduce what might be called Humanized Deontologism or a deontology with a human face. The final chapter would be a summary of the whole work. This would consist of a general evaluation and conclusion.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There has been a number of sources dedicated to scrutinizing how ethical systems justify the way we ought to live. However, the trend these sources take have been to give a one-sided explanation and assessment of either of these views without looking out for how Kant's deontological ethics and utilitarianism can be made to complement each other. We thus wish to take a look at the trend of literature that are dedicated to modifying Kant's theory to accommodate some aspects of utilitarianism or seek to harmonise both theories to develop an attractive synthesis.

Kant's deontological ethics has enjoyed a lot of attention among moral philosophers as indicated in the many critiques and responses raised on this theory. Our aim here is to review extant sources on Kant's deontology and show how inadequate these sources deal with the aspect of Kant we want to work on. Thematically Kant's ethics is seen to focus on the good will and its autonomy, duty, the categorical and hypothetical imperatives and the a priori characteristics of moral laws. The good will, according to Kant, is good in itself without any qualification (Kant, 1959). In other words, it is good without any condition and it does not derive its goodness from any other thing; it is intrinsically good. The morality of our actions depends on the motivation behind the action and such motivation must be the good will. He further explains that acting from the good will is a matter of duty. And so, humans ought to act out of the good will not for



any reason other than duty. In talking about duty, we have the duty to follow the basic principle in morality which is the categorical imperative. From the categorical imperative we determine the moral worth of our actions. Kant says that ethics has been confused with empirical issues and this has resulted in the many inconsistencies in moral theories. For him, the moral law is known through a pure practical reason and not based on any other fact.

Utilitarianism has also passed through the mill of scrutiny involving criticisms and other interpretations. The theory emphasises the usefulness of moral laws in promoting the net of happiness over pain for the greatest number. The research pays particular attention to Mill's modification of utilitarianism when he distinguished between qualitative and quantitative pleasure as well as Moore's ideal utilitarianism. These views were modifications to Bentham's quantitative pleasure which encountered a lot of criticisms.

Our objective here is to review sources that are dedicated to finding out a meeting point between these two theories. The motive is to see how best we can contribute to helping the theories extricate themselves from the many criticisms levelled against them since they both seem inadequate in helping humans attain reach the high moral standards sought after. The objective is to explore the possibilities of integrating or reconciling the core values of the two theories into a more permissible theory that would serve as a useful guide for moral behaviour. It must be noted that practicalising Kant's ethics is a presupposed objective intrinsic in the harmony that will be achieved between Kant's deontology and utilitarianism.

Brennan (1967) dedicates part of his to analysing Kant's deontology and utilitarianism which the researcher finds useful. He begins with a look at what he

calls Kant's voluntarism as a theory in moral situations and observes that one important aspect of Kant's theory is that it provides a check on the potential one-sidedness of utilitarianism and pragmatic ethics. He is of the view that Kant's deontology has given a new trend to morality that is totally different from the consequentialist thought which was bedevilled with problems. Brennan however fails to realise that Kant's ethics, though it was meant to solve some of the problems Utilitarianism and Pragmatism pose, has not really been successful in giving us a practicable alternative devoid of some serious problems. Even though we find this literature as giving further insights into these theories, fails to find out how these theories can be harmonized to at least appeal to life situations. Although he looks at both Kant's deontology and utilitarianism, he did not focus on whether there is a possible complementarity of these theories. Brennan focused particularly on the attractions and shortcomings of both theories leaving out the possibility of a merger of both theories.

On his part, Taylor (1979) analyses Kant's morality and the modern version of hedonism or utilitarianism. He opines that when we say that pleasure is good, it means that it is good not merely as a means to some end but as an end in itself. He also observes that it is generally accepted that feelings of pleasure are always good in themselves and feelings of pain always bad. Taylor (1979), then, says of Kant that one significance of his ethics was to show that what moral must emanate from our rational will if we suppose it to be something relational and at the same time non-empirical. He, however, did not pay particular attention to finding out the possibility of reconciling these seemingly opposing theories. Taylor's work ended on the evaluation of both theories with no particular attention to finding out a harmony between the two theories.

Furthermore, Bradley (1959) takes a vivid look at pleasure for pleasure's sake and duty for duty's sake. In analysing pleasure, he asks whether happiness is the climax or the end of actions and explains that "for what more can we wish than that all should be well with us – that our wants should be filled and the desire of our hearts be gratified?" (Bradley, 1959). He continues by saying that pleasure is something we can be sure of, for it dwells here in ourselves. We share similar belief but wish to add that humans generally crave for successful life but the problem erupts when we break the boundary of contentment. The greatest quantity of pleasure is not the end, there are pleasures we desire in preference to others even at the cost of discontent and dissatisfaction. These pleasures are to be preferred and are the higher pleasures. Bradley adds that the moral good is an end in itself and it is to be pursued for its own sake. With Kant's ethics, Bradley observes that the good is the good will which, according to Kant, is the universal will and also the free will which is autonomous and final. But Bradley could not fully exhaust the arguments as to whether the will was really free in the light of Kant's deontological ethics. Bradley's work only entails the normal trend of interpreting both Kant and utilitarianism without paying particular attention to the possibility of modifying the theories in order to achieve reconciliation.

Again, Ewing (1976) analyses the utilitarian and Kant's deontological theories. For utilitarianism, he acknowledges that the ultimate ground for their validity lies in the general happiness principle and the theory has a great attraction of being relatively simple. Ewing, however, outlined various critiques of the theory which render the theory unattractive but failed to let us know how this theory could be modified to make it attractive. With Kant's duty for duty

sake, Ewing argues that there is a prominent difficulty that most readers of Kant's theory face. That is, men seem to often perform noble and self sacrificing actions under the influence of love rather than out of a conscious sense of duty and it seem unfair to deny all the possible intrinsic value of such actions. Ewing concluded in his analysis of Kant that his theory needs a supplement mainly because of the various problems that the theory faces. In this vein, he suggested utilitarianism but did not proceed with the merger but rather explained the various positions of utilitarianism to apparently make it easy for anyone who wishes to research in this area to do so. Ewing suggested possible reconciliation of the two theories but did not proceed to work out how the reconciliation would be effected.

Singer (1963) examines the principles of utility and the categorical imperative as well. In his work, *Generalisation in Ethics*, Singer lays bare the stipulation of the principle of consequences in its positive form. He states that if the consequences of doing X are generally desirable, then, it is one's duty to do X, where X refers not to a specific act in specific circumstances but to a kind of action. This principle is thus in line with traditional utilitarianism which claims that we have the duty not only to minimize unhappiness or pain but to maximise happiness or pleasure. Singer assesses the principle of the categorical imperative. But again, he did not consider the fact that an ethical theory is not worth much attention when it fails to appeal to life situations. One way of doing this is to synthesise theories by merging their strong points. Thus Singer could have looked in this direction but he did not.

On his part, Fagothey (1976) claims that utilitarianism is a wise combination of egoism and altruism and an expression of the kind of life most of

people lead. It recognizes that man is social and that we are all in this world together and in this life, we all accept that available pain should be eliminated and unavoidable pain can be tolerated by ensuring that no one has to bear more than his share. The theory also demands the social virtues needed for community living and restrains only those few whose fanatical or distorted interpretation of virtue might issue anti-social acts. Fagothey also notes that the fundamental reason why a conduct might be wrong is that it subjects other persons as a means but always not as an end. The dignity of the rational being is, therefore, the fundamental reason why one must be moral. The import is that, if one must, for instance, not subject other persons as means to oneself as end, one cannot subject himself as means to another's end. The question then becomes, who imposes the maxim on oneself. This, he reasons, is what Kant calls the autonomy of the will. Although Fagothey's assessment is in line with the trend the research is directed towards, he departs from the main focus of the study whereby the useful and attractive aspects of the theory are not synthesised to develop a more attractive and appealing system of moral standard.

Lillie (1966) also makes an exposition on Kant's deontology and utilitarianism. He claims that for a practical estimate of the desirability of one action rather than another, there is the need to take into account, not only the pleasantness of the consequences of the action, but also the probability of these consequences actually occurring. By appealing to the happiness of the greatest number, utilitarians mean that we ought to aim not merely at consequence and pleasantness. Concerning Kant's deontology, he argues that some philosophers refer to Kant's conception of duty as a duty of perfect obligation and its meaning is mostly misconstrued. This is because when we call duty a duty of perfect

obligation we sometimes mean that it can be expressed in a definite law like you ought to pay your debts. At other times, it is a duty which holds unconditionally in any circumstances whatever, such as the obligation to be honest. Lillie's explanation seems to give further insight into some of the proposed arguments on perfect and imperfect duty in Kant's deontology; however, he did not pay any attention to reconciling the two theories even though he succeeded in giving explanations to some misconceptions of the theories.

Again, Birsch (2002) makes relevant remarks on Kant's deontology and utilitarianism. He observes that Kant's claim that moral laws are perceived by person's as universal commands is not necessarily the case. This is because there are many problems which the theory faces like the problem of descriptions for actions. This relates to the procedure for creating moral laws. By this a person must be able to identify an action and then decide on the rule that guides the action. The second problem is the conflicting of moral laws and the exceptions of moral laws. He further analyses utilitarianism and observes that the theory is battling with three main problems: the problem of preferences, the problem of identifying consequences and the problem of injustice. These problems seem not to be different from the age old identified problems with the theories and so there is the need to further look at how these theories can be made attractive by merging their strengths to create an applicable synthesis. Birsch's focus did not end with this objective and this is where the study takes a further step to look at how a harmony can be created.

Likewise, Thomas (1993) argues that utilitarianism is a goal-based ethical theory. In other words, actions are good or bad, right or wrong according as they promote or hinder the maximisation of intrinsically valuable states of

affairs. He observes that utilitarianism involves six claims which are results, metricity, unity, personal decision making, aggregation and definition of welfare. In his analysis of Kant's ethics he notes of the good will and the moral will as elusive. But he believes that the good will is the only kind of motivation with intrinsic value and it is good in itself with no reference to results. The moral will sees an action as morally good if it is done from duty and so a good will is a moral will. Thomas's analysis did not conclude with a reconciliation but it opened up possible areas of finding a harmonious relation between the two theories. For instance, the concept of intrinsic value of actions is identified in both Kant's deontology and utilitarianism and this creates a possible opening for integration.

Frankena (1973) investigates into what teleological and deontological theories give us. According to him, teleological theories state the basic or ultimate criterion or standard of what is morally right, wrong, obligatory, etc. It is the non-moral value that is brought into being. Deontologists, on the other hand, reject what teleologists affirm. They deny that the right, obligatory and the morally good are wholly, whether directly or indirectly, a function of what is non-morally good or of what promotes the greatest balance of good over evil. For them the morality of an action does not depend on the effects but rather the volition and merely because it is one's duty to perform such an act. He further identified different kinds of deontology. Act-deontologists maintain that the basic judgements of obligation are all purely particular ones. Rule-deontologists, however, maintain that the standard of right and wrong consists of one or more rules. It has proponents like Thomas Reid, Richard Price, etc. The assessment is relevant for the research but Frankena did not take a further step of finding out

the possible areas of integrating the two views. His focus reiterated the age old division between teleology and deontology. We are seeking to use a theory from both views and find possible areas of complementarity.

Also, Rachels (1999) gives a vivid account of utilitarianism and Kant's deontology. He summarises that classical utilitarianism in three main propositions, firstly, actions are to be judged right or wrong solely by virtue of their consequences. Secondly, the consequences of an action are the amount of happiness or unhappiness that is caused. Thirdly, no one's happiness should be rated above another's. The utilitarian agrees that right actions are those that produce the most good, but the good is happiness for the greatest number of people. Rachels also looks at Kant's categorical imperative and understands it to mean that whenever one is taking a particular action, one must decide what rule he would be following and as to whether he would be willing for that rule to be followed by everyone all the time. Rachels' work gives a basic analysis of the utilitarian and Kant's thoughts. In a likely manner, Ozumba (2002) also offers a useful insight into the theory of the utilitarians and Kant's deontology in his work and observes that utilitarianism is dedicated to looking at the ends of moral actions and the means by which these ends are achieved. Furthermore, he alludes to utilitarianism as an important theory which is able to reconcile deontologism and egoism. Looking at Kant's ethics, Ozumba argued that Kant sees duty and obligation as the necessity for acting out of respect for the moral law. He further reiterates that the motive of the will, in Kant's ethics, is good only if this motive necessarily emanates from acting from duty. Although Rachels did not make any attempt at integrating the two theories, Ozumba seems to have entertained such a possibility when he observed that through integration we can create hybrid



theories that can be useful in responding to our modern ethical problems. As a result, he sees a possible integration of teleologism and deontologism even though he did not work out how to pull off the integration. In fact, it is realised that Ozumba only identified one point of harmonisation but did not successfully synthesise the two different theories to get a new theory as the researcher seeks to do.

Cooke (1974) is of the view that an exclusive concentration on the *Groundwork* or the *Critique* can easily lead to a misunderstanding of the basic thrust of Kantian deontology. This is because, Cooke argues, while it is certainly true that Kant emphasised the categorical character of moral obligation as no one had previously, still, “Kantian ethics is in a fundamental sense, a teleological ethic, concerned above all with ends of action, human fulfilment and happiness (Cook, 1974). Cooke, thus, presses his point:

While Kant held that moral effort is of supreme worth and while he believed that particular duties were sometime derivable from a purely formal principle, he always held that the pursuit of morality would be senseless if it was not aimed at the realisation of one’s natural perfections in a harmonious community. His main ethical concern was with human fulfilment and the condition of its attainment (Cooke, 1974).

Analysing Kant’s ethics this way, Cooke stresses that Kant’s deontology has affinities with a natural law view of morality. The analysis Cooke makes, here, directly falls into our objective of finding out how Kant’s deontology and utilitarianism, which is a teleological theory, could complement each other. Even though we agree in principle with the arguments Cooke puts across, we think

that Kant's deontology will be more appealing if we look at it from the perspective of the way humans behave and further merge its strength with some utilitarian concepts but we think Cooke did not look at this aspect of Kant's deontological ethics.

Field (1966) argues that Kant's ethics started with several assumptions about what is right or wrong. For instance, there was the assumption that if there is a moral law at all then it must be absolute and universal. Also, if a thing is really good, then, it must be good in itself. There also was the assumption that the rightness or wrongness of an action can neither depend on what we want nor the actual results of the action. Field also claims that Kant assumed the essence of goodness and the moral law are to be deduced from the notion that whenever we act we must also will our action to become a universal law. We disagree with Field because we think that looking at Kant's deontology critically, he did not proceed on these assumptions. Kant rather proceeded with the idea that we need to move away from abstract conceptualisations to what actually ought to be the case. As to whether he succeeded is part of what our work will explore.

Field (1970) further claims that Kant has not succeeded in the task he set for himself. For him, Kant thought that the nature of goodness or rightness could be derived from the conception of a rational being. As a result, Field thinks, Kant has failed because of some two possible directions. Firstly, it may be that Kant had not really understood what was involved in the nature of rational beings. Secondly, Kant may have been mistaken in thinking that it was connected in this way with the concept of goodness and rightness. We partly disagree with Field because it is rather expected of rational beings to be moral Kant, instead failed to realise the imperfect nature of rational beings and this is

the direction we will take in our study. Although we see Field's analysis as relevant to our study we also see his work as falling short of the main focus of this study. He sought to make Kant's deontology attractive by looking at the various shortcomings of the theory but we proceed further to flesh out a synthesis between Kant's deontology and utilitarianism.

Hare (1963) also explains the thesis of utilitarianism. According to him, the principle accepted by utilitarians, everybody to count for one, nobody for more than one can both be justified by the appeal to the demand for universalisability and also be used to provide an answer to our daily pertinent moral questions. By this principle, Hare is of the view that everyone is entitled to equal consideration and that if it is said that two people ought to be treated differently, some difference must be cited as the ground for these different moral judgments. Hare sought to analyse some problems the theory faces. One problem, Hare identifies, is the relation between desires, inclinations, etc, on the one hand, and interests, on the other. It seems correct that moral arguments could be conducted in terms of either of these sorts of things without making any difference. Yet, they are certainly to be distinguished. Hare posits here that to have interest is for there to be something which one wants or is likely in the future to want or which is a means necessary or sufficient for the attainment of something which one wants. Another major problem which Hare throws up was that utilitarians commonly put their theories in terms of pleasure or happiness but it seems not evident that an account couched in terms of desires or interests could be easily translated into one in terms of pleasure or happiness. He then proceeds to take a second look at these criticisms. Even though Hare outlines and responds to many of the arguments raised against the theory which we agree

with, we think that he could have done more by also analysing the theory in the light of Kant's deontologism. However in his later work, *Sorting Ethics* (1997), Hare investigates whether Kant could have been a utilitarian. According to him, Kant's claim of not using man as a means to an end but an end in himself is utilitarian in thought. Here, Kant is seen as looking at the consequences of our action. He, in other words, meant that humans treat themselves with dignity and not as tools to ends. We see this analysis as being in line with the focus the study takes but we will proceed to find other possible areas of integration.

Again, Urmson (1967) is of the view that, Mill is sometimes tagged as an example of an ethical naturalist by those who interpret his account of happiness naturalistically, as being one who desires rightness in terms of the natural consequences of actions. He thus sees Mill's philosophy as saying that a moral rule is shown to be correct when the rule promotes an ultimate end. Also, moral rules can be justified only in regard to matters in which the general welfare is more than negligibly affected. Again, he observes that a particular action is justified as being right by showing that it is in accord with some moral rule and vice versa. This view is also shared by the researcher but we wish to add that there was no emphasis on the means by which this theory can be made more appealing since it still faces problems this is because rule utilitarianism as Mill professes is also vulnerable to some of the criticisms raised against act utilitarianism. And we will look at the core of these criticisms and propose some sort of solution by reconciling utilitarianism and Kant's deontology which we think was not considered by Urmson.

Hazlitt (1964) also dedicates portions of his work to examine the utilitarian and Kant's ethical theories. He is of the view that happiness can be

conceived as a mere arithmetical summation of units of pleasure and pain but this finds little acceptance today either by moral philosophers or the layman in the street. He explains that, it is important to understand the words pleasure and pain in a purely formal sense. However, the popular association of these words with merely sensual and carnal pleasure is so strong that such warnings of the importance of its formal meanings are often lost. We think that it is necessary to understand pleasure and pain but both concepts are not arithmetically definable. And this is why we have problems with the hedonistic calculus outlined by Bentham (1789). This is because we believe that when we consider pleasure in terms of its qualitative sense we would find it useful. Concerning Kant, Hazlitt focuses on the semantic understanding of 'end' and claims that by proposing that we treat man as an end, Kant was looking at the end result of our actions as sometimes deciding the morality of our actions. This analysis is in line with the researcher's focus but we see it as just one area of integrating both theories and we think that there are other possible areas for reconciliation.

Miller (1969) tries a defence of Kant's concept of the good will from another dimension. To him, the detractors of Kant's view have been mistaken, and that not only was Kant correct but his critics have proved his correctness unintentionally. For Miller believes that when Kant writes of a 'Kingdom of Intelligent,' he is not referring to everybody. For by this we may commit the Academician's fallacy, which is an error of ascribing 'architectonic' interests to laymen. However, the inhabitants of Kant's kingdom must be literates, be reflective enough to formulate maxims and laws and it is in the realm of such entities that Kant's theory holds sway. We see this literature as establishing the reason why Kant's deontology is for moral agents who have reached a certain

level of intellectual reflection and we think that it is at this level that moral agents will opt for qualitative pleasure over quantitative pleasure.

Nielsen (1973) on his part proposes that purely human purposes are enough to give meaning to our lives. For we desire happiness and we can find, even in a purely-secular world, abundant sources of it. Beyond this, we can find a rationale for seeking to mitigate the awful burden of human suffering. These considerations, he argues, are enough to make life meaningful. Nielsen fully shares the humanist view of human-centeredness but it is also possible to include a spirit-centred view - that is views which give room for spiritual beliefs - to his thought through integrativism. In any case, we also think that the import is not to find out whether ethics can be human centred or spirit-centred alone but that ethical theories should be geared towards the appreciation and benefit of humans.

McGreal (1970) argues that the attempt to base morality on the search for perfection is useless because one must presuppose morality in order to build the conception of perfection. Also, to attempt to build morality on the idea of the perfect divine will is even worse. This idea is untenable in that not only must the idea of the divine be also based on moral conceptions. McGreal thus observes the role that the imperfect nature of humans play as far as morality is concerned. We share McGreal's position that moral philosophers should take human weaknesses into consideration when formulating ethical systems. We realise that Kant is criticised for being too much of a perfectionist and we believe that ethical conceptions must take into account the natural behaviour of humans.

Similarly, Handy (1969) attempts to unearth what is meant by humanistic ethics. He is of the view that naturalistic humanists think that all human values

are grounded in worldly events, relationships, experiences, etc. Humanistic ethics, he continues, emphasise the consequences of human behaviour. Also, morality is observed as a social phenomenon, rather than as a purely or primarily individualistic matter. Thus both the good and the bad things we do and suffer mostly have a rippling effect on other people as a result of the social systems in which they live and the culturally determined patterns of behaviour and response. The view which Handy puts across clearly fits into the harmony we wish to establish between utilitarianism and Kant's deontology since we believe that our actions one way or the other affect others as well and so a practical ethical theory must also take the welfare of others into consideration and so we find the work relevant.

Furthermore, Edel (1969) is of the view that one advantage of humanistic philosophy is its insistence that the best part of philosophy is one which is man-centred. However, so persistent is its man-centred orientation that it sometimes forgets that man himself is a very special and very limited phenomenon in the history of the cosmos. The import here is this: humanistic ethics states the truth that ethics is a human creation, not in the superficial sense. In fact, the idea that ethics is man-made carries with it the possibility of improvement, revision and reorganisation but more than man-centeredness is involved. Edel observes then that the concept of humanistic ethics may be regarded as a corrective endeavour within naturalist ethics under the specific distortions that produce a neglect of creativity and responsibility. Edel's exposition reiterates our further claim that we cannot neglect the man-centredness of ethics, but critical analysis would reveal that it takes more than this.

Again, Kupperman (1983) observes that we cannot expect too much from human beings, and so if morality represents what we expect then the demands of morality cannot be too great. Generally, Kupperman believes that morality can circumscribe the area in which it is allowed to favour one's own interests or the interests of those one loves. But the interplay between morality, on the one hand, and self-interest and personal relations, on the other hand, is hardly static. He says that though entirely altruistic behaviour would be unrealistic, almost all of us should behave more altruistically than we do and that some moral requirement to this effect would be useful. Kupperman's view is meant to alert us to the shortcomings of humans to perform wholly altruistic acts. We therefore need not expect too much from humans. We however think that there is the need to further analyse some of these sources in our quest to find a meeting place for the two theories which would be appealing to human situations.

Furthermore, Blackham (1983) writes a detailed work on the humanists in his work, *Humanism*. Here, he distinguishes between the various kinds of humanism, for instance, Christian humanism, literary humanism, scientific humanism, etc. He is of the view that humanists believe that man is the product of culture and that man is not born human but becomes human in a society. He, however, sees Mill as a nineteenth century humanist and that utilitarianism is a human based theory. We believe that to be able to humanise deontology, we need to understand better the tenets of the humanists and this is where Blackham's work becomes relevant. But let us note that Blackham's work is not dedicated to analysing the human benefits of Kant's deontology and utilitarianism and this is where we want to explore.



Generally, we realise of these sources as making attempt in one way or another to analyse, explain or interpret utilitarianism as a teleological theory, Kant's deontologism and humanistic ethics. What seems to have been the trend in these reviewed sources is that they do not fully explore the area where this work is directed towards. We do not by this deny that there was no attempt to look at a possible merger and harmonisation but we think that the attempt was not enough. We therefore proceed to analyse utilitarianism and Kant's deontology and find out possible areas of complementality.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **MAIN ISSUES IN KANT'S DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS**

In our journey to achieve a compromise between Kant's deontology and utilitarianism there is the need to take a vivid look at Kant's deontological ethics. In this chapter, we will throw a searchlight on the main conceptions in Kant's deontology. The objective is to explain Kant's deontology in the way Kant puts it and to further explain his conceptions as they have been interpreted by other philosophers as well as the researcher's own understanding of Kant's thought.

Kant's deontological ethics is undoubtedly one of the most influential, at least, in modern ethical discourse. The theory is to a large extent motivated by a reaction against hedonism, especially the egoistic aspect of hedonism. Thus, Kant's deontological ethics insofar as it does not take into consideration the consequences of an action becomes a non-consequentialist theory and the most popular one of course. Talking about non-consequentialist theories, we have act and rule non-consequentialists. Act non-consequentialists are of the view that there are only actions, situations and people about which we cannot generalize (Thiroux, 1967). For rule non-consequentialists, they believe that there are rules which form the basis of morality (1967). Here, it is following the rule that makes an action moral and not what happens as a result of following the rules. Kant is a rule non-consequentialist. His thinking is that we could set up absolute moral rules by reasoning alone: the same kind of reasoning that established mathematical truth without reference to any empirical evidence. As a result, for a

moral truth to be absolute it must, first of all, be consistent in the logical sense and also its truth must be universalisable.

For him, if moral rules are established in this manner they will be indisputable and will also be morally and logically commanding to all moral agents. Those who refuse to obey such moral rules become immoral. Since human beings, according to Kant, are often inclined to act in certain ways, it becomes a moral imperative for human beings to obey rules out of a sense of duty. In other words, sensual inclinations are irrational and emotional and humans, more often than not, act on emotions rather than on reason, as a result people must force themselves to act morally out of a sense of duty. And so, an act is moral when the will to act from duty is the motivating factor of the action.

Kant proposes that for us to know which actions are right in a particular situation, certain procedures must be followed. That is;

1. The moral agent must will a maxim
2. The moral agent must act from the maxim
3. The maxim must pass the test of the categorical imperative.

Thus, the most essential thing in acting is when the maxim upon which the action is performed passes the universalisability test and the maxim is also free of any influences. Kant observes that;

... since I have robbed the will of every inducement that might arise for it as a consequence of obeying any particular law, nothing is left but the conformity of actions to universal law as such, and this alone must serve the will as its principle. That is to say, I ought never to act except in such a way that my maxim should become a universal law. Here, bare conformity to

universal law as such is what serves the will as its principle and must serve it if duty is not to be everywhere an empty delusion and a chimerical concept (Kant, 1959).

By invoking the categorical imperative, Kant does not see it as a maxim *per se* but a principle or rule that will allow one to test all maxims from which he acts. In other words, if one wills and consequently acts from a maxim, that maxim must pass the test of the categorical imperative in order to be right. In this sense, the categorical imperative becomes the measuring rod for determining actions that qualify as moral.

Kant's deontological ethics carries the thesis that the only thing that is good without qualification is *the good will*. In other words, the good will is intrinsically good and that it would remain so no matter what its consequences are. He saw other things such as happiness, courage, temperament, etc, as good, but that the necessary condition of the goodness of these things is that they be possessed by a person with the good will. In other words, the good will is good in terms of nothing but for the fact that it is good in itself. It means further that, in Kant's view, it is the intention behind the action that matters and not the consequences. But generally, it is difficult to be able to isolate nature from consequences, however, in some instances we look at the nature of the action based on the motive behind the action whilst the consequences are usually out of our cognitive limit to determine.

It is important to distinguish between subjective and objective moral principles as Kant understands it. For Kant, subjective principles are called maxims while objective principles are laws. In our daily lives, rational beings, more often than not, determine their will according to objective laws, that is,

they act in accordance with rational moral principles. This is where humans can be differentiated from animals, since it is only the rational being that has the power to act in accordance with his idea of laws.

However, though man is an imperfect rational being he still has the ability to act in accordance with rational laws but does not normally do so because of some external influences. As a result, man requires the notions of 'ought' and 'duty' to apply to their moral lives. In this case, it is realised that it is only humans who are affected by imperatives. Kant generally means that morality is not a set of rules which prescribe the possible means for the attainment of some end, be it happiness, self-realisation, satisfactory life, etc, but a different set of rules which must be obeyed for its own sake as categorical imperatives. Moral rules must, however, be obeyed solely out of duty and not on the consequences the rule is meant to produce.

### **The Aim of Kant in his Deontological Ethics**

In the preface to his *Groundwork*, Kant was of the view that philosophy is divided into Logic, Physics and Ethics. He sees Logic as formal and without any sensuous experience; however, physics and ethics have both empirical and non-empirical or a priori part. But the task of formulating and justifying principles based on a priori or pure part of physics is called a metaphysic of nature; likewise, the a priori part of ethics is called a metaphysic of morals (Kant, 1959). Kant, thus, seeks to ground morality solely on a priori grounds. He thinks that experience has shown that humans often do what we ought not to do, provided we allow that there is such a thing as a moral 'ought'. As a result, if there be moral principle in accordance with that which men ought to act, then,

knowledge of this principle cannot be known by sensuous experience but a priori. However, if we need detailed knowledge of particular human duties, then, we require experience of human nature, which is the empirical part of ethics and Kant calls it 'practical anthropology'.

Kant's quest for basing the foundation of his ethics solely on a priori knowledge carries with it some basic assumptions. He firstly assumes that reason functions actively in accordance with laws and principles which it can know and understand. Such rational principles, he believes, can be manifested not only in thinking but also in science and moral action. Kant, thus, points out that if we believe that reason has no activity and no principles of its own and that the mind is merely a bundle of sensations and desires, then, there can be no a priori knowledge. But he believes this is not the case (Kant, 1959). Making known what course ethics takes, Kant again makes it clear that the distinction between the a priori and empirical parts of ethics must be treated separately since mixing them up would not only bring about intellectual confusion, but also would lead to moral degeneration. For if actions are to be morally good, then, they must be done for the sake of duty and it is only the a priori or pure part of ethics that can show us what the nature of duty is. In other words, we cannot know by experience that an act is performed with the motive of duty, to be able to act based on what duty requires is to conceive of duty as purely non experiential. When we mix the different parts of ethics up, we may begin to confuse ethics with self-interest and so on. Thus, Kant generally set out to lay a solid foundation for a metaphysic of morals and establish the supreme principle of morality.

The facts are not farfetched to realize that Kant might have been influenced by the ethics of the Stoics who hypothesise that the rational man is the one who follows '*aparthea*' (Seneca, 1969). Also the strict puritanical life of his parents might have influenced him in his idea of how a moral agent should behave. Puritanism is a 16<sup>th</sup> century religious movement that is noted for advocating for the observance of strict religious and moral earnestness. Generally, they lived and advocated for strict religious purity and piety and were also seen as radicals in terms of following religious and moral laws. Kant was brought up by puritan parents who taught him to follow strict moral and religious principles and laws. This seems to suggest why his ethics is conceived as too strict and perfectionist in nature.

### **The Good Will and its Autonomy**

The central pillar of Kant's deontological ethics is to define what he takes to be the absolute good. This will set the stage for understanding what morality is. This is because the moral agent must strive to attain the good. According to Kant, the only thing that is good without restriction or conditions is *the good will* (Kant, 1959). That is to say that the good will in all circumstances is an absolute and unconditional good. That is, the good will becomes the only thing that is good in itself and good independently of its relation to other things. Thus, Kant explains in his *Groundwork*:

It is impossible to conceive anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be taken to be good without qualification, except a good will. Intelligence, wit, judgment and any other talents of the mind we may care to name, or courage, resolution are without doubt good and desirable in many

respects; but they can also be extremely bad and hurtful when the will is not good which has to make use of these gifts of nature (Kant, 1959).

Here, Kant conveys the message that the good will is not actually the only good. On the contrary, there are many other things which are in fact good in many respects. The difference, however, is that they are not good in all circumstances or good in themselves. As a result, they may all be thoroughly bad when they are used by a bad will. Their goodness is, therefore, conditional, that is, they are good under certain conditions; the condition that they be managed by the good will.

Furthermore, Kant is of the view that the goodness of a good will is not derived from the goodness of the results which it produces. Thus, he reiterates in his *Groundwork* that “ A good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes – because of its fitness for attaining some proposed end: it is good through its willing alone – that is good in itself” (Kant, 1959). In other words, the conditioned goodness of a good will’s products cannot be the source of the unconditional goodness which belongs to the good will alone. Besides, the good will continues to have its own unique goodness even when it is unable to produce the results at which it aims. Paton (1964) suggests that there is nothing in this thought of Kant which suggests that the good will does not aim at producing results. On the contrary, Kant holds that the good will and indeed any kind of will must aim at producing results. We share Paton’s views but would like to state that it sometimes becomes important to look at the results a will produces and so if the good will is indeed good, then, we believe it is good because of the results it mostly produces, but this view seems silent in Kant’s deontology.



Kant also reiterates that the seat of a good will is reason itself. We are made to presuppose here that in organic life every organ has a purpose or function to which it is well adapted. This presupposition also applies to mental life since for human beings reason is the organ which controls action just as instincts control the actions of animals. Kant, however, explains that if reason has the mere attainment of happiness as its function, then, instincts would have been a very better guide. And so, if reason must be adapted to its purpose, then, its purpose cannot merely be to produce a will which is good as a means to happiness, but rather to produce a will which is good in itself. We must note that reason in action has two main functions, according to Kant. The first is to secure the individual's own happiness, which is a conditioned good and the second is to manifest a will good in itself that is an unconditioned good. The good will is, thus, innate in every man but takes the rational moral agent to work on his good will for it to manifest. And since the good will emanates from reason, anyone who fails to act according to the good will is not only immoral but irrational as well.

Again, Kant emphasises that the will is autonomous. This autonomy of the will is a necessary condition for the validity of moral judgments. And so, if we wish to establish the validity of the principle of autonomy, we must pass beyond our judgments about moral actions. To say, then, that the will is autonomous is to mean that the will has the property of being its own law giver. Thus, Kant explains that the principle of autonomy is "Never to choose except in such a way that in the same volition the maxims of your choice are also present as universal law" (Kant, 1959). The other side of the argument is that any moral philosophy which rejects the principle of autonomy has to fall back on a

principle of heteronomy. That is making the law governing human action depend not on the will itself but on objects other than the will. Such a view can only give rise to hypothetical imperatives. By heteronomy of the will Kant means that it is when the will gives up its power of autonomy. Here, the will determines actions purely on the basis that it would want to achieve a certain objective. In this case actions that emanate are not moral. And so, heteronomous will seems to be driven, not by the will itself, but desire to achieve some other ends.

Further discussing what he called the heteronomy of the will, Kant says that the principle of heteronomy divides into two; empirical and rational. In the case of the empirical dimension of the heteronomy of the will, the principle is always the pursuit of happiness. In this vein, since all empirical principles are based on sense experience and as such lack universality, they are not fit to serve as a basis for moral law. We generally have the right to seek our own happiness, but we must note that ethically speaking, happiness and goodness are different. And Kant holds that to confuse the law is to abolish the specific distinction between virtue and vice (Paton, 1964).

The other class of heteronomous principle is the rational principle, and this is when the principle is always the pursuit of goodness. This principle as an end to be attained is seen as the best of the proposed heteronomous principles of morality, since it seems to appeal to reason for a decision (Paton, 1964). It merely bids us to aim at the maximisation of reality that is appropriate to us which loses its taste of morality. This is why it does not contradict Kant's view of the autonomy of the will. The import here is that in any case a heteronomous will is not its own legislator and is also directed towards the achievement of certain ends. The moral law rather bids us to cultivate our natural perfection, that

is, the exercise of our talents, as well as our moral perfections, that is, performing duty for duty's sake.

The supposition that both doctrines carry is that the moral law has to be derived from some object of the will and not from the will itself. Such a view, however, does not give us any moral or categorical imperative since it considers a morally good action to be good, not in itself, but merely as a means to an envisaged end. Kant says then that such principles destroy all immediate interest in moral action and place man under a law of nature, rather than under a law of freedom (1964).

Kant seeks to show by an analytic argument that the principle of autonomy is the necessary condition for all our moral judgment. Thus, he reiterates in his *Groundwork* that “An absolutely good will, whose principle must be a categorical imperative will therefore, be undetermined in respect of all objects, contain only the form of willing...” (Kant, 1959).

In his *Critique*, however, Kant seeks to give further explanation between freedom and autonomy as they are connected to the will. He therefore saw the will as a power of causal action. Thus he said;

Will is a kind of causality belonging to living things so far as they are rational. Freedom would then be the property this causality has of being able to work independently of determination by alien causes: just as natural necessity is a property characterising the causality of all non-rational beings – the property of being determined to activity by the influence of alien causes (Kant, 1959).

Kant observes that when we consider the will, we may define it as a power of causal action belonging to living beings as far as they are rational. To describe such a will as free is to say that it can act causally without being caused to be something other than itself. In the case of irrational beings, they can act causally only so far as they are caused to do so by something other than themselves and this is what is meant by natural necessity as opposed to freedom. It must be noted that free will would act under laws, but that these laws could not be imposed on it by something other than itself.

Again, reason is the seat of the good will and that is why agents who act according to the moral law are not only moral but are rational as well. In his *Critique* Kant observes that reason must necessarily function under the notion that it is free. Thus, if the good will must have the characteristics that it is not determined by outside influences and that it is the source of its own principles, then, it must be driven by reason which is absolutely free. And so, if a rational person supposed his judgements to be determined, not by rational principles, but by external impulses, then he cannot not regard these judgements as his own. This also seems to be the case when we use practical reason; for a rational agent must regard himself as capable of acting on his own rational principles and it is based on this that he can regard his will as his own.

In alluding to the overriding use of reason in morality, the inference we gather is that humans are laws to themselves and not in the sense that by their actions they confer on events an arbitrary pattern of their own devising, but in the sense of being committed by their rationality to discipline themselves in certain ways (Mackinnon, 1957). By this, men are able to order their emotions and imaginations and are able to let their actions follow universal principles.

Generally, Kant's deontological ethics is seen as an ethics of reason or rational morality since he claims that the good will emanates from reason. Miller (1995) puts it, to act out of a good will is to do X because it is right to do X, and not for any other reason. Also, Kant's idea of the good will generates a legitimate question as to whether the good will is actually autonomous as Kant would want us to believe. Schneewind (1992) divides autonomy into two components. The first is that there is no authority external to ourselves which is needed to inform us of the demands of morality. The second is that in self-government, we can effectively control ourselves. One distinct fact about Kant's view of morality is that there are some actions which we simply have to do. By this, we impose a moral law on ourselves and the law gives rise to obligation and a necessity to act in certain ways.

It suffices to say that Kant's attribution of the characteristic of autonomy to every normal adult is a radical one. This is contrary to the natural law theorists who do not think that most people could know everything morality requires of them, without being told. Kant, however, came to hold that these views were not acceptable since they imply that the only thing necessary in morality is the necessity to use a means to a desired end. Thus, if one does not need a particular end, there would be no need to act in such a way that would produce that end. Kant, however, holds that true moral necessity would make an act necessary regardless of what the agent wants.

We share much of the views that Kant puts across but do not wholly agree with him as to the fact that the will is indeed wholly autonomous. The point we wish to stress is that the will must be autonomous even though it does not always seem to be the case in most practical instances. This is because the

will is not its own originator and as such many external factors, more often than not, dictates to the will. It will suffice to say that to grant autonomy to the will is to say that nothing succeeds in influencing the will. However, since Kant himself alludes to acting in accordance with duty because we often do what we do not want to do (as human as we are) shows that in practical life situations, the will is somehow determined by other factors. The moral import we need to draw is that whenever the will acts, the rational agent ought to assess the motive behind the action since it might have moral tendencies. Kant would have done us more good if he was able to explain who grants autonomy to the will, a comment which we find muted in Kant's thoughts.

### **The Concept of Duty**

Duty as an ethical concept has received many interpretations from many moral philosophers. Most of the scrutiny has been on what duty is, who sanctions duty, how duty becomes a duty and so on. According to the *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary*, duty is defined as a moral or legal obligation or a binding force of what is right. The *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* sees duty in the ordinary sense as tasks for which one becomes responsible of. In the philosophical sense, however, it is a technical term and as a result rules for its application vary. For instance, Kant sees duty to involve the recognition of and submission to the moral law. Kant, therefore, defines duty as the necessity to act in accordance with the moral law. In the light of this we would find out whether acting from duty and the universalisability of a moral law as explained in the categorical imperative guarantees that we act without considering the results of our actions.

The idea of duty is also seen as one of the pillars in Kant's ethics. In fact, Kant's exposition on duty clearly defines why his ethics is deontological. After carefully laying bare what he meant by the good will, Kant moves on to explain how this good will is to be used in the light of what duty is. In his *Groundwork*, Kant alludes to the view that since under human conditions we struggle against unruly impulses and desires, the only way a good will is manifested is in acting for the sake of duty. Thus, to Kant "A human action is morally good, not because it is done from immediate inclination – still less because it is done from self-interest – but because it is done for the sake of duty" (Kant, 1959).

Kant is generally seen to have made three propositions about duty, the first one of which states that an action is not regarded as morally good if it is done solely out of self-interest. This is so even if the action accords with duty and is in that sense right. To determine the moral worth of an action, it is important to isolate the motives upon which the action is performed. Here, we must first consider an action done solely out of impulse and desire and not out of duty and those done out of duty and not out of impulse or desire. By doing this, Kant believes that we are bound to find out that an action done solely out of natural sympathy may be right and praiseworthy but that it has no distinctive moral worth. Thus, the goodness shown in helping others is all the more conspicuous if a man does this for the sake of duty at a time when he is fully occupied with his own troubles and when he is not impelled to do so by his natural inclination to some interest (von Wright, 1963).

Paton (1964), shares the view that Kant's doctrine would be absurd if it meant that the presence of natural inclination to good actions does not make that action morally worthy. He says that a man shows moral worth if he does good,

not from inclination but from duty. Paton (1964) further believes that Kant is here contrasting two motives taken in isolation in order to find out which of them is the source of moral worth. Kant would have avoided the ambiguity if he had said that a man shows moral worth, not in doing good from inclination, but in doing it for the sake of duty. The assumption that we see Kant carrying here is that, if an action is to be morally good, the motive of duty must by itself be sufficient to determine it. We, however, think that Kant believes generous inclinations are a help in doing good actions and for this reason it is our duty to cultivate them. This view is shared by Paton (1964) when he observes of Kant that we have at least an indirect duty to seek our own happiness.

The second proposition from Kant which is also called the formal principle of duty states that an action done from duty has its moral worth not from the results it attains or seeks to attain, but from a formal principle or maxim – the principle of doing one's duty whatever that duty may be (Kant, 1959). In this context it is important to explain what is meant by 'maxim'. A maxim is a personal principle upon which we act. Kant calls it a subjective principle; this is because it is a principle on which rational agents do act. For Kant, the maxim which carries a moral worth is that based on the principle of doing one's duty. Such a maxim is not one that is aimed at satisfying particular desires or attaining particular results. Kant, thus, calls such a maxim (that which carries moral worth) a formal maxim (Louden, 2000). Thus, to act for the sake of duty is to act on a formal maxim irrespective of all external factors like desires. A man's actions are morally good when he adopts or rejects material maxims of any proposed action according as it harmonizes or conflicts with the formal maxim of doing his duty for its own sake (Kemp, 1968).



The third proposition is that duty is the necessity to act out of reverence for the law (Kant, 1959). The meaning we derive from this proposition is that to act on the maxim of doing one's duty for its own sake is to act out of reverence for the law. Further explanation reveals another fact; Kant appears to hold that if a maxim of a morally good action is a formal one, then, it must be a maxim of acting reasonably. That is, it must be a maxim of acting on a law valid for all rational beings and is independent of any desires. Kant stresses on this because he naturally sees humans as fallible and as such a law must appear to us as a law of duty and such an imposed law must consequently incite a feeling of fear or a feeling analogous to inclination and this complex feeling is what Kant referred to as reverence. This means that so far as the motive of a good action is to be found in feeling, we must say that a morally good action is one which is done out of reverence for the law and that is what gives it a unique and unconditional value (Paton, 1964).

Kant's also states that an action performed from duty does not have its moral worth in the purpose which is to be achieved through it but in the maxim by which it determines. That is, for Kant, an action has moral worth not because of the value of consequences but mainly because of the principle involved. In other words, what actually results from an action is not morally significant since the whole moral value of an action rests in the formal character of the principle which determines the action. To Kant, when the will is itself determined by nothing but the moral law, it is a good will, and when an act is determined by nothing but respect for duty, it is also determined by respect for the moral law. He again stresses the point that it is not the results of what is done that affects

the moral worth of an action, rather, the whole value of an action is dependent upon respect for and deliberate obedience to the moral law.

### **Duty as an absolute rule**

Kant believes that morality is a matter of following absolute rules. Absolute rules are rules that admit no exceptions and must be followed in all instances (Williams, 1972). Unlike the categorical imperative, hypothetical imperatives tell us what to do when we wish to achieve certain ends. This is because in the latter case the binding force of the “*ought to*” depends on our having the relevant desires and we can escape its force simply by renouncing the desire.

Moral obligations, by contrast, do not depend on our having particular desires. Moral requirements are categorical, that is, they have the form “you ought to do such and such.” And so, just as hypothetical ‘oughts’ are possible because we have desires, categorical ‘oughts’ are binding on rational agents simply because they are rational. Absolute rules are maxims done out of duty and it is what carries moral worth.

For Kant, the concept of duty is embedded in the concept of good will; this is because acting out of the good will is the true performance of our duty. In other words, it is our duty to act out of the good will and not because of any end to be achieved. So he further proposes that we consider only the special cases of the good will. That is cases where the good will must overcome “certain subjective limitations and hindrances” (Kant, 1959). And so acting from duty is not a necessary condition for possessing a good will, this is because a will can be good even when it does not act from duty.

It is important at this point to make a distinction between acting in conformity with duty and acting from duty. An action conforms to duty just in case it is compatible with what duty requires. In other words, for an action to conform to duty it is only necessary that the action be compatible with the requirements of duty no matter what the motive was for performing that action. For instance, duty to be honest when selling conforms to duty even if one is motivated to do so out of rational self-interest rather than respect for the moral law. This seems to be in line with the ordinary conception of what duty is. Thus, in our ordinary moral lives, there is no distinction between acting from duty and acting in conformity with duty. We generally accept, sometimes consciously, an action that merely conforms to duty. Kant, however, focuses on actions that emanate from duty and considers only those ones as moral.

We can, however, readily distinguish whether an action which agrees with duty is actually done from duty or from a selfish view. It must be noted that there is always the difficulty in making some of those distinctions when an action accords with duty. For instance, to use Kant's own example, it is always a matter of duty that a dealer should not over-charge an inexperienced purchaser and whenever there is much commerce the prudent tradesman does not overcharge but keeps a fixed price for everyone so that even a child might be able to buy from him just like any other. The implication is that men must be honestly served, but this is not enough to make us believe that the tradesman has acted from duty and from the principles of honesty. This is because his own advantage required it and it would not be out of the question, in this case, to suppose that he might besides have a direct inclination in favour of the buyers so that from love he should give no advantage to one over another. In this case,

Kant would say that the dealer did not act from duty or from inclination to act from what duty requires but merely with a selfish interest.

Kant claims that only actions done from duty have moral worth or moral content. The moral worth of an action, however, goes beyond the value that would merit moral approval and it is more than its compatibility with the requirements of duty and also consists in its being motivated in the right sort of way (Shirk, 1965). Specifically, an action only has moral worth if it is done from duty.

According to Kant, we have a duty to cultivate other things such as love, sympathy and other desires that make it easier to do our duty, however, he denies that actions done from duty are done “with repugnance” (Urmson: 1967). This is because Kant thinks that when we act to only conform to duty, it will reveal that we have a hidden hatred for the law, which also contravenes our acting from the good will. In other words, the moral worth of the action does not depend upon the realization of the object of the action but merely upon the principle of volition in accordance with which the action is done. Here, Kant seems to claim that:

1. The moral worth of an action done from duty does not depend on what it accomplishes.
2. The moral worth of an action done from duty depends merely on its maxim (Zink, 1962).

A searchlight on moral duty reveals that one way or the other, every individual experiences innate moral duty. Whenever we violate a moral duty, our conscience and feelings of guilt and shame tell us. For Kant, moral duty could be revealed to us through reason in the objective sense (Kant, 1959). To

act morally is to perform one's duty and one's duty is to obey the innate moral laws. These laws according to Kant are absolute in every sense. Kant's concept of duty can therefore be summarized as:

1. To act from duty is to necessarily act according as the moral law stipulates and with reverence to such law.
2. For an action to have moral worth, that particular action must be done from duty.
3. The Good will is responsible for making rational agents perform actions out of duty.

With the arguments so far adduced, can we say that when an action is performed out of duty and then attains a moral worth as Kant claims, that maxim becomes absolute? For instance, if an individual's action fully satisfied the universalisability test and was especially performed out of a moral duty, could we by this claim that actions do become an absolute rule?

Critically analyzing the concept of duty, one finds some difficulties which pertain even in our everyday life. Ross (1975) outlines various duties which he calls *prima facie* and each of which is to be given independent weight. They are fidelity, reparation, gratitude, beneficence, non-maleficence and self-improvement (Ross, 1975). He then claims that if an act falls under one and only one of these duties, it ought to be performed. However, an act might fall under two or more duties. For instance, I may owe a debt of gratitude to someone who once helped me but beneficence will be more useful at that particular moment if I helped others in greater need. Here, Ross seeks to answer the question of what is my duty with his list of *prima facie* duties since Kant was criticized for not letting us know what constitutes our duty. Ross, however, chose the word *prima*

facie rather than absolute. This is because he reasoned that each duty can be overridden if it conflicts with a more stringent duty. Much as we may agree with Ross to some extent, we also think that the duties that he outlined does not capture all necessary actions in human endeavours and so not too important. However, duties, whichever category they fall under have the tendency to clash with other duties and it will not be important for anyone to start looking through such criteria. All one has to do is to consider those duties that have clashed with reference to their anticipated consequences.

Miller (1995) thinks that, for Kant, only the unconditional ought is the moral ought. This is because morality must be necessary and universal, that is, it must be absolutely binding on everyone alike and so whatever situation one finds oneself, one ought to act in accordance with the requirement of the law. The implication is that moral acts are to be accomplished irrespective of other considerations such as merit and reward. Thus, Miller suggests that this morality must be "binding" and "universal" (Miller, 1995), and that is the position of Kant. When one understands the departure of a moral act from its consequences, then, it becomes clear what Kant is attempting to convey in his ethics.

### **Duty as an absolute rule: A reflection.**

The categorical imperative which emanates from the concept of duty also implies the absolute nature of moral laws. By this, a maxim which one wills that it can become a universal law does become absolute since that maxim becomes categorical. Also, many maxims which we think might be very beneficial at a certain stage in one's life would become self-defeating. It is obvious that telling lies, for instance, is sometimes very beneficial to humanity, in spite of its moral

connotation. However, in the realm of Kant's absolute rules and the strict adherence to duty some of these maxims would become unhelpful and morally empty. The maxim that "it is permissible to lie" when fully analyzed in Kant's ethics would be self-defeating since it is generally accepted that lying is wrong. More so, if this maxim was to become absolute, the idea of truthfulness will lose its value and people will lie to achieve whatever ends they want to.

This view of absolutely endorsing the wrongness of lies is not devoid of problems. A reflection on this question brings many examples to mind. A typical example is the case of the inquiring murderer who enters a house looking for a young lady running away from him. At this stage eye witnesses are left abase whether to tell the truth or lie about the whereabouts of the lady. Such an example indeed shows the difficulty in the universalisability and even possible non-universalisability of certain maxims. This is because the duty not to lie seriously comes into conflict with the duty to save an innocent life. On the basis of this example, we are left biting our nails since we do not know whether a different maxim might better be universalisable.

We so far realize that being a moral agent, then, means guiding one's conduct by "universal laws", that is, moral rules that hold without exception in all circumstances. As such, we should only do those actions that conform to rules that we could will to be adopted universally. And so if we lie, we would be following the rule that "it is permissible to lie." This rule could however not be adopted universally because it would be self-defeating since people would stop believing one another and then it would do no good to lie. Therefore, we should not lie and the duty not to lie is, in this case, absolute, Kant reiterates.

However, some situations provide an example of when an exception is in order. Kant indicates that we would be morally responsible for any bad consequences as a result of our lying. Suppose, however, that our telling the truth results in a morally reprehensible outcome? Here, Kant seems to suggest that we would be blameless. But how convincing is his response? In considering the duty not to lie as an absolute rule or maxim which would, of course, admit no exceptions, we still would have to answer a question like, what is the wrongness in lying to save an innocent person's life.

Kant's categorical imperative which emanates from the concept of duty also gives a further insight into his ethics. We thus need to analyse it to be able to have a great assessment of his thought.

### **The Categorical Imperative**

The moral law, in Kant's thought is a kind of command that demands obedience. This is different from the normal commands we encounter in our daily lives, which are normally issued by God and other authorities. The moral law that Kant alludes to here, is promulgated by reason. This is not like any other imperative of which one has ever heard because it is not a means to the achievement of anything and it also has no relation to whatever anyone wants. It, thus, becomes a command which is absolute and as such we have to obey it without any exception. Before proceeding with an in-depth explanation of the categorical imperative, we need to explain what Kant means by imperative and who qualifies to be a rational agent. A rational agent as explained by Paton (1964) is one who has the power to act in accordance with one's idea of laws or principles. This is what we mean when we say of a rational agent that he has a



will. The actions of a rational agent have a subjective principle or maxim and objective principles. This objective principle is one on which a rational agent would necessarily act if his passion is controlled by reason. Actions based on these principles may be described as in some sense 'good'. We must, however, note Kant's observation that men do not always act on objective principles, the reason being that we are imperfect rational beings. For rational beings that are imperfect like humans, objective principles always necessitate the will. In cases when objective principles seem to necessitate the will, the principle may be described as a command, or an imperative.

Kant distinguishes different kinds of imperatives that there are. He observes that some imperatives are conditioned by a will for some particular ends (Kant, 1959). In this case, such an imperative would necessarily give rise to hypothetical imperatives. They bid us to do actions which are good as a means to an end that we might will.

But some imperatives or objective principles are unconditional. Such principles would necessarily be followed by a rational agent without any desire for the attainment of some ulterior end. They may also be called 'apodeictic', that is, it is necessary in the sense of it being unconditioned and absolute (Kant, 1959). Hypothetical imperative is a conditional imperative which commands a person to do something as a means to an end (Kant, 1959). Thus, it is a command of reason that applies only if we desire the goal. For instance, statements like, "be honest, so that people will think well of you", "if you want to pass the course you ought to complete the assignment" are all examples of hypothetical imperatives. He further distinguishes between problematic hypothetical imperative and assertoric hypothetical imperatives (Kant, 1959).

Example of problematic hypothetical imperatives is if you want to be a good philosopher you must study ethics. Assertoric hypothetical imperative, however, commands one to believe in certain ways in order to be happy (Omoregbe, 2004).

The categorical imperative on a critical assessment then becomes a command that addresses, controls and constrains our will. Here there are no '*ifs*', one ought to do it, period (Omoregbe, 2004). This, according to Kant, is so because morality concerns how we ought to live and act. Thus to Kant;

...there is one imperative which directly commands a certain conduct without making its condition some purpose to be reached by it. This imperative is categorical. It concerns not the material of the action and its intended result but the form and the principle from which it results. What is essentially good in it consists in the intention, the result being what it may. This imperative may be called the imperative of morality.

(Kant, 1959)

By this, a categorical imperative is unconditional and independent of anything, circumstances, goals or desires. It is for this reason that only a categorical imperative can be a universal and binding law, that is, a moral law valid for all rational beings at all times. Kant explains the categorical imperative with an assumption that a principle upon which a perfectly rational agent would act is also that upon which an imperfectly rational agent ought to act if he is tempted to do otherwise.

It must be noted, here, that Kant's deontology is guided by a fundamental belief that everything in nature works according to rules and morally it is only

rational beings that have the power to act in accordance with these principles or rules. And so, the categorical imperative is one of such principles by which rational agents act. The categorical imperative is, therefore, an imperative of reason itself and is used for making other rules Kant calls maxims. This is similar to the *Golden Rule* which states that “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Audi, 1996). The question of the Golden Rule, however, is not without problems. For instance, the rule would not be able to answer a question like; “Does everybody want to be done unto as you do unto yourself, however good or bad that action might be?” Concerning the categorical imperative, Kant offers three formulations.

### **The Formula of Universal Law**

This formula holds that, act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law (Kant, 1959). Generally, a categorical imperative simply bids us to act in accordance with a universal law. In other words, we are to act on a principle which is valid for all rational beings and not merely on that which becomes valid when it is a means to a certain end, be it our own end or the desired end of others. Another way to understand this formula is that, moral imperatives require that the maxims be chosen as though they should hold as universal laws of nature (Paton, 1964). Thus, one interpretation of the first formulation is called the universalisability test which has five steps.

1. The agent finds a maxim.
2. The agent imagines a possible world in which everyone in a similar position follows that maxim.

3. The agent decides whether there are contradictions or irrationalities as a result of following the maxim.
4. If a contradiction or irrationality arises, acting on that maxim is not allowed.
5. If there is no contradiction, then, acting on that maxim is permissible (Davidson, 1968)

### **The Formula of the End in Itself**

The formula holds that, act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end (Kant, 1959). Here, the ends being referred to might either be subjective or objective ends. The subjective ends might be hypothetical imperatives; their adoption is at the individual's discretion. It may also be an objective end, that is, an end which carries an unconditional value and which a rational agent would necessarily pursue. The principle here is, act with reference to every rational being so that it is an end in itself in your maxim.

### **The Formula of the Law of Nature**

It states that, act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature (Kant, 1959). Primarily, a law of nature may be conceived as a law of cause and effect. However, as Paton (1964) explains, when Kant asks us to consider our maxims as if they were laws of nature, he treats these laws as teleological. Kant generally holds, according to this formula, that one becomes morally good when one acts on an impersonal principle valid

for oneself and for others and not because one acts from passion or self interest. This, Kant believes, is the essence of morality. He however thinks that if we wish to test the maxim of a proposed action, we must ask whether it would further a systematic harmony of purposes in the individual and in the human race, if the maxim is universally adopted (Ewing, 1976).

### **The Formula of Autonomy**

The formula states that, So act that your will can regard itself at the same time as making universal law through its maxim (Kant, 1959). The formula carries the import that the categorical imperative does not only bid us to merely follow a universal law, but to follow a universal law which we ourselves make as rational agents. Kant believes that this is the most important formulation of the supreme principle of morality since it leads to the idea of freedom. The implicit explanation is that human beings are not only bound to obey universal laws but that rational agents are the ground of these laws.

### **Formula of the Kingdom of Ends**

This formula also states that so act as if you were through your maxims a law making member of a kingdom of ends (Kant, 1959). The formula means that since rational agents are all subject to universal laws which they themselves make, they constitute a kingdom and so far as these laws bid them to treat each other as ends in themselves, the kingdom so constituted is a kingdom of ends. The formula is therefore seen to have sprung directly from the formula of Autonomy.

Kant first introduced the idea that our actions possess moral worth when we do our duty for its own sake as something accepted by our common moral consciousness and, then, tried to show that it is an essential element of any rational morality. One may ask then, does our common moral consciousness really insist that there is no moral worth in any action done for any motive other than duty? If so, then we certainly will not praise the young man who plunges into the river to rescue a drowning child if we learned that he did it because he expected a handsome reward from the child's rich father. But can we legitimately say it has no moral worth because the young man had other intentions? And would we happily advocate that people emulate the gestures of the young man? It would be difficult to know at this point which inclination followed the other. Whether it is the drive to save an innocent drowning child or the drive of a reward?

Kant's deontological ethics seems to run counter with the thoughts of those who see benevolent or sympathetic feelings as constituting a moral base. But we think that even a cursory analysis would reveal that there is, more often than not, a thin line between sympathetic feeling to act and an act of duty. For instance, how would we be able to explain the judgment of a jury who give a minimum sentence to a pregnant woman for theft? One cannot argue that they have not performed their duties since their duty was to punish thieves, however they could have given a maximum sentence to the pregnant woman.

One can at this point summarize the categorical imperative by saying that it is an imperative because it commands the will and it is categorical because it commands us to do something unconditionally, which is without regard to

consequences or personal desires (Birsch, 2002). The justification for it is that it is an injunction based upon reason.

### **A Summary of Kant's basic ideas**

Generally, Kant's deontology aims at establishing a solid foundation upon which moral judgments can be justified. In other words, it is meant to strengthen the vulnerability of moral standards and find a consistent and rational means of determining what is right and wrong. In doing this, Kant begins with the observation that ethics should be seen as a purely a priori branch of philosophy. This is contrary to the already existing view that ethics is empirical. By this view, the rightness or wrongness of an action is based on the end result of the action; a view that generally became known as consequentialism. According to Kant, when ethics is perceived as a priori, a lot of ambiguities and confusions will be removed. He meant that by a priori, moral laws must be strictly assessed by reason and not experience. Thus one major pillar in Kant's deontology is the unaided use of reason in determining the moral law. Moral agents are to act out of rational consideration and not based on the end result of the action; which is empirical. Kant saw reason as the organ which controls human action and as such to determine the wrongness or rightness of an action, we look at the motive behind the action and not the consequences that the action produces.

Central to Kant's deontology is the concept of the good will. Kant sees reason as being the seat of the good will. The good will, according to Kant, is an unconditional good and is absolutely autonomous. It does not depend on anything to be good but actions done out of the good will are, in fact, good. Kant

observes that rational agents act in accordance with the good will which is intrinsic in every human. However, it is the one who has attained a certain rational level who is consistently able to act in accordance with the good will. The good will is manifested in acting for the sake of duty. Thus an action has a moral worth when it is done from the sense of duty and not from any other moral incentive.

The concept of duty is another prominent concept in Kant's deontology. In fact, Kant's ethics is considered deontological because of his insistence that moral agents act in accordance with the requirement of duty. He insists that a human action is morally good because it is done for the sake of duty (Kant, 1959). Kant sees duty as the proper motive of a moral conduct. And so, we act in a certain way because duty requires it. For instance, one must give alms to the poor not because there is a supreme being who admonishes that we do so but because duty demands it.

Kant's conception of duty and how moral agents are to act in accordance with it diminishes the thought of acting in expectance of a reward. Thus according to Kant, rewards, satisfaction and other feelings do not play any role in making an action moral. This means that an action does not carry any moral worth if it is done in expectation of a reward or a favourable result. Kant says this because he believes humans do not have control over the consequences of their actions. We will discuss the concept of duty and the role reward plays in moral actions in our final chapter.

The explanation Kant gives the good will also makes it the moral will. The good will is the will that acts in accordance with duty. The requirement of duty in Kant's deontology is acting on the principle that demands that we



consistently universalise our maxims and that is the categorical imperative. The moral law assumes the form of command which is promulgated by reason. The categorical imperative admonishes that we perform actions that can be universalised. That is, actions that have universal appreciability and acceptance. The will behind acting according to such principle must be the good will. Indeed, it is a duty for all rational agents to act in accordance with this principle. The categorical imperative does not depend on our desire for a particular result. By this, Kant rules out any role that desire plays in a morally commendable action. An act is moral mainly because the action is done out of duty under the principle of the categorical imperative. We seem to have a way of looking at the role desire plays in a morally commendable act in Kant's deontology and we will discuss it in our final chapter.

Kant gave three formulations for his categorical imperative but we are among other things interested in the formula for the end in itself. Kant claims that we ought to act in such a way that we treat humanity, including ourselves, not as a means but always as an end. This seems to presuppose that rational actions must always set itself an end. It also seems to entreat moral agents to treat humanity with dignity and respect and not act with the intension of exploiting someone. We will look at Kant's idea of means and ends and the role it plays in our integrativism.

There is also a distinction between categorical and hypothetical imperatives. In Kant's view, a hypothetical imperative tells us to act in a certain way in order to achieve a particular desire. This imperative does not carry any moral worth according to Kant. It is therefore a conditional imperative based on our feelings and desire for the achievement of a particular end. Unlike

hypothetical imperatives, categorical imperatives demand an 'ought'. An in depth analysis will be done in our final chapter where these concepts will be harmonised with utilitarianism.

Kant's contribution to the search for the highest good is that it is the good will which is not based on anything to be good. His deontology assumes that reason is free and the will as autonomous. By this, the good will enacts and abides by its own laws. Moral agents who act in accordance with the good will are also guided by the categorical imperative. We get from Kant that factors such as happiness, desire, consequences, reward, etc, do not play any role in actions that count as moral. What really matters is that the action is done out of duty and for the sake of duty.

It has been realised that some of the views proposed by Kant are problematic and this reduces its level of appreciability. For instance, Kant's perception of duty sometimes makes it difficult for an agent to act when duties conflict. To look at some of these problems, we harmonise Kant's deontologism with utilitarianism by integrating some concepts of both theories. We believe this will create a bridge between these two seemingly opposing theories and make them more acceptable and less vulnerable to some of these criticisms.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **AN ACCOUNT OF UTILITARIANISM: A LOOK AT JEREMY BENTHAM, J.S MILL AND G. E MOORE'S VERSIONS.**

We now turn to examine utilitarianism in order to determine whether it share some common grounds with Kantian deontology. The chapter is dedicated to looking at three main aspects of utilitarianism; act, rule and ideal utilitarianism as professed by Bentham, Mill and Moore. We will also review some criticisms levelled against the theory and some responses to them. The aim is to explore the prospects for integrating the two theories.

Utilitarianism traces its roots to Hedonism in Greek classical philosophy. Hedonism was derived from the Greek word '*hēdonē*', which signified pleasure (Borchert, 2006). According to Sahakian (1974), hedonism had acquired two meanings in the history of philosophy; one pertains to the psychology of personality and the other to normative ethics. We are, however, concerned with the latter meaning and wish to say that when hedonism is used in reference to moral values, it is termed as ethical hedonism, which is the view that pleasure, and only pleasure, is intrinsically good and that pain is evil (Sahakian, 1974). The leading proponents of this view in ancient Greece were Aristippus and Epicurus. In modern times, however, this theory has evolved to what we now call utilitarianism which is based upon the doctrine of utility. This states that the right act or the good is whatever produces the greatest amount of happiness or pleasure to the greatest number of people (Anschutz, 1953). The leading

exponents of utilitarianism are, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Henry Sidgwick, Hastings Rashdall and George Edward Moore. Let us note, however, that for the scope of this work we would pay particular attention to the utilitarian views of two of these philosophers, namely, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and George Edward Moore.

### **Utilitarianism as a Consequentialist Theory**

Consequentialists normally agree that man ought to behave in certain ways which would bring about good consequences (Barnes, 1971). For utilitarians, human beings must act solely in the interest of all. Generally, utilitarianism posits that an act is right or moral if it is useful and can as such bring about a desirable end. In other words, it encourages everyone to act or follow that moral rule which will bring about the greatest good or happiness for everyone concerned.

Utilitarianism is generally divided into two: act and rule utilitarianism. [However, there have been other modern versions like ideal utilitarianism and prescriptive utilitarianism (Williams, 1972)]. Essentially, act utilitarianism maintains that moral agents should perform that act which will result in the greatest good for everyone (Williams, 1972). Here, individuals must make an assessment of the situation they find themselves in and act in a way that will bring about the greatest good consequences for everyone involved. Here, the choice lies with the agent to decide whether, for instance, lying is the right thing to do in a particular situation. This is devoid of whether lying is bad or otherwise.

The rule utilitarian sets off from experience and careful reasoning to set up the rules which would yield the greatest good for all humanity when followed. Thus, in deciding whether to kill or not, the rule utilitarian might enact a rule, 'never kill except in self-defence'. For this theory, there is the belief that there are enough human motives, actions and situations to justify setting up rules which will apply to all human beings and to all human situations. Thus, individuals need guidance in order to establish some stability and moral order in society.

### **Bentham's Utilitarianism**

Generally, Bentham (1748-1832) is seen as the father of utilitarianism. He became concerned with ethical theory through his interest in law and government, his disgust with injustice and his desire for social and legal reform (Rand, 1966). In his quest for a clear distinction between good and evil, Bentham developed a new science of moral law based on Cumberland's "greatest good" or "greatest happiness" principle (Rand, 1966). In his main work, *An Introduction to the Principle of Morals and Legislation* (1879), Bentham opens with a statement that man is naturally motivated by pleasure and pain, whether he is or is not aware of it. Bentham calls this human inclination the principle of self-preference upon which ethical hedonism is based, that is, the principle that we ought to pursue a life of pleasure. He defines the principle of utility as that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question. (Bentham, 1879). Bentham further explains the principle of utility as the greatest happiness

or greatest felicity principle or that principle which states the greatest happiness of all those whose interest is in question as being the right and proper, and only right and proper and universally desirable end of human action.

One pillar in Bentham's thought which attracted many critics was his quantitative hedonism. To him, pleasure is of one kind only; the difference lay in their quantitative aspects. Thus, pleasure is enjoyable and it does not matter whether it is derived from reading poetry or sticking pins in a baby's bottom. The import here is that each person is his own best judge as to what is pleasurable to him or her. He further develops the 'hedonistic calculus' to further establish that pleasure can be evaluated solely in terms of quantitative differences. The elements to be measured are; intensity, duration, certainty, propinquity, fecundity, purity and extent (Bentham, 1879). Bentham's philosophy was seen as too egoistic and a "pig philosophy", in other words sensual philosophy that does not discriminate in what kind of pleasure counts as moral. For instance, Carlyle (1795-1881) criticised Bentham that his conception of hedonism, with its egoistic motivation contributes to the deterioration of the times and persons so motivated merely increase the number of "knaves and dastards arrested" (Sahakian, 1974). As a result of the powerful criticisms that Bentham's view attracted, there was need to modify some of these views to make utilitarianism more attractive and it was during this time that John Stuart Mill's work came into prominence.

### **John Stuart Mill's Version of Utilitarianism**

Having been impressed by Bentham's utilitarian ideas, Mill (1806-1873), who was Bentham's intellectual successor, saw the need to clothe utilitarianism

with certain idealistic characteristics in order to rescue it from its uncouth lapse into a “pig philosophy”. It must be noted that Bentham’s basic premise was that the good was pleasure, which was of single quality and calculable in quantitative terms (Bentham, 1879). Mill reasoned that, in this case, it would be difficult to distinguish between a rational and irrational being since Bentham’s claim implies that as long as one is enjoying pleasure it does not matter what kind of pleasure it is. Mill, then, introduced the concept of qualitative hedonism. This is the theory that pleasure differs in kind as well as quality (Mill, 1895). That is, there are pleasures that are high in quality but low in quantity or less intense. Also, there are quantitatively higher pleasures with low quality. In his explanation, Sahakian (1974) used this example, that comparing a ton of coal to an ounce of diamond; all things being equal, a ton of coal is less valuable than a tiny diamond, despite the fact that both are composed of carbon atoms. In showing the need for us to consider the quality of pleasure other than the quantity, he said;

The only true or definite rule of conduct or standard of morality is the greatest happiness, but there is needed first a philosophical estimate of happiness. Quality as well as quantity of happiness is to be considered; less of a higher kind is preferable to more of a lower. The test of quality is the preference given by those who are acquainted with both. Socrates would rather choose to be Socrates dissatisfied than to be a pig satisfied. The pig probably would not, but then the pig knows only one side of the question; Socrates knows both (Mill, 1895).

The view that Mill entertains, here, is that when it comes to deciding which pleasures are more valuable than the other, it is the hedonic expert who is in a best position to do that because he has adequate experience with both types of pleasures. The hedonic expert is someone who has attained the rational and experiential capacity of both qualitative and quantitative pleasures and is aware of the long and short term effects of both. Such a person, according to Mill, knows that it is preferable to be a human being than to be an animal because, he knows there is an important qualitative pleasure in merely being a man which vastly outweighs all the physical pleasures afforded to animals. Thus, for Mill, “a being of higher faculties requires more to make him happy, is capable probably of more acute suffering and is certainly accessible to it at more points than one of an inferior type; but in spite of these liabilities he can never really wish to sink into what he feels to be a lower grade of existence (Mill, 1895).

With this further explanation, Mill sought to strengthen the potency of utilitarianism as a viable and respectable moral theory. It must be noted that Mill’s claim seems to be comparable to that of Bentham, who argues that when a person is experiencing pleasure, it is difficult, if not impossible for him to deny that he, indeed, likes it (Bentham, 1879). In other words, while pleasure is being experienced, an individual must admit that he is in fact enjoying it. Mill in his claim also said: “... I apprehend, the sole evidence that it is possible to produce anything is desirable is that people do actually desire it” (Mill, 1895). This means that something is desirable merely on the grounds that it is capable of stimulating desire.

Again, Mill raises several legitimate questions in his analysis. For instance, what is the source of the obligation of utilitarian morality? (Mill,



1895). Mill adds that pleasure is to be gained and pains to be avoided by the agent who aims at general happiness. Also, he lays special stress on a sanction which Bentham omitted to take note; the ‘feeling of unity with his fellow-creatures, which makes a “natural want” of an individual of properly cultivated that his aims should be in harmony’ (Mill, 1971). This feeling, according to Mill, in most individuals is much inferior in strength to their selfish feelings, but it presents itself to the minds of those who have it as an attribute which it would not be well for them to be without and this conviction is what Mill sees as the ultimate sanction of the greatest happiness morality (Sidgwick, 1967).

Mill’s utilitarian thought is generally seen as a modification of Bentham’s ideas. However, it has also been through much scrutiny and criticisms, especially the claim that pleasure alone is good and the further distinction that some pleasures are better pursued than others. Some moral philosophers like Urmson (1967) think that many of the critics of Mill actually do not understand Mill very well. According to Urmson, the general position of Mill is that, an action is justified as being right by showing that it is in accord with some moral rule. Also, a moral rule is shown to be correct by showing that the recognition of that rule promotes the ultimate end.

We realize from Mill’s account that pleasure is always good for its own sake, thus, he refers to it as an ‘ultimate principle’. To him, all men call something good because it is pleasant or conducive to pleasure and, thus, the only thing that men universally desire is pleasure. Mill makes two observations that sparked controversy in his explanation of his version of utilitarianism. First of all, he declared that pleasure and human happiness are one and the same thing. That is, to say that a man is happy is to say that he is experiencing

pleasure and to say that he is unhappy is to say that he is experiencing pain (Mill, 1895).

Secondly, Mill claims that pleasure is good no matter whose pleasure it is. That is your neighbour's pleasure has precisely the same value as the pleasure of your own. Thus, if pleasure is good by its very nature, then, its goodness does not depend on where it is or by whom it is experienced. This view influenced him in his assertion that if pleasure is alone good in itself, then, it is every man's duty to maximise it and to minimise pain.

An analysis of moral conduct is not complete when the motive for which an action is done is not taken into consideration. In fact, we sometimes bestow praise or blame on an individual based on the motive from which he acted. Thus, we are inclined to consider not what a person has done, but, what moved him to do what he did. Kant, for instance, played down the idea of looking at the consequences of an action. He was concerned with the motive behind the action. To him, so far as an individual's motive for a particular action is that of a dutiful motive, that action carries a moral worth. An action which is not promoted by a sense of duty is, however, not qualified as moral.

Furthermore, in dealing with the quality of pleasure, Mill had to respond to a criticism levelled against the Epicureans. It states that to assert that we should try to increase the total amount of pleasure to the maximum level seems to suggest that we should convert the whole world into an amusement park, disregarding all those fruits of civilized life that men prize and replace them with cheap and simple feeling of pleasure (Taylor, 1979). In their response, the Epicureans said that pleasure differ in many ways and as a result rejected the Cyrenaic way of life. Mill also in his response argues, as noted, that some

pleasures are inherently better than others. He, even, proposed a test by which we can discriminate between these 'higher' and 'lower' pleasures. He proposes that when we consult the man who has experienced both 'higher' and 'lower' pleasures, we will find out that he prefers 'higher' pleasures (Mill, 1895).

It, however, seems that Mill is giving primacy to the opposite view. He seems to entertain the view that man performs his duty in cases when his actions foster happiness in all who are affected by such actions. Thus, Mill gives primacy to consequences rather than the motive of duty. What we think is that when we say that a man's action is dutiful it must surely be a function of either his motive or the consequences of his actions and so the opposite views exercised by Kant and Mill can be reconciled. It was, therefore, not very relevant for Mill to spend time explaining that his utilitarianism incorporated the very concept of duty.

It must be noted that Mill was motivated by a number of factors to offer a different dimension to utilitarianism. He was first of all moved by the various problems that Bentham's version posed hence his modifications. Secondly and more generally, he was also responding to the general ethical question as to whether universal ethical guidelines are possible. Thus, for Mill, utilitarianism is the most practicable and all encompassing theory that fits well in moral deliberations. And so, he suggests in *Utilitarianism* that there is an ethical principle which could act as the foundation for universal ethical conduct. He thus stated:

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. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure. To give a clear view of the moral standard set up by the theory, much more requires to be said; in particular, what thing it includes in the ideas of pain and pleasure and to what extent this is left an open question.

(Mill, 1979)

Mill agrees with Bentham that actions are good as they maximise pleasure and bad as they maximise the reverse of pleasure (Mill, 1895). One can unhesitatingly say that Mill believes that all actions are directed towards a particular end. By this end, there might be intermediate ends in actions that we take but the ultimate end in all actions is the pursuit of happiness and the avoidance of pain. For instance, when we go to school, our earned certificates will help us to get good job, get money and have a fulfilled and satisfying life. Though we might encounter painful and unpleasant circumstances whilst going to school, the chain ultimately ends with pleasure and the avoidance of pain. On this note, we get the impression from Mill that the ultimate end of human beings is the maximisation of happiness. This is because Mill claims that when we talk of an end of human actions, that end must be desirable. The ultimate end of all actions is happiness and happiness is the only thing desirable as an end.

In proposing that actions are good in proportion as they tend to promote happiness and prevent pain, Mill implies that, on the one hand, as far as actions are concerned, the more we produce pleasure and the more we minimize pain the better the action becomes. On the other hand, Mill is concerned with the quality of the happiness being produced. What we generally get from Mill, here, is that

what is good or a good ethical life is one that is rich in happiness - both quantity and quality. To test the quality of happiness, Mill believes that we can use human preferences. He further holds the view that, whenever we want to choose between both pleasures, the best decision rest with individuals who have had experiences with both higher and lower pleasures (they are better placed to choose) and they would choose higher pleasures over lower pleasures. Thus, he said,

... it is an unquestionable fact that those who are equally acquainted with and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying both do give a marked preference to the existence that employs their higher faculties (Mill, 1979).

The general inference made from Mill's thought is that the question of the summum bonum which constitutes the foundation of morality has been with us since the dawn of philosophy. This has accounted for the main problems in speculative thoughts, occupied the most gifted intellects and further divided them into opposing schools waging intellectual war against each other. The thematic claim of utilitarianism is the *greatest happiness principle* which holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to maximize happiness and when it is geared towards the maximization of pain, such an action becomes wrong (Mill, 1971).

Humanely speaking, it is not only by the performance of an action that we consider as morally potent but also the consequences count as well. Let us note that even though Mill agreed with Bentham on the main utilitarian principle or the greatest happiness principle, he greatly differed from Bentham in the areas of prioritising pleasure. Here, Mill offered his qualitative modifications with the

additional thought that pleasures being experienced by humans also differ in various ways. This view of Mill is important in establishing the moral worth of promoting higher pleasures which are largely intellectual over lower ones which are largely bodily pleasures, even though the latter promises to be intense. Also, Mill is of the view that the difficulty in achieving happiness in a positive way usually makes it justifiable for sentient beings to seek the minimisation of pain in all actions that we take. However, pain is acceptable when it has the tendency of leading to a greater good for all. It must also be noted that Mill equally responded to the criticism that individual agents cannot devote their primary time and energies making unending calculations of actions and their effects in order to perform them. In his response, Mill appealed to rule utilitarianism. Thus, he was of the view that we need to properly act in accordance with moral rules. Rule utilitarianism urges us to act in accordance with certain rules whose end result is the achievement of pleasure. Even though we act in accordance with moral rules, the value of each action we take is determined by reference to the principle of utility.

It must be noted that Kant sees the motivation of acting morally as the respect for the moral law. Mill shares a different view, to him, what motivates people to do the right thing or act morally can be attributed to moral sanctions – among other things. Here, Mill differed a bit from Bentham, he did not only appeal to moral sanctions and socially imposed sanctions like punishment and blame, but he reasoned further that there are internal sanctions like self-esteem, guilt and conscience which bid us to act morally. As social animals, it is easy to find out that every action that we take affect others as well, and though we might not be blamed or punished by society for performing certain actions, our sense of

guilt and conscience are enough to propel us to do the right thing in so far as we are rational.

Mill is undoubtedly a rule utilitarian by this version of utilitarianism that is, he alludes to the thought that there are rules that are geared towards the maximisation of happiness. Thus, rule utilitarianism stipulates that it is better to follow a rule like promise keeping which might do more good than harm in terms of utility rather than allowing lying that might promote greater good.

### **G. E. Moore on (Ideal) Utilitarianism**

Moore believes that one area of philosophy which has suffered and is still suffering from controversy is ethics (Moore, 1966). There is always a great diversity of opinion on many ethical issues. There are actions which some hold to be generally right whilst others think it is wrong. Moore believes that the division is even sharper when fundamental questions are asked. For instance, what is it that we mean to say of an action when we say that it is right or ought to be done? Can we discover any characteristics which belong absolutely to all 'good' things and which do not belong to anything else? This, according to Moore, is what has urged him to consider the theory which is nearer to the truth and, at least, seeks to solve some of the ethical problems.

In his *Principia Ethica*, (1903), Moore states that the ultimate business of ethics include the discussion of statements like, what ought I to do? As well as ethical judgments like, good, bad, virtue, vice, duty, right, ought, etc. Generally, ethics is concerned with human conduct, be it good or bad, right or wrong, etc. (Moore, 1903). Moore proceeds to ask how some ethical judgments are defined, for instance, what is a good conduct, this he believes makes 'good' to denote

some property. But to him, when we are able to really define what good is, then, we can better understand it in any context within which it is used. Moore believes, however, that good cannot be defined, thus he states, "... if I am asked, 'what is good?' my answer is that good is good and that is the end of the matter, or if I am asked 'How is good to be defined?' my answer is that it cannot be defined" (Moore, 1903). This, Moore says, is the case because, 'good' is a simple notion just as 'yellow' is and so it is not possible to explain it to anyone who does not know it, as a result, good cannot be defined. He, thus, points out that the definition of good is different from saying that, for instance, pleasure is good. And so, no difficulty need to be found in saying "pleasure is good" this is because it does not mean that pleasure is the same thing as "good" or that "pleasure" means "good" and "good" means pleasure. For in that case, we will commit the naturalistic fallacy. To say that pleasure is good is to merely say that pleasure can be attributed to what is good and this is different from defining pleasure as good and good as pleasure.

In Moore's view it is only Sidgwick who has appreciated the fact that good is indefinable and this is evident in Sidgwick's analysis of Bentham's utilitarianism. Moore thinks that hedonism appears to be a naturalistic ethics with the claim that pleasure is the sole good which seems to be the definition of "good". It must be noted that Moore's attack on hedonism was simply based on the theory's claim that pleasure *alone* is good as an end in itself. By this, Moore is not attacking the proposition that 'pleasure is good as an end in itself' neither is he attacking what would be the means of achieving pleasure as an end. Stated clearly, Moore says that the pivot of hedonism is the view that all things are means to pleasure which is the only end to be desired in itself. This means that



virtue, knowledge, beauty, etc, are all means to achieving this end which is pleasure (Moore, 1903). This, Moore claims, was the view held by Aristippus, Epicurus and utilitarians such as Bentham and Mill.

Moore sought to further refine Mill's ideas by observing that Mill falls into the criticism against the hedonistic proposition that pleasure is the only thing at which we ought to aim and the only thing that is good as an end in itself. Mill seems vulnerable here because he states clearly that pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends (Mill, 1895). Also, Mill states that to think of an object as desirable and to think of it as pleasant are one and the same thing (Mill, 1971). The general inference that Moore makes out of Mill's work is that it first of all likens what is desirable to what is good and by this it falls into the web of committing the naturalistic fallacy. Moore also questions Mill's delineation of pleasure into qualitative and quantitative terms. He raises the question, "can one pleasure be more pleasant than another, except in the sense that it gives more pleasure?" (Moore, 1903) Moore generally states that if we agree with Mill that quality of pleasure is to be taken into account, then, we are no longer entertaining the view that pleasure alone is good as an end, since by that we imply that something else, which is not present in all pleasures, is also good as an end. Moore, then, concludes that Mill's analysis of the quality and quantity of pleasure leads to inconsistency. There is first the view that pleasure alone is good as an end and also that one pleasure may be of a better quality than another. Moore explains that when we, for instance, use colour as an analogy we will clearly realise the inconsistency in Mill's view. Thus, to say that colour is good as an end does not give possible room to further discuss why one colour – green, should be preferred to another – red. This is

because, they both conform to the fact that colour is the end. And so, if we agree that pleasure alone is good, then, we must agree with Bentham that all pleasures are the same and that pushpin is as good as poetry (Moore, 1903).

Moore, then, sets out to find out what he sees to be the ideal. By this, he explained the importance of answering the question “what things have intrinsic value, and in what degree? To him, in order to arrive at an answer, it is necessary to consider what things are such that if they existed by themselves, in absolute isolation, we should judge their existence to be good. In talking of the ideal, Moore identifies aesthetic enjoyments or appreciation as being part of the whole (Moore, 1903). Thus, it would be difficult to reject the view that beauty is, in fact, good in itself. However, in aesthetic appreciation, there is cognitive as well as emotional enjoyment. Apart from aesthetic enjoyment, Moore also talks of the pleasures of human intercourse or personal affection, for instance, friendship. Thus, in his version of utilitarianism, Moore accepts that pleasure is good in itself but that it is not alone good. There are other things which we might rightly consider as good. Based on this view, Moore sought to explain further his utilitarian view basing it on what he called voluntary actions.

Moore begins with the familiar assumption that we very often seem to have a choice between several actions. In other words, there is considerable number of different actions, at least in life situations, any one of which we could do if we choose to; in this sense we as humans seem to have a choice. Thus, there are times when we have the opportunity to choose between actions, for instance, we might be faced with a decision of whether to marry one wife or more than one. What it means is that we are presented with a choice and it is within our human capacity to decide which one best suits us. We are, however,

conscious of the fact that there might be some actions that we cannot perform even if we choose to. The assumption, therefore, is that many of our actions are under the control of our will, in the sense that if, just before we began to do them, we had chosen not to do them, we should not have, in fact, done them. Moore proposes to call all actions of these kind voluntary actions. He, however, cautioned that this view might mean that voluntary actions were not actually chosen or willed. They were voluntary because a particular act of will, just before the occurrence of such an action, would have been sufficient to prevent them; not in the sense that they themselves were brought about by being willed (Moore, 1966). And so, actions that Moore classifies as voluntary are those which we could have prevented if, immediately beforehand, we had the will to do so. He is, however, aware of the fact that there are some actions which mere willing cannot prevent beforehand but they all fall under what he calls voluntary actions. In this sense, voluntary actions are those actions which are within the agent's power to decide whether to perform them or not. Here, the moral agent has control to prevent such an action from taking place.

Moore's version of utilitarianism, thus, begins with the claim that there are many actions that are voluntary, in the sense that we could have avoided them if we had chosen to do so. The concern of the theory is to lay down some absolutely universal rules that guide actions. Here, ideal utilitarianism, that is Moore's version of utilitarianism, seeks to discover some characteristics which belong to all voluntary actions which ought to be done or which lie in our duty to do. Similarly, ideal utilitarianism also tries to answer the question as to whether we can discover any characteristic over and above the mere fact that it is right.

In answering questions such as these, Moore opines that ideal utilitarianism supposes that all actions, at least theoretically, may be arranged in a scale according to the proportion between the total quantities of pleasure or pain which they cause (Moore, 1966). In considering the total quantities of pleasure or pain, we are not only talking about pleasure or pain as it affects us only but other humans as well as even animals. Here, we are also to take into consideration the immediate or direct effect as well as the remote or the indirect effect of the action. To say that an action causes a total quantity of pleasure or pain is to mean that the quantities which would be arrived at if we could take into account absolutely all the amounts of pleasure or pain which result from the action no matter how indirect or remote these results may be. The principle upon which the scale is arranged states that, any action which causes an excess of pleasure over pain will always come higher in the scale than an action which causes a smaller excess of pleasure over pain, or than an action which causes no excess of pleasure over pain (Moore, 1966). Also, any action which causes no excess of either pleasure over pain or pain over pleasure will always come higher than any action which causes an excess of pain over pleasure. Finally, any action which causes an excess of pain over pleasure will always come higher than one which causes a greater excess of pain over pleasure.

Based on these explanations, Moore lays bare what he thinks are the principles of his ideal utilitarianism. The first principle asserts that a voluntary action is right whenever and only when the agent could not have done any other action instead, even if he had the opportunity, which would have caused more pleasure than the one he did do (Moore, 1966). Also, a voluntary action is wrong whenever and only when the agent could, if he had chosen, have done some

other action instead, which could have caused more pleasure than the one he did do. We must, however, note that ideal utilitarianism further asserts that in the case of all voluntary actions, one could act differently if one chose. By this the theory does not assert that right and wrong depend upon what one chose. Stated more succinctly, the first principle holds that “A voluntary action is right whenever and only when no other action possible to the agent under the circumstances would have caused more pleasure; in all other cases, it is wrong” (Moore, 1966).

Thus, the rightness of a voluntary action though depends on the amount of pleasure it is able to produce, rests on the fact that all other alternative actions lack the capacity of producing such a pleasure. It must be noted, however, that Moore’s utilitarianism does not assert that the rightness of a voluntary action is guaranteed only when that action causes more pleasure than any other action available to the agent, but that the theory claims that for an action to be right, such an action must cause more pleasure than any action the agent could have done instead. We should not lose sight of the possibility of actions which seem to produce the same amount of pleasure. In this case, Moore sees both actions as right. Thus, it is acceptable that sometimes a man may be right in acting on an action A, but he could also have been right in acting on another action B. This, of course, explains why Moore refuses to say that an action is right only when it produces more pleasure than other possible alternatives. The reason is that if we hold such a view, then, it would mean that no two alternatives could be equally right.

In this respect, we must note that the conceptions of ‘ought’ and ‘duty’ differ from the conception of ‘right’. And so, when we say that a man ‘ought’ to

or has the 'duty' to act in a certain way, we imply that it would be wrong for him to act on the contrary. Thus, ideal utilitarianism, in Moore's view, holds that when talking of ought or duty we cannot make the same assertion for what is right. An action is our duty or ought to be done only when it produces more pleasure than any which we could have done instead.

In making such a distinction between what is right and what ought to be or is our duty, we get the import that it is possible for a voluntary action to be 'right' without being an action which is our duty to do or ought to be done. It is, therefore, the case that our duty is to do what is right and that if we do not act rightly, we are doing what we ought not to do. Also, whenever, we act rightly, we seem to be performing our duty. It is, however, not the case that whenever an action is right, then, it is our duty to perform that action. This is because, there might be occasions when an action may seem to be right but we may not be under any obligation to perform such an action. And so, it is important not to confuse the fact that because it is our duty to act rightly any action which is right is also our duty. Since a right action does not imply duty, it would not be wrong to perform another action instead, this is because if an action is our duty, then, it admits no exception and it would be wrong to perform any action instead.

Moore, then, holds that voluntary actions may be right without being an action which we ought to do or is our duty to do (Moore, 1966). But let us note that every action which is wrong is also an action which we ought not to do. Also, much as we can say that every voluntary action must either be right or wrong, it is always the case that truly, voluntary actions either ought to be done or not to be done. This is because, there might be occasions when voluntary actions might neither be our duty to do nor yet our duty not to do it.

Moore's ideal utilitarianism posits that an action is right when that action causes, at least, as much pleasure as any action which the agent could have done instead. That is, when the performance of that action produces the maximum pleasure. Characteristically also, when we say of a voluntary action that it ought to be done, or it is our duty, we mean to say that among all other alternatives, such an action is the one which produces the maximum pleasure. However, when we say of a voluntary action that it is wrong or ought not to be done or not our duty to do, we mean that such an action cause less pleasure than some other action which the agent could have done instead. These, according to Moore, are characteristics which belong to all voluntary actions.

For Moore, ideal utilitarianism professes to tell us not only which among past voluntary actions were actually right but also which among those which were possible would have been right if they had been done (1966). In doing this, the theory gives a criterion or a standard for us to discover the rightness or otherwise of voluntary actions. Thus, to Moore, in the situation where an action is to be performed, we must ask, could the agent, on the occasion in question, have done anything else instead, which would have produced more pleasure? If he could, then, the action would have been wrong, otherwise right. Furthermore, whenever we want to be sure of the long term rightness of an action, we can as well consider whether there is any other action which the tendency of producing more pleasure than the one in question. If there could be any action like that, then, it will be wrong to do the first action. On this basis, Moore holds that utilitarianism of this form professes to give us an absolutely universal criterion of right and wrong and also an absolutely universal criterion of what ought or ought not to be done. Moore, however, cautions that ideal utilitarianism does

assert the production of maximum pleasure to all right voluntary actions but the theory does not further assert that it is because they possess such a characteristic that such actions are right.

Again, Moore's version of utilitarianism also accepts the general view that whenever a man acts wrongly, his actions result in greater unhappiness and when right actions are done the result is and would be much happiness. The import that we gather from Moore's thought, here, is that producing or not producing the maximum pleasure is a universal sign of right or wrong voluntary action. We should note that Moore's utilitarianism further holds the view that when we say of an action that it produces maximum pleasure, we also imply that they would be right no matter what other effects they might produce as well (Moore, 1966). This means that the rightness of an action does not depend on other effects of the action but rather the quantity of pleasure the action produces.

In making these assertions, Moore also explained the distinction between higher and lower pleasures. To him those who hold that pleasures are divided into higher and lower pleasures together with, even, those who hold that the focus should rather be on the quality of pleasure produced and not the quantity would all agree to the fact that it would be generally right to prefer higher pleasures to lower pleasures even though the former might be less pleasant. This should be the case because higher pleasures tend to produce more pleasure on the whole than lower pleasures.

Moore reiterates that ideal utilitarianism asserts not only that voluntary actions are right because they produce maximum pleasure but the theory makes a further assertion that it will always be the case under any conceivable circumstances (Moore, 1966). That is, if any conceivable being in any



conceivable universe were faced with a choice between an action which would cause more pleasure and one which would cause less pleasure, it would always be our duty to choose the former rather than the latter. Thus, when we have to choose between two actions, for instance, an action which would have as its sole effects A and another action with sole effects B, then, if A contains more pleasure than B, Moore says, it would be our duty to choose the action which caused A rather than that which caused B. And this would absolutely be always true no matter what A and B might be like in other respects, and to say this is to mean that effects of actions which contain more pleasure are always intrinsically better than ones which contain less (Moore, 1966). To claim that an action is intrinsically better is to mean that the action is better in itself, that is, if the action is performed it is better without any effects or accompaniments. And Moore says that it would be our duty to choose such an action which is intrinsically better and one criterion is that it produces a maximum of pleasure. In other words, it cannot be our duty to choose one action rather than another unless the total or sole effects of one contained much pleasure which would, then, make it intrinsically better. Moore's utilitarianism, thus, in sum makes two assertions:

1. That if anyone had to choose between two actions, one of which would in its total effects cause more pleasure than the other, it is always the agent's duty to choose the action that can cause much pleasure.
2. That any universe or part of the universe which contains more pleasure is intrinsically better than one which contains less. Also nothing can be intrinsically better than anything else unless it contains more pleasure (Moore, 1966).

We gather from Moore's version that utilitarianism in this sense assigns unique position to pleasure and pain in two respects. First of all, that they have a unique relation to right and wrong and secondly, that they have a unique relation to intrinsic value. In talking about one thing being better than the other, Moore advocates that it may mean five different things:

- a. That while both are positively good, the first is better.
- b. That while the first is positively good, the second is neither good nor bad but indifferent.
- c. That while the first is positively good, the second is positively bad.
- d. That while the first is indifferent, the second is positively bad.
- e. That while both are positively bad, the first is less bad than the second (Moore, 1966).

And so, when we say that action A is 'better' than action B, we mean to say that they stand in relation to the above five points. Moore further explains that, to say that a thing is intrinsically good means that it is good in itself without relation to anything else. Also, a thing is intrinsically bad when it would be bad or evil should it exist. Likewise, by saying that a thing is intrinsically indifferent means that if it existed quite alone, its existence would neither be good nor bad.

Generally, Moore avers, that suffering is sometimes good because it has further good effects. His theory, therefore, maintains that while nothing is intrinsically good except pleasure, many other things, according to Moore, are really 'good'. Similarly, while Moore maintains that nothing is intrinsically bad except pain, there are other things that are really bad, like murder. But he importantly points out that his version of utilitarianism should not be construed to mean that it asserts that pleasure is the only thing that is intrinsically good and

pain the only thing that is intrinsically bad or evil. On the contrary, it asserts that any whole which contains an excess of pleasure over pain is intrinsically good and also, any whole which contains an excess of pain is intrinsically bad.

By ideal utilitarianism, Moore thought it simple and able to bring out clearly some pertinent ethical questions. Thus, the theory seems to deal with questions like, what is the characteristic of voluntary actions. What absolute characteristic would belong to any voluntary action which was right in any conceivable universe and under any conceivable circumstances? We might ask at this point why Moore picks out only pleasure as the determining factor of right and wrong actions when he at the same time agrees that there could be other non-moral values.

### **Some Problems with Utilitarianism**

Utilitarianism just like all other philosophical theories has had to contend with many criticisms and attacks. Candidly, some of these critiques are legitimate whilst others are, in fact, not harmful to the theory. Our concern here is to show, as much as we can, some of the criticisms that have been raised against the theory.

Modern philosophers such as Ewing (1976) in his analysis of utilitarianism raised some concerns which, to him, the theory fails to address. For Ewing, utilitarianism is not as simple as it is claimed to be. The theory first of all runs counter with common-sense morality. For instance, the theory supports the instance that, if a man is to deprive his wife and children the comforts of living and purchasable pleasures, leaving them only bare necessities on the ground that he could use the money for charity and, thus, save more lives

and relieve greater families from more pain and less happiness. Here, Ewing claims that since the action is for the satisfaction of the majority it will be difficult for the utilitarian to reject.

More so, Ewing thinks that the utilitarian would further accept the proposition that when a man obtained money to give to charity by stealing from a very much richer person than himself, the action has the tendency of carrying a moral worth since it would benefit the greatest number of people (Ewing, 1976).

Again, many other philosophers and, even, some utilitarians like Moore (1903), think that Mill contradicted himself with the definition of happiness as “pleasure and the absence of pain” (Mill, 1895). This is because further analysis will reveal that pleasure might not necessarily mean happiness and also there are cases where pain might be reduced but such a person might not be experiencing happiness. Thus, for some philosophers, when the word pleasure is analysed, they reveal several dimensions that render Mill’s idea of pleasure ambiguous.

Additionally, the theory has also suffered criticisms from the point of view of its quantitative calculus. It is said that utilitarianism discourages the generally acceptable fact that we should all live by general rules. And so, living in a world where every action would have to be calculated would be less happy, time-consuming and even less spontaneous. This also makes the theory elitist as Mill claimed that it is only those who have experienced both lower and higher pleasures that are in the best position to discount lower pleasures. However, modern utilitarians like Smart (1973) and Hare (1963) all took a departure from the quantitative calculus as offered by Bentham. Smart (1973), for instance, argued that happiness is evaluative – partly, and it is the duty of each person to decide what he counts as his being happy.

As a consequentialist theory, utilitarianism has had to deal with the attack that it is not possible to know all the consequences of our actions. Some consequences are in sight, others are, in fact, hidden from us. Again, there are some consequences that even when we know, we cannot have power over like the case of Oedipus in Greek mythology. Also, the defect of not knowing all the consequences of our actions is coupled with another defect of how we can sum up happiness. Thus, when we are faced with two choices – for instance, making a donation to a disaster zone and buying a gift for a friend. Prior (1969) argues that utilitarianism makes us responsible for the unforeseeable results of an action. But Smart (1973) responds with the claim that there is no sense in blaming one for the consequences of a particular action unless the person was able to predict the consequences of that action and yet chose not to act differently.

Furthermore, the theory is also criticised for being incapable of meeting the requirement of notions like justice, fairness, social distribution, etc. Mill, for instance, thought that what is moral in justice emanated from utilitarian concern of the ‘general good’ and the rest could be explained by ‘the natural feeling of retaliation (Mill, 1971). What utilitarianism seems to lack, according to critics, and what justice seems to require is a notion of inviolable rights that everyone has which also constitute the basic and inalienable rights that are naturally endowed unto humanity. This is because the theory does not frown on an act itself but rather the consequences.

As pointed out earlier in Moore’s version of utilitarianism, he criticised his fellow utilitarians – Mill and Sidgwick - for claiming that pleasure is the only thing that is good in itself. This is seen as a defect of the theory by other

philosophers. To say this, in Moore's view is also to say that pleasure is good and good is pleasure which does not always follow. Also, there is the further criticism of whether pleasure is really the core of happiness. And also, as to whether it is really the case that a life with no pleasure is hardly a happy life at all. But will it suffice to, then, say that all pleasures lead to happiness? This is because there are some things that we highly ranked but which do not seem to produce pleasure at all, and in so far as they do, it seems incidental to our valuing of them. Consider, for instance, the song *Paven for a Dead Princess*, which was hit after Princess Diana died, though it is a beautiful music, it also creates a feeling of resigned melancholy. Would we call the feeling that such a song creates pleasure or something else?

Further analysis has been made into how Mill sought to prove the principle of utility. According to Mill, what is to be proven is that happiness is desirable and the only thing that is desirable (Mill, 1895). But critics raise a further question that how do we prove that something is desirable? In answering this question, Mill is of the view that the only proof that something is desirable is that it is seen and the only proof that something is desirable is that it is desired (Mill, 1895). The criticism raised, here, is that even though happiness is, in fact, desirable, the fact that people desire something does not make it morally right. For instance, some people desire alcohol and that it makes them feel happy but it does not make such a desire morally right. It must also be noted that some things are desired not because they constitute what happiness is but they are a means to happiness. For instance, for some people, money is not desirable in itself, it is desirable because it allows us to get things that contributes to happiness.

One modern philosopher who has criticised utilitarianism so much is Williams (1973). He begins with the claim that consequentialism has found plausibility in people's minds due to a misunderstanding of and negative reaction to non-consequentialist theories (Williams, 1973). He reasoned that utilitarianism does not care about how an action is brought about since its focus is on the consequences of the action. For him, there are many distinctions of what brings an act into performance, there is the case where one acts because the person, out of his/her will wanted to. On another occasion, an agent might not want to perform an action but is forced to do so because of certain factors - be it internal or external and thirdly, there is the possibility that one performs an action accidentally. To him, the utilitarian does not consider all these possibilities but is rather very much concerned with the consequences. But it is important to look at the driving force which brings an action into place since that can also determine the consequences. And since the utilitarian is not concerned with this fact, it is flawed.

Also, Williams (1973) reiterates that if utilitarianism will be attractive, then, it must also contain what he referred to as, a doctrine of *negative responsibility*. What this means is that, suppose in a specific situation, I can do A or B. 'A' here denotes an action which brings about the greatest happiness and B is basically doing nothing, which is itself an option to be chosen. In this supposed situation, I choose to act on B which is being idle or doing nothing, instead of A. The inference, then, is that I have failed to bring about the greatest happiness and so I am blameworthy. The utilitarian, according to Williams, must say that just as I am responsible for the things I do, I must also be responsible for the consequences of the things I do not do. Thus, in this case, I

should have done A, but I did not do it and instead did B which was equal to doing nothing so I have not acted in bringing about the greatest happiness. In making an analogy Williams used Jim and the Indians situation. According to him, a man says to Jim, if you shoot one Indian, I will let the other 9 live. If you refuse to shoot the one Indian, then I will kill all of them. So, here, Jim's options are:

1. Do X : Shoot the one Indian.
2. Do Y: refuse to shoot the Indian.

It is realised that act X seems to bring about the best consequences since the other nine will live when the action is performed. Act Y, on the contrary, seems to bring about the worst consequences since it will lead to the death of all the ten Indians. Williams points out that if Jim chooses to perform Y, that is, refuses to shoot the Indians, then, it seems that he is negatively responsible for the death of the ten Indians. After all, it is his choice that results in that consequence. In this case, therefore, it seems that Jim should be held responsible for the consequences of his inactions. The reference that Williams makes, here, is that the utilitarian will claim that Jim ought to have chosen act X instead of opting for Y. The case that Williams has against utilitarianism is that there should be a distinction between my actions and someone else's actions. In the case of Jim, he did not shoot the Indians. Pedro, another soldier did. So the utilitarian will be wrong to claim that Jim is responsible for the death of the Indians.

Williams (1973) thinks that utilitarianism fails to make a distinction between my 'projects' and someone else's 'projects'. My projects might be caring for my family, cherishing 'higher' pleasures like art, etc. These are important in determining the way I act. Thus, it is important for utilitarians not



to look down on our own 'projects' and 'commitments', that is, concerns which we build our lives around as moral agents, and rather, stress on maximizing desirable outcomes which might not even concern us. This generates a problem for the theory since utilitarianism does not allow Jim to distinguish between him killing and Captain Pedro killing since utilitarianism makes one responsible for the action one could have prevented from what one personally does and this is what Williams calls 'negative responsibility'.

Utilitarianism, according to Williams, also alienates ones feelings and principles. Thus, if one will be psychologically traumatized in killing in order to save a majority, the theory will see the person's feelings and dispositions as irrelevant. A utilitarian will say that the fact that Jim feels bad because he shot one Indian is irrational since it brought about the best consequences. But Williams thinks that even if Jim had refused not to shoot the Indian, Pedro might have shot them all. And so, it was not Jim who made the situation happened per se, but rather Pedro who had a choice, he could have killed the Indians or let them go. The critics claim further that utilitarianism entreats us to discard our commitments simply because someone else's project is such that not discarding my commitments would frustrate his projects and, thus, bring about unhappiness. The general idea that Williams, then, gives is that what it means to be an agent or an individual is to have the sorts of moral feelings that one had, a feeling which one has spent a life time cultivating and following them. And so, to separate a person from his own moral feelings is to claim that agents are irrelevant or to deny what is essential to being a person. As a result utilitarians cannot demand than an agent distant himself from his own moral feelings just because the consequences of a certain action would work better. Thus, Williams

thinks that moral agents need a sense of 'integrity' and 'commitment' in order to make sense of moral agency or justify any morality.

Even so, Ewing (1976) offered another criticism of utilitarianism from another dimension. According to him, to say that pleasure is the only good and yet further admit that a lesser pleasure may be preferable to a greater pleasure is like saying that money is the only thing which counts and, then, adding that money earned by public work is better than the same amount earned by business (Ewing, 1976). What should, in fact, be the case is that, if pleasure is the only good, then, it must be accepted that the more the pleasure the better it becomes.

Again, utilitarianism may be condemned as irreconcilable with the dictates of justice. This seems to be so since the theory tells us to maximise happiness without taking into consideration the way in which happiness is distributed. But to Ewing, justice requires that of two distributions, we ought to prefer the fairer to the less fair. Thus, suppose we could slightly increase the collective happiness of twenty men by taking away all the happiness of one man, would it be right in doing so? Ewing thinks that it would be right to do so according to the utilitarian principle since, for them, any distribution of good, however unfair, ought to be preferred to any other, however just, if it would yield the slightest additional happiness (Ewing, 1976).

Let us note that there are occasions when wrong actions, that produce unhappiness, may later turn out to bring about pleasure even though the long term result cannot make that action right. Also though utilitarianism has suffered and is still suffering from various attacks, we can understand because it is passing through the normal mill that philosophical theories pass through. And

that these criticisms does not damage the theory beyond repairs, it still holds sway on some grounds.

### **A Summary of the core Concepts in Utilitarianism**

Utilitarianism has gone through many criticisms and modifications. With the exposition done so far, we realise that the theory, though has some problems, also has some strengths which can be integrated and merged with other theories; in this case, Kant's deontologism. Utilitarianism is considered a consequentialist theory based on the utility principle or the greatest happiness principle. Consequentialist theories assess morality from the end results that an action produces. Such theories were popular before Kant propounded his deontologism. The type of consequentialism during this period was mainly egoistic. That is the product of a moral conduct must be that which promotes the welfare of the individual in question. This view became unpopular with time because of its vulnerability to abuse and criticisms. And that accounts for why utilitarianism was so much embraced as an attractive theory in the determination of moral actions. Thus an action has a moral content when that action promotes the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. The consequentialist view of utilitarianism draws the theory into sharp contrast with Kant's deontologism but we think that one major problem that Kant faces in his ethics which is when two duties conflict what right action one takes creates an opening to integrate consequences into Kant's deontologism. We wish take a look at this in our final chapter.

Another basic concept in utilitarianism is the concept of happiness. Generally, we find that utilitarians do not distinguish between pleasure and

happiness. They are used interchangeably to mean the same thing but since it is not the focus of this work we will not attempt an in depth explanation. Utilitarianism considers happiness as the summum bonum. In other words, the highest good is happiness or pleasure. Pleasure was first considered in a quantitative form where moral agents were admonished to calculate the net happiness over pain before acting. This was the view of Bentham when he claims that morally commendable actions are those that minimise pain and maximise pleasure for the greatest number. In this case, moral agents ought to calculate the amount of pleasure an action will produce over pain and act on that action using the hedonistic calculus. Bentham did not discriminate between pleasures but considered all pleasures as equal, only differing in quantity. This view was modified by Mill when he observed that in addition to the utility principle, there are pleasures that are qualitative as well. Pleasures are not only quantitatively conceived but there are some other pleasures which are associated with the development of the mind and rational cognition and such pleasures are not quantitative but qualitative. We find that the conception and modification of pleasure opens up a possibility for merging utilitarianism with Kant's deontology.

The concept of pleasure and its role in an action also shows the role desire plays in an action. When we look at the consequences of an action to be determining the morality of an action, we see that most of these consequences are desired consequences that a moral agent wishes to achieve. Man naturally desires a happy life, pleasure and success and these desires play a role in determining which action to take. Utilitarianism recognises the role that desire plays in morality especially in Mill's modification and we see a possibility of

integrating this into Kant's deontology even though Kant rules out the role that desire plays in action that has a moral worth.

Utilitarianism is criticised for using man as a means to the achievement of certain ends especially when the ends satisfy the majority. In other words, it is possible for the right of the minority to be sacrificed for the majority. Legitimate as this criticism might be, we think Kant's deontology entertains a teleological idea. We say this with the knowledge that using man as a means to an end is a teleological moral conception. Thus, we see a point of a possible integration between the two theories in this area too and we will look at it in our final chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **ACHIEVING A HUMANISTIC DEONTOLOGISM THROUGH INTEGRATING UTILITARIANISM WITH KANT'S DEONTOLOGISM.**

With the exposition done so far on both Kant's deontological ethics and utilitarianism, we will now flesh out a synthesis called humanised deontologism. We will do this by harmonising some core and attractive positions of the two theories.

With the passage of time, our ethical consideration has become more complex by the day. We believe that the best ethical theory is one which combines the strong points of different ethical views. And so, we think it is possible for an aspect of utilitarianism to be fused into Kant's deontology to make it attractive and less vulnerable to criticism.

Our objective in this chapter is to integrate some concepts of utilitarianism into Kant's deontology. We do this by reconciling both theories to create a workable synthesis. The concepts in utilitarianism that we seek to merge with Kant's deontology are, Mill's qualitative pleasure, consequences in the utilitarian thought, desire, reward and finally, means and end. With Kant's deontology, we will look at the categorical imperative, conflict of duties as a problem in Kant's deontology, using man as a means to an end and the concept of duty. We see these concepts, ideas and problem as creating an opening for integration and this is what we wish to do in this chapter.

There are some principles in both Kant's deontology and utilitarianism that allow for a harmony between the two theories. Both theories observe the need for a moral action to be altruistic. The utilitarian argues that the good act is that which satisfies the greatest number of people. By this the welfare of the majority is taken into consideration. This view allows for the possibility that an action cannot always satisfy everybody but, at least, if the greatest number of people benefit from such an action, then, it is good. This view has been criticised for neglecting the minority. We, however, think that sometimes the greatest number does not necessarily mean a calculated number, but rather maximum applicability. Kant also shares an altruistic view since he believes that a moral law must be able to hold universal acceptance. As a result, any action that one takes must carry the will that the action becomes a universal law for anybody at anytime. In other words, the rational man is the one who legislates for all and so if an action A, favours one but will not favour another when he is in the particular situation in which I am, then, I am not obliged to act in accordance with such an action.

### **Categorical Imperative and Qualitative Pleasure**

Kant's deontology recognises the categorical imperative as the fundamental principle that ought to underlie all actions. The imperative basically states that moral agents must act with the will that their actions can be raised to the level of a universal law. Our purpose here is to identify areas of possible harmony between the two theories.

When we look at the categorical imperative and the various interpretations given by some moral philosophers, we realise that the views are

diverse. Ebbinghaus (1954) believes that Kant's concept of the categorical imperative is so clear that it should hardly be misinterpreted. In this sense, moral philosophers who find it difficult to understand the requirement of the categorical imperative mostly concern themselves with the content of the categorical command and the inferences to be drawn from it. We believe this should be the best direction of assessment we can give the categorical command when we decide to look at the verbal definition of the categorical imperative the principle becomes simple but this will not bring out the moral import that the principle of the categorical imperative proposes to carry.

Kant's moral imperative is not the one which man acts upon under the condition of experience but rather it is a way of expressing the conditions under which a principle can have a categorical demand. In other words, Kant's principle does not emanate from our sensual experiences like pleasures or pain but it is a principle which directs us to how we ought to act. Ebbinghaus (1954) agrees that the categorical imperative is conceived as a fundamental principle which determines the laws that can be objectively valid for the decisions of our will (Ebbinghaus, 1954). For instance, whenever we see ourselves as having a duty to perform certain action, we mean that we have a categorical command in mind or an objectively valid principle innate upon which we act.

Kant claims that acting in accordance with the categorical imperative is a performance of one's duty. Thus, the categorical imperative determines the concept of duty solely from its form. In other words, the imperative states what duty is and also the forms of duties we have. In this way, the categorical imperative is seen as failing to show how particular duties which it (categorical imperative) determines differ, at least materially, from one another. This,



according to Ebbinghaus, becomes the formal character of the categorical imperative as a law of duty and it also provides the basis for a misinterpretation of the categorical imperative. Thus, the misinterpretation consists in the thought that defining duty in the formal sense necessarily confines moral philosophy rather than to state what the concept of duty is as regards its form and this makes it impossible to articulate particular duties that are materially different.

The idea we wish to state is that every concept of duty must begin by stating what duty consists in, that is, stating what the concept of duty is with regard to its form. For instance, if we say of a particular duty as consisting of producing pleasure for the individual alone, we have determined the concept of duty simply as regards its form.

Even though we seem to agree with Ebbinghaus that the focus of interpreting the categorical imperative must not necessarily be confined to its form, we think it is also the case that in determining the concept of duty, there is prudence in looking at its form, that is what that duty generally characterises. In this sense, the form of duty consists of abstract conception whereby duty is defined in abstraction without regard to its actual application in behaviour. This gives a clear, consistent and unequivocal view of the duty in question. This, we believe, Kant did in his ethics. Let us note that the formal characteristics and definition of duty also accounts for conditions under which that particular duty must be performed as well as the criteria by which such an action counts as duty. However, we believe that an account of what duty is does not only end at the formal definition. The material differences between duties are equally important as well

Further analysis into Kant's thought, indeed, reveals that he was concerned with both the formal and the material conceptions of duty. The categorical imperative is also a material conception of duty whereby moral agents apply their formal conception of duty. It defines an action which is our duty and how we ought to act in accordance with the requirements of duty. In other words, moral agents will have to apply Kant's formal conception of duty in determining the moral status of any given moral action such as enacting moral laws. In doing this, the key factor is whether or not the action passes the universalisability test. In this case, moral agents become legislators, not only for themselves but for others as well.

The categorical imperative seems vulnerable in some instances. For instance, there are instances when the imperative is abused and still holds valid. This sometimes calls for exception when acting in accordance with the categorical imperative. Hegel (1972) in his criticism of Kant claimed that whenever Kant deduced or tried to deduce particular kinds of duties, he found himself just going round in a vicious circle. The reason being that, in order to show a contradiction between a maxim and the possibility of willing that the maxim becomes a universal law, one has to always presuppose a possibility of a violation which rests on no one but the individual. That is, whenever a moral agent acts in a certain way, the maxim upon which he acts are purely from the innate goodwill and the justification of such a maxim is ultimately his own duty. What happens, then, is that, it becomes possible to put forward any kind of arbitrary conduct as a demand of duty. Mill (1895) agrees with this view when he said of Kant that, when Kant infers some precepts from actual duties of

morality, he fails to show that there would be any contradiction in its adoption by all rational beings, especially in the case of immoral rules of conduct.

Furthermore, the categorical imperative has been scrutinised and challenged on the basis that moral requirements are not categorical but rather hypothetical. Let us note that Kant distinguished between categorical and hypothetical imperatives. The categorical imperative is a command that directs us on how we ought to act in order to be moral, the hypothetical is however a conditional imperative which is directed towards the achievement of certain ends. Kant holds that what is moral is a categorical command and they emanate from our motive of duty to perform an action with the will that the action passes the test of universal application. Hypothetical imperatives are, however, imperatives of feeling and desires which have a teleological tendency. Morality, in Kant's view, is not concerned with the consequences of actions since, more often than not, consequences are beyond the control of man. Simply put, Kant claims that moral requirements are categorical.

Philosophers such as Ayer (1946) criticized Kant by saying that when we say moral laws hold as categorical commands, we mean so because some individuals have their moral motivation emanating from God's displeasure or concern for being isolated and antagonized by society. This view coheres with Broad's (1959) claim that some imperatives which we may call categorical, at least in the lives of some individuals, were once hypothetical and, then, gradually became categorical because of the strengths that individuals themselves gave it. As a result, some philosophers see nothing wrong with commands being hypothetical, provided such a command can be applied universally. The question that arises thereof is what principle counts as moral.

This question has attracted varied reactions from moral philosophers. Foot (1989) opines that moral requirements, contrary to Kant's views, are, in fact, hypothetical. For her, moral requirements are not independent of desires, for desires play an important role on the reason of an individual to act morally. She further observes that, "it is not evident that a man's desires could not give him reason to act honestly". The difference between categorical and hypothetical imperatives are that categorical imperatives tell man what he ought to do, whatever his desires or interests whilst hypothetical tell man what he ought to do because he wants something as well as what he ought to do on grounds of self-interest (Foot, 1989). This is a linguistic distinction of both commands, and her disagreement with Kant starts from here. She reasoned that if, indeed, moral requirements are categorical and as a result the linguistic distinction between categorical and hypothetical imperatives is potent, then, other rules such as rules of etiquette would be` categorical since it is also independent of our desires and feelings.

In order to prove that rules like etiquette are not moral requirements, Kant must ascribe categorical imperatives special dignity and necessity which the mere linguistic distinction cannot capture. In other words, Foot observes, the claim that moral requirements are categorical needs additional proof to properly distinguish it from other rules, by which claim it must be able to, in fact, prove that moral requirements are independent of desires and feelings. These views are also shared by Dreier (1997) in his observation that moral requirements are hypothetical. This is so because moral requirements are not independent of desires and so if the characterisation of categorical imperative is independent of desires, then, moral requirements are not categorical. He further opines that a

categorical imperative is one that each person has reason to follow, no matter what her desires (Dreier, 1997). And so, the only sort of reasons are instrumental reasons and this means that moral reasons are not categorical, they depend for their compelling force on contingent desires.

We, thus, realise that there are times when there do not seem to be any problem in saying that we behave morally because we feel in a certain way, since it sometimes becomes natural because of our psychological way of learning what is moral. As a result of some of these concerns, Foot (1989) argues that we normally act on what is moral, not because we seem to be obliged by some reasons that are categorical but because we are taught to act morally and we want to promote the good of others. For categorical reasons are devoid of desires and we sometimes act morally based on feeling. For instance, a man who publicly declares that he is performing his duties to his children simply because it is his duty and not for any love or affection that he has towards his children would certainly not be liked by, even, his children, even though he is doing what is morally required of him. However, when he talks of the fact that he is looking after his children because of the love and affection he has for them, even, when he is not aware that it is his duty to do so, would certainly get the reciprocal love from his children. More so, one acts honestly because one is taught to be honest and it seems to also bring good to others. Kitcher (2004) seems to cast doubt on the view that we could attract moral principles from considerations of logic and rationality alone, as Kant proposes. In other words, it seems to be the case that Kant perceives morality as a matter of laws which are obligatorily applicable to all, a view captured by the concept of the categorical imperative. By this, morality is a matter of laws that holds universal application. It in fact seems to

hold, as Kitcher (2004) observes, that Kant might have inherited such an idea from the natural law tradition where all human beings were equally “God’s children.” We note, here, that the universal applicability of moral laws is a necessity in moral deliberations. The other side of the issue is that moral laws do not always hold universal acceptance and that even when they do, they do not have universal application. It therefore becomes prudent to allow for exception since there are occasions when a moral law may be practicable in one instance but may not in another instance. This does not deny the fact that acting in accordance with what is moral must necessarily be obligatory at all times. Kant’s view that we are mostly distracted and influenced by other factors from acting on what counts as moral attests to the reason why it becomes obligatory to act, at least, most times in accordance with the moral law.

Our argument then seems to gain support from Dewey (1944) that when we consider Kant’s deontology, it would be possible for any tyrant to supply an explanation by telling those in his power that what duty requires of them is their unconditional obedience and acceptance of his maxims. The effect is that if the will of the tyrant himself is to satisfy the principle of the categorical imperative, then, his subject must follow him in every possible exercise of their will. Ebbinghaus (1954), however, thinks that it is a misinterpretation of Kant since, for him, it is not possible to subject themselves under such a tyrant except when their own will determines them to this subjection. We see some difficulty in such a situation as to how we can have a universally and objective moral principle as Kant sets out to achieve. This is because there might be instances when someone might persuade another to act by his maxims means that ultimately, everyone will act the way he/she deems fit or in accordance with his maxims. The effect

will be that society will lack cohesive principles. Also, it seems difficult whether Kant's idea of duty for duty sake, when we act with the motive of duty, including duty to obey those in authority, will allow one to act in accordance with one's own maxims when he is obliged to act by the maxims of a tyrant.

It is, however, important to note that man generally is a social animal. In all, our actions sometimes have effects on other people. Thus, Kant, in fact, did not disagree with this view and this is evident in his idea of a maxim passing the universalisability test. In being socially connected it also behoves on us to ensure that our actions carry positive effects on others. As a result, whether moral agents will follow their maxims or the maxim of others, it is generally accepted that what is moral also carries with it a tag that it should also promote the happiness of others as well. And so Ebbinghaus even observed;

I do will my own happiness ... I can, secondly, will the happiness of others. But in the third place, in willing my own happiness, I also will on the principle that others should will my happiness. Now if on my side I do not will the happiness of others, I cannot will that my maxim should be acted on by others and consequently I cannot will that it should be a law. Hence, if the categorical imperative is valid, there follows from it as a definite command of duty that I must include within my end of happiness, the happiness of others (Ebbinghaus, 1954).

What we have done is to analyse the categorical imperative in the light of some of the concerns raised by some philosophers about the acceptability of the theory. The import is to assess the strength of the imperative in order to create the harmony we want to achieve. With the criticisms and analysis raised the categorical imperative basically puts moral responsibility in the hands of the

individual. Moral agents act with the full responsibility and will that their action can benefit others. When the imperative advocates that we act on maxims that can be universalised it simply means that we do not legislate for ourselves but for everyone who would find him/herself in the particular situation one legislated. The difficulty is that not all moral agents can consistently act on maxims that are universalisable and always do so out of duty. Kant's view is that the categorical principle is known a priori and as such it takes purely rational moral agents to consistently act in accordance with the imperative. Thus, for moral agents to act in accordance with the categorical imperative without any problems, they must first of all, reach a certain rational height and be able to always act on their innate good will without any compulsion. However, moral agents who have not been able to work on their innate good will and as such reached the rational stage that Kant envisages will always find it difficult acting in accordance with the stipulations of the categorical imperative and so need to be commanded to. For such moral agents, acting on the categorical imperative is an absolute duty. By this, such individuals act on duty for the sake of duty. Kant's categorical imperative is still potent in directing us towards what is good and we think there are points where it merges with Mill's qualitative pleasure.

The thought of promoting the happiness of others when acting has also been an influence in the thought of utilitarians. In fact, happiness or pleasure as observed by utilitarians is the highest good and determines the way and manner that individual acts. A good act is one that promotes the happiness of the greatest number of people. Utilitarians mostly use pleasure and happiness interchangeably and we will not try any distinction even though there seem to be, at least, a difference in semantics. In his *Principles of the Legislation of*



*Morals* (1879), Bentham observed that pleasures are equal but only differ in quantity. This means that pleasures are calculable and moral agents ought to calculate the amount of pleasure an action will produce before acting. Bentham's view was heavily criticised for advocating that we act to maximise any pleasure at all without any distinction. This made it necessary for Mill to offer his distinction between qualitative or higher pleasure and quantitative or lower pleasure.

Mill observes that the ultimate end of utilitarianism is an existence which as far as possible exempts pain and is rich in enjoyment or happiness both in quantity and quality. Qualitative pleasure presupposes that there is always the need to look at the value of an action rather than the pleasantness of it. This is measured by the intellectual and rational development that the action will produce.

When Mill proposes that pleasure can be conceived qualitatively, he means to say that mental pleasures are intrinsically more desirable and valuable than bodily pleasures (Mill, 1895). In other words, the superiority of qualitative pleasure far outweighs the quantitative measure of other compared pleasures. Mill termed qualitative pleasure as higher pleasure. Philosophers like Edwards (1979) suggest that Mill was influenced by the doctrine of Hutcheson who associated pleasure with knowledge and virtue and saw them as incomparably excellent and beatific than the most intense and lasting enjoyments of the lower kinds (Hutcheson, 1969). We also conjecture that the thoughts of Plato in his *Phaedo* might have also influenced Mill. This seems to be the case with the concept of *eudaemonia* in Greek classical philosophy.

Qualitative or higher pleasure involves pleasures that encompass intellectual, self-improvement and the rule of reason in enjoying happiness. According to Mill, it should always be the case that if some pleasures are of high quality then they ought to be chosen over lower pleasures regardless of their respective quantities. Mill claims that we should choose higher pleasure no matter the situation we find ourselves in but was criticised as to what makes one pleasure valuable than the other and how we make such a choice. In other words, moral agents are being told to look at the quality of pleasure over quantity. In fact, in the analysis of Mill, rational agents ought to act in accordance with qualitative pleasure. But the question is what makes one pleasure more valuable or qualitative? To this, Mill observes that;

The test of quality... is the preference felt by those who, in their opportunities of experience, to which must be added their habits of self-consciousness and self-observation are best furnished with the means of comparison (Mill, 1895).

This means that it is not the case that all moral agents will choose higher pleasures over lower pleasures. Those who were able to see the difference are those who have had the opportunity to experience both pleasures and have attained a level of rational cognition which will allow them to make such a choice. It is worthy of note that Mill does not necessarily say that higher or qualitative pleasures are more pleasant than lower or quantitative pleasures or that mental pleasures are necessarily more pleasant than physical pleasures, but that it is the question of 'what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as pleasure?' (Mill, 1895).

Mill conceives of pleasure as not just any kind of satisfaction but rather the satisfaction that comes from exercising and developing the higher human faculties. This kind of happiness is found in the exercise of intelligence, imagination, skill and practice of moral virtue (Gibbs, 1986). The role that qualitative pleasure plays is to assign a central place to the development of our human powers, especially, self-improvement.

Again, Mill emphasises in his distinction that what distinguishes human beings from other animals is our mental power. With this power, we are able to discriminate between moral judgements, reasoning, imagination, aesthetic evaluation, etc. Also, moral agents are able to distinguish between higher and lower pleasures because of the mental power we possess. We note here that it is not everybody who is in the position to choose higher pleasures over lower pleasures. It is the one who is able to actively work on his mental capacity of discriminating between moral judgments. Thus a purely rational being is the one who will consistently choose higher pleasures over lower pleasures. According to Mill, one pleasure is generally more valuable than the other if competent judges prefer one over the other. In other words, the value of pleasure is determined not by its duration and intensity but by the preferences of competent judges. Mill conceives of a competent judge as one who has experienced both higher and lower pleasures and is consciously aware of the long and short term consequences and effects of both pleasures. The idea of competent judges has generated a lot of controversy among philosophers. But Mill states categorically that the competent judge must be acquainted with the different sorts of pleasure, must be equally susceptible to both classes of pleasures or is capable of enjoying

the different kinds of pleasures and finally is able to make effective choices (Mill, 1895).

We realise that Mill's idea of competent judges are those who have attained a higher level of rational cognition and cannot be easily corrupted by sensory pleasures. It is not everyone who is able to become a competent judge and is as such able to consistently choose qualitative pleasure over quantitative pleasure, regardless of the duration of pleasure involved. Mill's thought rules out the criticism that the idea of competent judges are based on intellectual elitism because all moral agents have the capacity of attaining a rational level required to make a distinction between lower and higher pleasures.

Generally, we find the two concepts as having a merging point and thus become a point of harmony. The categorical imperative posits that we act with the will that our maxims can be universalised. Thus moral agents must consistently act with the thought that those actions will hold universal applicability. The imperative gives absolute moral responsibility to the moral agent. It is realised that one has to reach a certain rational peak in order to be able to act consistently according to the principle of the categorical imperative. The categorical imperative also demands that moral agents think through their actions thoroughly before acting. The difficulty lies in how one is able to act in accordance with a consistently universalised maxim. The point is that it takes moral agents who have attained a level of rational cognition to do so. Kant thought of the good will as the basic good which is behind all actions, it is intrinsic but it is only the rational man who is able to act on the good will with the sense of duty. It means that the good will, which is the will behind our thoughts and actions that pass the universalisability test, is innate in every man,

and acting according to the good will is acting in accordance with the requirements of the fundamental principle of morality – the categorical imperative. It, however, takes a certain intellectual and rational height to realise and be able to consistently act in accordance with the categorical imperative.

One major common denominator underlying the categorical imperative and qualitative pleasure is the unaided use of reason and intellectual capacity. Qualitative pleasure, in the way Mill conceives it, also demands moral responsibility from moral agents. The import is that one is morally underdeveloped when he/she chooses lower pleasure over higher pleasure. It is, for instance, if it becomes difficult to shun having fun at a beach to reading a literature book. The import is that moral agents must reach a high stage of rational decision making and control oneself before he/she can consistently choose qualitative pleasure over quantitative pleasure. In other words, it takes a moral agent who is self-conscious and has reached a high level of rational appreciation. This is the reason why Mill appeals to the competent judge. Conscious of the controversy this idea of competent judge has created, we think that the judge is the moral agent who has reached an appreciable level of self-control, rational cognition and intellectual understanding.

And so, both concepts demand that in order to achieve the moral height we ought to, there is the need to reach a rational level that allows us to appreciate and take moral decisions without any external promptings. The role of reason in moral action has been appreciated by both Kant and Mill. Kant sought to put morality on the foundation of pure reason where moral agents do not act on the basis of mere empirical factors. Kant sees morality as purely a priori and observes that it is the only means by which we can rid ethics of its problems.

Mill did not disagree with Kant that reason must be allowed to play a major role in moral decision making. This is because it is not possible for moral agents who are not purely rational to choose qualitative pleasure over quantitative pleasure. Thus, even though, it might not be clear as Kant puts it, Mill's qualitative pleasure demands that we reach a certain rational and intellectual level before we can act.

It is the case that a human being with low level of mental faculty can easily gain satisfaction of his desires and be made fully content because he has low capacities of enjoyment. But he is not capable of the same level of happiness as a person of superior intelligence and character. Thus the higher being is more liable to pain, must suffer more discontent and will never be perfectly happy; yet his condition is happier and better (Gibbs, 1986).

Acting in accordance with the categorical imperative is a duty and the same applies to Mill's higher pleasure. Moral agents must as a matter of duty choose qualitative pleasure if their action will have a moral worth. This integrates the ideal utilitarianism of Moore whereby he observes that there are some concepts that do not necessarily denote pleasure but are qualitative, for instance, friendship and aesthetic value. The categorical imperative can therefore be merged with qualitative pleasure to mean that it is categorical that we choose a qualitatively pleasurable action. In this way it becomes easier to universalise our maxims. Thus the good will also allows moral agents to act in accordance with the value of qualitative pleasures.

### **Consequences and Conflict of duties.**

Kant's deontology, as already pointed out, conceives of duty in the absolute sense, there are no room for exceptions and duties are not ranked as which one is weightier or urgent to act on in certain situations. This has accounted for one major problem against Kant's thought and that is what should moral agents do in situations when duties conflict. However, we think that it is an area where we can harmonise Kant's deontology with utilitarianism. We note that utilitarianism is a consequentialist theory and this also accounts for the fundamental difference between Kant's deontology and utilitarianism. Let us note that one main problem of Kant's deontology is its inability to appeal to the real motivations of human action, especially when duties conflict. In this vein we see the problem of conflicting duties as a possible opening to integrate the utilitarian concept of consequences.

A valid moral law should be in tune with the capacities and abilities of man. There would be no use for laws if their precepts are unattainable and cannot be enforced because they are not within human capacity. In this vein, there is the need to look at the nature of man when moral theories and laws are being formulated. Kant in his *Groundwork* took some aspects of human nature into consideration when he observed that we mostly do what we do not want to do and as a result, moral law should command our will to act. In other words, under human conditions where we are always struggling against our impulses and desires, a manifestation of the good will is acting for the sake of duty. We share Kant's view, here, but we think that ruling out consequences when acting is also bound to make his theory problematic.

Let us also note that Kant's position that we cannot judge the rightness or wrongness of an action by considering the consequences of the action seems to emanate from his notion of *means* and *ends*. Kant's view seems problematic since we might not be able to always judge the rightness or wrongness of an action without looking at the probable consequences. Much as we believe that the motive for the performance of an action is a determinant of the rightness or wrongness of an action, we cannot absolutely rule out the role that consequences play in determining whether the action is right or wrong. Kant does not seem to hold that we know our duty, in each case a priori or from direct intuition, but he does hold that we can determine our duty from certain a priori principles (Hazlitt, 1964)

It might be accepted that to say of an action that it is right, we also look at the ability of that action to produce good. There seems to be no better explanation for acting in certain ways other than that the action produces good or prevents evil. This explains why we think (ideal) utilitarianism can be of help in taking a second look at Kant's deontology. The theory observes that in deciding whether an action is right, in a given situation, one might want to look at how much good each action is likely to produce. This does not demand that one calculate the amount of pleasure to be produced as Bentham (1789) alludes to but that one looks at the consequences the action is likely to produce.

Kant conceived of ethics as purely a priori which also has universal application. This view does not allow him to consider the consequences of an action since this will mean having an empirical consideration of what is moral. For Kant, what is moral is purely not based on how we feel, what we see or any other thing linked to the empirical verification of that object. It is absolutely



based on the motive of duty. In other words, our feelings might be influenced by something else which might prevent us from taking the right action; such an action then does not become a moral one. It is that action which ignores desires and feelings and acts for the sake of duty upon which one would will that such an action become a universal law.

The universal application of some ethical guidelines sometimes seems problematic. There are instances when some universal laws do not hold absolute applicability. For instance, in wars, there is the tendency for an ethical guideline to be broken to avert a greater evil. Such a view takes the long term consequences of actions into consideration. Kant's deontology is very vulnerable when duties conflict. A moral agent might be faced with a duty to save an innocent person and a duty not to lie. In the case of the inquiring murderer, where a murderer enters a room and asks the whereabouts of his victim who he supposes to be hiding in that room, it becomes difficult to know which action to take; whether to tell the inquiring murderer that the victim is actually there or lie that there is no such person there. Let us note that Kant's theory does not provide the means to allow us to rank moral laws and so in such a situation it becomes difficult to know which action to take.

Our idea of humanised deontology allows that when such a situation happens we need to admit exceptions to one of the duties or even set priorities. Since I must either lie or not, it must be right either to lie or to sacrifice a life which I could have saved (Ewing, 1976). We note in Kant that he mostly looks at the negative instance when deciding which moral action to take. As a result he said that in such cases like the inquiring murderer, we are to tell the truth since when we lie and the person gets killed later we will be responsible. But we also

think that if we do not protect the innocent person we will as well be responsible unless, of course, we are told to protect our life first by giving the person up. Kant, however, talks of promoting the interest or happiness of others as well. In this case, when two laws conflict it is hard to know how we can rationally make a choice other than considering the consequences of those actions. Thus, it is a duty for moral agents to act in accordance with moral laws but when duties conflict, we ought to look at the consequences of the action. The import is that we cannot act without looking at the consequences, at least as far as it is within human capacity.

Ewing (1976) argues that there are instances when it is possible for much greater evil to be averted by a lie. In this case, we cannot say that lying is wrong. In other words, there are instances when we cannot say that it is bad to lie. For instance, it would seem justifiable for one to break a general moral law by lying in order to avert a calamitous happening. Also, it might be possible for us to say that it is self-evident that lying is always evil but not self-evident that lying is always wrong. What Ewing mean is that there is the possibility of recognising lies as morally bad (evil) in itself but lies cannot be always denote bad motives. Thus, there are times when we might have to give exceptions to moral laws.

Human nature, sometimes, allows that, even in the performance of our duty, we still look at the consequences. This does not overrule the deontological view that moral laws are obligatory, but it gives exception to the duty and an altruistic value to the action with the further thought that we need to maximise greatest satisfaction. And so, as far as Kant's deontology is about what action is right, it is important that it be supplemented by some utilitarian views. Kant is criticized for developing a formalist theory that wholly rejects teleological

elements as moral. The rejection of a teleological direction to his ethical theory has attracted other views from some philosophers who think that there is the need for Kant to have had a second look at his theory. For instance, Ewing (1976) argued that to be able to choose between conflicting duties, it will be necessary for Kant to consider a utilitarian complement even though we think Ewing did not fully develop such a view in the direction we would want to. Paulson (1963) also proposed for a teleological supplementation to strengthen Kant's deontological ethics. He, for instance, points out that lying is not repugnant because of its self-destructiveness, but because it "destroys an essential good, the confidence that is the fundamental condition of all social life." Thus for Paulson, there is also the need for moral agents to give an exception to some moral concepts and sometimes look at the consequences of some of our actions to determine their moral worth (Paulson, 1963).

Looking at the consequences of actions as humanised deontology proposes, we are bound to be faced with a further problem; the problem that we cannot always foresee all the consequences of an action. In other words, there are consequences of some actions which are beyond our immediate cognition and in such a situation we are left confused about which right action to take. Kant himself foresaw this problem when he observed that the consequences of actions are beyond our control and as a result we cannot rely on consequences to direct us towards what is moral. In this case, we are looking at both immediate and remote consequences. More often than not, we are faced with actions when the immediate consequences are in sight but the long term consequences cannot be known. For instance, when I call a friend to visit me and as he was coming, he falls and breaks his legs, and after five minutes another thing happens as a

result of his broken leg. We think that these are follow-up consequences that I did not know. Generally, we believe that in this case the consequences are beyond our control but do not absolutely ignore the fact that consequences play a part in determining which moral action to take. Indeed, in judging or taking a decision, moral agents take into account only the facts or information that is available to the agent. Such a person can only take moral responsibility on the basis of those facts or information. Thus, consequences beyond the ken of human apprehension should not detain our progress towards developing a moral theory.

We also think that in some instances when the predictable consequences of an action are good we can probably presume that the unforeseeable consequences will also be, at least, more good than evil. In instances when the consequences of an action are generally out of sight, we need to look at the situation within which the particular action is to be taken and, then, look at the probable consequences of other actions taken which correspond to such an action. In this case, it is possible for us to use probable inferences to ascertain the probable consequences of such an action.

Kant's deontology needs utilitarianism especially in situations where duties conflict. Daily moral deliberations allow that at a certain point in time, duties will conflict and we will be caught in a position of having to choose one of them. In this situation, the best way to decide is to look at the consequences of the actions involved and act on the one with desirable outcomes over the others. If so, then one should not conceive of duty in the absolute sense but a more pragmatic approach would be in order. This means that in moral decision

making, consequence play a vital role and this is what humanised deontologism canvases.

### **Means and Ends in Kant's deontology and utilitarianism.**

In Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative, he observed that we should act in such a way that we always treat humanity, whether in our own person or in the person of any other never as a means, but always at the same time as an end. By inference, Kant seems to be emphasising the dignity and respect we give to humanity when we do not take advantage of our fellow man or use him to achieve our personal objectives whether negatively or positively. To this view, Ewing (1976) thinks that even though it has had a great influence in even advocating for human rights campaign, they can only serve as a guide to tell us which particular action to take when we have some positive idea of the ends of man (Ewing, 1976).

To this end, utilitarianism has the ability to provide a concrete idea of end without which the principle of treating humanity as an end in itself cannot be accepted. Hare (1997) thinks that when Kant talks of treating man as an end in itself, he means to say that the end of others which we are to treat as our own ends must not be immoral. This view is also shared by other utilitarians like Harsanyi who also rules out anti-social ends and the immorality of an end when considering prescriptive-satisfaction. Again, Hare (1997) thinks that Kant seems to be implicitly alluding to the view of a rational-will utilitarian. He observes that when we consider Kant's distinction of duties to oneself and duty to others, we are bound to realise a utilitarian and a non-utilitarian aspects of Kant's deontological ethics. The utilitarian part relates to duties that are prescribed to

others, and they are utilitarian because Kant considers them to be consistent with promoting the interest and advancing the end of others (Hare, 1997). This seems so because utilitarianism, for Hare, is that theory of morality which seeks the end of all in accordance with universal maxims.

The properties of *means* and *ends* are visible in Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative where he stated that we act to treat humanity whether in ourselves or in another person simply as an end and not as a means to the achievement of certain ends. The import is that we treat humans in as much as they are humans with respect and dignity and without any exploitative intent. The idea is not only based on how we treat others but even ourselves as well. We ought not to subject ourselves into any dehumanising act with the intention of achieving a certain end. Kant stresses this because '*ends*' do not matter in morality since we cannot always achieve desired ends. Also, there is the tendency of abusing humanity and human dignity if the achievement of a certain end is seen as determining the morality of an action.

Utilitarianism is however criticised for implicitly justifying using people as a *means* to an *end*. This is because when the utilitarian stresses that a good action is that which satisfy the minority then it is the case that the happiness of the minority is sacrificed. In other words, it is possible to use the minority as a means to a certain end; an end which satisfies the majority. This problem is simply due to the fact that utilitarians did not clearly define what they meant by 'the greatest number'. As a result it is conceived that the theory approves of using man as a means to an end. We however think that if we explain the concepts of means and end in the way the researcher sees it to be, it will possible to integrate both Kant and the utilitarians conceptions of means and ends.

The idea we wish to convey is that there are times when we ought to treat someone as a means to an end, at least, if we borrow Ewing's, idea of treating man as a means – that is whenever we allow one to do us service; this according to him is not in itself wrong provided we treat him also as an end in himself (Ewing, 1976). We also think that to treat man as an end in himself is to promote the welfare of man without any consideration. But we seldom do so because human struggles for life sometimes leave us with no alternative than to sometimes use humans as a means to certain end. We may ask whether we always use somebody as an end in a negative way and whether it is not possible to use someone as a means to an end in a good way.

We share the view that it is not always the case that the rule utilitarian will use man as a means to an end, at least in the negative sense or exploitatively. This is so because a particular rule is followed strictly in this case. Also, man as an end should be seen from the point of view of “never acting with the view to exploit”. We believe that this view should be a pure motive force behind every action we take. This shows that at surface level Kant and utilitarianism sharply oppose each other as far as means and ends are concern but on the integrativist analysis made we realise that complementability has been possible.

This view seems to run counter to Yang's (2006) observation that when the confusion between motive and an action, on the one hand, and means and an end, on the other, is cleared, then we will understand Kant better. In making this distinction it is important to explain what intrinsic motive and non intrinsic motive are. Intrinsic motive is the desire to do something for its own sake while non intrinsic motive is the desire to do something because of further preferred

ends (Darwall: 1983). In other words, when we say of an action that it is motivated by an intrinsic motive, we wish to say of that action that it is good in itself, but a non intrinsic motive is that motivating force which is good as a means. For instance, if I go to school because I want to impress my parents, it means that my going to school is means for a desired end, which is to impress my parents and it therefore becomes a non intrinsic motive. However, if I go to school because I want to go to school, we might say of this that it is good in itself. So, according to Yang, the relation between a motive and an action is not necessarily the relation between a means and an end.

We realise that there seem to be no difference between intrinsic motive or the desire to act for its own sake and non intrinsic motive or the desire to act for the sake of a preferred end. A moral imperative sometimes commands us to act as a means to a certain end. By this, an action is good when it is able to serve the purpose for which it is performed. This is similar to the non intrinsic motive outlined by Darwall. The argument we wish to put across is that means and ends are not necessarily conflictual; that they can be complementary at times. For instance, a wife cooking for the husband or a friend coming to the aid of a partner. In both instances the recipients of the action could be interpreted as exploiting their counterparts. But when the actors do so with the conviction that it is pleasant to make your partner happy then there is “double” gain.

Yang (2006) thinks further that looking at the distinction between intrinsic motive and non intrinsic motive, moral requirements are those motivated by intrinsic motive. For instance, a morally good act, like, generosity, must be motivated by an intrinsic motive to be generous. To this end, we can see



such action as being good in itself even though it might not promote anyone's interest.

We think that moral requirements are not always motivated by intrinsic goodness. This is so because the desire to act, though purposive, is not in itself morally bad. It is, for instance, good not to be temperamental for the sake of peaceful co-existence. Supposing one visits his brother and it so happens that he is maltreated by the brother's wife. Even though he might not like the treatment meted out to him by his brother's wife, it is morally commendable for the person to exercise patience and accommodate whatever treatment he receives for the sake of peace. The import here is that it is sometimes good and morally commendable to act in order to impress or prevent a bad outcome. Such an action is not immoral simply because it was meant to achieve a certain end. Thus, practical human situations sometimes demand that we act to prevent or avert other occurrences and such an act does pass the litmus test of a moral act. We commend people who act to prevent certain disasters or control themselves, against their intrinsic nature, for the sake of peace and such an act is not immoral. This is why we think that it is not always the case to say that non intrinsic motive of an action is morally wrong. When we strictly follow such views entertained by Yang, what happens is that we are bound to follow maxims and actions which might not in effect benefit anybody at all. However, what is the usefulness of morality if does not benefit mankind. Kant himself alludes to the fact that promoting the end of others should be ultimate goal of every rational being and, in fact, morality demands that we promote each other's interest. This view seems to contradict Yang's view that performing an action to

impress others or serve the interest of others is immoral since it is, in other words, tantamount to using something as a means to an end.

In another vein, we even think that Kant's view of acting for the sake of duty and Yang's thought of the intrinsic ends of actions sometimes makes it difficult to act with the aim of promoting the happiness of others. This means that whenever we are to act, we need not consider whoever will benefit but whether the action has the motive of duty or has intrinsic motive end. This view seldom considers what Kant thinks should be the ultimate of all rational beings, that is, promoting the happiness of others. This is so because it is not always the case that our duty brings good to others and, even, to ourselves. Duty does not involve the automatic promotion of goodness. There might be other things that we might consider as our duty but may not promote our good or that of anybody. This accounts for why we need to consider and rationally sieve our actions even if those actions are our duty.

### **Kantian Duty and the Utilitarian's Concepts of Reward and Desire.**

Kant's ethics is called deontological because of the insistence that moral agents act for the sake of duty. Acting in accordance with the categorical imperative is a matter of duty. Kant holds an absolute conception of duty whereby duty admits of no exception. We act on duty for the sake of duty. This conception is opposed to some utilitarian concepts but we think it is possible to integrate some utilitarian concepts like desires and reward. The idea of reward is a consequentialist concept and Kant's deontology does not look at the role that desire and reward play in moral actions. In fact, in the view of Kant, these concepts do not play any part in action that has a moral content at all. But we see

areas of harmonization between these utilitarian concepts and Kant's concept of duty. We do this by modifying Kant's concept of duty that it is not necessarily absolute. There are instances when duty admits exception and also that in the performance of our duty, human desire and feeling play a major role. Thus there is the desire to perform one's duty and a reward of satisfaction after the performance of that duty.

We explicitly share Williams' (1981) view that moral requirements give reasons for actions and since all reasons are internal and dependent on desires, moral requirements are not categorical but dependent on desires. We infer from Williams (1981) that whatever is a motivation factor for a moral agent to act is what gives the agent the reason to act. Williams, therefore, observes that for reasons to be able to motivate an action it must be able to implicate a desire or be aided by a pre-existing desire. Generally, moral requirements give reasons for us to act when the motivating factor is our desires.

Yang (2006), however, thinks otherwise, he believes that there is a condition which the categorical imperative satisfies that cannot make moral requirements be based on desires and this is the intrinsic-end condition. The condition states that a categorical imperative represents an action that is good in itself or good apart from the relation to a further end (Yang, 2006). This view is different from saying that a moral requirement is independent of desires. Kant himself observed that "if an action is represented as good in itself and therefore as necessary, then the imperative is categorical" (Kant, 1956). Yang thinks this is different because it is possible for a moral requirement to be independent of desires but be good as a means. But we may assess whether it cannot also be possible that an action that requires our feelings can also have the intrinsic-end

position. Yang believes that intrinsic-end condition is a necessary condition for a categorical imperative but seldom analysed whether there can be instances when the intrinsic-end can also apply to actions emanating from our desires. And also, as to whether desire is not responsible for directing us towards what has the intrinsic-end. We wish to point out that intrinsic-end, sometimes, meets with desire and the categorical. For instance, I have the desire to be educated. I pursue my education and pay my fees because I feel that it is my duty to sponsor myself and also because, education for me is categorical, good in itself and conforms to *a priori* rational moral principle of self-improvement. Also, I may want to be educated so I will be employable and get a higher standard of living. In both instances, duty, intrinsic-end and the categorical have the tendency of together motivating an action.

Our aim is not to deny the categorical nature of moral requirements. Even when it is denied that moral requirements are not hypothetical, it seems difficult to deny that desires do not play any major role in acting on what is moral. Let us imagine a world when one does not desire anything, including the desire to act morally, such a world would be a 'dead' one. We believe that morality is not always what our duty to do is; we sometimes need to apply our rational ability of choice in deciding what is moral.

There seem to be an error that Kant did not pay attention to and this is the over generalization view that he had on desire. Kant seems to think or assume that all desire was desire for pleasure and in talking of pleasure also saw pleasure in the realm of sensual and bodily desires. He does not seem to have considered intellectual satisfaction as well as pleasures connected to the development of the

mind in a positive sense. In this sense, Hazlitt (1964) thinks that there is a psychological basis for Kant's error. He thus says;

... when we perform a beneficent act out of love or completely spontaneous benevolence we are not conscious of doing our duty. It is only when we have a disinclination toward an act that nevertheless "force" ourselves to do it, in the conviction that it is our duty, that we are conscious of "doing our duty" ... (Hazlitt, 1964)

Thus, Kant seems to have used this human behaviour to have proposed that it is always our duty to do what is right whether we like it or not. That is, it seems to say that it is always our duty to do our duty. We agree with Kant that it is, in fact, our duty to do what is right, but we seem to differ when we further state that the fact that it is sometimes necessary to force ourselves to perform our duties against other desires does not mean that these are the only occasions that we act morally. We, in other words, mean to say that we recognize the need to constantly remind ourselves, sometimes, about what our duties are and, even, sometimes perform them against our wish, but Kant seems to hold that this is when our actions become moral. However, we wish to put across that it is not the only occasion that our actions become moral. If we strictly side with Kant, then, what will we say of a man who spontaneously acts out of the good will towards another man or who has developed the habit of acting out of duty and morally from infancy. What will happen to such a person is that he will act that way habitually and spontaneously, rather than from a conscious sense of duty. What we think is that Kant should have taken such instances into consideration

and realized that moral lives become complex by the day and so a seeming restrictive thought might not be acceptable in all situations.

The question of reward in performing an action is, in fact, part of the natural composition of man. In our daily affairs, humans are driven by reward to even perform their duty effectively. The idea of expecting a satisfactory return after an action is done is what we might term as a reward. In this working definition of what a reward is, we realise that reward is not only material returns of an action but even the level of understanding or acceptance that an action produces. The import here is that, even, when we perform our duty, we consciously or unconsciously look out for a reward after the performance of that duty. A reward of satisfaction that we have performed what is morally required of us or that our duty has produced good consequences. For instance, presenting a birthday gift to your partner in anticipation of the happiness you derive from making your partner happy. This situation, we believe does not make an action immoral. We can understand that the anticipation of a reward sometimes motivates us into acting morally, in Kant's case, doing what duty requires.

There is a further problem with Kant's deontology. We are struck by the view that we should act purely out of the motive of duty. This is because, in some human situations, we seem to often perform some actions we might deem noble or self-sacrificing out of love other than out of duty. As a result, we naturally praise a father who performs what we deem is his duty, namely; taking care of his children out of love. And we blame a father who performs his duty to his children with repugnance. Our view is that we perform our duty better when we see the joy, and develop the desire, to perform such a duty. Indeed, it even makes us perform our duties in a better manner. The desirable feeling we

develop towards the performance of our duty becomes a motivation for us to perform our duty without repugnance. This illustrates the role of desire in the performance of our duty. Also, an action that is motivated by both duty and desire carries a moral worth, since it seems to be in line with some human situations. Humans do not necessarily act out of the motive of duty alone at all times but we sometimes act with the aid of desire. Here, we ascribe the property of intrinsic value to some forms of desires just as Kant ascribed to duty.

Duty in morality, therefore, is a matter of necessity, moral agents, so far as we are imperfect need to be compelled by reason to act in accordance with the moral law. The question of what is my duty and who sanctions duty gives a different form to the argument. Duty is a moral demand which are sometimes instinctively innate but sanctioned by society and the individual. Its origin has been an issue of diverse views. For some moral philosophers, it is a God-given command to act in a certain way, an instinctive feeling embedded in man since the day of his birth. Some, however, ascribe what counts as duty solely on what the society commands as well as what the individual adheres to. We observe that, the use of conscience is a guiding principle to what duty is. That is, when we fail to perform our duty our conscience sometimes becomes the best assessor of the morality or otherwise of that action. This force drives men to perform their duty in as far as they are rational.

We see of Kant that he was concerned with setting up a framework that would operate against plurality of values and maxims. This strict mission also accounts for the non-simplistic and rigid interpretation of what is moral. We sometimes allow for plurality of moral values which have the tendency of moral praiseworthiness. There are duties like preservation of one's life, development of

one's talent, etc, which count as duty to oneself. We can also infer that there are instances when a person's duty to develop his talent is a duty he has towards his family, friends and society other than himself. But this view generally defeats the critics claim that Kant does not pay attention to the division of duty to oneself and duty to others.

We think that a person has a duty to himself, a duty to even keep and promote his maxims. If we accept that we have duties to others, then, we also have duties to ourselves. The preservation of our life is, in fact, our duty, and we wish to differ from the concern that a duty to develop one's talent is a duty to family and society and not oneself. We believe that it is first of all one's own duty to develop oneself, society and family comes in when we consider the long and short term effects of such duties. However, duties can be contractual and still hold applicability. My duty to honour my parents depends on them doing the right thing. If my father, for instance, decides to kill an innocent person, I am not compelled to hide the truth just because I must honour my parents. Thus, to have a duty towards someone sometimes assumes a contractual character.

Kant claims that the ultimate end of every rational being is to promote the happiness of others for the sake of their happiness. Kant observes,

Now humanity could no doubt subsist if everybody contributed nothing to the happiness of others but at the same time refrained from deliberately impairing their happiness. This is however, merely to agree negatively and not positively with humanity as an end in itself unless every one endeavours also, so far as in him lies, to further the ends of others (Kant, 1956).

This supports the view that Kant sees the moral law as being altruistic in nature. This allows for an integration of utilitarianism and Kant since they all



seem to share the view that man is a social animal and as a result every action he takes one way or the other affects others as well. Therefore humanised deontology opines that altruism in morality is, indeed, an important aspect in determining a morally commendable action. Thus, both Kant's deontology and utilitarianism all proceed from one platform and complement each other in this sense.

Let us also note that the idea of happiness in utilitarianism is not alien to Kant. The major difference is that the utilitarian sees happiness as the only good whilst for Kant, it is not. In fact, it does not determine what is moral at all but it is an aspect of our life. We think by our synthesis that happiness is, in fact, good and plays a role in the way we act morally but happiness is not the only good. There are other things which we might consider as good. Conscious of the ability to appeal to any form of happiness as moral, we allude to Mill's qualitative happiness that involves the upgrading of the mind as helping us act on what is morally good. And so, the greatest happiness principle is not out of place. For what is the use of an action if we do not derive anything from it. And so we might agree with the utilitarian that a good action might include one that maximises qualitative happiness.

If Kant accepts that ethics has an empirical dimension, then, he can be allowed to appreciate the role that happiness plays. Our view is that ethics is both a priori and empirical and it is important to develop a synthesis that blends the two. And so, the integrativist believes that qualitative happiness is categorical. In this way the categorical happiness becomes; act so that you at the same time will that your action entails high qualitative pleasure for the benefit of not only yourself but for others as well. This is because it is possible to satisfy

the conditions of the categorical imperative in the way we assess it. Moral agents hold it as a matter of duty to act based on qualitative happiness, in this way, it becomes difficult to think that we can ascribe any kind of happiness as good. We see hypothetical imperatives, in the way Kant defines it, as rather being a guiding principle to quantitative pleasure. In this sense, hypothetical imperative becomes a sieve that sorts out such category of pleasures. For instance, we generally brand eating as a pleasure in the quantitative sense but we still think that there are some qualitative elements like the type of meal eaten. The import is that, even, pleasures that we brand as not moral might have good elements in them and our synthesis ascribes a sifting role to hypothetical imperatives to determine which is better in some circumstances. This approach integrates Kant's imperatives and pleasure.

We realise in both Kant and utilitarianism that they are both formalistic. Legalism and formalism in morality is not bad in any sense and so it does not negate the potency of any theory that employs it. Let us note that formalism, at certain point in time, ensures consistency in morality. In this sense, we wish to say that utilitarianism also ascribes to ethical consistency and this is why modern utilitarians give primacy to rule utilitarianism over act utilitarianism. This is because rule utilitarianism advocates for the consistent adherence to moral rules which are geared towards the maximisation of happiness and the minimisation of pain. This trend allows for an integration of Kant and utilitarianism.

Again universalising our maxims and actions is also important in morality. This view gives moral responsibility to individuals to consider the fact that their actions harmoniously apply to all without any problem. We believe that it further demands the use of our rational faculty when acting. In this sense,

it is possible to apply universalisability to both utilitarianism and Kant's deontology. But we need to note that not all actions can be universalised and it does not mean that such actions are necessarily immoral. For instance, becoming a medical doctor and consequently saving a life is, in fact, good but we cannot universalise the maxim that everyone should, then, become a doctor so he/she could save a life. Thus, universalisability is a requirement of a moral action but it is with an exception. Let us generally note that it is difficult to universalise ethics in the normative sense.

We might in analysis of Kant ask, how deontological is Kant's deontology? Kant's idea of acting in accordance with duty emanates from his idea of the good will. The idea of duty is not alien to, even, the utilitarian; for him, duty is acting to promote the principle of utility. Kant's emphasis is on the good will which according to him must control every action. As a result we might act in accordance with what duty requires but if it is not from the good will, the action might not be moral. In this sense, we place the pivot of Kant's deontological ethics not on duty but on the good will. Thus, a moral act is one that is done in accordance with the good will. The difficulty, then, arises when we ask how we know an action arises out of the good will. It is possible for one to act in a good way but not out of the good will, and we seldom can know the motivating force behind the action. In this case, we can say that out of the good will we can act in accordance with the utilitarian principle and not have a problem with Kant. These give the indication of how possible it has been to flesh out a midway or a bridge between Kant's deontological ethics and utilitarianism.

Our objective has not been to do away with the two theories but to find possible areas of integrating the two seemingly opposing ethical theories. We

think that Kant's ethics needed to be supplemented with utilitarianism, with its idea of consequences, greatest happiness principles, qualitative pleasure and man as an end. This will help strengthen Kant's deontology and make it more appealing and acceptable and this is what we call humanised deontology.

Humanised deontologism does not to ascribe the summum bonum or the highest good to only one thing – *good will* and *pleasure* respectively. This does not mean that good will or pleasure cannot qualify as a highest good but that each of them is not sufficient to denote the only highest good. An action guided by the good will has the greatest likelihood to produce good results. The problem, therefore, arises when Kant talks about acting on the good will out of duty and for no other reason. Utilitarianism also has its own problems, we generally accept that most of our actions are towards the maximisation of happiness and the avoidance of pain, but this does not make happiness the only good; for there are other things apart from happiness which are, in fact, good. When we ascribe the good to just one thing, the tendency is that we face an over simplified conception which can easily be abused.

It is our view is that a synthesis that appeals to human nature would better serve as a bridge between utilitarianism and Kant's deontology. Ewing (1976) classifies the mind into three aspects, feeling, knowledge and will/action. In this vein, happiness or pleasure is the good of feeling, truth is the good of knowledge and moral virtue of will and action (Ewing, 1976). This view rather falls short of other aspect of human appreciation, for instance, religious values and aesthetic appreciation. Humanised deontology, conceives of man as a composite of two; on the one side, a thinking being endowed with reason and on the other side, endowed with feeling. In other words, man does not only think

but feels as well. His high sense of rationality seems to differentiate him from other creatures. The composition of man, therefore, accounts for how he ought to behave. This composition accounts for the opposing arguments between moral rationalists and moral voluntarists. For moral rationalists, what is good is fully determined by reason and it is because man is naturally endowed with reason that he is able to discern between good and evil. In other words, moral truths are knowable a priori and the rational man is the one whose reason governs his will and his life is controlled by both virtues and reason. This is exactly the view that Kant entertains and upon which he built his ethical theory.

Our synthesis takes cognisance of the emotional the feeling nature of man as well as his thinking nature. We see the utilitarian insistence on pleasure as only satisfying our feeling side. It seems to be always the case that we all seek pleasure, happiness or satisfaction. Even in the performance of our duty we wish to gain satisfaction in having performed our duty. Thus, the quest for happiness is man's goal. This does not mean that happiness is the only good. There are other virtuous acts which might not necessarily produce the happiness that a hedonistic utilitarian might want. Thus, for the ideal utilitarian, other things such as aesthetic value, religious value, love, etc, are all good in themselves. The other side of man, however, is the rational part. It seems potent that man needs to allow his reason to control his desires. The satisfaction of our reasoning or thinking side is when our action is based on the good will and duty. When we apply the moral law in a legalistic and formalistic way we wish to be satisfying our thinking side. Kant gave primacy to reason alone, negating the possibility of desires in deciding what is moral, but we wish to say that desires play a role in deciding what is good. We recognise the superiority of reason when deciding

which action is right, but desire's role is primary. Therefore, as far as the good will, in Kant, and happiness, in utilitarianism is concerned, we have a bridge.

By man's nature we sometimes perform our moral duty out of the desire to do so. We desire to be generous, honest, etc. This does not rule out the fact that we also act out of duty for its own sake, but even when acting out of duty, man does not neglect the role of desire and consequences. Many people give alms out of pity for the sick, others look after their children out of love, some choose a career and work dedicatedly out of interest, and people choose to lecture because they feel the joy to do so. Practically, man acts, chooses certain careers or takes certain decisions out of desire. This does not leave out the role reason plays. In this case we see reason as playing a superior role in determining which action is good or bad.

To this end, humanised deontology sees the moral man as the one who is able to integrate his two attributes. Let us note that utilitarianism appeals to one side of man whilst Kant's deontology appeals to the other. For Ewing (1976), when we are to look for something as the good, then, it is harmony. We share this view because we think when we are in harmony with our feeling side, there is happiness, joy, peaceful co-existence. When we are in harmony with our thinking side, we have truth, wisdom, intellectual value. Ewing (1976) thinks that when we are in harmony with men, there is social harmony, love, in harmony with God, there is religious peace. Generally we believe that in harmonising utilitarianism with Kant, we create moral peace and maximum acceptability.

### **Humanised Deontology: The Integrativist Position**

Humanised deontology is the synthesis we create after integrating some utilitarian concepts into Kant's deontology. We have done this by modifying some Kantian conceptions to allow for utilitarian integration. Kant's deontology defends the thesis that the moral law is fully determined by the motive and intention of duty behind the action and not for any other reason and the moral law ought to be known *a priori*. This *a priori* part of ethics is called the Metaphysics of Morals and it is based on the assumption that reason functions in accordance with laws we can know and understand. As a result, if an action must be morally good, it must be done out of duty and it is only the *a priori* part of ethics that can know the nature of duty.

The synthesis is anchored on the metaphysics of nominalism. The ontology of humanised deontology is that at the material level (particulars) and the formal level (universals), there are areas of complementarity between motives and consequences even though they appear distinct. Humanised deontology emphasizes that motives and consequences are a class of things or universals which remain theoretical constructions of the mind. The real motivation subsists at the material level of these universals. That is the observable individual realities like the motive of duty and the consequences of pleasure.

Utilitarianism upholds the thesis that is generally considered as an antithesis to Kant's position. The position utilitarians defend is that morality is determined by the empirical result of an action which is the consequences of the action; the consequences that the action produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. In this case, pleasure becomes the highest good and

the motivating factor behind an action, however pleasure cannot be known *a priori* except by the result of the action.

Humanised deontology defends the position that the determination of a moral action is based on both motive and consequences and any attempt to separate them will result in insurmountable problems. This is because we test individual actions by the motive or rules and test rules or motives themselves by consequences. Thus both the empirical and *a priori* parts of ethics are not antagonistic but complementary. The humanistic tendency in the synthesis is that human nature allows that we look at both the *a priori* and *a posteriori* parts of ethics when we are in a moral dilemma and this does not make an action immoral.

Our synthesis is therefore pivoted on the harmony we have created between both theories. The first task has been a modification of some Kantian concepts, for instance, we have modified Kant's conception of duty to admit some exceptions. It is realised that Kant's conception of duty makes it difficult to allow for consequential integration since the motive of duty absolutely determines the morality or otherwise of our actions. We however establish that the conception of duty must not be absolute in the way Kant conceives it. Duty must sometimes allow for exceptions which do not necessarily make an action immoral.

Humanised deontology recognises the enormous role duty plays in directing us towards what constitute a moral action. Moral laws must be assessed with the motive of duty but this duty must not be conceived in the absolute sense. The new synthesis recognises that both reward and desire have roles to play in morally commendable actions. It thus seems difficult to deny



the role desire plays in acting on what is moral. A world in which we do not desire anything will be a 'dead' world since there are times we even desire to perform our duty. Also, our synthesis recognises the role of reward in an action that is morally commendable. Our conception of reward is the expectation of a satisfactory return after an action is done. With this working definition, we do not necessarily see reward as a material gain of an action but even the acceptance and satisfactory feeling an action produces is also a reward. And so, humanised deontology claims that even when we perform our duty or do what is required of us, we consciously or unconsciously look out for a reward: a reward of satisfaction that we have done what is morally required of us or a reward that the performance of our duty has produced good consequences. The exception we give to duty also proposes that we perform our duty better when we develop the joy and the desire to perform such a duty. We observe that conscience is a guiding principle to what is our duty, so when we fail to perform our duty our sense of right and wrong sometimes becomes the best assessor of the action.

Furthermore, humanised deontology is pivoted on the appeal to reason in aiding us to take morally commendable decisions. It posits that moral laws must be the type that demands a level of rational cognition if moral agents can act in accordance with such laws. The theory establishes that the moral law ought to demand that moral agents go through some intellectual training and reach a high state of rational cognition before we can be morally developed. As a result, for moral agents to recognise the moral law and act in accordance with it, reason must play a very crucial role. This is why we harmonise Kant's categorical imperative and qualitative pleasure to form a synthesis driven by both reason and desire. In this vein, the theory fleshes out what we call categorical happiness

which is meant to aid moral agents in decision making. The categorical happiness states that we rationally act so that we at the same time will that the action entails high qualitative pleasure for the benefit of not only ourselves but for others as well. Here, moral agents act with the aid of both reason and desire that their action becomes pleasurable in the altruistic sense. We appeal to reason because it is the only thing that differentiates man from animals and a rational moral agent from others.

Again, humanised deontology conceives that consequences sometimes play a role in morality. Much as we believe that the motive behind the performance of an action determines the morality or otherwise of an action, we also think that the role of consequences in determining whether an action is right or wrong cannot be overlooked. We accept that to say of an action that it is right is to sometimes look at the ability of that action to produce what is good and beneficial. As a result, when we say that a better explanation for acting in a certain way is that the action brings good or prevents evil. Humanised deontology thus observes that in deciding whether an action is right or wrong in a given situation, we can look at the amount of goodness the action is likely to produce. This accounts for why in our harmonisation we see an opening in Kant's thought which allows that we integrate the concept of consequences. Our belief is that even in the performance of what constitutes our duty, moral agents ought to look at the consequences and the impact the action is likely to produce. In this way, we rationally move from just acting on principles and maxims, to considering the consequences the action is likely to produce.

Humanised deontology claims that the consequences of our actions ought to be altruistic and qualitative in terms of the pleasure to be derived. That is, the

level of pleasure and satisfaction that we will be derived from an action must be one that will promote the wellbeing of the human qua rational being.

The theory also takes a different look at the concept of *means* and *ends* in morality. Generally, the idea that the end justifies the means and that other things can be used as a means to the achievement of a certain end is seen as morally questionable. Utilitarianism is mostly criticised for implying that the happiness of the minority can be sacrificed for the majority. Our theory, however, observes that there are instances when using something as a means to achieve a certain end is not necessarily immoral. We observe in normal practical life that we use others to achieve certain ends. The theory claims that the most important thing is that moral agents do not use another as a means with an exploitative intent. That is the intention to use someone to achieve a certain end to the detriment of the person being used. And so, the immorality in using someone as a means to an end is fully dependent on the motive behind the action. The theory establishes that it is not always the case that using someone as a means to achieving a certain end is immoral. This is why in our harmony the theory establishes that means and end in both Kant's deontology and utilitarianism are not necessarily antagonistic.

Humanised deontology therefore establishes that when we harmonise by modifying some Kantian conceptions to allow for utilitarian imperatives, we create a theory or a synthesis called humanised deontology which recognises that reason, consequences, desire and reward play enormous role in moral actions. Also, means and ends are not always immoral since we do not always use someone as a means to achieve an end in an exploitative manner.

The harmony we create solves some problems that Kant's deontology and utilitarianism face. When we look at Kant's deontology, we realise that one major problem of the theory is when moral agents are faced with two or more conflicting duties. Kant observes in his deontology that we act out of duty for the sake of duty. In this sense, he holds our absolutist view of duty. Moral actions are those done out of what duty requires. Even though Kant did not admonish that we perform conflicting duties concurrently, we still realise that when duties admit of no exceptions it makes the theory problematic. For instance, there are times that we are faced with the duty to lie and duty to save a life. In such situations, moral agents are not directed as to the criteria according to which they can choose one duty over the other. This has been one of the most popular criticisms against Kant's deontology. Our new synthesis offers a solution that when duties conflict, moral agents can look at the available consequences in sight and act on the one which is weightier in terms of its urgency and effects. We first admit that duties have exceptions and so, I must either break the duty not to lie or the duty to save an innocent life. In this case we think that the conception of what is our duty is not an absolute one. Apart from this, we posit that consequences have a role to play. When duties conflict in a particular situation, we can also look at the effects that the performance or non-performance of the action will produce, and consequently choose one over the other.

Again, humanised deontology asserts that duty is contractual, for instance, I owe a duty to someone when the person also recognises his duty to others. For instance, I owe a duty to an inquiring murderer when I realise that he is observing his duty to protect innocent lives. Moral agents ought to perform

actions that are their duties in a rational way and also consider that performance of our duty to some people is sometimes contractual. This is why we will not fault a wife who has shelved her duties towards a wife beater husband. This is because we believe that the wife can better perform her duties when the husband refrains from beating her and performs his duties as a husband.

Our theory also provides an answer to Kant's critics that his theory is too perfectionist and is removed from real life situations. Kant is criticised in this way because he conceives of duty in the absolute sense and also claims that the moral law demands absolute adherence. As corollary of that even when telling a lie is meant to save someone's life or avoid calamitous happenings, Kant says that we ought to obey the moral law that we ought to tell the truth. Also, Kant rules out the role human feelings play in a morally commendable action. The morality of our action is not based on the feeling we develop towards the performance of that action, but the motive of duty. When acting in accordance with this duty, Kant urges that we do not look at the consequences of the action or the role desire plays in the action in order for the action to be moral. This seems difficult for practical human decision making. Humanised deontology recognises that there are times that we need to consider the consequences that the performance or the non-performance of our duty will produce. In other words, human nature naturally allows that we sometimes consider the result of our actions. This does not make an action immoral. Kant proposes that we should not look at consequences because it is beyond our control. Much as we agree on certain principles that there are some consequences that are beyond our control we also think that in certain situations, we are able to reckon the likely consequences. Again, humanised deontology recognises that first of all we are

able to perform our duty better when we develop the love and desire to perform it. Also, there is even the desire to perform our duty and so, no matter how small, desire has a role to play in morally commendable actions.

The categorical imperative has also suffered various criticisms and misinterpretation that include the claim that it is not able to adequately respond to the growing human problems. Again, the imperative is criticised as being too individualistic. Our synthesis seems to exonerate Kant from such a criticism. This is because humanised deontology reveals that the categorical imperative is the material aspect of Kant's deontology. That is, it is the imperative which represents the practical aspect of how moral agents ought to act. The imperative is not necessarily subject to abuse because of the level of rational cognition moral agents must reach in order to fully act in accordance with the imperative. This view is, in fact, muted in Kant's thought but with the harmony we create between the categorical imperative and qualitative pleasure, we establish that the categorical imperative, in the way Kant puts it, is not meant to be a yardstick for all individuals in as much as they are individuals, but for individuals who have reached a certain level of rational understanding. These are moral agents who can consistently universalise their maxims without any chaos and confusion in their minds. In this case it becomes difficult to easily abuse the categorical imperative. Again, Kant's categorical imperative was criticised for being too subjective. But humanised deontology establishes that with the categorical happiness one moves from subjectivism to actions that have altruistic tendencies.

On these bases, we see humanised deontology as dealing with some major standing objections in Kant's deontologism. These notwithstanding, the synthesis also provide some responses and escape for utilitarianism as well.

Utilitarianism is mostly accused of assuming that using man as a means to an end is not immoral. In other words, utilitarianism makes it possible for the happiness and interests of the minority to be sacrificed for the majority. In this case, when the majority is happy, then the action cannot be immoral. Such a situation is interpreted as using man as a means to the achievement of a certain end. Humanised deontology however establishes that it is not necessarily immoral to use man as a means to the achievement of certain ends. It all depends on the motive behind the action. If one uses another for a certain end with the intention to exploit then the action becomes immoral. In practical daily life, we use others to achieve certain ends but since we do not always do that with an exploitative intent, we cannot always say that the action is immoral. Again, we accept sometimes that it is better for the majority to be satisfied than for the minority since there are instances when it seems impossible to satisfy everyone equally. This does not necessarily make an action immoral rather it makes the morality of an action to be dependent on certain factors like motive, intention and maximum acceptability.

Also, humanised deontology has shown that it is not wrong to say that pleasure can denote a highest good. It must be noted that utilitarianism is criticised for first of all claiming that pleasure is the only good and then also claim at the same time that some pleasures are better than others. In the first instance, humanised deontology modifies the assertion that pleasure alone is good and establishes that pleasure is good but not the only good. Again, the synthesis accepts that some pleasures are better than others. In this case, qualitative pleasure is better than quantitative pleasure. And we establish that critics of the view that pleasure is pleasure and we cannot say of one to be better

than the other do not have any strong argument. This is because, if we accept that pleasure is good, it does not necessarily mean that all pleasures are good. For instance, we can say that money is good but it will not be wrong to say that money from a good business is better than money from armed robbery. And so we realise that humanised deontology rescues utilitarianism from such criticism.

Utilitarianism has also been accused of neglecting the role of reason in an action and only gives primacy to the empirical aspect of morally commendable actions. This criticism is a general criticism against most consequentialist theories. Humanised deontology has exonerated utilitarianism from such a criticism by establishing that utilitarianism does not neglect the role of reason in morality. This is because for moral agents to choose qualitative pleasure over quantitative pleasure, one needs to reach a high level of rational cognition if we can choose qualitative pleasure over quantitative pleasure. It must be noted that human nature does not always allow us to easily choose qualitative pleasure over quantitative pleasure, and if moral agents can consistently do so they must attain a certain moral height which involves rational development. Simply put, it takes a rational moral agent to consistently choose qualitative pleasure over quantitative pleasure.

Humanised deontology like any other theory or synthesis is prone to certain attacks and criticisms. We wish to raise some possible criticisms that might be raised against our synthesis. One main criticism may come from Absolutists. Absolutism is the ethical view that certain moral judgements, concepts and principles have absolute adherence and admit of no exceptions. Absolutists will argue that a theory that does not hold an absolute view on



certain moral concepts is subject to abuse. Also, to propose for a theory that admits of exceptions is to find an easy escape for morally undeveloped individuals to find an excuse for their immoral behaviours. We see such a criticism as not very convincing. First of all, humanised deontology admits that we conceive of duty not in the absolute sense, as Kant did, and accepts that duty has some exceptions. To hold an absolutist view of an ethical concept is not necessarily to ensure that nobody abuses it, rather what it does is to make it difficult for moral agents to fully act on such concepts and principles in real life situations, especially when faced with moral dilemmas. This is why Kant's absolute view of what duty is has been problematic. Again, the exception humanised deontologism conceives of duty does not mean that moral agents can neglect their duties for any other excuse. What it means is that we do not always act based on duty for the sake of duty. Duty must be assessed from the possible consequences it will produce. In this case when two duties conflict, we opt for the one whose consequences are more likely to promote human wellbeing than otherwise or we set priorities. When duties have not conflicted we act according to the requirement of duty after careful rational examination of the effect that the performance or non performance of the particular duty will produce.

Similar criticism is expected from objectivists who hold the view that ethical concepts or principles have universal acceptability. Objectivists will ask how acceptable and universal this synthesis can be since it seems to be too subjective. We think that such an objection will not do any harm to the theory since humanised deontology also aspires for universal acceptance. Indeed, the theory also recognises the difficulty of holding views that can be universally accepted and practiced in all situations. As a result, we think that maximum

acceptability of a theory is enough. Again, humanised deontology recognises that not all concepts can be universalised; in fact it is almost impossible to attempt to hold that all ethical concepts can be universalised. But even when it becomes possible, then it will also be possible to universalise exceptions to some ethical concepts as well. For instance, even though we can universalise the maxim that murder is morally wrong, we can also universalise the maxim that we can kill in self-defence.

One major criticism that the theory is bound to face is the view that humanised deontology is not the only theory that proposes that we conceive of duty not in the absolute sense but that duty admits of exceptions. For instance, Ross (1975) in his deontology establishes that morally commendable actions are those based on prima facie duties. However, when two or more prima facie duties conflict we act on the weightier ones. In this case, critics may ask, “what is new in humanised deontology?” Our response is that, it is indeed the case that humanised deontology recognises that duty admits of some exceptions and this is similar to the views of Ross. However, there is a major difference between humanised deontology and Ross’ deontology. In the first instance, Ross does not recognise that consequences play any part in a morally commendable action. As a deontologist, Ross rejected consequentialism with the view that maximising the good is only one of the several prima facie obligations which determines how a person ought to act in a particular case. Ross accepts that since consequences are beyond the power of humans, it cannot determine the morality of our actions. Humanised deontology, however, recognises that it is not possible to weigh conflicting duties without looking at the available consequences that the performance or non performance of that duty

will produce. In this case, humanised deontology establishes that when duties conflict, we need to look at the consequences that both duties will produce and act, with a rational intent, on the one which is weightier. Again, moral agents set priorities on which duty they ought to perform. What is new with humanised deontology is the integration of consequentialist and deontological views to form a practicable synthesis that appeals to human nature and normal human decision making.

Others may also criticise the theory for not taking a position as to what the highest good is since almost all ethical theories take a stand on what they each consider as the highest good. Again, humanised deontology recognises reason and desire or emotions and their role in a morally commendable action but does not show which one plays a major or supporting role. Even though we see this objection as a legitimate one, we think that in the first place it is difficult to find one single value which is not subject to criticisms and some kind of problem as regards the highest good. In fact, the highest good cannot escape criticism if it is ascribed to one single value. The aim of humanised deontology is not to find out what the highest good is but give an option for moral decision making based on the nature of humans. In this vein, we recognise that the highest good cannot be one single entity but that which appeals to the composition of humans as beings that feel and think. As a result, we do not rank reason and emotion or desire. We see both of them as having a complementary role and this is evident in the harmony we have created.

We wish to establish that there might be more criticisms and objections against the new modified theory. The debate continues but what we have done is to respond to some possible objections of the theory.

## Conclusion

What we have done is not to make Kant's deontological ethics and utilitarianism more vulnerable to the various criticisms raised against them. On the contrary, we have established a bridge, made modifications and identified similar areas where they both complement each other.

Our motivation has been that Kant's deontological ethics has been hailed and demoralised by moral philosophers. Kant himself wants his theory to be a solid foundation upon which moral standards can be established. The idea is that morality has been very much considered on how people behave and the outcome of those behaviours. Kant was particularly worried about the determination of what is moral on the generalization of consequences. Thus consequentialism held sway before Kant developed his ethics but he found some problems with appealing to consequences as the main judge for determining what is moral. Kant observed that ethics must be looked at with the 'eye' of pure reason. It is only by *a priori* knowledge that we can know of what is moral. In this case, we conceive of what is moral through our *a priori* conception of what is our duty.

By this, we must act from the good will which is unconditionally good. The principle that guides our actions is the categorical imperative which bids us to act according to the maxim by which we can at the same time will that our actions can be raised to the level of a universal law for anybody at anytime. What Kant means is that since man is naturally self-seeking and egoistic, he must, as a matter of duty, act in a way that his action passes the universalisability test. The inference is that, we all become legislators and enact laws not only for ourselves but for others as well.

Also, humans are, more often than not, influenced by sensual inclinations to act in a certain way, as a result, most of our actions do not pass the litmus test of what is moral. And so, what is moral must be obligatory, demand our immediate obedience and not be for any other reason. Thus we act with the motive of duty and not for any other reason. In this case, we do not look at the result of the action as a moral determinant. Kant established moral objectivism and absolutism of the concept of duty. He further advocated for the establishment of human dignity in his second formulation of the categorical imperative when he stated that we treat man not as a means to some end duty as an end in himself. We generally see Kant's thoughts with mixed feelings.

On the one hand, we ascribe to his ethical consistency, at least, as far as our adherence to duty is concerned and also as far as duties have not conflicted in a particular situation. Also, the concept of duty is not in itself wrong. More often than not, man ought to act with the thought that it is his duty to do so. The problem, however, is when our quest to perform our duty does not, in any particular instance, admit any form of scrutiny, especially, in exceptional cases. It is undeniable, that using man as a means to an end can seldom be moral. On the other hand, however, Kant's deontology did not consider some peculiar situations when duties conflict.

Looking at Kant again we proposed to integrate a rival theory, utilitarianism. Here we looked out for some of the strong conceptions that utilitarianism proposes. We decided to choose utilitarianism and not any other theory because we think that unlike the categorical imperative which conceives of only absolutes, that is, actions either pass or fail the moral test without any further consideration and allowance, the utility principle comes out with a

proportionality that, at least, ensures that there is maximum benefit of our actions. This is important because of the seeming problem of developing a moral theory that will hold absolute practical benefit, and so we think that maximum benefit and adherence is better. Again, there seems to be no mechanism for solving the moral dilemma we face when duties conflict but we see a rescue in utilitarianism. This is because, utilitarianism permits ready comparison of all actions and when it so happens that some sets of actions have the same expected utility then they are equally good. As a result, we see utilitarianism as not been absolutely wrong with the idea of happiness, the utility principle and qualitative pleasure as Mill (1895) proposes. However, the problem is with their conception that pleasure is good and good is pleasure. In other words, the only thing that is good is pleasure. Utilitarianism did not also give a clear explanation of the “greatest number” that they propose for. As a result, the theory is conceived as proposing that the minority can be used as means for the happiness of the majority and this goes against the idea of justice and equal distribution.

From some of these considerations we realised the relevance in taking a second look at these views. Our motivation has been to show how morality would make sense in the light of the human-ness which has to be built into our systems of moral recommendations. And the idea is to see how our synthesis can contribute to practical ethics. On these bases, we developed humanised deontology or deontology with a human face. The first striking thought is that we still hold the imposing role that duty plays in performing a moral act. However, there are some modifications and further conceptions that have to be made in order for these theories to be better integrated and help solve some of our modern complex ethical problems. Thus humanised deontology still affirms

duty but proposes that duty, reward and desire are not antagonistic to each other when determining what is moral. Also, the idea of appealing to the consequences of an action in moral decision making is not in fact wrong since this idea rescues Kant from a major problem; a problem of conflict of duties. This means that consequences also play a role in morality, especially, when duties conflict. Kant did not consider this situation and so did not give any solution to such a problem. Ross (1975) attempted a solution by proposing that we weigh the conflicting duties and act on the weightier one but he also fell in to the same problem that Kant created. This is because Ross denied the role of consequences in morality.

We, however, think that we cannot adequately weigh *prima facie* duties and act on them without considering the consequences of those duties. Thus Ross' criteria were inadequate. Our synthesis, therefore proposes that it is by appealing to consequences that we can resolve the problem of conflict of duties.

Furthermore, we affirm in our modifications that it is always better to opt for qualitative pleasure as Mill admonishes. We also need to realise that what is pleasurable or brings happiness is not always good even though it is the case that whatever is good is pleasant. On this basis, we integrate qualitative pleasure and the categorical imperative. Thus, the supplementation utilitarianism brings into Kant's deontology is not in the sense that happiness is the only good but that we, sometimes, derive the rightness and the wrongness of an action from the good and harm those actions produce. On this basis, we might not agree with the utilitarian about what is good but we can, at least, agree with him that what makes an action right or wrong is the good or bad it produces.

Again, we conceive of happiness as a goal in life, men thrive for success, prosperity, peace and comfort all of which result in happiness. Thus the thought

of happiness is very important in determining the way we make our choices. Our problem, however, is when happiness is conceived as the only thing that is good. We think that happiness is not the only good, there are other things that are not necessarily the product of happiness but are, in fact, good. For instance, Kant's good will is good even though it does not necessarily produce happiness at all times. But we also note again that the good will alone is not the only good.

We might accept the possibility that all our actions are geared towards the production of happiness, be it long or short term, but we think that if we always conceive of it as the only good and the only goal in life, we seldom can act morally. This is where Kant's deontology becomes important; we need to consider the motive behind our action and apply our rational judgment on actions before we act, even though the action is geared towards the achievement of happiness. Thus if we want ethical consistency then we must allow reason to guide our desires. This view differs from Kant because he allows the role that reason plays to 'swallow' the thought of desire in actions.

It is realised in Kant's deontology that there is an implicit reference to consequences of our actions and this even makes our integration easier. For instance, when Kant talks of treating man as an *end* and not as a *means* to an end, he implies that we treat man as man. In other words, we should treat man with dignity and respect. Here we see a purposive nature given to man actions related to man, this gives a teleological implication to Kant's idea. But generally, both also accept the importance of looking at the long term consequences of an action. For instance, utilitarianism posits that pain is sometimes acceptable, in cases when that pain is to lead to a greater happiness. That is, there are situations when the immediate consequences of our actions are painful but it is realised



that the later result is pleasure, and so it is acceptable to endure such pain for future happiness. Likewise, we see Kant's concept of acting on duty for the sake of duty as not looking at the immediate consequences that our adherence to duty will produce but the later consequences and that is why he reiterated in the example of the inquiring murderer that we tell the truth so that we escape any later consequences of our lying. The problem that both theories create is assigning a single entity as the only good. Humanised deontology proposes that what is good is not one, there are other things that are good, either conditionally or unconditionally and they all contribute to arriving at what is moral.

With these two theories, we conjecture that Kant's thought satisfies the rational side of man as a thinking being. While utilitarianism also deals with the feeling side of man. The synthesis is then to say that since humans are both "thinking and feeling beings", the good will and happiness are all good. As a result, determining what is moral, we are primarily motivated by desire and reason is employed to shape our choice in a more acceptable way. Thus reason and desire complement each other and that is why we sometimes desire to, even, perform our duty. We do not rank any of them but accept that desire seems primary but does not over rule reason. We see both as giving equal and important contribution to knowledge of a moral action. Actions that are purely done from desire without the guiding help of reason have the greatest probability of not passing the moral test. We propose that both be assessed in their own right without one negating the role the other plays. The question of how we should conceive of duty has also been dealt with. We hold the view that when performing our duties, it is important to emphasise that duty should, sometimes, be conceived as contractual. In other words, we are morally obliged to perform

our duty to someone who performs his duty to us. For instance, I owe a duty to my father when he also performs his duties as a father. This conception can be invoked to solve particular problems like the inquiring murderer.

We think that Kant's deontological ethics can be best understood when we analyse further the levels with which he theorised. Kant's deontology can be seen in two levels. There is the level of abstraction or formal phase and the level of practicality or the material phase. In his level of abstraction, Kant explains the concept of duty as we should see it. Here Kant saw the good will as emanating from duty which only appeals to our *a priori* aspect of moral cognition. At the level of practicality, Kant descends from the mountain of abstraction to how his theory can be practicalised; this is where Kant talks about the categorical imperative and hypothetical imperatives. At this level, Kant uses the universalisability principle to give further responsibility to moral agents. This shows that Kant fundamentally satisfies the usefulness of ethical theories but his ethics is not without problems. These problems are more evident when we analyse his level of practicality.

Thus what we have done is to take a second look at his theory by proposing for a supplementary theory by merging the strengths of these theories. In view of this, we have created a synthesis between these two seemingly opposing theories to make them more appealing to practical life situations. And we have done this conscious of the difference between moral and ordinary practical judgements. We think our synthesis satisfies both judgements since we do not throw off the moral conceptions these theories explain but rather integrate human nature into them, hence, the formulation of humanised deontology.

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