A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF ARISTOTLE'S AND MOORE'S ETHICS IN THE LIGHT OF KANT'S ETHICS WITH IMPLICATIONS IN AFRICAN ETHICS

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ABSTRACT

The paper attempts to critically interrogate the ethics of Aristotle and George Edward Moore in the light of the ethics of Immanuel Kant with implications in African ethics. Aristotle holds an ethical view that virtue lies in the middle of two extremes and happiness at the end determines the goodness or badness of any action which has to become constantly displayed by people. Moore holds an intuitionist ethical stand where the good or bad of anything is known through intuition for it cannot be known by empirical observation and judgment. The problems which stand as central features of these ethical positions are that some actions have no median way to virtue, and the possibility of ethical relativity following intuition. But Immanuel Kant's ethical position would come for reconciliation by advocating that good justified by proper reason should stand as determinant factors for what is morally right or wrong unlike the Aristotle's and Moore's positions. By this, Kant proposes for a universal ethical theory that anchors its ethical judgments on rationality and self-recommendation after self-experience. It is from this perspective that the paper points out the implications of Kant's ethical position in African ethics where the sense of morality is natural and being justified by reason and self-experience. The paper is expected to show how African conception of morality is natural and justified by self-experience and reason which implies in Kant's ethics. The paper adopts analytic and critical evaluative methods.

Keywords: Ethics, Aristotle's Ethics, Moore's Ethics, Kant's Ethics, African Ethics, Morality, Virtue, Rightness, Wrongness.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of what is good or bad and by extension, value, is centrally an existential one as it has a lot to do with a people's culture, philosophy, attitude, peace, progress, development, etc. This follows the fact that it is one of the aspects of human life that is fundamental because it raises and answers questions about good life, moral life of people.

There are several approaches to conceptualize ethical values and morality. Factors responsible for the conceptual variations could be attributed to culture, environment, profession of training, historical facts, religion, social influences, existential experiences, etc. Be that as it may, many scholars have argued that the concept of rightness or wrongness of any action is a product of reason, implying that it is a sort of universal concept. By this, the concept of value becomes more natural than any other means. Reason identifies the good or bad in an action, speech or thought. But many others would strongly hold that it is strictly relative. That is to say that each society conceptualizes what value is to it. The implication is that what is valuable to one society may not be considered a value in another society. Thus, ethical values become more of conventional affairs than rationality.

From these two positions, it could still be seen that some scholars conceive ethical values as emotive, situationist, motive and prescriptive. Some scholars would even go further to hold that the goodness or badness of anything is engulfed in the naturality of that thing in question, while others would posit that the naturality of whatever is in question does not count for its ethical values.

However, it is a matter of existential concern that the concept of value has been interpreted differently following theories and beliefs. Of course, this raises certain critical ethical questions as to why cultural and religious orientations, various conceptions of ideas and concepts easily drive people's mentality and attitude to the extent that they are ready to do and die for what they believe in, which they may not see or claim empirical knowledge of. At this, the problem is: if these theories are to be observed as such, the fate of humanity is indeterminate, and in trouble; and human life, in danger. Be that as it may, the paper is going to concentrate on the conceptions of morality and ethical values and conducts as perceived by Aristotle and Moore, and finally critically and thoroughly evaluate them in the light of Kant's ethics with implications in African conception of ethics.

The paper shall give an insight into the concept of ethical values and morality. It is the position of the paper that in African discourse of ethics, morality is broader than the concept of value, and is more of rational than conventional affairs. It is from the naturality and rationality of morality that the tendency of its universalizability is drawn. From this implies and justifies Kant's ethical position as a product of good will and rationality.

Aristotle (384 BC)

The Stagiran erudite, pupil of Plato, tutor to Alexandra the Great, founder of Lyceum (the 'Peripatetic School') was born in 384 BC in Thrace in Greece. Intellectually, Aristotle was highly influenced by his master (Plato) whom he heavily criticized following his idea of postulating the reals (Forms) in the Ideal or Formal World and their copies in the Physical World. Aristotle would not assimilate the Platonic position without criticisms based on the following reasons: (1) that postulating the reals in the Formal World does not help to explain motion as experienced in the Physical World. (2) That by postulating the real in the Formal World, the essence of things are now separated from their materiality, and that ought not to be. (3) That if the real in the unchangeable Ideal World do not change, how could they help to explain change as seen in the world. Or how possible is it that the unchangeable will give birth to the changeable? (4) That the Forms are the Ideals of things in the physical world, and yet,

are not material. (5) That Plato is inconsistent as he would in a time argue that the materials participate in the Form, and at another time, say, they are the shadows or reflections of the Forms. (6) That the postulation of things and their essences in two different worlds would certainly lead us to such postulation of another world till infinitum. (7) That the world-postulations do not in any way epistemologically advance our knowledge of reality in its entirety (Omoregbe, 1994, 123-34). Having presented his criticisms against his master, he went ahead to posit that Matter and Form, matter and its essence are all there physically present in the material object as presented to us. While the materiality of any object expresses its physicality, the essence or form expresses the purpose, function or teleological implication of the object. This idea is central in his theory of Realism which is all about the idea that both the materiality and essence of anything whatsoever are there present in the given object. That is what is expressed in his idea of hylemorphism. Suffice it then to say that reality is holistic to human knowledge. The ideal and physical are real in the matter as-experienced. A table is made of its tableness or essence or form and the wood. A house is made of its houseness or shape or form or its teleology, end purpose and then its physical structural-components. So, both the physical and the ideal are there inherently inseparable in the matter as we see it.

Ethics for Aristotle is not only an intellectual affair, but also attitudinal affair. Any action is a means to an end; this end is good in itself. But there is only one end which is not a means to any other rather to itself. It is an end sought for its own sake. This end is happiness. As Lawhead puts it, "the final goal of all human activity is happiness... This should not be confused with pleasure but is best thought of as meaning 'well-being' or "living well" or "having a life worth living"" (2002, 81). The Aristotelian concept of happiness in ethics is not like the Epicurean concept of hedonism in ethics that upholds pleasure of man as could be physically existentially attained. By extension, all other ends gear toward creating happiness. That means that every human action supposedly should aim at providing happiness at the end. But how can this happiness be attained? Aristotle answers, it is through imbibing in actions that lead to a happy life at the end, a life that ensures wellness in our being. By this, there is an insight into morality being established by our reason to stand as a watchdog when we are making choices of a life that will bring wellness to us who will live such a lifestyle. That is to say that all human actions are for happiness which is got through morality, and this implies that morality is for acting, for practising, not for intellectual storage. Happiness has to be morally guided so that it would truly be differentiated from the epicurean hedonism that encourages practically pleasure as could be existentially attained. How exactly do we know the attitude whose teleological end would give us happiness? Aristotle responded that practical wisdom would do that. We shall come down to what this concept means.

At this juncture, we can decipher that for Aristotle, actions that end in happiness are morally good, right and just, while actions that do not end in happiness are morally evil, bad, wrong and unjust. To instantiate this, Aristotle wrote: "Those who say that the victim on the rack or the man who falls into great misfortunes is happy if he is good, are whether they mean to or not, talking nonsense" (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 7. 13). Virtuous action which is moral should provide happiness thereby encouraging well being in the people living carrying out such action. By this, the purpose and standard of moral action is happiness. Actions should aim at providing happiness, and if they eventually end in it, then it is morally worthy, but otherwise, it is morally unworthy. This idea of making happiness the purpose and standard of moral action, he calls eudemonism. Aristotle would stress this idea arguing that "to say that happiness is the

chief good seems a platitude and a clearer account of what it is, is still desired" (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 1.7). But in actuality, what is this happiness which all actions morally supposed to lead to? Aristotle answered that it is the "activity of the soul in accordance with virtue." Still on this position, Aristotle wrote: "We state the function of man to be a certain kind of life, and this to be an activity or actions of the soul implying a rational principle, and the function of a good man to be the good and noble performance of these" (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 1.7).

In moral discourse, action is inseparable from happiness and virtue. Virtue is defined by actions and seen as the by-product (happiness) of actions. Be that as it may, Aristotle divides virtue into two kinds/versions: (1) intellectual virtue also called 'excellence of intelligence' which include theoretical wisdom, understanding, sound deliberation, judgment, scientific knowledge, art, practical wisdom, intuitive reason, etc. (2) moral virtue also called 'excellence of character' which include justice, courage, generosity, temperament, etc. Most importantly, there will be no good life without these or one of them.

Virtue generally lies in the middle as Aristotle held in his Doctrine of the Golden Rule. Virtue is the mean between two extremes, excesses and defects. But what is this virtue? For Aristotle, virtue is never separated from attitude. It is the result of a habit; it is that "internal disposition, a permanent state of mind inclined towards good actions which spring spontaneously from it" (Omoregbe, 2008, 165). In other word, it is "the state of mind which spontaneously gives rise to good actions as a matter of habit" (Omoregbe, 2008, 165). For, Aristotle, virtuous actions do not just occur, they result from constant and persistent practice through a long period of time. They are those good actions which one keeps doing every time and they become one's part. They result from the spontaneous expression of a permanent inner disposition inclined towards a good action. It is formed as a daily habit; it is not just learnt, performed and left. Aristotle expresses this when he wrote: "One swallow does not make a summer, nor does one day; and so too one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed and happy" (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 1.7). The purpose of life is to keep that attitude that provides happiness at constancy so that it will become an intrinsic part and parcel of the virtuous man who carries out the action. Aristotle is emphatic on this when he wrote: "We state the function of man to be a certain kind of life, and this to be an activity or actions of the soul implying a rational principle, and the function of a good man to be the good and noble performance of these" (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 1.7). It must be constantly in exercise so that the person performing the virtuous acts cannot live without such life. Virtue must be experienced from day-to-day behaviour, habit of the person as the teleology, the purpose for such habit. Virtue seeks to provide happiness to man, hence happiness becomes the driving force for the constant virtuous attitude. The purpose for virtuous attitude is the happiness it provides at the end. Aristotle put it this way

Happiness, therefore, does not lie in amusement; it would, indeed, be strange if the end were amusement, and one were to take trouble and suffer hardship all one's life in order to amuse oneself. For, in a word, everything that we chose we choose for the sake of something else−except happiness, which is an end. Now to exert oneself and work for the sake of amusement seems silly and utterly childish (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 10.6)

In fact, for there to be virtue, virtuous act must become a person's personality which he will not live his life without, and that is what he calls moral or practical virtue. It is the behaviour which a person becomes so inclined to, that it would become part of him, his life and attitude. For Aristotle, when this habit is acquired, it is almost impossible for the person to live without practising it. He believes so much in habitual virtue, the continuous doing of good and not the one learnt but never practised. I think the biblical injunction that we should teach our children the good way in a way that (from his early ages) that he will not forget when he grows up. Aristotle on this said: "It makes no small difference therefore, whether we are habituated in one way or in another from youth upwards; indeed it makes a very great difference, nay, all the difference" (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, Book 1, 1102a, 5-111b 25).

It is commanding to say that to an extent, Aristotle later appeared intuitive in his ethical articulations. He was of the view that because of the constancy of carrying out virtuous acts, the virtuous man quickly understands any action that is virtuous. In this regard, Aristotle wrote:

The lovers of what is noble find pleasant the things that are by nature pleasant; and virtuous actions are such, so that these are pleasant for such men as well as in their own nature. Their life, therefore, has no further need for pleasure as a sort of adventitious charm, but has its pleasure in itself (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 1.8)

It seemed intuitive saying that virtuous men know virtuous act that gives happiness by their mere nature. However, Aristotle's position was that wise men, true philosophers know actions that provide happiness and they do them every time, hence they are the virtuous men. That centrally differentiates them from the unwise, non-virtuous men. Lawhead on this position said that the morally good person is one who carefully follows reason, desires to do the right thing, has a well-formed character, knows the proper goals in human life, can estimate how to achieve those goals in practice, and probably the one who has the most experience in making tough, moral decisions (2002, 85)

One of the concepts employed by Aristotle in his ethical discourse is Practical Wisdom. What is this practical wisdom? Aristotle said that it "is concerned not only with universals but with particulars, which become familiar from experience" (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 6.8). It is the rule or standard by which any given action in any given situation can be judged as right or wrong. Pointing the function of the practical wisdom in determining virtue, Aristotle wrote that virtue is "determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it" (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 2.6). It is the determining-factor to apply to strike a balance between two extremes where virtue is located. That means that it is the guiding principle to determine the goodness or badness of anything at all.

Aristotle also, distinguished among virtues, and identified justice as the greatest of all virtues. He saw it as 'what is lawful' or 'what is fair and equal'. Going deeper into the concept, he distinguished between two kinds of justice to include: (1) Universal Justice which is practically synonymous with virtue. For him, anyone who possesses it knows no boundary in terms of doing good. In his words, "he who possesses it can exercise virtue towards his neighbour as well as himself" (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, Book 1, 1102a, 5-1129a). (2) Particular Justice is the very opposite of universal justice. It knows boundary in terms of doing what is

good. It is particular to a people or group. By implication, it is defective for it does not rhyme with the principle of universality which should guide just actions. In an attempt to analyze justice, Aristotle goes ahead to point two consequential justices: (a) The Remedial Justice which deals with fairness in human transactions, both the voluntary transactions like taking or giving loans, making promises, etc; and the involuntary transactions like killing, stealing, etc. Expanding his discourse on the concept (justice), he pointed out (b) The Commercial Justice which is all about the moral principles that guide commercial activities.

Aristotle extended the tentacles of his ethical discourse to the domain of friendship. Friendship is an issue saddled with the whole burden of morality for it is all about human-relationship, and the human dignity and value must be prior. In that, he saw friendship in three kinds: (1) Friendship of Utility: As the name suggests, it is a friendship based on the utility, gain or advantage derivable from it. It is parasitic in nature, and as such, is the lowest-in-value among others. Old people, he held, are the main perpetrators of such friendship. (2) Friendship of Pleasure: As the name suggests, people engage in such friendship based on the pleasure or delight (say, sexual, company, etc.) that proceed from such friendship. Youths, Aristotle held are dominant in such friendship. (3) The Friendship of Good, which is based on the goodness of the character of each involved-person. It is an agape-like-friendship. Each person is good and seeks for the well-being of the other. Unfortunate is the point that friends of such are very rare to see. Thus, where as the first two are fragile following its, parasitic, egoistic guiding principle which makes it easily breakable or short-lived, the last is not breakable for the principle of genuineness and love which does not hurt, guides it; but then hard to see such.

George Edward Moore (1873-1958)

This specialist in classics was influenced by Louis Lavella, David W. Ross, Bertrand Russell, Alfred J. Ayer, Alfred N. Whitehead, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Rudolf Carnap and the whole Vienna circle scholars. As academics is all about being influenced and influencing others, Moore, in turn, influenced a group called the 'Bloomsbury Group of Writers and Artists'. The group was made up of the novelist E. M. Forster, the biographer Lytton Strachey, the art critic Clive Bell, the painters Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, the economist John Maynard Keynes, the Fabian writer Leonard Woolf and the novelist critic Virginia Woolf (https://www.britannica.com). It was famous during the early 20th century for arts development as it nurtured creative environments especially for growing artists (https://www.tate.org.uk). However Moore was forced out of his intellectual shell to face the academic community by the German Idealists (Hegel, Schelling, Fichte) and the well known objective British Neo-Idealists− Thomas H. Green, Bernard Bosanquet, Bradley, James Mc Taggart, Edward Caird, etc. The attempt by the Idealists to spiritualize the universe and proclaim time and matter as unreal, marvelled not only Moore, but the analytic philosophers and they rose in both attack against idealism and defence for empiricism and linguistic analysis. For Moore, the Idealist doctrine contradicts his 'truisms' and this truism is that consciousness is different from the object of consciousness and even the application of consciousness on the object of consciousness which the Idealists ignored to differentiate; hence, "Moore set out to analyze common sense language" (Stumpf and Fieser, 2003, 423) which finally culminated into ordinary language analysis. In his article, "The Refutation of Idealism" Moore highlighted three epistemic facts in knowledge: (1) the consciousness (the knowing self or ego), (2) the object of consciousness or what which is to be known or perceived, (3) the perception of the

object or the way or manner through which the knowing or perception is done. Consciousness is common in epistemological enquiry or knowing-process but the perception or knowing of the epistemological object is quite different. That is, consciousness is common in knowing of, for instance, a man and an animal, but their perception or knowledge is different. Applying colour to elaborate this point, Moore wrote:

The sensation of blue exists in my mind, and sometimes it does not, and knowing as we do that the sensation of blue includes two different elements, namely, consciousness and blue, the question arises whether when the sensation of blue exists, it is the consciousness which exists or the blue which exists, or both (Moore, 1903, 433-53; De George, 1962, 57-70)

Here, Moore tried to differentiate between the consciousness and the real existence of a thing. In knowing or perception or sensation, does the existence of that thing base on its perception, or our consciousness to perceive it or even how we perceive it or trying to know or sense it? Moore went on contending for the necessity of this differentiation in epistemological enquiry so "that if anyone tells us that to say 'Blue exists' is the same thing as to say that 'Both blue and consciousness exist' he makes a mistake and a self-contradictory mistake" (Moore, 1903, 64). Thus, to say that 'man' is the same thing as 'man plus consciousness' is to make a self-contradictory mistake and this mistake is what the Idealists make. The point is that the object of knowledge is not the same with the object joined with the knowing self or ego. In concluding the argument, Moore said: "If we are told that the assertion 'Blue exists' is meaningless unless we mean by it that 'The sensation of blue exists', we are told what is certainly false and self-contradictory" (Moore, 1903, 64). Of course, it is obvious that Moore is systematically attacking Berkeley and his position: to be is to be perceived- esse est percipi, and that of Josiah Royce's position. The object of sensation in deed is quite different from the act, manner and way and process of sensation.

Categorically speaking, Moore is said to belong to the Meta-Ethics philosophers. Meta-Ethics is the aspect of ethics which deals with the analysis of ethical terms like good, bad, evil, moral, justice, virtue, duty, obligation, principle, right, wrong, etc. Its central focus is to analytically deal with ethical terms as to what exactly do we mean when we say that something is good or bad or just, or dutiful, unjust or even evil. It deals with the problem of what we precisely mean when we give a moral judgment, that is, the core, simple and unambiguous meaning or implication of the ethical terms we use to pronounce a moral judgment over anything whatsoever. Meta-Ethics asks the question: How do we define a good or bad action? What is precisely the simple analytical meaning of the value or moral-terms we use to define a bad action? However, as a sub-division of Meta-Ethics, Moore is one of the Anti-Naturalist Ethical theorists who hold that moral terms cannot be defined by their natural properties unlike the Naturalist Ethical theorists who hold that moral goodness or badness, rightness or wrongness of anything is explained or defined in terms of its natural properties. The Anti-Naturalists deny that natural goodness was a special kind of 'non-natural' property. The rationale for this position is that definition reduces the quiddity, the essentiality or the core meaningfulness of the object of definition because of the possible inadequacy, or inappropriateness of the terms with which the definition would be done. And so, when morally defining an action, the meaningfulness of that very action to be defined is reduced and thus, no word can pinpoint in exactitude the goodness or badness of that action. This is because we define based on our empirical observation or natural property or function of the very object of definition. Again,

definition is different from the thing we define just as both are different from the way or manner of definition. That is to say that definition is never the thing we define rather, it is our attempt to say or pinpoint what we think is the thing we have perceived and deem fit to define. Definition is not the same as the thing we define and thus, we cannot define moral goodness for its meaningfulness cannot be got through the act of definition or the consciousness with which we define it. For Moore, the moral goodness of a thing is never got or determined via the terminal definition. That is to say that the goodness or badness of an action or anything at all is never got through defining, explaining or describing it in terms of its natural properties and as our empirical observation of it leads us to. This is because moral goodness or badness is not something we can empirically penetrate or discern like to see, taste, feel or hold it.

In his Principia Ethica, Moore attacked the Naturalists with the principle or belief of the Anti-Naturalists. Even when a good action or thing is pleasant, cherished or admired, it does not follow that whatever is as such, is good. For Moore, the term 'good' is a simple notion, and as such, is indefinable, unexplainable, un-analyzable and indescribable. Therefore, attempting to morally define the goodness of a thing is committing 'naturalistic fallacy'. This fallacy is all about trying to dab into the morality of a thing based on our empirical observation of the natural properties of that very thing. Still applying the concept of colour to bring home his idea, Moore wrote:

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, and that is all I have to say about it. But disappointing as these answers may appear, they are of the very last importance (Moore, 1903, 10)

The analogy with colour as a perfect instance to explain the simplicity of moral goodness for Moore is the best because there is no other better way to explain it except metaphorically. "Yellow and good, we say, are not complex: they are notions of that simple kind out of which definitions are composed and with which the power of further definition ceases" (Moore, 1903, 10). For Moore, nature cannot tell us what exactly moral goodness is. Our natural traits or features cannot define the morality of us because the concept 'good' is not empirical, and so, not empirically observable in our natural properties or qualities. It is indefinable even though we can detect its presence in a thing. This implies that "things which ought to exist for their own sake are things that are intrinsically good, and the primary concern of ethics is to determine what is good" (Omoregbe, 1999, 113). But how then can we define or detect moral goodness? How best can we explain it? For Moore, the perfect way to explain this simple notion is by Intuition. This is because reason has limit to knowledge. For Moore therefore, intuitive knowledge is more reliable than reason. Coming from a humanist perspective, some scholars have held the view that beyond the limit of reason is humanism where more insights into the concept of good or bad are well expressed in reference to the right and humanistic attitude with which one interrelates with another. Such view has been propagated by some scholars prominent among who is Pascal Blasé (1966, No. 267), Anayochukwu Ugwu (2022, 135-81; 2022, 57-73), David Hume (1969, 415), Anayochukwu Ugwu, Albert Nwosu and Chukwuemeka Ugwu (2024, 14-34), Paul Roubiczek (1966), 1), Anayochukwu Ugwu and Gabriel Asuquo (2022, 76-102), Udo Etuk (2002, 112), Leo Ozoemena, Anayochukwu Ugwu and Hilary Ngwoke (2022, 157-60). According to these scholars, the fact of humanism practically expressed in human relationship ought to form the fundamentality of whatever

principle that forms (human) morality. Thaddeus Metz (2010, 81-99; 2011, 233-42; 2014, 131-51) and, from a Yoruba perspective, the work of Oduwole and Fayemi (2022, 6-16) have similar views of an African humanist ethics.

However, in his Pensees, Moore held that "the last proceeding of reason is to recognize that there is infinity of things which are beyond it. It is but feeble if it does not see so far as to know this" for even "the heart has his own reason which reason itself does not know." By this, Moore is both an ethical Anti-Naturalist and an Intuitionist. So, the morality of an action or anything at all, is known, determined, explained, analyzed and defined through intuition− a flash of knowledge, sudden knowledge about something that just, out of nowhere, without rigorous thinking process, reading or contemplation, descends on us. Intuition is the "knowledge that is acquired directly by an immediate contact of the mind with the object without going through the process of reasoning …. It comes as a flash into the mind" (Omoregbe, 2009, 29). It is a by-product of our instinct, the emergence of certain knowledge on us. This means that "certain moral actions may be known to be right or wrong by a direct intuition of their rightness or wrongness without considering the value of their consequence" (Omoregbe, 2009, 29). His fellow and a source of big influence on him, David W. Ross was even more critical on this. For him, the morality of anything is known through intuition. Moral terms can never be defined or explained by natural properties rather by intuition. In fact for Ross, even our human obligation and duty, are all known via intuition, not by rigorous thinking or whatever way.

Critiques against Aristotle's and Moore's Ethics

This juncture calls for the necessary juxtaposition of Aristotle's and Moore's ethics for critical evaluations. It has been established that both Aristotle and Moore are ethical naturalists and to an extent, could be described as ethical intuitionists. However, while Moore could be said to be a thorough going ethical intuitionist, Aristotle could be said to appear an ethical intuitionist half way. But while Aristotle could generally be grouped under ethical naturalist, Moore is strictly an ethical anti-naturalist.

According to Foot, Moore's Anti-Naturalism was "a desire-based, egoistic interpretation of David Hume's practicality requirement, i.e. that morality is necessarily practical" (2001, 5). Even though that idea is also in Aristotle, nevertheless, she says that the theory is a product of Logical Positivist movement and its application of 'linguistic philosophy' or 'linguistic turn' in evaluation of the terms of moral judgment, and as a result, she denies "that moral evaluation is opposed to descriptive statements, or matters of fact, as the non-cognitivists argue" (Foot, 2001, 5). In other words, Moore's naturalistic ethics took its root from Aristotle's ethics that is more of attitudinal. But there are more to morality than language, analysis and attitude.

Aristotle in his golden mean doctrine held that virtue lies in the middle of two extremes. In defending his position on the media of virtue in an action, Aristotle wrote:

Both fear and confidence and appetite and anger and pity and in general pleasure and pain may be felt both too much and too little, and in both cases not well; but to feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is characteristic of virtue (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 2.6)

What Aristotle argued for here as the main characteristic of virtue is not obtainable, and so, there lies the challenge in his median virtue position. He appeared to have forgotten that it is not applicable in all cases, for virtues like keeping promise, telling truth, being courageous, etc are intrinsically good or moral; and vices like murder, adultery, betrayal are intrinsically evil. There are no middle ways for some attitudes so as to determine their virtuous state as Aristotle postulated. There is no middle way for betrayal, murdering, etc. It is either done or committed or not. What is deductible from Aristotle's ethics is that he is primarily proposing an ethics of moderation, but he seemed to forget the human nature.

Aristotle, from an ethical perception, condemned retail commercial activities. His reason was that it is an un-natural way of acquiring wealth. He thought that retail commercial activities are exploitative of both human beings and their material resources (Omoregbe, 2008, 168).

Furthermore, holding that happiness ought to come from a moderate behaviour is unattainable in some cases. For instance, a temperamentally passionate and romantic person may be uncomfortable in some situations if he is forced to control himself in those very situations knowing that immoderate behaviour is proper at some points. Apart from his negligence to consider human nature, he did not consider socio-cultural influences on people's attitude. For instance, if every action aims at happiness at the end, what is their moral content? By this, Aristotle encourages relativity of value for if what I do, and which at the end gives me happiness, I see as morally right, then that is morally right to me as I am supposedly to continue in such attitude. But he seemed to forget that the moral and reasonable content of actions are very necessary to be queried.

More so, it may sound worrisome that Aristotle supported slavery and by extension, human trafficking. His argument was that nature has already made some people slaves, and therefore slavery is only but a continuation of natural occurrence. By this, Aristotle could said to be a moral-naturalist. This influence came as a result of the saying that any thinker represents the time and an event of his own era (slavery was the main practice in Greece during Aristotle's time). What is the mean of the virtue in enslavement? What is the happiness that ends enslavement while it is the very act of denial of humanity to a slave? By this, it is arguable that Aristotle did not only propose moral relativism but also moral selfishness or moral geocentricism. This is because in slavery, the human-buyer or slave master is happy and justifies the act, while the human-product which is bought and treated as the buyer wishes, will never willingly justify and be happy in the act.

But Aristotle who just supported slavery arguing that it is natural would now turn to condemn taking interests from loans arguing that it is un-natural. Being a reason to condemn commercial activities, he believes that money is good and for exchange, but not to be increased at interest because money has no natural increase like animals and trees. Thus, obtaining an increase (to human financial value) from something that is un-natural (interest-collection) is morally evil. As if that is not enough, he went further to condemn retail trading and commerce arguing that they are un-natural means of acquiring wealth. By this, as an aristocrat, Aristotle did not even consider the poor masses in his ethics− those who cannot afford wholesale or producing-trading (as perhaps, for him, those are the natural means of commerce). All these are the contents of the version of his commercial justice.

Moore's intuitionism derives its moral judgment from the immediate flash of knowledge that comes to the mind and found ready to be used. Consequently, Moore did not give time for reflection over some issues pertaining intuition, and repercussions of our moral actions and judgments. Again, intuitionism is a personal way of knowing, and in giving out intuitionist moral judgment, bias, or the Bacon's idols or hermeneutical constraints may play out. More so, intuitionism reduces the whole idea of morality to the facticity of knowledge-emergence in mind which could be used at that spot. The concept of morality could, by this view, become a subject of change or era, and so, becomes twisted which can pave way for bias. And what if the intuition upon which moral judgment given today never reoccurred, what then becomes the fate of moral judgment? Finally, intuition is a means that is inconsistent, and it does not occur in all moral-questioning-situations. At this, do men wait till it occurs before giving out moral judgment especially when it calls for urgency? Its presence and modus operandi thus becomes the question of concern here.

Moore held an intuitivist ethical position arguing that the inherency of good or bad in an action is grasped only through intuition. By this, man determines the rightness or wrongness of any action, hence he encouraged a relativist ethical viewpoint. Man here becomes the Protagoras' maxim that 'man is the measure of all things'. But when it concerns the issue of value which everybody, not one person shares from, relativism becomes highly challenging because the concept of value is for social and not individual consumption. The intuitive source of rightness or wrongness of any action could be consciously or subconsciously biased.

Both Aristotle and Moore could be described as ethical naturalists. This is because both scholars believed human attitude determines the goodness or badness in any action. What gives pleasure, Aristotle would argue, at the end and which man keeps doing every day is virtuous; and Moore would argue that the concept of good and bad are inherent in an action and it is left for man to determine them though intuitively. Just like the critiques levelled against ethical intuitionists, the ethical naturalists suffer same as there are possibilities of bias in ethical naturalists hence the goodness or badness therein is a product of human being.

Aristotle's and Moore's Ethics in the Light of Kant's Ethics

Choosing Aristotle in this paper follows his position that the disposed human attitude from where we can decipher if truly virtue lies in the middle is the parameter to determine what is morally good or bad; whereas that of Moore is his contention that the whole conception of moral goodness and badness of any action and the justification of moral concepts are far from being determined or known via disposed human attitude or rigorous reasoning process but only by intuition. Aristotle's motivation to hold his ethical view emerged as a product of criticizing the too much 'abstractness' or too-idealistic position of his master– Plato, who holds that realities and the Good are in the Ideal or Formal World and not in the Physical World thereby removing the essence from the matter and making it inaccessible to human life-experience or human life-in-the-world. At this, Aristotle therefore, determined to bring the idea of realities down to be real in the physical world, and the idea of moral goodness and badness of any action to that attitude which man is disposed to be doing on daily basis from which man will now discern if the virtue of that attitude lies in the middle. Just like Aristotle, Moore's interest to hold his ethical view was drawn from the idealization and subsequent denial of certain things which he– Moore knew and believed they really exist in the world, by the Idealists, and as a

consequence, their ideas are hazy as they failed to distinctly separate among the three epistemic apparatus: consciousness, conception or perception and the object of conception or perception. At this, Moore then held that the morality of any action or the moral justification of any ethical concept is discerned through only intuition. The whole combination was motivated by our enthusiasm to critically analyze and re-evaluate the contents of their ethical ideologies, juxtapose them and then attempt to critically evaluate them in the light of Kant's ethical ideology with implications in African ethics. Additionally, the choice of authors was also informed by the similarity in the interest between Aristotle and Moore (criticisms on idealism, etc), and their dissimilarity (that the attitude which man is disposed to, as part of life which he cannot but keep displaying daily and intuition respectively define and determine the moral goodness or badness of any action whatsoever).

The implication is that unlike Aristotle and his ethical position about the disposal attitude, man is aware of morality or virtuous acts because such knowledge is in his nature. However, it must be noted that for Kant, the knowledge about the immortality of the soul, the freedom of the will and the existence of God is never got via speculative reasoning, rather, as a postulate of practical reason. It is got via moral assumption hence he continued in his Critique of Practical Reason: "Therefore it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God" (Part 1, Book 1, Theorem 130). It has before now been thought and argued that by mere thinking and arguing on the reality and or existence of a Supreme Being presupposes that such a being truly exists or is real.

So, the basic for the moral argument is ultimately drawn from the facts about the human life as the subject matter. Thus, facts about human nature have to determine the evaluation of human will. Foot speaking on this tried to put on a wider context, the evaluation of human action, not only of "the evaluation of other features of human life, but also of evaluative judgments of the characteristics and operations of other living things." She held that moral judgment on the natural goodness and badness in plants and animal life are only but normative and indeed evaluative. Natural goodness is therefore "attributable only to living things themselves and their parts, characteristics, and operations; it is an intrinsic or autonomous goodness that depends directly on the relation of an individual to the life form of its species" (Foot, 2001, 25). For her, "judgments of goodness and badness can have a special 'grammar' when the subject belongs to a living thing, whether plant, animal, or human being" (Foot, 2001, 25-6) unlike the emotivist and prescriptivist positions that 'good' and its cognates can be used as it is in the description of sub-rational living things. Foot's position implied that linguistic analysis of moral language should be used categorically; in that, the analysis necessarily has to differ when it concerns human beings and non-human beings. In other words, 'natural' goodness, ought to be attributed only to living things themselves and to their parts, characteristics, and operations, and in this, goodness depends directly on the relation of an individual to the 'life form' of its species. The evaluation of natural normativity in human beings, she holds, ought to differ from that of animals and plants, let alone non living things. This argument borders on the fact that human beings are rational and by extension moral agents, and as such, know the connection between an end and a means to that end. They know the moral obligations that fill their lives unlike the animals though who carryout certain existential duties for their lives but not with the knowledge pertaining the morality attached to an end and a meant according to the Kantian ethical position. In other words, "an objective theory of morality can establish an intelligible connection between objective moral evaluations and what we have reason to do as

individuals. Rational choice is an aspect of human goodness and at the heart of ... virtues" (Foot, 2001, 52) as Foot argued. In this case, should moral judgment be held against the irrational beings or beings found with instincts? Where is the boundary of moral judgment to human beings and non-human beings? This is one of the most prominent criticisms against normativists (Ugwu and Ngwoke, 2021, 1-7). Foot therefore proposes categorical moral judgments in accordance with categories of beings. In line with Foot's thought, moral judgment should be in degree and correspondingly to the being in question based on their nature.

At this point, to conclude this section, the paper shall interrogate certain concepts central in the paper.

First is ethics. By ethics, the paper means those accepted conducts and principles of behaviours that should guide attitudes of interrelationships among a particular people of community. It is the conventionally agreed set of rules that is standard for socially accepted attitude. To substantiate this point, Christian-Catholic ethics is different from Islamic ethics; both are different from that of Hinduism. It is from this perspective that ethics could be likened to dogma or doctrine of a culture, people, economy or religion.

Second is value. By this, the paper means that action that is valued, cherished and held with a high esteem in a particular culture or community. It is that action that adds value, quiddity or sense of humanity in a community.

Juxtaposing ethics and value, both have same qualities: they are relative to a particular people of economy or culture. While ethics is entirely abstract, ideal, value may be material or ideal. But both are meant to direct a people's social attitude towards one another, to the right direction.

Third is morality. This is the consciousness to determine what is right or wrong in the light of conscience. What differentiate morality from both ethics and values as social concepts meant for shaping human attitude towards good or bad is consciousness and conscience. Consciousness personalizes the knowledge of morality to be self-generating, not convention-generating. Conscience makes the concept of morality self-justifying through experience and then subjects it to the treatise of rationality. While ethics and value are products of convention or culture or particular tradition, morality is a product of reason and conscious conscience.

It is from this perspective of substantiation that the paper argues that African concept of morality is a product of reason and conscience being guided by the fact of self-experience. It is at this point that Kant's ethical position gets ground or strong support from the African ethical discourse.

African Ethical Implications of Kant's Ethical Critiques against Aristotle's and Moore's Ethical Theories

First, the paper has already pointed out a tripartite errors in Aristotle's ethics that (1) virtue lying in the middle of two extremes of an action does not apply in every case, as there is, for instance, no middle way for some actions like killing, etc. (2) He equally seemed to forget that certain situations clearly and sternly demand immoderate behavioural approach as the best alternative. (3) He also seemed to have ignored the possible cultural and religious influences

on man and the facticity of human individuality and temperaments. Second, the paper has also addressed the errors in Moore's ethical conception which include that: (1) while Moore does not despise the role of intuition in determining what morality entails, he appeared to have forgotten that intuition does not always and necessarily play out in certain conditions, and at the immediate time the moral judgment is most needed. (2) He seemed to neglect the intellectual potency of human common sense, sense of reason and perception in defining and determining what is morally good or bad in any action. Third, the paper has equally pointed out (1) how in Kant's ethical position, what is good is determined by the good will which is that act in human nature that is good in itself and is done for the sake of duty which is different from an act according to duty. (2) The act of good will is neither identified by intuition nor constant habit but rationality and universalizability as its moral standard.

Thus comes in the necessity of the ethical position by a people of Africa from where Kant's ethical position could be justified. The African does not approach certain issues with the kind of logic Western scholars use; logic of language analysis to determine moral worthiness of an action or constancy of an attitude or even determination of moral or immoral actions from a hedonistic viewpoint. The sense of morality or good or bad of an action is more nature-derived than the characteristic ways many Western scholars could decipher what is morally god or bad. The only tools with which the African uses to identify what is morally good or bad are rationality, conscience and then practical experience of effects of an action. Following the spirituality of the African life, everything inheres and reawakens the moral consciousness of the African. The fact of being family members, coming from the same land (nativity), being members of a meeting group, or even sharing same experience, are all sources of morality or standards for moral worthiness or unworthiness. This is because, the commonness or bond in all these instances is a phenomenal being identified with elements of effectiveness to act and react to actions of a member toward the other members. An African needs no more extra mural effort of anything before knowing that to keep the reliability or trust f the bond in the above instances is morally good. The fact that we are family members or share same nativity is enough phenomenon or being to react negatively to you whenever you as my family member or fellow native land child consciously and willingly hurts me especially to the extent of seeing my blood (killing me). Moral consciousness and demand are inherent in some concepts for such concepts are not just morally worthy but also set moral standard; concepts like community, nwanne (relatedness), agbata-obi (neighbourhood), ndụ (life), ọchịchị (governance), ọrụ (work/duty), ahụ-mgbu (sickness) ọnwụ (death), ezi-okwu (truth), ntụkwasi-obi (trust), mmụta (knowledge), mmekọrita (relationship), etc. To keep all these or ensure their real effectiveness between one another is itself a moral consciousness and a moral demand. They are sacred; and so, to do with them demands high level of moral consciousness because anything anybody in any of these media of relationship/engagement does, if a human being does not reward him/her, nature (material things) or invisible members of same medium of relationship/engagement would do. To keep the trust of relationship, maintain the personality of truthfulness, kindness in relationship, ensuring good governance for human welfare, not causing sickness or death unto one, being one's neighbour, the act of knowing or science, being one's relative, among other medium of relationship/engagement are all highly morally demanding. In fact, the fact of being in any of these media of relationship/engagement reawakens moral consciousness as much as it is morally demanding. The reason is simple: conception. By conception, the paper means how the African conceives these media of relationship/engagement. The African believes that s/he exists together with other beings some of whom are invisible; hence any immoral action

is punishable in any way, to any extent and by either visible or invisible beings. "This socio-ontological existential pattern of the African implies that moral consciousness guides the community interaction for any action must be rewarded according to its moral state" (Ugwu and Asuquo, 2022, 85). Thus, it can be argued that the African lives with "this consciousness, and that gives the insight into the belief system that even in the hereafter, spirits of the community-elements still live in such [community]" (Ugwu and Asuquo, 2022, 85). The African is always aware of the ontological effectiveness of every being in as much as being explains what that exists and anything that exists has the inherent capability of influencing and being influenced by other beings. For instance, the mother earth is conceived as a deity capable of influencing the human person in accordance with the level of morality or immorality in the action of engagement. The fact that person lives on the land appeals to his/her conscience of the purity of the being s/he stands and lives on and that consciousness demands him/her to ensure that good not bad prevails in his/her actions to avoid being rewarded with evil instead of good. As it is recorded elsewhere about the Igbo conception of the Earth goddess, it reads that "seeing blood (killing) especially of fellow human being is the worst taboo to commit against the spirituality, deity-hood, the sacredness of the Land- Earth goddess (Ala) and this is what is obtainable in the Igbo/African culture" (Ugwu and Asuquo, 2022, 85).

Making reference to the concept of community, it is argued that the concept has everything to explain about the African life and what it demands to live a moral life. The ethical principles of the idea of 'community' are natural sources of morality. The consciousness of the term 'community' stirs up the consciousness of morality in Africans. This is because the African knows s/he lives and succeeds and has his/her existential aspirations attained in the community; and to still live in the community of his/her ancestral cycle in the hereafter is a principal driven force in his/her earthly existence. The consciousness of the quiddity or essence of community drives his/her life in the physical world to ensure a good life; and to maintain the same existential status with his/her ancestors in the hereafter is his/her own paradise. The African knows that s/he lives within the community of beings in the physical world; and by that, s/he represents his/her ancestry as a physical representative or embodiment of the community of his/her ancestors or ancestry.

From this natural way of knowing the good and bad, Africans need no formal direction from any human authority to identify rights and wrongs, or what ought to be or not. Understanding this has huge ethical and moral implications following the understanding that to socialize is to primarily and horizontally socialize with human beings mainly, and in addition, other visible realities. From a vertical angle, socialization extends to the domains of the invisible realities which include both the departed-living and departed-non-living (Ugwu, forthcoming), deities and other spiritual forces and entities and finally the Supreme Deity who oversees the affairs. Socio-ontologically speaking, whether the activities of the socialization process are qualified as good/right or bad/wrong, the reward, of course, must be in accordance with the status/quality (good or bad). When right, 'good' will surface in reward either from human beings or human products/inventions or from nature or even spiritual aspect through the invisible realities, but when otherwise, bad will surface as reward from same sources as well. By this, the concept 'community' takes a socio-ontological meaning and implication. To maintain 'community' as a concept is morally laden with high sense of responsibility. To live with fellow human beings is morally demanding for human beings are sacred beings and to live with other beings is to live with the consciousness of ontological reaction.

The African sense of morality is natural, for through experience of effects of actions, thoughts and speeches, one comes to know the rightness or wrongness of whatever one does. Of course human common sense is another facilitator that identifies moral worthiness or unworthiness of actions. Common sense tells one that to kill or steal what does not belong to you without willing consent by the owner, are all wrong actions. So long actions like these do not appeal to the common sense, then they are wrong, and one would not wish that such actions do not come to one. This is where Kant's ethical position implies in African ethics. Human nature is same everywhere, and if such action does not rhyme in principle with your own nature as a human being, it would not rhyme in principle with the nature of the human being in the other sides of the world. This thus points to the relativism and universalism of value and ethics and morality. Conclusively, while value and ethical principles could be relative according to cultures, religions and economies, morality is universal according to human nature: reason, conscience and even consciousness.

It is based on the universality of morality that the African does not fight for revenge. Nature in whose principle morality inheres, fights for revenge. When one does bad or evil especially when one continues to make such action as a habit by refusing to change one's way, through such lifestyle or commitment, one is already going against natural principles and the fundamentality of morality. So, some natural disasters are acts of incurring disciplining or punishment by nature upon oneself. When one is bent on doing evil, one is already derailed from the principles of favouritism from nature, but it is left for nature to react to such an individual. This sense of moral worthiness or unworthiness of any action is quite different from the moral conceptions held by many Western ethicists where logic and criticality in linguistic analysis in respect to the determination of the goodness and badness of any action, take the upper hand

CONCLUSION

It is the position of the paper that the concepts of ethics and value are relative, but that of morality is universal. While the concepts of ethics and value as social conducts and behavioural principles generally accepted to guiding a people of a particular culture, religion and economy are relative; the concept of morality is a universal one because it emanates from human nature of being composed of conscience and reason. Having a sense of such distinction among these concepts would ease an understanding of the paper vis-à-vis the ethics of Aristotle, Moore, Kant and African people. While Aristotle set out to find or address the question of good life which he finally identified with attitude, Moore set out to analyze the terms with which whatever Aristotle referred to as good life are expressed. By this, the two scholars, knowingly or unknowingly, were busy dealing with the questions of ethics and intellectual prowess. But Kant came in to bring whatever discourse Aristotle and Moore were battling with, down to human beings, their attitudes and human experience. The discourse became more subjective in experience after which the subject of experience would now recommend such experienced action to be done unto his/her neighbour. By this, experience and rationality became factors to determine that which is good or bad hence Kant's discourse on the goodness or badness of an action is more of morality than being described as ethics or value. It is from this perspective that Kant's moral discussion came in rhythm with that of the African people. However, the African discourse on the goodness or badness of any action goes beyond Kant's good will action and the proposal of universalizability hence the dictum 'Do unto others what you like

them do unto you'. The African moral discourse takes the form of socio-ontological, in that, the consciousness of nature as an active and influential being plays very prominently. Any action that qualifies as good or bad must have something good or bad in common with nature, other beings like ancestors, etc. and the Supreme Being. In fact, while the violation of ethical and valuable principles have no much weight hence more of social, that of morality has big consequences for it has much bearing on the invisible beings hence socio-ontological. It is the approval or disapproval of any action by the invisible beings that not only makes it a social, but also ontological affair and taboo. It is from this angle that the African moral discourse takes a universalizable status because it must have passed through the scrutiny of good sense of judgment guided by reason after experience.

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