

Humanised Deontologism: Theory and Praxis for Contemporary Moral Philosophising

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Abstract

This work is committed to analysing two main divergent ethical theories, Kant's Deontological Ethics and Utilitarianism, 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 import is to synthesise the basic assumptions driving these theories to, firstly, bridge the sharp division and secondly, to make the theories as appealing and practicable as possible. By this we introduce what we call Humanised Deontologism, 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.

Introduction

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, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) propounded the theory of utilitarianism; the principle based on the happiness of the majority. Frederick 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. The import is 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 focus 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. We, thus, to introduce what we call Humanised Deontologism, 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. 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?"

Kantian Deontology: The Necessity of Motive

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, a statement 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).

It is important to 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 highest good 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).

Kant's deontological ethics is, to a large extent, motivated by a reaction against hedonism, especially the egoistic aspect of hedonism. Thus, insofar as Kantian ethics 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. 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 as a result humans, more often than not, act on emotions rather than on reason, therefore 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 (1975) 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 motive 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 (1975), 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.

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 (Paton, 1964). 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 expectation 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 (1959) says this because he believes humans do not have control over the consequences of their actions.

The explanation he gives the good will also makes it the moral will. It 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, he 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.

Kant gave three formulations for his categorical imperative but we are among other things interested in the *formula for the end in itself*. Kant (1959) 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 others. Kant (1959) distinguishes 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 and does not carry any moral worth. 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'.

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. 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. 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. Brennan (1967) 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. To look at some of these problems, we harmonise Kant's deontology 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.

Utilitarianism: Prioritising the *End*

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. 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.

Bentham (1789) begins with a straight forward statement that, "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure". 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 based on the capacity 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 and wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness, we mean intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the deprivation 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 principles 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.

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. Ewing (1976) that the ultimate ground for their validity lies in the general happiness principle and the theory has a great attraction of being relatively simple.

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. Singer (1963) 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. 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. 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.

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 the society.

Key Utilitarian Concepts

Utilitarianism has gone through many criticisms and modifications. 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. 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 deontology. 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 deontology. 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 deontology 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 deontology.

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.

Humanised Deontology: The Integrativist Position

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 here is to integrate some concepts of utilitarianism into Kant's deontology. We do this by reconciling both theories to create a workable synthesis. 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 a particular action, 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.

Humanised deontology is the synthesis we create after integrating some utilitarian concepts into Kant's deontology. We do 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 (Humanised Deontology) 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 deontologism 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 create between both theories. The first task is a modification of some Kantian concepts, for instance, we modify 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 deontologism 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 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 an 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 imperative 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. 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 deontologism 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 deontologism 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 deontologism 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 Remarks

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.

Our objective 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.

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. We might not agree with the utilitarian about what is good but we can, at least, agree 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.

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