

Ethical Problems, Ethical Interrogations and Ethical Responses

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Abstract

By showing how philosophers probe into and respond to ethical issues, this paper discusses the nature of ethical problems. It examines the contentions between traditional and non-traditional ethical perspectives by evaluating the ideas of certain philosophers that cast aspersion on traditional views of ethics. It equally responded to these thinkers' opinions. Engaging conceptual and historical analyses, the paper delves into certain critical issues involved in ethics and ethical interrogations, relative to the issues raised by these thinkers. Thus, while not denying that these thinkers' ideas have some merit, the paper holds that their arguments focused on subverting traditional ethics and ethical terms threatening normative ethics as well as human everyday moral (virtuous) existence. It avers that the collapse of normative ethical thinking and acts can engineer societal moral conflicts.

Introduction

This paper examines the nature of ethical problems, showing how philosophers interrogate ethical issues and offer responses to some ethical issues. In particular, it explored the views of Joseph Fletcher, Friedrich

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Nietzsche, and Alfred Jules Ayer². Over many centuries, since humans became inquisitive, ethics has been approached and defined differently, just as philosophy itself has been variously conceived. In the West, after the Ionian Philosophers, Thales, Anaximander and Anaximander, attempted to define the originative substance of the cosmos (Oladipo, 2015), Socrates and other philosophers began to interrogate the definition of what leading the good life is (Plato, 1997: 33). As part of the variegated perspectives, ethics has been defined as the science that systematically studies human conduct. Broadly conceived, according to Solomon, Martin and Vuaught (2009:15), it covers a wide range of issues concerning:

... values, rules, and justifications. It involves questions such as... What is good? What is evil? How do we know right from wrong? What is the good life? What makes a person good?... The study of ethics involves the question of why certain actions are deemed right whereas others are deemed wrong. And this is a call for justification. In philosophy, ethics refers to the theory behind our moral pronouncements.

Using conceptual and historical analyses, this paper explores certain issues considered in ethics and ethical interrogations and responds to the views of the philosophers examined. Generally, as deducible from above, ethics looks at the rational justification for human moral judgments. Thus, assessing what we consider just or unjust, it deals with the principles of rightness or wrongness of human conduct and seeks an intellectual or rational inquiry into the nature of the acts and modes of appropriate conduct, to obtain certain knowledge about such actions and explain the events of human experience. Also, there are as many established ethical perspectives that have been subjected to various criticisms. This paper looks at a few of these in relation to the nature of and approaches to ethics.

2. Ayer's view here is representative of the philosophical position of the members of the "Vienna Circle" (the logical positivist school). This group which originated from and was led by Moritz Schlick between 1924-1936 was primarily and deeply influenced by thinkers like David Hume, Friedrich Nietzsche, Henry Poincare, Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Carl Popper and Thomas Kuhn were prominent among the critics of the group's activities.

The Nature of Ethical Problems and Approaches to Ethical Problems

There are many ethical problems that centre on several ethical issues. These issues include the problems of justice and fairness, integrity, abortion, informed consent, confidentiality, respect for autonomy, anonymity, free will and determinism, concerns for the environment, moral dilemmas, etc. One way or the other, intense and justifiable discussions of these issues bring to the fore the difficulty of the discussions involving ethical problems. While some problems relate to ethical practices, some are theoretical. As such, there is no one way to define or approach the problems. As gleaned from the work of Braunack (2001:98–103), the things to consider in defining ethical problems include the issues relating to interests, conduct or courses of action, the values and importance attached to life, conflict of values, human ideals, dignity, relationships, opinions, orientations, daily choices, societal values and conceptions of virtue. Schilpp (1936:58) holds that an ethical problem:

is not concerned with the search for, or setting up of, any absolutes of whatever type. And that because the ethical problem is fundamentally a human, that is to say, a qualitatively personal, problem. It must, in the very nature of the case, leave room for and provide the possibilities of human progress.... Positively speaking, the ethical problem is concerned with the search for and discovery of new or revised proximate objectives for the purpose of dealing in a rationally adequate way with new situations and novel experiences.

The numerous ethical problems confronting humans focus on their experiences and involvement in everyday issues in areas like politics and governance, health, societal affairs, personal choices and economic issues. To deal with them in an academic sense, ethical problems are abstract, general and fundamental in nature (Oladipo, 2007: 23-24). Being abstract means that the answers or solutions proffered to the questions raised almost always provoke other questions that will need further answers. This process continues, with new problems surfacing. The general nature of ethics means that ethical issues, problems or questions may not necessarily be addressed by the accumulation of facts but by carefully assessing the methods of

describing available facts. Therefore, resorting to scientific experiments may not help in getting answers to ethical issues. That ethical problems are fundamental means that anyone may attempt answers to them in every field of human endeavour. As a matter of fact, ethical concerns are universal and basic to human existence and may interest any human who is critical, rational and reflective. For instance, issues of justice, moral rights, honesty, etc. are concerns involving every sentient or rational being. They are what bothers the entire society (Velasquez, 2011:14).

Ethical problems have been approached in many ways. Three of these are: critical thinking, conceptual analysis and reconstruction of ideas. Velasquez (2017:684) sees critical thinking as “the kind of disciplined thinking we do when we base our beliefs and actions on unbiased and valid reasoning that uses well-founded evidence that avoids false generalisations and unrecognised assumptions, and that considers opposing viewpoints.” Critical thinking in ethics involves subjecting the assumptions, beliefs, orientations and claims of individuals and people involved in ethical discussions and practices to critical interrogation and analyses. By this, the fundamental or basic assumptions and convictions that direct and influence human conduct and activities are carefully subjected to proper scrutiny or examination, without leaving any stone unturned. The assumptions subjected to critical analysis may be the ethical orientations and claims involving other people, the society, cultures, religions, social institutions, etc, which have been accepted unquestioned and/or not previously or properly interrogated. Thus, ethical assumptions are well-assessed to situate human beliefs and convictions on steady and objective grounds. In this respect, new ways of looking at issues and hidden assumptions manifest or surface as ethical issues are examined and critically analysed.

Conceptual analysis involves the clarification, distinguishing and interpretation of concepts. By this, both their latent and manifest meanings are brought to fore as attempts are made to analyse what they really mean. Concepts are, thus, made clearer as the ethicist seeks meanings that are beyond the dictionary. As argued by Eegunlusi and Onyibor (2018: 101-102),

ethics equally gives room for appraisals of human conduct
and moral values and virtues that can enhance good conduct

within societies as well as reflections on the meanings of moral terms so as to understand conceptual leanings and tone the human mind to empirically adopt concepts in morally responsible ways. In its application, ethics is useful in helping different fields of human endeavour to operate based on standard practices so as to benefit humanity as a whole.

Ethics can probe into the essential nature of moral terms and give humans the chance of reasoning “beyond ordinary realms and be very clear in articulating their perspectives, while clearly disambiguating their terms. This ideal of clarity of expressions is a core aim of philosophical analysis” (Egunlusi and Onyibor, 2018: 102). Giving attention to this, by conceptual analysis of ethical terms, the ethicist does a thoughtful and thorough examination or exploration of the conceptual meanings that are often assumed or not often taken seriously. In this respect, words like good, goodness, bad, badness, fair, just, moral, immoral, amoral, equity, equality, equanimity, and a myriad of others, are diagnosed with meaningful details explored for proper clarification.

The third approach to addressing ethical problems, reconstruction of ideas, transcends the activities defining critical thinking and conceptual clarification to involve re-considering, reconceptualising or re-evaluating prevailing ethical ideas so as to reframe, re-contextualise and reorder them. It deals with the interpreting of the principles, ideas and ideals as they affect institutional and societal development. To some extent, this is where the adversarial concerns of ethics, which entails reflectively challenging, disproving and re-contextualising existing ethical ideas through intense counter-examinations, sometimes comes in.

As a branch of philosophy, ethics allows for variegated or alternative perspectives to issues (Solomon and Green, 366-382). This adds beauty to ethical arguments and allows for expressing ideas without inhibitions. However, by the adversity or adversarial method or paradigm to thinking, certain individuals often attempt to subvert the thoughts of others through critical argumentation, especially the ideas often taken as predominant, so as to substitute with theirs. According to Moulton (1996:14), the adversary approach to reasoning aims at proving wrong or attacking others’ views by seeking the lacuna in thought not adequately accounted for in the other

thinkers' theories or viewpoints and subjecting their works to "strongest or most extreme opposition." This is the light in which traditional conceptions of ethics have been subjected to critical interrogation and reinterpreted with the aim of jettisoning them. By looking at arguments against established ethical perspectives, the remainder of this work will be devoted to how philosophers challenge well-received or well-founded ideas and the possible responses to their challenges.

Ethics' Considerations: Between Traditional and Non-Traditional Conceptions of Ethics

Traditional conceptions of ethics account for conventional perspectives of morality. Philosophers differ in their perception of issues of ethical concern and what holds as the criteria for assessing or justifying morally virtuous conduct, moral values and rules guiding ethical conduct. Thus, different views have been propagated that are directed at explaining the principles and approaches guiding human conduct (Barcalow, 1998:16-6). On close examination, some of these views are threats to the traditional conception of ethics. For instance, in establishing his idea called Situation Ethics, Fletcher (1966:164-168) argued that human actions are not intrinsically good or bad in themselves but that their goodness or badness depends on the situation under which one finds oneself. This means that human conduct cannot be said to be good or bad but dependent on the situation warranting it. Fletcher's position is better illustrated with examples. As an instance, Fletcher would think that it is not bad for a housewife held as a war prisoner to have sexual relations with the prison warder if that is the only option for gaining freedom to unite with her family to take care of her disabled husband and sickly children. He considered this kind of situation a "sacrificial adultery."

Apart from Fletcher's ethical situationism, the views of Friedrich Nietzsche constitute a direct attack on the traditional view of ethics. Nietzsche attacked the fundamental assumptions of Kantianism, Utilitarianism and Christian ethics. He denied that there is only one true way to interpret the world. However, he believed that some interpretations are better than others. Thus, he settled on the fact that all the events of the universe can be interpreted by a force he calls the "the will-to-power" (Nietzsche, 1955:43). He defined this 'will-to-power' as a hypothetical situation that is a means of interpreting the universe by what humans are

conversant with: the activities of our will. He then affirmed that all “organic” structures of the world, all “mechanical happenings” (Nietzsche, 1955:43) can be traced to the will-to-power. All human conduct is to be seen as the effect of the will-to-power. He denied that pleasure and pain prompt human actions as the Utilitarians claimed but maintained that desires, the acts of the will, are the motivators of human actions. Desire prompts man to wish to spread his influence over other things and other persons. Thus, the way we offer an interpretation of the world shows how we extend our influence over the world and other persons in the world.

Furthermore, as a fallout of his denial that there is only one true way to interpret the world, Nietzsche denied that there is a universal and absolute truth or morality. Thus, whatever any person conceives or perceives morality to be is merely their way of interpreting morality, which one cannot affirm as true or deny as false. However, one can hold this interpretation as a vital tool of the will-to-power. This makes morality, as a way of interpreting the world, a vital tool for extending our influence and power over other members of society and the world at large (Solomon and Greene, 368-381). Following this, Nietzsche affirmed, as an instance, that Mill and Kant who respectively propounded Utilitarianism and Kantianism only make efforts to impose their personal desires and preferences over other members of society and the world. In his *Groundwork to the Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant stated the main position of his ethical philosophy, the Categorical Imperative, in about six different ways, one of which is: “Act only on that Maxim through which you can at the same time will it should become a universal law” (Nietzsche, 2002: 187; Kant, 2001:510).

As an interpretation of the Categorical Imperative, Kant expects that if one decides to commit suicide or borrow without paying back, one should ask whether one wills that one’s action should become a universal moral law that all men should follow. Invariably, this entails pondering on what the outcome of suicide or refusing to pay back what one owes will be for all men. Will not the world become a miserable habitat and a place riddled with mistrust if everyone is given to committing suicide and making their family members live in sorrow and misery by choosing death as a way of escaping responsibility? Is it morally enviable to violate the trust and confidence reposed in them by their creditors, if they borrow and do not pay back?

As good as Kant's categorical imperative sounds, Nietzsche was dissatisfied with Kantianism. He concluded that Kant was only attempting to impose his morality on the world by making it absolute whereas there is nothing like an absolute morality. Nietzsche, thus, considered Kantianism as an expression of the will-to-power (Nietzsche, 2002:187). He equally criticised the Utilitarian theory which is of the view that an action is good if it promotes a balance of good over evil for the greatest number of people. This is when the action is compared with other actions that one could have performed or considered as alternatives. In simpler terms, utilitarianism says that a good action is that which promotes the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Also, as good as this seems, Nietzsche argued that utilitarianism, as discussed by J.S. Mill, is his desire, shared with his other British citizens, and which he wishes should become a universal moral principle (Nietzsche, 2002: 119-123). Thus, utilitarianism is Mills' expression of the will-to-power, a determined effort to impose his will on the world. Based on the above, Nietzsche argued that the generally accepted and admired moral views which majority of people live by as well as the ethical philosophies defended by prominent moral thinkers are nothing but the expressions of the will-to-power. As the fallout of taking a historical overview of different moralities and viewpoints in the world, Nietzsche claimed to have realised that two primary or fundamental types of moralities exist or that morality can be subsumed under two big umbrellas: the Master Morality and the Slave Morality (Nietzsche, 2002: 153; Solomon and Greene, 1999: 382-385).

Nietzsche described the master morality as the instrument of the strong to exert their influence and power over the weak while the slave morality is the instrument of the weak to gain power and exert their influence over the strong. Nietzsche believed that the nobles of Europe abandoned their nobility to embrace ignobility by allowing themselves to be controlled by Christianity instead of exercising their power and influence as nobles (Nietzsche, 2002: 154-156). He argued that the master morality derives from the power that develops in certain persons born to exercise their power and influence over others. The master morality bases its activities on bravery, intelligence, retaliation, strength, and power-thirstiness. It promotes the individual over and above the group. It is one in which the

aristocrat has disdainful perception of his subjects as liars and deceivers who only wish to gain his favour. Thus, the aristocrat considers himself as the all-in-all, seeking his own interests and self-actualisation, and making his subjects obey his commands.

In contrast, slave morality is that in which the weak adopts the tools of sympathy, empathy, kind gestures, patience, humility, diligence, charity, and so on, to control and gain power over the strong. They see this as the morality of “utility.” What is seen as good is not just what benefits the strong but what is useful to the entire human community. It is the slave morality that evolved the use of terms such as “goodness” or “badness” to express its affairs. Thus,

according to the slave morality then, “evil” inspires fear; but according to the master morality, it is “good” that inspires and wants to inspire fear, while the “bad” man is seen as contemptible. The opposition comes to a head when, following the logic of slave morality, a hint of contempt (however slight and well disposed) finally comes to be associated with even its idea of “good,” because within the terms of slave morality, the good man must always be unthreatening: he is good-natured, easy to deceive, maybe a bit stupid, *un bonhomme*³. Wherever slave morality holds sway, language shows a tendency for the words “good” and “stupid” to come closer together. (Nietzsche, 2002: 113).

In this light, from the angle of slave morality, the bad person is the one who makes others live in fear whereas, under the master morality, the one who causes fear is regarded as the master. The slave morality is that under which humans seek freedom and happiness while they subtly seek to exert their influence over the strong (Nietzsche, 2002: 156). Overall, denying the possibility of a universal or objective morality, Nietzsche did not consider any of the above two broad rubrics of morality as being more true than the other even though he preferred the master morality to the slave morality.

Unlike Nietzsche who merely derided traditional morality, the Logical Positivists strongly denied and cast aspersion on it altogether. The Logical

³. A good simple fellow

Positivist School, also called the “Vienna Circle”, was championed by scholars of scientific turn of mind like Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap, Hans Hahn, Carl Hempel, Philipp Frank, Alfred Jules Ayer, Olga Hahn-Neurath, Viktor Kraft, Theodor Radacovic, Gustav Bergmann and Otto Neurath. Resting their arguments on the analytic ideas of Ernst Mach and Ludwig Wittgenstein, most importantly Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, and being consumed by the problems in the “philosophy of science” (Berke, 2024: 170), they argued against ethics and metaphysics on the claim that both fail the verifiability criterion that every statement that will be counted as meaningful must be empirically or logically/mathematically verifiable. Thus, focusing on wiping out ethics and metaphysics, they sought to establish the scientific criterion for the meaningfulness of propositions and to give philosophy a content that did not violate positivist ideals” (Berke, 2024: 170). It is against this backdrop that Ayer, who was more like their spokesperson, criticised or attacked the foundation of normative ethics by holding that:

We find that ethical philosophy consists simply in saying that ethical concepts are pseudo-concepts and therefore unanalysable. The further task of describing the different feelings that the different ethical terms are used to express, and the different reactions that they customarily provoke, is a task of the psychologists. There cannot be such a thing as the ethical science, if by ethical science one means the elaboration of a “true” system of morals (Ayer. 1973:337).

Ayer took G.E. Moore as a point of departure in the first part of the above quotation (Moore, 1973: 324). Moore, whose works preceded the era of Logical Positivism, had denied that ethical concepts are analysable. However, Ayer’s writing did not stop at this point of non-analysability of concepts but argued that normative ethical concepts are meaningless and vacuous or unintelligent. As seen in his quotation above, Ayer thought that ethical concepts only allow humans to evince or express their feelings and, as a result, cannot be said to be true or false. For instance, to say, “You acted wrongly in stealing that money” is to have asserted nothing more than “You stole that money”. To have said, “You acted wrongly in stealing

that money” is to have evinced one’s disapproval of the action. If one now generalises one’s earlier proposition and utters “Stealing money is wrong!”, one has only said, “Stealing money!” Ayer concludes that the exclamation mark in an expression such as “Stealing money!” only conveys the feelings being expressed whereas the statement cannot be said to be true or false. Two parties that disagree on the statement “Stealing money is wrong”, where one considers it to be true while the other terms it false, are merely disagreeing on the grounds of sentiments since no one has a way of determining what is right or wrong because the statement can neither be true nor false. Ayer then asserts that such statements as the above are merely “emotive” rather than just being assertive.

Furthermore, Ayer did not believe that such statements as were considered above perform “emotive” roles alone but that they equally induce certain feelings in the hearer, thereby provoking certain actions or being useful as tools of command. For instance, to express, “It is your duty to tell the truth always” is to say nothing than “Tell the truth always”. Instances as the above made Ayer conclude that normative ethical terms are not objectively valid and, thus, do not make sense talkless of being true or false. Thus, they are not verifiable since they only evoke certain feelings in us. Having raised what the above philosophers discussed, we turn to analyse their views to create a balance.

Reflections on the Views of Fletcher, Nietzsche and Ayer

Fletcher’s view above, no doubt, threatens traditional ethical views in that it confines moral actions to complete subjectivity and bases them only on what each individual perceives/considers to be morally right or wrong, rather than on objective standpoints. His interpretation may result in anarchy and lawlessness or violate the standards of ethically virtuous traits that make for decency in society, thus precluding having a well-ordered society (Rawls, 1999: 3-29). For instance, in issues involving trust with other men, will the disabled and invalid husband still be able to trust his wife and not constantly think that she is cheating on him on occasions when she goes out to cater for essential family needs? The foundation of trust is already shaky since the woman chose an easy way out. Besides these, situation ethics makes a pawn of people and allows them to be used as means to an end. On the overall, the theory is absurd as an attempt to solve a problem leads to

others, aggravates matters and lampoons human intelligence (Eller, 1968; Oladipupo, 2019: 50-52; Lutzer, 1972: 20-80).

On Nietzsche's part, considerations of master morality and slave morality are injurious to human personal growth, interpersonal relations or social cooperation, and societal development. To break this down, on one hand, his discussion of slave morality does not just endanger Christian ethics but humanity. Certain concepts adopted by Christian ethicists, such as kindness, diligence, humility, patience, and so on, which are generally considered to be conveying acts of moral virtue, no doubt, have great appeal and use in human everyday ethics for individual existence, interpersonal relations and addressing of moral issues (Hauerwas & Wells, 2011:153-237; Geisler, 2010:116-119; Velasquez, 2017: 16-27). Thus, Nietzsche condemns morality to utter disrepute by affirming that such virtues as these are mere subtle tools used by the weak to influence and dominate the strong. His argument and appeal that we must free ourselves from such traits are not better than appealing that we should stop standing on moral principles or giving them any consideration at all. On the other hand, his description of master morality portrays superhuman entities that are mere overlords and see others as valueless puppets to be bullied, ordered around and used for their selfish purposes. Since there is limit to human endurance, in the past, anarchy ensued in societies where the attributes of the master morality were exhibited. This was what resulted in revolutions such as the French Revolution and the American Revolution where master morals were forcefully overthrown to allow the thrive of slavish morals in forms that guarantee human freedom and emancipation (Egunlusi, 2022: 194). Thus, if we follow and live by Nietzsche's conception of master morality, it is doubtful if society will benefit in terms of good conduct and meaningful development.

Furthermore, Nietzsche's assertion that there is no objective morality, if true, makes morality nothing better than individual perspectives. Apart from the fact that the claim suggests absolutism and objectivity, since the implication of Nietzsche's argument is that we should consider and accept it as the only true position, it equally condemns ethics to relativism (Williams, 1999:168-172). Ewing (1973:318- 319) argued that subjectivism entails disagreement. This position is not far from commonsense. Since each individual appears to be doing what is right, how do we differentiate what is

right from what is wrong? The implication of ethical relativism here is that everybody sees what is good to them as moral rather than considering what is good objectively. In this regard, certain actions will be termed good that are detrimental to societal welfare and harm certain persons within the human society, while certain actions will be considered as bad that can promote societal interests and wellbeing. This may then result in anarchy within the society. Even if perspectives such as the above never result in crisis, we may never be able to determine what morality is since the criterion of moral rightness or moral wrongness is based on personal judgments and sentiments whereas individuals differ in their judgments of issues.

In addition to the above, Nietzsche's position that the Utilitarians and Kant only attempted to impose their views on all humanity seems out of place. They have only attempted to give certain principles that they consider better for regulating human conduct. Nietzsche is equally guilty of what he accused Kant and the Utilitarians of. Thus, he is actually the one to be accused of imposing his views regarding master and slave morality on the world. If he did not want us to accept his view, he would not have denied that there is an objective morality and, by implication, accepted this as the basis for attacking the foundations of the ideas of Mill and Kant on morality. A person who asserts that no view is sacrosanct on the other has already put forward a position that implies that he expects others to accept his views and has only presented a position that is not better than saying, "my view is sacrosanct upon yours". Thus, Nietzsche's postmodern turn of mind for denying objective morality assumes too much (Velasquez, 2017:197). Duly considered, it assumes subjectivism to imply objectivism.

Nietzsche's perception of Kantianism and utilitarianism is responsible for his utterances on these theories, which aimed at their total subversion. One may not totally agree with Kant and Mill on all points of their ethical philosophies but to assert that their efforts are focused on merely exercising their will and imposing such on the world is to deny that performing actions that are not based on selfish motives and actions that are to the greatest advantage of the greatest number of people are of worthy endeavours (Mill, 2001: 460-476). Among several perspectives, the ideas of Kant and Mill have given humanity certain strong points upon which to consider and improve certain moral theories that can serve as viable guides for human conduct. It appears that what interests Nietzsche is the total scrapping of

these views than their reformulation in manners that may be of more profit to the world.

In giving consideration to Ayer's view, he is right in holding that ethical statements are used to express our approval or disapproval of certain actions but may not be totally right in maintaining that all ethical statements are deliberately intended to arouse feelings in the hearers of such utterances. His position rules out the instances of uttering certain ethical expressions out of habit (or out of a subconscious human mind) rather than as a deliberate effort. Furthermore, Ayer went too far in holding that ethical statements and terms are meaningless. This position differs from Moore's assertion that ethical concepts cannot be analysed. To deny that ethical concepts are analysable is milder than asserting that they are devoid of meaning altogether. The latter position is not better than affirming that every ethical concept cannot be accounted for in human vocabulary and, hence, has no use. We should query how Ayer could interpret concepts and the meanings attributed to them if they are meaningless. Besides, if concepts are meaningless, how do we make meaning of the values attributed to human conduct? For instance, in arguing against or in favour of abortion, as J.J. Thomson and others have done, important concepts that have meaning for human existence are/were brought to fore with justifications provided for using them (Thomson, 484-495; Geisler, 2010: 131-358).

What influenced Ayer to maintain the above position is nothing other than his logical positivist background that every utterance must of necessity correspond to a state of affairs in the world to be meaningful (Stumpf, 1994:453). The logical positivists' rejection of ethical and metaphysical languages as meaningless, for not corresponding to any state of affairs in the empirical world, may have explained why Ayer frowned at value-laden statements to embrace descriptive analysis (Tuboly, A. T., 2021:1-37). In addition to the above, Ayer seemed to have lost sight of the fact that each discipline has its peculiar language, which Bertrand Russell has also argued for (Russell, 2001: 245). The discussions on the rightness and wrongness of actions cannot be separated from normative ethics. The paradigm of psychology is different from that of ethics. To treat normative ethics as a branch of, or/and in the language of, psychology as Ayer expressed, is to

rob it of its being situated within the paradigm where it may be meaningful and relevant.

Conclusion

This paper examined the nature of ethical problems and how philosophers interrogate ethical issues. After examining the nature of ethical problems and approaches to these problems, it responded to the views of Fletcher and Nietzsche, against traditional ethics, and Ayer's denial of ethics. From Moulton's perspective, it observed that adversarial approaches to philosophical discussions aimed at critically proving others' views wrong from strong and highly extreme angles, based on observed gaps in thoughts, is one of the paradigms often adopted by ethics. This, thus, formed the basis of its examination of and response to the claims of the above-named thinkers. While not denying that the views of the above scholars have some merit or areas of strength, it maintained that their weightier aspects threaten normative ethics and the ethical concepts adopted in everyday existence. Thus, the clamour to rid humanity of traditional ethics and/or jettison normative ethical concepts is a call to renounce virtuous traits and embrace vices, which may lead to moral crises in society.

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