

THE END OF THE FACT-VALUE DICHOTOMY:
A NEO-ARISTOTELIAN APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

THE END OF THE FACT-VALUE DICHOTOMY: A NEO-ARISTOTELIAN APPROACH

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The objective of this thesis is twofold. First, the work intends to show that the commonly discussed fact-value dichotomy, which begins with Hume's famous is-ought paragraph, cannot be solved by meta-ethical theories that defend the traditional interpretation by treating the issue as purely a matter of logical deducibility or that merely dwell on moral words and concepts without offering practical solutions. In this context, after examining the parts of Hume's moral philosophy that do and do not comply with the traditional interpretation, reflections on the problem of meta-ethical theories are discussed. This analysis is presented through prominent thinkers who advocate non-cognitivist and cognitivist views. Alfred Jules Ayer and Charles Stevenson are analyzed for non-cognitivism, while Moritz Schlick and George Edward Moore are examined with regard to naturalism and intuitionism. The views studied here necessitate the investigation of two more philosophers who approach cognitivism and non-cognitivism from different angles. In this way, Mackie and Hare are analyzed in the context of the fact-value problem. Two fundamental challenges arise, one of which is essentialism, and the other is the irrationality of moral judgments related to the fact-value problem. Thus, the necessity of a theory that will both

eliminate essentialism and defend the rationality of moral statements emerges. The second aim of this study, based on the idea that dissolving the dichotomy can only be understood within the context of historicity and teleology of the relationship between “what is” and “what ought to be”, is to discuss MacIntyre’s neo-Aristotelian approach critically.

Keywords: Cognitivism, Essentialism, Intuitionism, Naturalism, Non-cognitivism, The Fact-Value Dichotomy

ÖZ

OLGU-DEĞER İKİLEMİNİN SONU: NEO-ARİSTOTELESÇİ BİR YAKLAŞIM

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Bu tez iki temel amaç taşımaktadır. İlk olarak, çalışma Hume'un ünlü "olan-olması gereken" paragrafıyla başlayan olgu-değer ikiliğinin, konuyu salt mantıksal bir tümdengelim sorunu olarak ele alarak geleneksel yorumu savunan ya da pratik çözümler sunmadan salt ahlaki kelimler ve kavramlar üzerinde duran meta-etik kuramlarla çözülemeyeceğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda Hume'un ahlak felsefesinin geleneksel yoruma uyan ve uymayan kısımları incelendikten sonra, sorunun meta-etik kuramlara yansımaları tartışılmaktadır. Bu analiz, gayri-bilişselci ve bilişselci görüşleri savunan önde gelen düşünürler aracılığıyla sunulmaktadır. Alfred Jules Ayer ve Charles Stevenson gayri-bilişselcilik kapsamında analiz edilirken, Moritz Schlick ve George Edward Moore doğalcılık ve sezgicilik açısından incelenmektedir. Tartışılan teorilerden çıkan sonuçlar gereği, bilişselciliğe ve gayri-bilişselciliğe farklı açılardan yaklaşan iki filozofun daha irdelenmesi ihtiyacı ortaya çıkmıştır. Buradan yola çıkarak, John Mackie ve Richard Mervyn Hare olgu-değer problemi bağlamında analiz edilmektedir. İncelemenin sonunda, birisi özcülük, diğeri ahlaki yargıların akıldışı olduğu iddiası olmak üzere iki temel zorluk ortaya çıkar. Böylece hem özcülüğü ortadan kaldıracak hem de ahlaki yargıların

rasyonelliđini savunacak bir teorinin gerekliliđi ortaya çıkmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu ikiliđin çözümlenmesinin ancak “olan” ile “olması gereken” arasındaki iliřkinin tarihselliđi ve teleolojisi bađlamında anlařılabileceđi fikrinden hareketle bu çalıřmanın ikinci amacı, MacIntyre’ın neo-Aristotelesçi yaklařımını ortaya koymak ve tartıřmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Biliřselcilik, Dođalcılık, Gayri-biliřselcilik, Olgu-Deđer İkilemi, Özcülük, Sezgicilik

To My Family

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Ancient Greece and the Middle Ages had arguably an understanding of comprehending human beings in a holistic manner. The fact-value problem arose when at one point, humans began to be understood in fragments, not in their unity. In other words, the idea that human life has a factual and an evaluative side as a political animal lost its integrity, and these sides or aspects started to become two different fields. Until the 16th and 17th centuries, values and evaluation, understood within the teleological structure of nature, were seen as a human practice different from natural sciences, with the rejection of the Aristotelian teleological understanding of nature. This change led to a strict separation between the concept of *facts*—which are the objects of observation and experimentation based on natural sciences—and that of *value*—which is regarded as specific to the ethical, aesthetic and political fields. The concept of fact is typically presented in a narrow view as value-independent, mechanistic, purely empirical and devoid of any teleological understanding. In this sense, while one can only have the knowledge of “what is”, “what ought to be” is seen as out of knowledge, personal feelings and preferences. Ethics is not about “what is”; it is about “what ought to be”, and the latter is incompatible with the former. In other words, a direct relationship between ethical concepts—such as good, bad, value, responsibility, and virtue—and facts or objects cannot be established. Based on Hume’s famous paragraph in *Treatise*, the traditional interpretation has been developed on the impossibility of a logical deduction between “is” and “ought” against this background. Ever since this point of separation, the fact-value problem has become one of the most discussed philosophical issues in ethics and meta-ethics. This traditional interpretation entails that there is an unbridgeable gap between fact and value and that it is impossible to deduce evaluative statements from factual statements. Hume’s emotivist ethics also

supports this traditional interpretation since it does not include moral propositions in the field of fact or reason. On the other hand, there are different interpretations of Hume's famous paragraph, and according to these anti-traditional interpretations, Hume does not claim that it is logically impossible to deduce value from fact; instead, he states that the relationship that makes the transition between fact and value possible needs to be explained.

However, the dominant character of the traditional interpretation has deepened the fact-value problem, and this problem plays a central role in contemporary meta-ethics debates. Non-cognitivism, based on traditional interpretation and the legacy of Hume's philosophy, separates ethics from rational and factual realms. In this context, evaluative statements do not have a truth value as an expression of emotions. While this controversial claim encompasses all evaluative statements, it has transformed ethics into an arbitrary field where there is no authority other than personal desires, feelings, and preferences. Against this idea, cognitivist views have emerged, which argue that ethics should remain within a rational discourse, which has not dissolved but modified the problem. Naturalism and intuitionism try to move ethics out of the arbitrary field of emotivism to a more objective area, as they claim that natural or non-natural concepts can explain evaluative judgments or moral concepts. While the naturalist view does not reveal a distinction between fact and value in terms of defending that value can be explained by factual and natural properties, intuitionism contributed to the problem in terms of claiming that moral concepts cannot be explained by any natural properties and included morality in an autonomous field. Naturalism's explanation of values with the methods of natural sciences has created a contrast between the mechanistic and value-independent view of "fact", which is also a product of the traditional interpretation, and value, and it has not found a clear enough answer how value is a property of facts or objects. On the other hand, intuitionism's claim of intuitive justification of moral judgments and the idea that morality, which is supportive of traditional interpretation, should be explained with non-natural properties, precludes defining the value on a factual and rational level.

In this respect, theories have emerged that attempt to overcome the deficiencies of cognitivism and non-cognitivism. While an anti-realist view of cognitivism appears against the essentialist claims of cognitivist ideas, prescriptivism rejects the non-cognitivist claim that moral values have no meaning but argues that there can still be a non-cognitivist view. Although these two views try to solve two fundamental problems, the first one being essentialism and the second the problem of meaning in moral judgments, which were discussed in meta-ethical theories, they supported the traditional interpretation and contributed to the fact-value distinction.

The traditional interpretation is dominated by the idea that the fundamental problem of Hume's is-ought paragraph in *Treatise* is the impossibility of logical deduction of value from fact. This logical gap between fact and value brings about an epistemological and ontological distinction between the two. In addition, they consider moral judgments and concepts independent of their normativity and interpret them only through their use, language analysis and emotive states. This interpretation, on the other hand, does not make the transition from meta-ethics to ethics possible. Therefore, the meanings of moral judgments and concepts are limited to what can only be described, and no moral criterion for their validity is presented.

A question arises regarding the evaluation of moral judgments from both a factual and rational perspective and the possibility of doing this with a non-essentialist approach. This effort requires seeing fact and value as a rational inference rather than a mere matter of deducibility because it will be seen that in all other meta-ethical theories, including that of Hume, the explanation of certain values is done through factual reasons. Then, this work requires a critique of the traditional interpretation of Hume's paragraph and an exploration of the possibility of an anti-traditional understanding.

From this point of view, in this study, MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian approach will be examined to dissolve the fact-value problem. In this regard, the aim of the study is to explore the possibility of defending the unity of fact and value in a rational plane and showing that ethics does not go beyond the limits of knowledge obtained through experience. It will be argued that this approach—

with the anti-traditional interpretation—revives the rejected Aristotelian teleological understanding and explains values in both a kind of factual and rational discourse. When considered in a teleological factual context, “what is” and “what ought to be” cannot be thought of independently of each other.

Therefore, in the second chapter, the is-ought paragraph is evaluated within Hume’s moral philosophy. Firstly, the paragraph and traditional interpretation are introduced; then, in order to go beyond the passage, the relationship of this interpretation with Hume’s moral philosophy is revealed. Finally, contrary to the traditional interpretation, the places that parallel the anti-traditional interpretation in Hume’s moral philosophy will be analyzed. Some points allow both traditional interpretation and anti-traditional interpretation to be made. However, it will be claimed that the traditional understanding deepens the distinction between fact and value and leaves no factual and rational explanation for ethics, so the first step will be taken to consider the possibility of eliminating the fact-value problem with an anti-traditional reading.

The third chapter will first discuss how non-cognitivist theories change the character of the problem and deepen the distinction between fact and value. Secondly, cognitivist theories, such as naturalism and intuitionism, will be examined through the fact-value distinction. Non-cognitivism and cognitivism will be discussed through representatively selected significant thinkers such as Ayer, Stevenson, Schlick, and Moore. It will be argued that non-cognitivist theories, which approach the phenomenon-value problem through traditional interpretation, do not offer a rational perspective that involves the validity and meaning of evaluative propositions; on the contrary, they reduce ethics to a cognitively meaningless field because they see moral judgments as mere expressions of emotions and emotional states that motivate action. Research on the meanings of moral judgments or concepts for non-cognitivism has always been limited to their areas of use, and it will be suggested that an effort to justify moral judgments is not based on logic or rationality because they are formed on emotions in terms of their usage patterns. On the other hand, it will be argued that naturalism does not reveal the fact-value problem but that moral concepts such as good are hard to defend as properties of facts and objects, and this

essentialist idea should be abandoned. Moreover, it will be argued that intuitionism's assertion that moral concepts are property of things but that they correspond to a non-natural property and any factual or natural property cannot explain that value supports the fact-value problem.

In the fourth chapter, two alternative theories that oppose classical cognitivism and non-cognitivism and try to revise them will be discussed in the context of the fact-value problem. John Mackie's anti-realist cognitivist approach, which tries to solve the problem of realism or essentialism in terms of cognitivism, will be evaluated through his famous "error theory", "the argument from queerness", and perspective on the is-ought problem. R. M. Hare's understanding of non-cognitivism, known as "universal prescriptivism", which emerges to make up for the deficiencies of non-cognitivism, and argues that moral judgments can be meaningful, has been discussed within the framework of the concepts of prescriptivity, universalizability and supervenience, which are unique to his ethics and his perspective on the is-ought problem. Although Hare thinks that value judgments have a descriptive side, and Mackie says that value propositions can be derived from factual statements only by staying within the institution, both thinkers defend the traditional interpretation of Hume's paragraph.

The fifth chapter contains an analysis of the shortcomings of the meta-ethical theories discussed and claims that the fact-value problem cannot be solved within the conceptualization presented by the meta-ethical discussions. Alternatively, it will be argued that firstly, the paragraph should be handled with an anti-traditional interpretation in order to dissolve the problem, and then the necessity of a theory that presents a teleological factual context for the fact-value association. In this respect, MacIntyre's anti-traditional interpretation and criticisms of it, and then Aristotelian philosophy to understand the neo-Aristotelian approach to eliminate the fact-value problem, will be taken with its central lines. Contrary to the traditional interpretation, instead of dwelling on the impossibility of a logical deduction between fact and value and considering the issue as a matter of deducibility, it is much more reasonable to think that there is a relationship between fact and value and that this relationship is related to a

rational inference and how it can be explained in a legitimate way. In this sense, this chapter claims that if Hume maintains that it is impossible to deduce value from fact, he would be contrary to his theory because he also uses factual explanations while explaining some moral concepts. In the second part, after stating that the issue should be a rational inference, based on the idea that the second feature of the relationship between fact and value is teleology and that this problem does not appear in Aristotelian philosophy, Aristotelian ethics will be explained through his biology and metaphysics. It will be argued that Aristotle's concepts of *telos* and *ergon* establish a relationship between moral and non-moral evaluative propositions and that the concept of function for the nature of things provides a teleological factual context for the fact-value association. However, it should be noted that Aristotelian ethics is also based on an essentialist idea. Therefore, the necessity of a non-essentialist explanation emerges in order to explain "what is" and "what ought to be" on a factual and rational basis.

In the last chapter, MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian philosophy will be introduced to investigate the possibility of dissolving the fact-value problem in an Aristotelian non-essentialist way. MacIntyre's alternative theory will be examined within the framework of the critique of modern emotivist morality, the Aristotelian concept of function and *telos*, and his unique concepts of Unity of Human Life, Practices, Narrativity and Traditions. There are normative contexts that form meanings of moral judgments and concepts, and these contexts are created in a factual context by practices in life. Based on the idea that this cultural and historical context creating their meanings cannot be ignored, Aristotelian concepts of function and *telos*, which are associated with moral judgments and concepts, will be defended based on sociological, not biological facts. Therefore, it will be claimed that moral activity is socially embodied and that "what ought to be" is not revealed and explained independently of "what is". This chapter will show that moral and non-moral evaluative propositions can be presented within the same thought system based on the concepts of function and purpose and that it is necessary to do this within the concept of the unity of

human life, narrative and tradition that gives meaning to them, within the idea of historicity, rather than with a metaphysical explanation based on human nature.

In the light of these chapters, this thesis presents a critique of the fact-value distinction caused by Hume's traditional interpretation by examining meta-ethical theories. This endeavor demonstrates that meta-ethical theories that dwell only on words and concepts without offering practical solutions fail to solve the fact-value problem. In this respect, based on the idea that ethics and value have a factual meaning, it claims that the problem of fact-value can only be solved when the relationship between "what is" and "what ought to be" is seen within historicity and teleology. To understand purposeful human action would be to understand its history, aims and intentions, which is a starting point for clarifying the character of moral judgments and behaviors. Human actions, on the other hand, can be understood within human practices and her own sociability and narrative. Thus, this study will argue that the factual context is inevitable in terms of virtues or values which are learned and gained in human practices. The concept of the good or common good will emerge as a socially embodied concept learned in practice.

CHAPTER 2

DAVID HUME AND THE IS-UGHT DICHOTOMY

The ancient philosophers, though they often affirm, that virtue is nothing but conformity to reason, yet, in general, seem to consider morals as deriving their existence from taste and sentiment.

D. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*

As human beings, we make evaluations and use evaluative judgments in our lives. One way to construct an evaluative sentence is to make “ought” sentences which we generally use for our moral claims. The question, which is one of the most fundamental problems of moral philosophy and makes us think about these sentences, is this: On what basis do we make these judgments? How we justify an “ought” sentence is closely related to the motives deriving from that we direct the sentence to people and expect them to act accordingly. For instance, when we address the sentence “you ought not to lie” to someone, the ground on which we base this sentence is important in terms of communication and action practices between each other. The fact that the person we asked this question acts in the opposite direction causes us to see her as immoral. In other words, how we ground sentences about values has been an important and amply discussed topic throughout the history of philosophy.

Under which circumstances we acquire knowledge about values will also determine our position on moral knowledge. At this point, a religious way of thinking can state that these sentences are certain commands of God due to the thought that our values must be sufficiently independent of facts. Where will it come from if “what ought to be” does not come from “what is”? A transcendent place completely far from this world. On the other hand, another answer to this question is to separate value from facts and matters of reason and treat moral

statements as a psychological process of human affections. In this context, 17th-century British philosopher David Hume considers moral propositions neither “relations of ideas” nor “matters of fact”. In other words, sentences about values are neither statements based on reason nor statements we can experience with observation. Hume first introduced this problem in a paragraph in his book *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Being concerned in this chapter with explaining Hume’s position, I shall focus on analyzing the is-ought paragraph based on his moral philosophy. I will first explicate the famous is-ought paragraph and its traditional interpretation that leads to distinguishing between fact and value and considering them as two irreconcilable concepts. Second, the relationships between the traditional interpretation and Hume’s moral philosophy will be investigated to understand better the passage going beyond it. Finally, I will try to point out the places in Hume’s moral philosophy overlapping with the anti-traditional interpretation of the paragraph by pointing out the role of reason in his philosophy and his factual explanations for justifying some moral concepts.

2.1. The Is-Ought Paragraph and the Traditional Interpretation

In every system of morality I have always remarked that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I’m surprised to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, is, and is not, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an ought or ought not. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this ought, or ought not, expresses some new relation or affirmation, ’tis necessary that it should be observed and explained; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it. But as authors do not commonly use this precaution, I shall presume to recommend it to the readers; and am persuaded, that this small attention wou’d subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relation of objects, nor is perceived by reason.¹

¹ David Hume, Lewis A. Selby-Bigge, and P. H. Nidditch, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 2. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 469-470.

With regard to the concept of “fact”, Hume concluded that what is encompassed by “is” are factual statements that are value-independent and that they depend merely on observation. In addition, Hume makes a separation between “matters of fact” and “relations of ideas” in the sense that the former is observational and contingent while the latter is necessary and depends on reason. He thinks that moral statements are neither “matters of fact” nor “relations of ideas”.² From this point of view, “what ought to be” seems to be detached from “what is” and from reason. Although this passage has attracted the attention of many philosophers and has been interpreted in many ways, almost all philosophers agree that Hume draws attention to some kind of distinction and relation between “what is” and “what ought to be” in a moral context.³

The tension between “is” and “ought” is studied under many different labels.⁴ Hume’s law which supports the view that there is an “unbridgeable gap”⁵ between fact and value, constitutes the main idea of the traditional interpretation. The idea that there is not and cannot be an inductive relationship between the propositions we take and the evidence we present for them can be associated with the relation between “is” and “ought” statements in the sense that we cannot find any satisfactory evidence as to the relation between “is” and “ought” statements. In reasoning, we adopt propositions based on evidence. In reasoning, we adopt propositions based on evidence. But what is the basis of this evidence? Or what is the basis for our reliance on evidence? Hume’s law, therefore, supports that there is no such an inductive relationship between “is” and “ought” statements. Many philosophers like Hare, Nowell Smith and Ayer, make the

² Roger Scruton, *A Short History of Modern Philosophy: from Descartes to Wittgenstein*, 2nd ed., Routledge classics (London ; New York: Routledge, 2002), 121.

³ Nicholas Capaldi, *Hume’s Place in Moral Philosophy*, Studies in moral philosophy, vol. 3 (New York: P. Lang, 1992), 56.

⁴ Richard Hare (1954-5, p.303) uses “Hume’s Law”. Putnam (2004, p.19) calls it “The fact/value Dichotomy. Black (in Hudson (1969, p.100)) refers it as “Hume’s Guillotine”.

⁵ Hilary Putnam, *The Collapse of The Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 9.

following evaluation from the passage: No ought from is means that non-moral statements do not entail moral statements since “is” statements, as factual statements, are non-moral statements while “ought” statements are evaluative. By upholding this view about “entailment”, they argue that there is a logical divergence between fact and value propositions. That means Hume’s law creates “an unbridgeable gap between ‘is’ and ‘ought’ ”.⁶

Given there are many different interpretations of the paragraph, different questions come to light: Is Hume talking here of the logical impossibility of passing from fact to value, excluding moral knowledge from both “relations of ideas” and “matters of fact”? Does he place moral knowledge on a purely emotional basis? Or is he saying that the transitions that have been made so far are illegitimate and that this transition or the relationship between fact and value should be questioned and that it should be well-grounded? Does he want to criticize existing religious and rationalist moral reasoning and establish a moral system that can be justified by facts and observations? While the first two of these questions fall into the category of the traditional interpretation, other criticisms, which are defended by some philosophers like Alasdair MacIntyre and Geoffrey Hunter, fall into the anti-traditional interpretations, and they oppose the former by advocating that Hume is investigating exactly how an acceptable transition can be made from fact to value.

A careful inquiry would reflect that it can be possible to read the passage and Hume’s philosophy in both ways. When considering Hume’s whole philosophy, it is possible to find evidence for the traditional interpretation and the basic idea that opposes it. We will now touch upon a few points that are fundamental to Hume’s moral philosophy. In this way, we will try to bring to light the points where Hume’s philosophy agrees with the traditional and anti-traditional interpretations.

⁶ Max Black, “The Gap between ‘Is’ and ‘Should,’” In: Hudson W.D. (Eds) *The Is-Ought Question. Controversies in Philosophy*, (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1969), 169.

2.2. Hume's Moral Philosophy

David Hume, the leading thinker of the Scottish Enlightenment and advocate of empiricism, thinks that the mind is misunderstood by metaphysicians based on empirical observations about the human mind. In this regard, all knowledge depends on sense experiences, but that sense experiences cannot be rationally grounded; on the contrary, our knowledge is usually the results of mental processes and operations explained by psychological concepts rather than rational premises. Taking a similar stance on ethics, he claims that our moral judgments and attitudes are not organized according to rational principles and a certain behavior pattern and that these are guided by emotions according to the impressions taken from relationships with other people. That is, the criterion in human behavior is not reason but the effects arising from behavior, which are associated with emotions because for behavior to bring approval or disapproval, it has to evoke emotions such as pleasure or pain.

On the other hand, Hume did his research on humankind through a natural science of the human mind, rejecting traditional metaphysics. Since the science of humans is the only solid foundation for other sciences, the solid foundation of this science itself must be experience and observation.⁷ Thus, “the intention of Hume to extend the methods of the Newtonian science as far as this is possible, to human nature itself, and to carry further the work begun by Locke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Butler.”⁸ That means the mind is a “bundle of perception” in the sense that experience is the same thing as perception. Thus, perceptions embrace all the contents of the mind, which are separated into two things: impressions and ideas.⁹

⁷ Hume, Selby-Bigge, and Nidditch, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, xx.

⁸ Frederick C. Copleston, *History of philosophy, Volume 5: Hobbes to Hume* (London: Doubleday, 1994), 261.

⁹ Hume, Selby-Bigge, and Nidditch, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 3.

According to him, while we correspond to what we call impressions, sensations, and perceptions, ideas are what we call concepts or meanings. For example, when I perceive a tree, I have a certain (visual) impression of it; but when I think of a tree, I have an idea of the tree. In other words, he calls the perceptions that carry “vividness impressions”, which include all our senses, passions and emotions, while he calls the thoughts the “less vivid images” of these impressions in thinking and reasoning.¹⁰ In this sense, impressions are alive and strong because they are acquired through the senses, while ideas are what remain in mind after the impressions. That is, they are “copies”, “representations”, or “images” of impressions.

For Hume, who divides the impressions into sensation and reflection, while the impression of a cold accompanied by pain is the impression of sensation, the copy that remains in the mind after the impression is the reflection. Impressions and ideas are also divided into simple and complex. At this point, the following example will be illuminating: When we consider the “red patch”, its perception is a simple impression, and its image is a simple idea. On the other hand, watching Paris from a hill is a complex impression, while its image is a complex idea.¹¹ As it can be seen, for Hume, the components of the mind consist of perceptions. The foundational thing is the impression, and if there is no impression, we can say that there is no idea. Complex ideas are formed by the coming together of distant ideas; therefore, all ideas can be traced back to the impressions from which they are derived. Consequently, no term is meaningful unless it has the impression; that is, it does not express an idea. In this context, it would not be an exaggeration if we say that the meaning of every sentence lies in its sensory or experiential content. In other words, what is called understanding is possible with perception.

Hume takes this understanding much further, makes an investigation of the human mind and divides all meaningful sentences into two. Sentences

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 97-120.

¹¹ Copleston, *History of Philosophy, Volume 5: Hobbes to Hume*, 264.

derived from experiments and sentences derived from relations between ideas (the logical dimension). He explains this distinction as follows.

All the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, relations of ideas and matters of fact. Of the first kind are the sciences of geometry, algebra, and arithmetic, and, in short, every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain.... Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe.... Matters of fact...are not ascertained in the same manner, nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible because it can never imply a contradiction.¹²

Clearly, Hume splits all objects of human reason or inquiry into two. Mathematical propositions fall into the relations of ideas in that they assert the dependent relations between thoughts and only thoughts. Thus, the truth of a mathematical proposition is independent of questions of existence and depends only on the relations between ideas, or the meanings of certain symbols, as it were, and requires no verification from experience. For instance, to say $4+3 = 7$ is not to say anything about the things that exist in themselves; the reality of the proposition is dependent only on the meanings of the terms.¹³ On the other hand, the matters of fact depend on a contingency in the sense that it is possible for any empirical fact to be otherwise. It cannot imply a contradiction because the proposition “the sun will not rise tomorrow” is no less intelligible than the proposition “it will rise”.¹⁴ While there is proof in mathematics, there is causal inference in matters of fact. Therefore, Hume’s critique of causality has a vital role in understanding whether causality is between objects. Hume asks from which impression the causal relation derives, and he thinks that none of the

¹² David Hume and J. B. Schneewind, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1983), 25.

¹³ Copleston, *History of philosophy, Volume 5: Hobbes to Hume*, 274.

¹⁴ Hume and Schneewind, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, 25-26.

things we call causes can be qualitatively the origin of the causal relation. He then asks whether it derives from a relationship between objects.¹⁵

At this point, he detects that all objects considered as causes or effects are contiguous. That is, the fact that two events occur sequentially and in the same place within contiguity and temporal succession leads to what we call causality. Therefore, the principle of causality arises from experience and observation. We often see two objects together, such as the sensation of flame and heat. Here we presuppose an “order of contiguity and succession”, and “without any farther ceremony, we call the one cause and the other effect and infer the existence of the one from that of the other.”¹⁶ In this context, Hume explains causality as a psychological process such that there is no notion of necessary connection but only impressions. The idea of necessary relation is the image of this impression in consciousness. It should be noted here that the existence of causal relationships boils down to a psychological habit. In this regard, it is not justifiable to move from our mental life to external necessities. Since the situation between two events or the situations related to the objects is a matter of fact, the propositions for them are contingent. Only propositions expressing relations between ideas are necessary. In other words, the idea of a necessary connection cannot be derived from the impression of a necessary connection because such an impression does not exist. Hence, the idea of necessity comes from an impression which mind produces due to experiencing regular succession.

Hume follows a similar path in his research on ethics and bases ethical knowledge on emotions. Ethical propositions, therefore, do not fall into either field. Considering Hume’s explanation of the causality principle, it is not surprising that he followed the same road regarding the concept of value. If we consider that the causal relationship is neither in matters of fact nor in the relations of ideas, the concept of value, like causality, is neither a quality specific to objects nor arises from the relations of reason. Indeed, since moral

¹⁵ Hume, Selby-Bigge, and Nidditch, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 1978. 75.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

propositions belong neither in matters of fact nor the relation of ideas, there does not seem to be an impression of values, as in the thought of necessary connection. Value propositions are then meaningless because, to be meaningful, they must either derive from experience or from relations of ideas.

On the other hand, he divides impressions into sensation and reflection. As stated above, he includes all of our sensations, passions, and emotions. It seems that Hume is actually trying to find out from where the impression of moral actions and values derives. So if we have any doubts about a philosophical term as to whether it is meaningful or not, we inquire from what impression it derives. If it is impossible to detect any impression, then the sentence is not meaningful.¹⁷

As in his critique of induction and causality, according to Hume, there is no inductive relationship between the propositions we accept and the evidence we present for them. Therefore, “is” propositions do not constitute satisfactory evidence for “ought propositions”. Also, the second important point of the paragraph is that since moral propositions are neither in “matters of fact” nor in “relation of ideas”, it opens a window into another way of justifying them. At this point, Hume thinks that reason discovers some truths; in other words, it presents the tools used to reach the given results, but it has no effect in terms of action. It cannot convince us to adopt or reject that goal or the other since ethical judgments depend on emotions. He summarizes his justification in the following way:

[T]he final sentence, it is probable, which pronounces characters and actions amiable or odious, praise-worthy or blameable: that which stamps on them the mark of honour or infamy, approbation or censure: that which renders morality an active principle, and constitutes virtue our happiness, and vice our misery: It is probable, I say, that this final sentence depends on some internal sense or feeling, which nature has made universal in the whole species.¹⁸

¹⁷ Hume and Schneewind, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, 22.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

This feeling, which is universal in all species, seems to vary from person to person since it is something that can change according to its quality and severity. Then, it does not seem possible to talk about the truth or falsity of moral judgments that are not already in the relations of fact and reason. Their actions reveal motives, and emotions give us the criteria by which we accept or reject a moral proposition. Hume states his thoughts on virtue and vice and their difference from reason in the following passage.

Thus the distinct boundaries and offices of reason and of taste are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood; the latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one discovers objects, as they really stand in nature, without addition or diminution: the other has a productive faculty, and gilding or staining all natural objects with the colours, borrowed from internal sentiment, raises, in a manner, a new creation.¹⁹

Based on Hume's emphasis on emotions in the field of ethics, he is called the founder of emotivism since being vicious means that we feel a sense of guilt about that action or character.²⁰ In other words, calling someone immoral is related to our feelings towards him. Thus, the distinction between moral good and evil also arises from pleasure or pain. These feelings derive from "the view of any sentiment or character".²¹ There is a universal "feeling of sympathy" between all people in terms of approving some things and rejecting others.²² This situation arises from this feeling coming from the purpose of the human being in his social position. This feeling is what causes us to care for others. "No

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

²⁰ Hume, Selby-Bigge, and Nidditch, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 498.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 546-547.

²² David Hume., *A Treatise of Human Nature: A Critical Edition*, The Clarendon edition of the works of David Hume (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 2007), 309.

man is absolutely indifferent to the happiness and misery of others. The first has a natural tendency to give pleasure; the second, pain.”²³

This sentiment of sympathy arises from an original instinct in humankind, and the sense of justice arises from the tendency towards this feeling because justice is clearly directed to increase society’s benefit and support civilized society. From this perspective, concepts such as sympathy, community interest, and justice are interrelated.²⁴ Since “the feeling of sympathy” serves to determine the right interests of human beings and act according to society’s benefit, it would not be wrong to say that this feeling is justified by social benefit. Thus, it is this sense of sympathy, not reason, that is essential in pursuing the good of society. In this context, *utility* is the source of morally good and what is useful is what causes pleasant feelings. Pleasure leads to approval or approbation, while pain leads to disapproval or censure. Hume states that “what praise is implied in the simple epithet *useful*”²⁵

This state of usefulness gives happiness to the human community, as it derives from the tendency of the human species to advance its interests as a society.²⁶ The utility of society, then, arises from the desire to do “good”. At this point, the feeling of sympathy, which passes from a personal to social interest, stands out as a sentiment rather than an inter-subjective rational unity. There are situations, Hume argues, when personal passions and interests have to take a back seat and when our desires act on behalf of someone else rather than on our own. It is precisely this feeling of sympathy that drives a person to be aware of social interests by removing them from their personal interests. Although virtues appeal to human appreciation and affections, as noted below, they are grounded

²³ Hume and Schneewind, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, 43.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

in the community's social interests because the human being has a strong bond with society. Hume argues that

as much as we value our own happiness and welfare, as much must we applaud the practice of justice and humanity, by which alone the social confederacy can be maintained, and every man reap the fruits of mutual protection and assistance.²⁷

On the other hand, the interest of each individual is closely tied to the interest of the community, and what is useful brings approval because it is pleasant. Thus, usefulness is an interest that benefits someone, and this interest is not only the interest of the person who approves but goes beyond that. Therefore, it becomes the interest of both the character who approves and those to whom the action serves.²⁸ In other words, Hume emphasizes the concept of usefulness in knowing what is good for oneself or for society. But he doesn't seem to justify it rationally because what he calls usefulness is also the source of moral sentiment. Our moral actions and judgments are also revealed as an expression of our emotions. In fact, the issue of common interests does not appear on a rational basis but as a moral feeling.

So far, we have drawn a portrait of Hume's philosophy that highlights moral feeling. However, it will be clearly seen that Hume talks about the universality of this sympathy at some points and the concepts such as the common interests of the society. So, how can there be a picture where the reason is not in the game regarding the determination of these common interests? In other words, how will experiencing common feelings or having a common sympathy gather people around the common good? Understanding these points carries a number of difficulties. However, it seems that Hume draws a system running parallel to the traditional interpretation since moral judgments, as expressions of emotions, can be based neither on "the matters of fact" nor on "the relation of ideas".

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 40

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

In any case, emotions underlie our caring for others and thinking common interests of society. Therefore, the thesis “no ought from is” seems plausible because values depend on emotions. On the other hand, it can be interpreted as a deriving value from facts since the value is grounded in common social interests. Moreover, it should be noted that Hume has some comments on the role of reason in the transition from personal interests to common interests. In the light of these, it can be thought that Hume, as the anti-traditional interpretation suggests, is in search of a moral philosophy that can be justified through observation and experimentation. Now for this latter, it is necessary to look at the common points in his philosophy.

Hume, in his book *Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, argues that people should “reject every system of ethics which is not founded on fact and observation”.²⁹ From this point of view, this statement of Hume seems to contradict the traditional interpretation’s claim that he is against finding for morality a basis which is not already moral. Here, Hume is talking about an understanding of ethics that he can justify with facts and observations. It is not a coincidence that he draws a framework for this task through emotions because he argues that the experimental method, which has been successfully applied in the natural sciences, should also be applied to the study of human beings.³⁰ Thus, he was interested in the kind of data we can obtain from the observation of human psychological processes and moral behaviors.

In addition, when we consider the issue a posteriori, the value of social virtue derives from “feelings of humanity”, that is, from sympathy, and considers the condition of usefulness as a source of approval in all matters. This question of usefulness also applies to all moral decisions regarding the virtue or vice of actions, such as justice.”³¹ Here, one thinks that the concept of the common

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁰ Copleston, *History of philosophy, Volume 5: Hobbes to Hume*, 261.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

interests of society derives from sympathy. However, when we consider Hume's explanation of the concept of justice as a value, he derives it from the factual practices about what people's interests are. So the meaning of justice lies in people's long-term interests.³² Thus, Hume develops a definition of justice based on facts. So justice is useful. Why? To understand this, we have to look at the long-term common interests of people. The important point here is that the grounding of usefulness or the "feeling" for the usefulness of justice is based on facts.

Although Hume says that the source of morality is emotion and that morality is not in the relations of ideas, he also emphasizes the importance of reason in moral actions. He talks about the principles of humanity that have dominance over emotions, and he says that these principles should have authority over our emotions. Well, if a principle has authority over emotion, what is it, if not the involvement of reason at this point? Hume emphasizes that these principles should give us a general ability to approve of what is beneficial to society and a capacity to condemn what is dangerous or harmful. In this sense, we can avoid personal interests and think about the benefit of society.³³ Nevertheless, Hume still thinks that it is this sense of sympathy that drives us to avoid the shadow of personal interests and to think about the benefit of society. In other words, it is not possible for a person to think about society rather than his personal interests with a rational choice, but it is possible if she has the feeling of sympathy. This is because it is easier for reason to push people toward personal interests. So although it is sufficient to educate us about the harmful or beneficial disposition of qualities and actions, it is insufficient to produce a moral condemnation or approbation. Interestingly enough, reason educates us about the disposition of qualities and actions and points to their beneficial

³² David Hume, Lewis A. Selby-Bigge, and P. H. Nidditch, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 2. ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 497.

³³ Hume and Schneewind, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, 47.

consequences for society or the person who has them.³⁴ That is, it plays an active role in distinguishing between what is of common interest or what is useful and what is not. However, it is not sufficient by itself to judge any moral proposition. There is a feeling that manifests itself above the tendencies.

While Hume draws attention to the importance of reason, he also wants to explain why it cannot be the only source of morality. First, the mind makes generalizations and uses analogies instead of examples. Reason can judge either the matters of fact or the relation of ideas. But when it comes to such a moral concept as “the crime of ingratitude”, there is nothing but malice or passion for utter indifference. On the one hand, there are good intentions expressed by good services; on the other hand, there are inadequate services and bad intentions with carelessness. We cannot say that they are vices at all times and under all circumstances.³⁵ However, reason pushes us to act oppositely. Immorality is not a particular fact or relationship that can be the object of understanding but “arises entirely from the sentiment of disapprobation, which by structure of human nature, we unavoidably feel on the apprehension of barbarity or treachery.”³⁶

2.3. Concluding Remarks

On the one hand, Hume says a lot about the role and importance of reason, but on the other hand, he sharply criticizes the understanding that regards reason as the sole source of morality. The former supports the anti-traditional interpretation as he emphasizes the role of reason and derives the good from facts such as social interests. There are also important marks that his aim is a factual and observational moral understanding. From this point of view, the idea that Hume is against the search for a basis for morality which is not already moral is false. When we consider the source of morality as the habit of thinking

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

about the world objectively, leaving our interests aside, it is obvious that a value derives from the concept of common interests as a fact. This is because Hume also states that it is necessary to move from personal interests to the common interests of society and that reason has a role at this stage. From the anti-traditional understanding, although Hume calls it a habit, forming this habit involves a rational process of why we should put personal interests aside and care for common interests. At best, it has become a habit because it is constantly practised if that's what Hume meant. So there is a reflection on emotions and the justification of moral propositions begins with giving up personal interests and turning to common interests. In this case, approval and disapproval lie in considering what is common to all human beings rather than a personal matter of lack of desire or pleasure. That means Hume clearly emphasizes the role of reason for moral propositions and draws evaluative propositions from factual situations. In this respect, Hume wants to say in the paragraph that this transition has not been made legitimately and must be justified. In a way, he seems to be trying to justify morality by reducing it to emotions through facts and observations. In other words, the interpretation of the paragraph that Hume criticizes the transitions made so far between fact and value and seeks a legitimate transition to it seems justified.

On the other hand, although the transition from personal interests to common interests implies the process of reason, for Hume, this transition is based on emotion. That is, those who have a real sense of sympathy can care about the community's social interests. A rational process under reason is the source that pushes us towards self-interest. Here, too, we see that, unlike the ancient Greeks, the concept of rationality for Hume is pretty much different due to his century. The right or the rational and the good do not go in a parallel way. In other words, Hume denies the existence of such a thing as moral *knowledge*. The sense of sympathy inherent in everyone provides unifying ethical power. So, ethics is not derived from relations between objects. In the light of all these, Hume's grounding of the concepts of usefulness and common interests, which are the basis of morality, are based on sympathy in a way that leads to emotivism. The fact that moral propositions are approval and disapproval instead

of being right and wrong, which are made based on emotions, also supports the traditional interpretation.

The important point is whether or not emotions can be regarded as facts for Hume. It is far from an easy question since he divides the scope of human experience as “the relation of ideas” and “the matters of fact” emotions emerge as a third and different domain. However, if we take emotions as some kind of matter of fact, then we can conclude that Hume is a kind of naturalist since he reduces moral judgments to them. Yet, in any case, emotions and “the matters of fact” do not seem to be the same thing because the former does not correspond to mere facts that the natural sciences are interested in. Moreover, as we will see in the next chapter, inheriting Hume’s philosophy, non-cognitivism also reduces moral judgments to emotions and claims that they are not factual.

To conclude, we have enough evidence for the different interpretations of the passage. What is important to understand the fact-value problem better is to make a contextual reading of Hume within the framework of paragraphs and his entire philosophy. When this is done, Hume’s intention to establish an ethical theory based on fact and observation becomes clear. It tries to do this with an emotion-based moral understanding. Explaining the source of moral propositions as emotions and psychological processes independent of fact and reason has caused him to be called the founder of emotivism. However, it is worth noting that Hume does not completely remove reason from moral processes.

Since this chapter aims to determine the starting point of the fact-value problem and to determine where traditional and anti-traditional interpretations correspond in Hume’s philosophy, it does not involve analyzing the interpretations of Hume’s paragraph one by one and revealing what he wants to express because that would be a different thesis topic. In this way, it is an entry to explain how the traditional interpretation treats Hume in this way, how non-cognitivism benefits from it and how the distinction between fact and value is widened. In the next chapter, there will be analyses and discussions from non-cognitivist and cognitivist literature on how this gap deepens with the traditional interpretation.

CHAPTER 3

DICHOTOMY AFTER HUME: NON-COGNITIVISM AND COGNITIVISM

Metaethical theories deal with three kinds of problems. The first one concerns the ontological status of moral facts, which involves whether there are moral facts. This question brings another problem: If there are moral facts, then are they similar to scientific facts? Moreover, it involves searching for whether moral concepts such as “good” or “evil” are qualities of objects. The second problem belongs to moral epistemology, which examines whether moral concepts have the status of knowledge and whether they can be true or false. In other words, it investigates how we reach the knowledge of moral concepts and what their basis is. For example, can we get knowledge of moral concepts through rational reasoning, or are moral judgments merely expressions of our beliefs and emotional behavior?

On the other hand, the third problem holds a more extensive question about how we justify our moral judgements, which needs an investigation of the first and the second problems. The answer requires both the ontological state of ethical concepts and judgments and knowing how to reach their source of knowledge. In other words, the question of how we ground our moral judgments exposes the is-ought dichotomy we are dealing with. Therefore, it is a problem whether moral judgments can be derived from factual propositions and whether the value will be based on facts. In this sense, the fact-value problem constitutes a significant epistemological problem for meta-ethical theories.

Based on Hume’s traditional interpretation, the answers to these first two questions continue to recreate the characteristics of the fact-value problem. Since “Hume’s Law represents a metaphysical dichotomy between ‘matters of fact’

and ‘relations of ideas,’³⁷ this brings along with an epistemological distinction. Non-cognitivism, whose main argument is that there is an unbridgeable gap between fact and value, emphasizes the impossibility of deducing evaluative statements from factual propositions. Naturalism, one of the cognitivist theories about the fact-value problem, remains within the conceptualizations of traditional interpretation and holds that evaluative propositions are not different from factual propositions because both fields have the same research objects, and what is called value can be a natural property of objects. Intuitionism, as another cognitivist approach, argues that moral concepts can be cognitively meaningful, although it accepts the distinction between fact and value. However, it will be argued that the effort to solve the fact-value problem will lead to a non-cognitivist view and new concerns about the dichotomy rather than eliminating it. Thus, in this chapter, non-cognitivist and cognitivist theories will be discussed through their primary representative thinkers, and the situation of the problem in terms of cognitivism and non-cognitivism will be revealed.

3.1. Emotivism and the Legacy of Non-Cognitivism

Hume’s distinction between “matters of fact” and “relations of ideas” and the traditional interpretation of his is-ought paragraph seem to enforce the idea that there is an incompatible gap between fact and value. The fact that moral judgements as evaluative statements are not presented in Hume’s distinction leads to a consideration that they are out of reason and represent untestable human behavior due to depending on emotions. From this perspective, emotivists regard Hume as the first defender of their view since it holds that moral judgements as expressions of our feelings are neither factual nor rational. According to emotivism, moral statements merely express our emotions but do not define what is judged to be moral and show only subjective feelings, not objective properties.

³⁷ Hilary Putnam, David MacArthur, and Mario De Caro, *Philosophy in an Age of Science: Physics, Mathematics, and Skepticism* (Cambridge MA: Harvard university press, 2012), 14.

As a defender of the fact-value dichotomy, non-cognitivism counts them as epistemologically and ontologically two different things. Factual statements are empirically verifiable statements that give them a kind of objectivity. On the other hand, evaluative statements cannot be empirically and objectively justified, so they are subjective, contingent and emotion-based. Ayer and Stevenson are the most notable thinkers in that they are radical emotivists inheriting Hume's legacy and advocating the fact-value dichotomy. In this respect, both emphasize that nothing but the natural sciences is objective. According to this argument, while science deals only with facts, is impartial, objective and therefore value-free, values are unstable and unrealistic.³⁸ Obviously, this perspective presupposes that the function or primary purpose of our cognitive knowledge requires a field of thought that is an accurate and objective representation of "reality", but this too is an "intellectual myth".³⁹ Indeed, non-cognitivist theories, especially in terms of ethics, have "intense restricted understanding" since, based on Hume's distinction, they advocate many dualisms about some concepts such as fact-value and descriptive-evaluative propositions, rationality and emotion, science and ethics.⁴⁰

It can, therefore, easily be seen that emotivism widely represents the logical positivist view of ethics. Based on Hume's distinction of meaningful sentences, logical positivism, which deepens this distinction, inherited his emotion-based ethics and carried it even further. The ethical understanding of Alfred Julius Ayer, one of the most influential advocates of logical positivism, can be seen as applying the famous verifiability principle of logical positivism to ethics. On the other hand, Charles Leslie Stevenson developed his emotive understanding of ethics with the use of language, and the fact-value distinction

³⁸ Giancarlo Marchetti and Sarin Marchetti, *Facts and Values: The Ethics and Metaphysics of Normativity*, Routledge Studies in Contemporary Philosophy (New York (N.Y.): Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 3.

³⁹ Gemma Corradi Fiumara, *The Mind's Affective Life: A Psychoanalytic and Philosophical Inquiry* (London-Philadelphia: Brunner-Routledge, 2001), 76.

⁴⁰ Marchetti and Marchetti, *Facts and Values: The Ethics and Metaphysics of Normativity*, 3.

has become a sharp distinction that is increasingly accepted. In this framework, Ayer and Stevenson are selected as the representatives of non-cognitivism and will be discussed within the framework of the fact-value problem.

3.1.1. Alfred Jules Ayer

As a radical emotivist, Ayer fundamentally opposes ethical naturalism and intuitionism, which advocate that there are moral facts or truths and that the method to reach them is reason or intuition. He argues that they are untenable theories since they are incapable of an objective criterion for verifiability of evaluative judgements. He criticizes them not because he thinks their standard is independent of sense data but because there is no such criterion at all.⁴¹ The main point that logic positivists have in common is that propositions can be divided into two categories: meaningful and meaningless. The problem of criterion regarding the meaning of the propositions is the most fundamental issue. The way of thinking which denies the existence of synthetic a priori propositions in a Kantian sense divides meaningful propositions into analytic and synthetic. While only experience can decide the truth of synthetic propositions, logical and mathematical truths are analytical truths, and their truth depends on the terms they contain. In this sense, Ayer thinks that moral judgments do not have cognitive content and belong neither to analytic nor synthetic propositions. Because if they did, there would be objectivity in the field of ethics that everyone could accept, just like in natural sciences or mathematics.

Ayer divides the content of the ordinary ethical system into four classes. First, there are propositions that articulate “definitions of ethical terms or judgments about the legitimacy or possibility of certain definitions”. Second, some propositions describe “phenomena of moral experiences and their causes”. Third, there are “exhortations to moral virtue”. And finally, there are “actual moral judgments”. He thinks that the distinction between these four classes is clear and that moral philosophy falls within only the first. In other words, ethics

⁴¹ Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, Repr (New York: Dover Publications, 1952), 108.

involves propositions regarding the definitions of ethical terms.⁴² Therefore, ethics is the elucidation and clarification of the meanings of moral terms. In addition, propositions about the moral experience, which fall into the second category, fall into the field of psychology. The third and fourth classes are not made up of real propositions; they are exclamations or orders that seek to warn the reader to act in a certain way. In this respect, they do not belong to a branch of philosophy or sciences.⁴³ As can be seen, Ayer rejects normative ethics and attempts to reduce moral terms to non-moral ones as much as possible. He calls irreducible ethical propositions meaningless, that is, “pseudo-science” and reducible propositions “scientific”. He investigates whether value propositions can be translated into empirical statements. In other words, he looks at whether our explanation of empirical assumptions can also be applied to moral assumptions.⁴⁴

It should be noted that, for Ayer, “there are only two ways for a proposition to be meaningful: being logical or being factual. Evaluative judgements are neither factual nor logical since we cannot treat them as objects of rationality or natural sciences.”⁴⁵ If ethical propositions do not fall into either, they must be grounded in another way, which is only for understanding the meanings of ethical concepts, not the justification of any moral concept or imperative. Thus, ethical propositions are expressions of emotions. Let's explain with an example:

[I]f I say to someone, “You acted wrongly in stealing that money,” I am not stating anything more than if I had simply said, “You stole that money.” In adding that this action is wrong I am not making any further statement about it. I am simply evincing my moral disapproval of it. It is as if I had said, “You stole that money,” in a peculiar tone of horror, or written it with the addition of some

⁴² *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 103

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁴⁵ Marchetti and Marchetti, *Facts and Values: The Ethics and Metaphysics of Normativity*, 9.

special exclamation marks. The tone, or the exclamation marks, adds nothing to the literal meaning of the sentence. It merely serves to show that the expression of it is attended by certain feelings in the speaker.⁴⁶

It is worth noting here that Ayer simply thinks that a person arguing a certain action is right does not necessarily mean that she approves of that action since people can also approve of bad things. Taking Hume's idea further, he states that "it cannot be the case that the sentence "x is good" is equivalent to "x is pleasant" or to "x is desired." Since some things are not good even though they are pleasurable, some bad things are not good when they are pleasurable, or some bad things can be desired even though they are bad. The validity of normative moral judgments cannot be determined either by the actions leading to happiness or by the nature of human emotions; their validity should be regarded as "absolute" or "intrinsic" that cannot be calculated empirically. He argues that sentences containing normative ethical concepts in our language are not equivalent to sentences expressing psychological or empirical propositions.⁴⁷

Therefore, Ayer claims that descriptive ethical propositions should be taken into account, while sentences containing normative ethical concepts cannot be explained. We can clearly conclude that the normative ethical concepts can apply to all "ought" sentences. What he means by a descriptive sentence is a sentence expressing a specific behavior contrary to society's moral sense. However, the same sentence can also express a particular moral judgment about a certain behavior. For example, the sentence "x is bad" can be used as a description in the first case and in a normative way in the second case. In this case, the sentence used in the first case expresses an ordinary experimental and sociological proposition. In contrast, in the second case, it can mean "x is wrong", which does not express any empirical proposition.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, 107.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

From this point of view, moral terms that fall within the scope of normative ethics are pseudo-concepts, and pertinent propositions are the ones that are somewhat similar to true propositions but cannot be analyzed and verified. Criticizing intuitionism, he argues that there is no criterion for intuition when it comes to moral judgments because there is no criterion by which we can decide between inconsistent intuitions. He, therefore, explores the possibility of a third view compatible with empiricism. According to him, this is obvious the fact that “a synthetic proposition is significant only if it is empirically verifiable.”⁴⁹ Since judgments containing normative ethical concepts do not add anything to the content of the proposition, the sentence “you acted wrongly in stealing that money” does not convey anything more than the sentence “you stole that money”. When I say “this action is wrong” from an empirical point of view, I make no further statement; I am merely stating that I morally disapprove of the action. Moral judgements serve to show what kind of emotions the speaker is going through at that moment. Since I am not making a real proposition here, it is pointless to ask which is right, no matter what proposition is made regarding the issue of stealing. They do not directly express anything about the facts; they do not serve to make an argument about a certain object. They express the human ethical feeling about phenomena. They do not have an empirical response in expressing emotions, so they cannot be right or wrong.⁵⁰ As a result, they do not fall into the category of truth and falsehood as mere expressions of emotion.⁵¹

Thus, propositions containing prescriptive judgments such as “ought”, “good”, and “wrong” are meaningless. The only thing they express is emotional states. On the other hand, ethics is only the examination and analysis of descriptive ethical sentences. Propositions containing value judgments are as

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 108.

meaningful as they are empirical and descriptive and meaningless if they are not. The following statement makes it possible to see what ethics means for Ayer.

[T]here cannot be such a thing as ethical science, if by ethical science one means the elaboration of a “true” system of morals. For we have seen that, as ethical judgments are mere expressions of feeling, there can be no way of determining the validity of any ethical system, and, indeed, no sense in asking whether any such system is true.⁵²

The only thing we can legitimately investigate in this context is the moral habits of a particular person or community and why they have these habits and feelings. That’s why this research falls entirely within the field of social sciences. In this sense, it turns out that ethics is nothing but a branch of psychology and sociology. Since moral expressions do not have an absolute and universal meaning and do not have objective manifestations, their meanings also vary from person to person. These meanings can only be revealed by the emotions expressed by the terms and the reactions they cause. Since there are no criteria to validate our moral judgments, they are reduced to exclamations and imperatives, and their truth and falsity cannot be spoken of; it can be said that Ayer’s understanding of ethics has absolute subjectivism, absolute skepticism, and even nihilism.⁵³

In this understanding of ethics, it is not possible to reason about moral principles and the nature of morality since there is no system of values or norms. Indeed, in Ayer’s ethics, moral reasoning and discussion become impossible because reasoning and discussion on moral issues presuppose the existence of a certain value system. However, Ayer, who regards ethics as a branch of psychology and sociology, does not accept the existence of such a system of values and says that it is not possible to argue about the validity of moral values and principles, even if they are accepted in some way. According to him, we praise or condemn such principles solely based on our feelings.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵³ William S. Sahakian, *Ethics: An Introduction to Theories and Problems*, Barnes & Nobles College Outline Series (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1974), 214-215.

3.1.2. Charles Leslie Stevenson

Although he is a non-cognitivist thinker, Stevenson focuses on the possibility of moral discussion. Unlike Hume and Ayer, he opposes the traditional theories of interest that moral judgements are solely expressions of our emotions, and ethics is nothing but the branch of psychology.⁵⁴ However, in terms of this discussion ground, although moral propositions contain rational truths and justifications, in the final analysis, they do not make a rational call; they aim to follow a strategy of persuading the other by arousing emotion and excitement. Then, analysis and meta-ethics first need to be done in the field of ethics. Stevenson begins his research on language and analysis of ethical judgements. He attempts to give a definition that satisfies three conditions for the ordinary meaning of “good”. First, we need to be able to reasonably disagree on whether something is “good” or not. Secondly, “goodness” must be somehow appealing. Finally, the “goodness” of anything should not be verifiable using the scientific method alone. In other words, unlike Ayer and Hume, he thinks that ethics should not be mere psychology and that these three conditions exclude the traditional theories of interest without exception.

Stevenson emphasizes that there is a definition of “good” satisfying these three conditions and that he wants to put forward something new by opposing traditional theories.⁵⁵ In addition to the fact that no traditional approach of interest satisfies these conditions, Stevenson ironically adds that what is needed to meet this condition is not a Platonic idea, a Categorical Imperative or seeing “good” as a uniquely unanalyzable or undefinable quality either.⁵⁶ In order to satisfy these three conditions, we must abandon the presupposition that traditional interest theories hold. According to Stevenson’s critique of tradition, all traditional theories of interest, including Ayer, argue that moral statements

⁵⁴ W. D. Hudson, *Modern Moral Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 115.

⁵⁵ Charles Leslie Stevenson, “Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms”, *Mind* XLVI, (1937), 16.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

are descriptions of the existing state of interest and only inform us about interests. This presupposition is true, but it is not sufficient on its own. There is always some descriptive element in moral judgments, but this is not entirely so. The main use of these judgments is not “to indicate facts but to create an influence.”⁵⁷ Instead of merely describing people’s interests, they modify or reinforce them. They suggest interest in an object rather than expressing the interest in question already exists.⁵⁸

For Stevenson, who emphasizes the importance of the effects of moral judgments on attitudes, the point of telling someone “do not steal” is not just to let people know that they disapprove of stealing. Rather, it attempts to get the other person to disapprove of it. Moral judgments have a “quasi-imperative force” that “operating through suggestion, and intensified by your tone of voice, readily permits you to begin to influence, to modify, his interests.”⁵⁹ In other words, it is possible to say that moral judgment not only describes the interests of the person but also directs the interest itself. In this sense, moral terms for Stevenson are tools used in complex relationships and the reorganization of human interests. People in societies that differ greatly from each other have different moral attitudes because they were exposed to widely different social influences.⁶⁰

Continuing his research on meaning, Stevenson tries to understand how moral sentences have a power to influence people. Two different purposes push us to use the language. The first is “to record, clarify, and communicate beliefs”—as in science—while the second is “to give vent to our feelings (interjections), or to create moods (poetry), or to incite people to actions or attitudes (oratory).” Arguing that this distinction depends entirely on the

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

speaker's purpose, Stevenson calls the first use of language "descriptive" and the second use "dynamic".⁶¹ The descriptive meaning is about the field of cognition or science and refers to a sign's "disposition to affect cognition".⁶² Accordingly, terms with a descriptive meaning and the propositions containing these terms can be true or false because they say something about the world, describe facts, and convey beliefs.

When a person says "Hydrogen is the lightest known gas", his purpose may be simply to lead the hearer to believe this or to believe that the speaker believes it. In that case the words are used descriptively. When a person cuts himself and says, "Damn", his purpose is not ordinarily to record, clarify, or communicate any belief. The word is used dynamically. The two ways of using words, however, are by no means mutually exclusive. This is obvious from the fact that our purposes are often complex. Thus when one says "I want you to close the door", part of his purpose, ordinarily, is to lead the hearer to believe that he has this want. To that extent the words are used descriptively. But the major part of one's purpose is to lead the hearer to satisfy the want. To that extent the words are used dynamically.⁶³

At this point, Stevenson suggests that moral judgments are not only descriptive but, more importantly, dynamic judgments and words associated with the dynamic use of language are called "emotional meaning". A word's emotional meaning emerges from its historical usage and produces emotional reactions in people. In other words, it is possible to say that the meanings of moral judgments are emotional. According to him, saying "you lied" to someone has an emotional meaning rather than a determination or a description and can turn into an accusation. So the more specific the emotional meaning of a word, the less likely people will use it as purely descriptive.⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶² Charles L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (London: Yale University Press, 1945), 70.

⁶³ Stevenson, "Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms", 21.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

In order to define “good”, Stevenson primarily investigates the condition of disagreement. There is a distinction between “disagreement in belief” and “disagreement in interest,” as is typically the case in the sciences.⁶⁵ He proposes that ethical disagreement is disagreement in interest. This allows us to think that ethics is not a matter of belief or knowledge which can involve truth or falsity. Rather, it is about people’s interests, and the disagreement that rises above them is based on interests and emotions. Where C says, “This is good”, and D says, “No, it is bad,” there is a case of “suggestion” and “counter-suggestion”. Each is trying to divert the attention of the other.⁶⁶ In this regard, what is good is not something that can be rationally known but something that can be understood through emotions, and it varies according to people’s interests. The second condition is about one’s attraction to “good”. Someone who sees X as good must have a powerful desire to get it. In other words, “good” should be something attractive.

The third condition is that the scientific method is not sufficient for ethics. We regard the scientific method can be applicable in ethics, but only because our knowledge of the world determines our interests. In other words, our knowledge of facts determines our interests, and thus we make moral judgments on interests. Although this explanation seems like an idea that we derive value through facts, for Stevenson, empirical facts are not the inductive basis on which moral judgments emerge problematically. That is, he supports the idea that value statements cannot be logically deduced from factual statements, agreeing with Hume’s traditional interpretation.

On the other hand, it would not be strange to think that we somehow derived an understanding of value by depending on facts because, based on them, we produce reasons for our moral arguments. For example, A and B disagree about where to go—cinema or symphony. Although the example is different from the arguments in which prescriptive ethical concepts are used, it

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

can be seen as similar to changing other people's interests. Stevenson takes the example as follows.

Clearly, they would give "reasons" to support their imperatives. A might say, "But you know, Garbo is at the Bijou". His hope is that B, who admires Garbo, will acquire a desire to go to the cinema when he knows what play will be there. B may counter, "But Toscanini is guest conductor to-night, in an all-Beethoven programme". And so on. Each supports his imperative ("Let's do so and so") by reasons which may be empirically established.

If A and B, instead of using imperatives, had said, respectively, "It would be better to go to the cinema", and "It would be better to go to the symphony", the reasons which they would advance would be roughly the same.⁶⁷

In this manner, the scientific method is related to ethics since our knowledge about the world determines our interests. Clearly, if we genuinely need facts to establish our moral judgements, then a considerable consequence follows. According to Stevenson, we cannot logically derive value statements from factual statements, but we somehow justify our moral arguments by giving factual reasons. Historically speaking, Stevenson, like Ayer, embraces Hume's traditional interpretation, and thus he sees the issue as "deduction". If someone said "close the door" and added the reason "we will catch a cold", the latter is the rarely inductive basis of the former.⁶⁸ In other words, the argument that "we will be cold" cannot always be a reason for the inductively closing the door argument. On the other hand, since moral judgments are used to express emotions and influence the attitudes of others, these judgments and the justifications for them cannot be reduced to natural concepts, no matter how factual and rational they seem. While scientific discourse is informative, ethical discourse primarily seeks to influence the attitudes of others.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶⁹ G. J. Warnock, *Contemporary Moral Philosophy*, New Studies in Ethics (Basingstoke London: Macmillan, 1967), 70.

The scientific method is not enough to agree on moral judgements since it is about the disagreement in belief rather than disagreement in interest. For example, A has a sympathetic nature, and B is not. They argue among themselves whether “the public dole” is good or not and suppose they uncover all the consequences of that aid. Even so, A can say that help is good, and B can say it is not. The disagreement in interest may not be due to limited factual knowledge but simply because A is sympathetic and B is cold.⁷⁰ In other words, here, we can talk about a disagreement in an interest based on the characters of A and B persons rather than factuality. Interestingly, Stevenson speaks of the predominant self-interests inherent in humans. However, it seems contradictory to distinguish between fact and value and design a concept of human nature as sympathetic or cold. If human nature has innate value, it seems problematic to treat fact and value as two separate things. However, since for Stevenson, for example, tolerance emerges as an emotion rather than a value, that is, values manifest mainly as feelings, non-cognitivism seems to be able to eliminate it in this way.

Since the disagreements in moral issues are disagreements in interest, there are no rational methods to solve them. Yet, Stevenson thinks there is a way around it anyway. He says that this way, which will ensure agreement, is persuasive even if it is not rational and experimental. On the other hand, ethics is not reduced to psychology because psychology does not work to direct our interests; it discovers facts about how our interests are or can be directed.⁷¹ According to Stevenson, the field of ethics has to be an area where people with different interests, desires, lifestyles, temperaments and value judgments come face to face and fall into conflict.⁷² That is, since disputes in ethics will involve contrasting individuals’ attitudes, aspirations, wishes and preferences, the way to resolve this conflict is not rational but persuasive.

⁷⁰ Stevenson, “Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms”, 29.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

⁷² Stevenson, *Ethics and Language*, 136-137.

His analysis of moral judgments satisfies three conditions for the typical meaning of the good. He argues that the traditional interest theories fail to meet these conditions because they neglect emotional meaning. This neglect leads to their neglect of dynamic use, the method of resolving disagreements, and problems arising from their method. He thinks that the following criticism can be raised against his theory; when we ask if something is good, there is more than just being influenced by advice, persuasion or supported scientific knowledge about it. These are not satisfactory. The only reason for this is that truth of its own—a truth to be grasped a priori will reveal itself to us. To replace this particular truth with purely emotional meaning and purely factual truth is to distance ourselves from the object of our investigation. Such an answer is not something comprehensible because he is against an undefinable understanding of the good that intuitively expresses itself.⁷³ However, he does not deny that there is a rational persuasion in the matter of persuasion. Suppose one cannot influence the other person's beliefs with rational methods in a way that will cause a change in his attitude. In that case, he will inevitably use non-rational methods by directly turning to the other person's attitude. These irrational methods are what Stevenson defines as persuasion techniques in a general category. That means it is based on words' emotional effect and is directed immediately at one's attitude.⁷⁴ Then, we cannot talk about truth or falsity in persuasion.

3.2. Naturalism

In contrast to non-cognitivism, cognitivist theories argue that moral judgements do not express emotions but beliefs and can have truth value.⁷⁵

⁷³ Stevenson, "Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms", 30-31.

⁷⁴ Sahakian, *Ethics: An Introduction to Theories and Problems*, 219-20.

⁷⁵ Alexandre Miller, *An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press and Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 8.

When naturalism is considered, having a truth value is taken to be about whether a moral statement or concept has a reference in the world. The criteria of how a moral statement is true or false are determined by a fact about the world constitutively independent of human opinion. This means that an “ought” statement about values can be explained by an “is” statement about facts. Then, moral facts exist independently of the agent, and since moral terms correspond to some moral facts, moral judgments also express these facts. From this point of view, morality exists as a set of facts in the world to be perceived by individuals. If research in the scientific field is carried out with a method based on facts, the same method can be used in the field of ethics. In this sense, all moral concepts must be open to empirical inquiry. According to the naturalist understanding, all qualities can be explained by natural or physical qualities, and the knowledge about them depends on experiment and observation.⁷⁶ Thus, it follows for Naturalism that moral beliefs, emotions, and preferences must also originate from empirically explainable natural conditions and dimensions of humans.⁷⁷ In other words, Naturalism claims that moral qualities such as the “goodness” of persons or character traits have precisely the same status as natural qualities studied by natural science and psychology.⁷⁸ That’s why naturalists are broadly known as reductionists since they attempt to explain moral terms with some natural characteristics and argue that moral qualities cannot be a genre on their own apart from this explanation. Moreover, they generally developed theories that define moral terms with natural qualities such as “what is desired”, “what is pleasurable”, “what increases happiness”, or “what increases life expectancy”.

⁷⁶ Terry Horgan and Mark Timmons, “New Wave Moral Realism Meets Moral Twin Earth”, *Foundations of Ethics: An Anthology*, ed. Russ Shafer-Landau and Terence Cuneo, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2007), 495-496.

⁷⁷ Stephen L. Darwall, “How Should Ethics Relate to Philosophy”, *Metaethics After Moore*, ed. Terry Horgan and Mark Timmons (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 2006), 27-28.

⁷⁸ N.L Sturgeon, “Ethical Naturalism”, *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*, ed. David Copp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 92.

Naturalism argues that this identification between moral concepts and natural properties is similar to the combination of secondary qualities⁷⁹ such as color with physical things, so moral properties can be taken as qualities that derive from physical events and actions and are a part of them.⁸⁰ Then, he does not distinguish between fact and value because values are the property of facts.

It is crucial to state that there is a disagreement among different naturalists regarding whether moral judgements can be reduced to natural properties. For example, Cornell's realism objects to this kind of reduction.⁸¹ However, within the context of this thesis, only the naturalists who defend the reduction will be considered. Among the prominent figures in naturalist cognitivism, Moritz Schlick takes the lead.

3.2.1. Moritz Schlick's Naturalism

Emotivism shuts down all means of obtaining an empirical thesis about moral judgments or criteria such as objectivity and impersonality. However, despite coming from a logical positivist view, Schlick criticizes non-cognitivism and argues that the science of morality can be made and moral judgments can be right or wrong.

Naturalism opposes the explanation of moral terms in a non-empirical intuitive way. Thus, it attempts to explain moral propositions with factual or natural features. It defends the idea that the science of morality can be done and sees the field of morality as a branch of psychology, natural sciences or social sciences. It claims that moral judgments, like other scientific or empirical propositions, are testable or verifiable by the scientific or experimental method.

⁷⁹ For the distinction between primary and secondary qualities see also, John Locke and R. S. Woolhouse, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: New York : Penguin Books, 1997).

⁸⁰ Jeff Bell, "Moral Realism", in *Ethics*, ed. John K. Roth and Kent Rasmussen, Rev. ed (Pasadena, Calif.: Salem Press, 2005),

⁸¹ Alexander Miller, *An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics*, 8.

Naturalism argues that they are factual by reducing values to some natural features (natural behavior, desire, instinct, interest, etc.). Then, the fact-value problem for naturalism does not exist in such a way that ethical propositions are evaluated within the status of knowledge because they can be true or false and are not excluded from rational discourse.

Schlick strongly opposes metaphysical explanations and, thinking that ethics is an empirical discipline, applies the analysis method he uses in the field of knowledge to the problems of ethics and the theory of value.⁸² Accordingly, human behavior is not governed by a set of moral principles but rather determined by pleasures. Considering that the fundamental problem of ethics is related to the causal explanation of moral behavior, Schlick argues that it belongs nowhere other than in the branch of psychology.⁸³ True moral explanation only begins where the theory of norms ends because ethics is not about the normative but the factual.⁸⁴ From this point of view, Schlick explains value and evaluation.

“Value”, “the good” are mere abstractions, but valuation, approbation, are actual psychic occurrences, and separate acts of this sort are quite capable of explanation, that is, can be reduced to one another.⁸⁵

Values are related to facts as they are abstractions. Since evaluations are seen as psychological processes, they can be considered as reactions to pleasant or unpleasant events, which Schlick expresses as follows:

⁸² Béla Juhos, “Moritz Schlick”, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York, 1967), 323.

⁸³ Moritz Schlick, *Problems of Ethics*, trans. by David Rynin (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939), 28-29.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

[T]he moral precepts are nothing but the expressions of the desires of human society; in the moral valuation of definite acts or dispositions as good or bad is mirrored only the measure of joy or sorrow that society expects to receive from those acts or dispositions.⁸⁶

He is therefore concerned not with moral principles but with the human motives that motivate behavior to provide a causal explanation for moral action. He asks the following questions: What factors lead a person to be moral or immoral? What motives one to play an active role in moral actions?⁸⁷ His answer to these questions is that when people implement their moral decisions and actions, they do so with the expectation of pleasant results.⁸⁸ In this sense, moral judgments for Schlick vary depending on the wishes and desires of individuals. He can be compared to Hume in his thought that ethical concepts such as “good” are reduced to pleasure. Still, on the other hand, he differs from Hume in seeing it as a factual situation in which the value of an object causes a feeling of pleasure or pain in a subject who feels the thought of that object.⁸⁹ Schlick is called a naturalist because he bases ethics on psychology and reduces it to natural concepts such as desire and interest, but he also supports a cognitivist view since he argues that ethical judgments can be right or wrong. Indeed, he shares a similar point with Hume in that he reduces ethical concepts to concepts such as desire or interest. However, unlike Schlick, moral judgments cannot be true or false for Hume since the latter’s theory for morality is an emotion-based theory, and he makes a sharp distinction between “matters of fact” and “relations of ideas”.

Schlick proposes that the main task of ethics is to explain moral behavior. The science of psychology, like other sciences, accepts the principle of causality

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

in accordance with the idea that all events are subject to universal laws. Thus, he claims that the explanation of human behavior must also assume the validity of causal laws, that is, the existence of the laws of psychology.⁹⁰ In this regard, Schlick answers the question of why we act the way we do by saying that because we obey a psychological law. Thus, the motivation that provides the highest pleasure and the least pain out of all motivations related to behavior has the chance to replace other motivations.

According to Schlick, who questions what the moral good is, individuals who act on the basis of their own interests at the beginning, considering the things that will bring them pleasure, at a later stage, come to act in a way that takes into account the pleasure or benefit of other members of the society.⁹¹ Then, moral good is defined by actions that benefit society. In other words, Schlick presents a pleasure-based understanding of moral good by moving from the perspective of one's own pleasure to one that takes care of the interests of others. We must now proceed to an important question: On what rational justification is the motivation of the person to take care of the public interest from his own self-interest? Schlick argues that an "enlightened" agent can see that social impulses, acting in the interests of others or for the benefit of society, constitute the most important pillar of a happy life.⁹² Thus, the concrete meaning of moral good is determined by factual contexts such as society's benefits.

Schlick criticizes the ideas of non-cognitivist ethics in terms of the meaningfulness of moral judgments. On the other hand, the common point between them is that there are no synthetic a priori propositions and that meaningful judgments are either analytical or synthetic. Whereas the general logical positivist position claims, as we saw with Ayer and Stevenson, that non-cognitive emotive theory is the only way to explain moral propositions, Schlick argues that moral judgments have cognitive content because they, in turn,

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 186.

correspond to synthetic propositions in the logical positivist distinction. Thus, for him, the meanings of ethical propositions are not a priori but can be determined empirically by experience and observation. From this point of view, Schlick thinks it is possible to determine the meaning of moral concepts such as “good”, even if it is impossible to explain what they really are.

3.3. Moore’s Intuitionism

While naturalists argue that moral facts and properties exist independently of the human mind or beliefs and that these properties are identical with natural properties that are the subject of natural sciences, intuitionists strictly reject that they are not identical to natural properties and cannot be reduced to them. In other words, the latter is against finding a non-moral ground for morality and argues that moral properties are non-natural properties. Thus, these moral terms are unanalyzable primitive terms, and the truth of the basic moral principles or value judgments containing them is intuitively grasped, and these judgments are self-evidently true.⁹³ Naturalist and intuitionist theories have a common point that moral judgments have truth values, and there can be moral knowledge. Among the cognitivist theories, the discussions about the fact-value problem are based on the relationship between natural features and moral concepts or judgments. From this point of view, the most significant reaction to reductionist naturalism comes from the famous intuitive thinker G. E. Moore.

G. E. Moore explored the nature of morality and how the “good” should be defined in his book *Principia Ethica* published in 1903. In this book, he contributed to the fact-value distinction without reference to Hume, claiming that moral concepts cannot be reduced to natural properties and cannot be explained with facts. On the other hand, he tried to solve the dilemma of ethical knowledge from an intuitive cognitivist point of view by arguing that moral propositions are meaningful and can be true or false.

⁹³ William K. Frankena, *Ethics*, Prentice-Hall Foundations of Philosophy Series (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1988), 85-86.

3.3.1. The Concept of “Good” as Undefinable Property and the “Open Question Argument”

In his research into the nature of morality and the definition of “good”, Moore first explains what it means to define something. For example, when considering moral concepts, defining something is describing its true nature, not analyzing what it is used for, as naturalism and non-cognitivism do. Moreover, defining something is possible only if it is something that is not simple but a complex concept that can be broken down into parts.⁹⁴ According to him, the concept of “good” is not something definable since it is not a complex concept that can be broken down into parts.

He tries to explain this idea with an analogy he makes between the color yellow and the concept of “good”. According to him, both are undefinable properties because they cannot be broken down into smaller parts. Just as you cannot explain yellow to someone who does not know what yellow is, you cannot explain “good” to someone who does not know what “good” is. A concept of a horse can be defined because it has many different features that we can count, but just like yellow, the concept of good cannot be defined because it is a simple concept; that is, it does not have features that can be divided into parts.⁹⁵ In this sense, “good” is not a particular object or entity but a simple property ascribed to particular entities. Therefore, “good” is different from what it predicates and cannot be identical to it. For example, let’s say the subject is “pleasure”, where the good is the predicate. When it is said that “pleasure is good”, the definition of good cannot be “pleasure”. So pleasure alone cannot be the definition of good because if it were, it would become the good itself. Then, the concept of good cannot be defined.

⁹⁴ G. E. Moore and Thomas Baldwin, *Principia Ethica*, Rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 27.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

To further defend the view that the concept of “good” is indefinable, Moore proposes the “Open Question Argument”. Accordingly, in order for something to be definable, the questions we ask about the object and concept attempted to be defined must be “closed questions”. By closed questions, he means that what is said is understood by everyone, without the need for other questions and without causing confusion.⁹⁶ For example, when a person is told that he is single, it is understood that he is unmarried, or when an object is said to be square, it is understood by everyone that it has four equal sides and four right angles.⁹⁷ In other words, if we can define x as y and then get an answer when we ask whether a particular x is y, which is widely understood, we can say that this is a closed question.

On the other hand, in open questions, if we define x as y, we can ask whether a particular x is y, and we cannot define x as y, then this is an open question.⁹⁸ For example, when we say that pleasure is good, we can ask whether pleasure is good; that is, we have a chance to ask whether pleasure corresponds to good. At this point, we need to ask whether what we give as the definition of good is good itself. When we ask this question, we cannot get an answer for good and cannot define the concept because when we say something is pleasurable, we cannot necessarily and explicitly say it is good.⁹⁹ From this point of view, the definitions which were made for the concept of good so far for Moore are not identical to good itself but features that can mean different things. For example, concepts such as pleasure and “desired thing” do not define the good and have different meanings from it. So, he argues with the “Open Question Argument” that the good is the undefinable property and irreducible to anything else.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁹⁷ Andrew Fisher, *Metaethics: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2011), 13.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹⁹ Moore and Baldwin, *Principia Ethica*, 68-69.

3.3.2. Naturalistic Fallacy

Moore opposed the thinkers who tried to define the good with other characteristics which are good. He radically criticizes the attempt to explain the good by reducing it to any natural property (pleasure, interest, desire, etc.) because these features do not give the definition of good as required by the “Open Question Argument”. He sees this definition as an error and calls it a “Naturalistic Fallacy”. Some features, such as pleasure or interest, might qualify as good, but it would be wrong to claim that good and these features are the same things. Because when we say that orange is yellow, we do not need to think that orange and yellow are the same things.¹⁰⁰ The same is true for moral concepts. Any particular action x can be in my interest when we try to define moral concepts with non-moral concepts, for example, when we define “what suits our good interests”. However, is that action x good? Action x does not give us the good itself.

Moore, who thinks that natural features can never explain moral concepts, finds the naturalist approach, which reduces them to natural features, wrong since they fall into the “naturalistic fallacy”. He states the following about the philosophers who made this mistake:

But far too many philosophers have thought that when they named those other properties they were actually defining good; that these properties, in fact, were simply not ‘other’, but absolutely and entirely the same with goodness. This view I propose to call the ‘naturalistic fallacy’, and of it, I shall now endeavour to dispose.¹⁰¹

In this sense, for Moore, it is a naturalistic fallacy that thinkers, such as Schlick, who examines the good through human experience and natural characteristics, try to identify moral concepts with natural science concepts by equating moral qualities with natural qualities. In other words, factual concepts and value concepts cannot be explained in terms of each other since they are two

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

different things. Then, moral concepts such as “good” must be explained in a different way. He thinks that “good” can be grasped intuitively and that this intuitive ability does epistemically exist in humans. Moral qualities such as goodness and truth are unnatural, unanalyzable, and therefore clearly comprehensible.

Although he thinks that the concept of “good” is undefinable property, he claims that one can know what is good to be true. The way to get knowledge about “good” is a kind of “intuition” in the sense that one can find what true firsthand is.¹⁰² In this regard, “good” is real, but the properties of the empirical world do not explain it. Yet, it is something self-evident, and everyone can understand by intuition.

3.3.3. Intrinsic Value

After investigating what “good” is, Moore moves on to studying how one should act in practice. There are some values about how people should act, and these values are expressed through some goods. They are intrinsically good; they are values that are not tools for other purposes.

Understanding these values is essential in terms of understanding whether moral judgments can be right or wrong or what ought to be done. There is both subjective and objective good for people. According to his explanation below, Moore argues that those goods are not only objective but also intrinsic values. However, the fact that a value is intrinsic does not necessarily mean that it will be objective.¹⁰³ We call value “the unique property of things” independent of the human mind. Everyone is always aware of this concept, and with true reasoning, one can realize this fact.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Michael Lacewing, *Philosophy for AS and A Level - Epistemology and Moral Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 362.

¹⁰³ Moore and Baldwin, *Principia Ethica*, 282.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 68-69.

In the case of goodness and beauty, what such people are really anxious to maintain is by no means merely that these conceptions are ‘objective’, but that, besides being ‘objective’, ‘they are also, in a sense which I shall try to explain, ‘intrinsic’ kinds of value. It is this conviction—the conviction that goodness and beauty are intrinsic kinds of value, which is, I think, the strongest ground of their objection to any subjective view.¹⁰⁵

Moore considers his ethics to be metaphysical, not naturalistic.¹⁰⁶ In this sense, value for him can be defined as a non-natural intrinsic good or property. Moore, who thinks that there are self-evident truths about intrinsic values, underlines that these are not reduced to or derived from another truth because these are truths that do not need to be proven. As stated above, they are things that everyone is aware of. Moore divides these moral truths into two. The first are truths about being good, regardless of the consequences they cause or the associations with other values. They can be given friendship, love and beauty.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, second-class truths are related to duty or obligation, and these apparent truths can be known by intuition.¹⁰⁸

In conclusion, moral judgments express objective facts and situations independent of the subject, rather than expressing personal feelings and subjective experiences.¹⁰⁹ Then, “good” exists independently of a person, and we reach its knowledge through intuition. We can say that moral judgments are also not subjective since the concept of “good” is not a subjective thing and cannot be analyzed but can be perceived by everyone. As we can understand from the definition of intrinsic value, contrary to emotivist theories, the “good” of something does not depend on people’s preferences or feelings. Thus, since ethical concepts are not like other natural concepts and cannot be explained by

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 281-282.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

¹⁰⁹ G. E. Moore, *Ethics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), 79-80.

them, morality constitutes an autonomous field because it is not defined by something non-moral.

Goodness as a fundamental moral concept denotes an undefinable, unnatural quality of things.¹¹⁰ That is, the meaning of the term good corresponds to a certain objective property which can only be grasped or realized through an act of immediate intuition.¹¹¹ In this way, Moore offers neither a fully rational way of justifying the knowledge of the good nor an empirical and experiential way of justifying it. Rather, it speaks of a kind of intuitive justification for self-evident truths that do not need any evidence. This means that ethics is an autonomous research area, especially in the natural sciences, regarding its status and way of knowing, which seems to support the ontological distinction between fact and value. Unlike philosophers such as Ayer and Schlick, Moore opposes the use of sciences such as psychology and sociology to solve ethical problems.

At first glance, Moore's distinction between moral and natural qualities seems to fit the idea that moral propositions cannot be derived from the factual propositions put forward by Hume's traditional interpretation. It should be noted, however, that Moore does not explicitly mention a logical gap between fact and value like Hume.¹¹² Again, he does not expressly state that the statements expressing value were not factual.¹¹³ However, the indefinability of moral concepts and their irreducibility to natural properties make them self-evident concepts that can be obtained by intuition independent of facts. And this does not allow us to explain morality in terms of something non-moral. In this regard, unlike Hume, he maintains that there is a semantic difference between fact and value. Since factual and moral qualities are different, fact and value appear as two things that cannot be reduced to each other and cannot be explained by

¹¹⁰ Sahakian, *Ethics: An Introduction to Theories and Problems*, 42.

¹¹¹ Hudson, *Modern Moral Philosophy*, 69.

¹¹² Richard Joyce, *The Evolution of Morality* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006), 148.; William H. Bruening, "Moore and 'Is-Ought'" 81, no 2 (1971), 148.

¹¹³ William H. Bruening, "Moore and 'Is-Ought'", 147.

similar features. Therefore, for Moore's intuitionism, we can conclude that fact and value are intertwined because values exist within facts, but they are also two different things since they exist as non-natural properties. From this point of view, explaining the relationship between the natural and the non-natural is problematic.

3.4. Non-Cognitivist and Cognitivist Discussions

Philosophers such as Ayer and Stevenson, whom we discussed among non-cognitivist theories, think that only descriptive elements of the problem can be discussed and cannot go further when it is necessary to make a decision about a moral issue that requires a practical discussion since they belong to a logical positivist tradition. Therefore, their moral theories are also descriptive; they cannot go beyond determining how moral judgments are used. Examining the usage of moral judgements, they argued that they are expressions of emotions. This idea is basically a critique of metaphysical, religious, and intuitive understanding of moral judgments and concepts. Likewise, naturalism also criticizes intuitionist, metaphysical and religious approaches, but unlike non-cognitivism, they argue that moral judgments can have a truth value; that is, they are meaningful judgments because they are in the field of empirical research. Intuitionism, like naturalism, argues that moral judgments can have truth values, but unlike naturalism, intuitionists claim that they cannot be reduced to natural properties. For them, we can say that the moral field has a kind of autonomy since the moral cannot be explained by the non-moral. After getting an idea of the non-cognitivist and cognitivist theories, in this section, starting from the people we discussed above, we will cover their discussions by contrasting them with each other. Also, to better understand neo-Aristotelian understanding to eliminate the fact-value problem, MacIntyre's critiques of the discussions will be presented for the sake of the main argument of the thesis. I hope to show thereby that the place of the fact-value problem in meta-ethical discussions and their deficiencies will be better determined.

3.4.1. Critiques of Non-Cognitivism

Non-cognitivism is an approach that mostly adopts the emotive theory. Because the reduction of moral concepts to emotions removes them from both rational discourse and the factual realm, for classical non-cognitivism, emotions are not something factual. This idea comes from the basic logical positivist view that meaningful sentences are either analytic or synthetic propositions. Since moral judgments are neither analytical nor synthetic propositions in this respect, they cannot take truth value, so they are called pseudo-science. We can say that non-cognitivism, as a theory embracing the traditional interpretation of Hume's paragraph, has undertaken the task of sustaining the distinction between fact and value. While Ayer argues that religious and metaphysical claims about moral judgments mean nothing but expressing the attitudes and feelings of the person who utters them, Stevenson claims that they have a side leading one to action since their duty is not only to express feelings but also to persuade to another person. Although criticizing metaphysical and religious explanations has opened the way for the possibility of a psychological and sociological alternative explanation of morality,¹¹⁴ all moral disagreements in a rational discussion seem endless since they explain the "good" on an emotional basis.¹¹⁵ Because there is nothing but subjective feelings of people, it is not possible to have a rational moral understanding that can be discussed on an intersubjective objective basis.

According to MacIntyre, emotivism fails for three different reasons. First, suppose the theory explains the meaning of a specific type of sentence by referring to its expressive function of the feelings and attitudes held at the time the sentence is uttered. Emotivism claims that moral judgments express feelings and attitudes about approval or disapproval. However, since many types of approval exist, he cannot answer what kind of approvals they are. In other words, emotivism, which bases moral concepts on emotions independently of facts and

¹¹⁴ Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 76.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

reason, does not give us a clear idea about what kind of approvals these emotions are. Second, emotivism characterizes two different types of expressions as if they were equivalent in meaning. It shows “evaluative expressions” and “expressions of personal preference” as equivalent. However, while expressions of preference are dependent on the speaker and the person to whom the word is spoken in terms of their “reason-giving force”, evaluative expressions are not dependent on the environment in which the word is spoken in terms of their “reason-giving force”. Therefore, evaluative judgments include a demand to be valid for everyone, and they do not have a feature that can be reduced to the preferences of individuals. Finally, the emotive theory strives to become a theory about the meaning of sentences, but the expression of emotion and attitude is a function of their use in specific situations, not their meaning.¹¹⁶

From this point of view, Moore’s criticism comes to mind, who claims that the definition of “good” does not depend on its usage in certain circumstances. It might, therefore, rightly be said that a study of the meanings of moral judgments or concepts or ethical research does not depend on their use. However, although non-cognitivism claims that moral judgments are meaningless, whereas naturalism finds them meaningful, they both have tried to achieve a result by conducting a study of meaning according to only their usage areas. On the other hand, there may not be any relationship between the meaning of a sentence and its usage. Gilbert Ryle’s example can be helpful. An angry teacher may actually be revealing his current feelings when he shouts “Seven times seven equals forty-nine” to a child who makes a mistake during a math lecture. However, there is no relationship between the use and meaning of this sentence used to express an emotion or attitude. In this sense, when someone makes a moral judgment, for example, “This is right” or “This is good,” those sentences obviously are not the same thing as the sentences like “I approve of this, do so as well”, or “Hurrah for this!”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

Ayer develops a theory that takes over Hume's traditional interpretation, but he adapts this in the context of logical positivist knowledge. Accordingly, he collects all judgements under the three titles: logical, factual and emotional. The truths of logic and mathematics, which are thought to be analytical, fall into the first class. In contrast, the empirically verifiable or falsifiable truths of the sciences fall into the second class. According to MacIntyre, the third class, the class of emotional judgments, is seen as a "rag-bag" in which everything that is left of the other two types is stuffed. This class involves both ethics and theology, which is unacceptable because it is clear that propositions about the intentions and actions of an omnipotent being like God and ethical judgements about duty or "what is good" obviously do not fall into the same class.¹¹⁸ As a result, we can say that the initial classification of meaningful judgments is wrong because not all of them fall into a single class. In fact, the theory of emotion easily emerges from such a dubious classification because if any rational or factual way cannot explain moral judgements, then what way is left?

Another criticism of non-cognitivism is that moral judgments cannot be reports of our feelings because if they were, any dispute about moral issues would not be possible. In this manner, Moore also argues that two people who make seemingly contradictory judgments about an ethical issue cannot actually disagree.¹¹⁹ If we admit the idea that there would be no ground to talk about moral judgments, emotivism cannot be a valid theory. This is because we can dispute ethical matters. However, this criticism does not seem to be effective for emotivism since, as a non-cognitivist theory, emotivism is already against the idea of an objective and rational moral ground on which to argue. Since moral judgments are statements without truth-value, a criterion about their truth or falsity cannot be established. Thus, words have emotional meanings in emotional theories. While this emotional meaning for Ayer expresses the feelings and

¹¹⁸ Alasdair C MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 1998), 163.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 164.

attitudes of the person uttering the judgment, in Stevenson, it is about influencing the feelings and attitudes of the person spoken to. On the other hand, both of them argue that “good” or other evaluative expressions have no meaning themselves other than being expressions of feelings. They simply question what they correspond to by looking at their usage. In this sense, they agree with Moore that “good” cannot function as a name for a natural property. For Stevenson, as for Moore, facts are logically disconnected from evaluations.¹²⁰

The fact that emotivism puts the meaning of moral judgments in a different domain from the rational and factual plane does not give us a full account of what makes moral judgments or actions directive. As expressions of emotions, moral judgments have no other meaning than descriptive in terms of the interests, desires or needs of the speaker or the person being spoken to. This pushes the field of ethics into a position where people try to persuade each other purely emotionally or simply express their subjective preferences. Also, emotivism does not attach enough importance to the distinction between the meaning of a proposition that remains invariant between different uses and the variety of uses in which one and the same proposition can be spoken. For instance,

“The White House is on fire” does not have any more or less meaning when uttered in a news broadcast in London than it does when uttered as a warning to the President in bed, but its function as a guide to action is quite different.¹²¹

It is beyond a doubt that meaning and the possible area of usage are closely related, but they are not the same thing. Moreover, it is natural for people to persuade each other through moral views, but the fact that this is done purely through emotions eliminates the discussion ground for the field of ethics. When we look at non-cognitivist theories, Hume’s traditional interpretation combined with a logical positivist understanding created an incompatible gap between fact and value. Considering evaluative statements independently of facts and rational

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

discourse has drawn a sharp boundary between “what is” and “what ought to be”. Therefore, sentences about “ought” were seen as expressions of emotions and attitudes or as statements for persuading and directing other people. Ultimately, it has removed a ground we can call right or wrong.

3.4.2. Critiques of Naturalism

Contrary to most non-cognitivist views, Schlick, as a logical positivist, argued that moral statements could be cognitively meaningful. He reduced them to natural features such as desires, wants, and interests. In this sense, unlike the traditional interpretation of Hume and non-cognitivist philosophers such as Ayer, these characteristics are related to factual psychological states. Thus, by its very nature, reductionist naturalism appears to solve the fact-value problem because the verifiable nature of moral concepts and judgments through observation and experimentation enables them to be meaningful judgments. Then, values are things that can be explained in terms of facts and even reduced to them. Values or evaluations give us information about the facts. Since this evaluation is identified with a psychological fact such as want, naturalists are freed from accepting the existence and knowledge of any value before evaluation.¹²²

The most famous critique of reductionist naturalism is the one mentioned above, developed by G.E. Moore. He states that naturalists have made a naturalist fallacy and that morality cannot be reduced to natural characteristics. Schlick’s definition of good corresponds to “what one desires” on a naturalistic basis. In other words, it emerges as an object of desire. But for Moore, when we want to define values, a moral concept such as “good” is simply indefinable and unanalyzable. The definition of “good” with any fact or natural property cannot give its true definition. Schlick, on the other hand, explains moral values in terms of empirical psychological characteristics in that “good” is always “what is desired”. In this context, ethics being an object of empirical research, we cannot talk about an autonomous morality other than the factual. For Schlick, unlike

¹²² Darwall, “How Should Ethics Relate to Philosophy”, 31.

other logical positivist thinkers, moral knowledge is synthetic. Since the morally good is what is desirable, it is possible to ask the following question with the help of the Moorean critique: is the desirable really “good”? Since not everything desirable is good, the good itself cannot be expressed as desirable.

The most basic problem of moral naturalism is how moral concepts correspond to an object, fact or a natural property. Because in reductionist naturalism, moral concepts are used to attribute moral properties to various facts or actions, the idea that moral properties have the metaphysical status of a fact or natural property may arise.¹²³ This idea is difficult to defend because it implies that moral facts exist independently of humans and their convictions. However, since there are many types of naturalism in the literature, it would be appropriate to say that not all of them support this idea. For example, since Schlick already criticizes metaphysical explanations of moral concepts, for him, moral concepts are not independent entities but have the same status as other things that are just factual. Because there is no metaphysical field other than factuality in the world, moral values also belong to this reality. Although naturalism is right in the idea that values cannot be separated from “what is”, it does not sufficiently explain the problem of how moral properties are at one and the same level as physical properties. The connection between moral concepts and natural properties should be properly explained since if moral concepts are independent of humans, then the rational agent has no contribution to forming moral evaluations; rather, we just discover them. Because if we equate the values directly with the physical properties, it would mean ignoring the human factor in terms of the formation of this value.

“What ought to be” cannot be analyzed without “what is”, but scientific research and its objects are not the same as ethical research and its objects. Since naturalists like Schlick consider ethics to be a subject of scientific inquiry and claim that it is not the task of a philosopher to give a set of moral duties and principles, they think of ethics as an object of research in the science of behavioral psychology. However, when we see ethics as a transition from “what

¹²³ David Copp, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*, Oxford Handbooks in Philosophy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 8.

is” to “what ought to be”, this includes an analysis and evaluation of what should be beyond a purely psychological explanation. In other words, Moore’s critique of the definition of the good tells us the followings about naturalism: Since value is the same as fact, naturalism does not enter into an investigation into what it is. The fact that naturalism is deprived of this kind of research does not adequately explain the question of “what ought to be done.” The research towards “good” includes a reflection on “what it is” and “what ought to be” beyond sociological research. From this point of view, we can say that Schlick’s ethical research remains only on how value is explained psychologically and sociologically. Therefore, his concern is not to define “good” but to show that moral judgments are describable in terms of corresponding to facts so that they can be explained and meaningful.

3.4.3. Critiques of Intuitionism

As we have discussed earlier, intuitionism is an idea that opposes certain religious and metaphysical explanations of moral judgments. Besides, it is against non-cognitivism that if ethical propositions were merely statements expressing the speaker’s feelings, then questions of value would be indisputable.¹²⁴ As a result of this criticism, two people’s opposing judgments have a chance to be true simultaneously because each judgment expresses the feelings of the person to whom it belongs. However, Ayer explains this criticism of Moore by giving an example and claims that it does not affect the emotivist theory; on the contrary, it is a discourse in favor of him. Since when one of the two people says that “thrift” is vice and the other answers the opposite, one will say that he approves of “thrift” and the other disapproves of it. Thus, there will be no dispute. In this sense, both propositions can be true according to this theory because the non-cognitivist theory does not undertake a truth-seeking mission in terms of moral concepts and judgments; instead, it analyzes their

¹²⁴ Moore, *Ethics*, 49.

meanings by looking at their usage.¹²⁵ At this point, Ayer wants to show that in terms of non-cognitivist theories, the debate is over a question of fact, not a question of value. In other words, it is not the purpose of their argument to show that person has a “wrong” moral sense of a situation whose nature one correctly grasps. What we are trying to show is that she was wrong about the facts of the situation.¹²⁶ The discussion over questions of morality can only be a debate over whether that person is consistent within that value system if any value system is presupposed by her, but not overvalue and their validity.¹²⁷

On the other hand, Stevenson claims that Moore does not accept the absolute power of empirical research; therefore, he thinks that concepts such as “good” cannot be analyzed and that the scientific method will not be sufficient for ethics. Unlike Moore, he argues that moral concepts’ meanings lie in how they are used and that these meanings can be explained.¹²⁸ As a matter of fact, Moore also says that “good” is undefinable and unanalyzable but does not claim that it is something completely incomprehensible. However, when we ask how we can know the things that are actually good, he thinks that the things that need to exist for themselves are what we call essentially good, and when we meet them, we absolutely recognize the specificity of the good. In other words, we understand what is good in an intuitive way. Intuitive justification for moral judgments not only prevents judgments from being empirically verifiable but also prevents rational justification for them since there does not appear to be a causal relationship about why “good” is good. In other words, we cannot talk about a rational justification and the reflection process about it.

According to MacIntyre, propositions that state anything is “good” are what Moore calls “intuition”, and these propositions are not open to proof or

¹²⁵ Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, 110.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 110-111.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 111-112.

¹²⁸ Stevenson, “Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms”, 18.

disproof; in fact, no positive or negative evidence or rational justification can be given for them.¹²⁹ MacIntyre opposes Moore's claim about the indefinableness of "good" in two ways. First, Moore tries to show that "good" is undefinable by believing a definition of "definition" in an erroneous dictionary.¹³⁰ To begin with, Moore bases his analogy between yellow and good on his notion of definition. The concept of yellow is not a complex concept, so we can understand it with reference to itself, and it is difficult to make further definitions of such concepts. He argues that "good" as a moral concept cannot be defined as a simple concept like "yellow" because it cannot be broken down into its components like complex concepts and that defining something is not to say what it is used for but to describe its true nature. "Just as we cannot identify the meaning of yellow with the physical properties of light that produce the effect of seeing yellow, so we cannot identify the meaning of *good* with particular natural properties associated with good."¹³¹

In fact, this idea is not historically foreign to us. In all his dialogues, Socrates sought the definition of something, not its attributes or examples, but its true nature.¹³² However, we should keep in mind that when it comes to moral concepts, if there is teleological thinking, the purpose of a concept may be its usage. Thus, if we establish the nature of something based on its purpose, then we can define it. We can establish the definition of "good" through factuality within its purpose. However, just as there is no explanation for why "good" is good in Moore's theory, one cannot have an understanding of whether the concept of "good" contains any *telos*. Thus, his concept of "good", understood intuitively without any purpose, doesn't say how learning to recognize a good friend helps us recognize a good watch. That is, how can we acquire knowledge

¹²⁹ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 15.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹³¹ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 159.

¹³² One example of this Socratic activity can be seen in Plato's early dialogue *Euthyphro*

of the “good” that is in both? There is no exact explanation for this; instead, we only understand intrinsic “good” as a simple property in an intuitive way in both cases. Yet, there is no explication as to “how the meaning of ‘good’ is learned and an account of the relation between learning it in connection with some cases, and knowing how to apply it in others.”¹³³

Second, Moore’s explanation leaves it completely unexplained and inexplicable why something good should always give us a reason for action.¹³⁴ In other words, the fact that something is “good” itself is not a sufficient explanation to provide reasons for action to those who have this intuition in the face of goodness. In this sense, the explanation of “good” has to cling to itself with action and explain why calling something good always has to give a reason about why one should act this way but not that way. However, since intuitive justification does not provide a rational explanation for choices made between actions, it does not give us such a reason.

MacIntyre thinks that Aristotle made it clear in the initial arguments of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that what Moore called the naturalistic fallacy was not a fallacy at all. Every activity, every research, and every practice aims at some good because what is meant by “good” is what human beings characteristically aim for. Propositions about what and who the good, the just, and the brave are, are factual propositions. Like all other species, human beings have a unique nature of their own, and this nature is one in which they have specific goals and move towards a particular *telos*.¹³⁵ From this perspective, if we want to explain the true nature of “good”, there is another possibility, as MacIntyre points out, other than intuition and calling it indefinable. We can approach the ethical within the integrity of fact-value and within a certain teleology. To understand teleology in moral concepts might be to know how they relate to factuality. However,

¹³³ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 160-161.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹³⁵ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 148.

Moore found the only way not to equate moral concepts with physical properties in the idea that they are undefinable.

To reiterate, Schlick objects to Moore's claim that "good" is an undefinable concept. For him, "It is very dangerous to withdraw from this task under the pretext that the word "good" is one of those whose meaning is simple and unanalyzable, of which therefore a definition, a statement of the connotation, is impossible."¹³⁶ He emphasizes that even if "good" itself is indefinable, the meaning is determined, and we can do this by looking at how the term "good" is used, unlike Moore.¹³⁷ At this point, we can argue the following for naturalism and intuitionism. Neither of them gives reasons about why "good" is good since the former argues that moral concepts and judgments are meaningful and explained by natural properties by looking at their uses. On the other hand, the latter claims that defining them does not necessarily involve taking into account their uses, so the "good" is unanalyzable. While Schlick persists in determining what the use of values is empirical, Moore avoids giving any proof for moral judgements with purely intuitive justification.

Intuitionism does not seem sufficient to solve the fact-value problem. On the contrary, there are considerably important ideas that it strengthens non-cognitivism. MacIntyre says that an emotivist might criticize intuitionism as follows.

[T]hese people take themselves to be identifying the presence of a non-natural property, which they call "good"; but there is in fact no such property and they are doing no more and no other than expressing their feelings and attitudes, disguising the expression of preference and whim by an interpretation of their own utterance and behavior which confers upon it an objectivity that it does not in fact possess.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Moritz Schlick, *Problems of Ethics*, trans. David Rydin (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939), 8.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 8-10.

¹³⁸ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 17.

In this case, the emotivist critique seems powerful because the question of how to justify the existence of “good” as a non-natural quality remains unanswered when it comes to intuitive justification. The objection is that Moore provides inspiration for emotivism. In his view, Moore and his successors acted as if their intuitionism had developed an impersonal and objective criterion for moral issues. But in reality, emotivism prevails as a stronger and more psychological will. MacIntyre argues that emotivists have drawn a very sharp line between the factual, including the perceptual, and what Stevenson calls “difference in attitude”.¹³⁹ Emotivism is a successor theory of views similar to those of Moore or intuitionists such as Prichard. Moore’s understanding of the good with a non-natural quality appears irrational in the last instance.¹⁴⁰ Because it is difficult to ground the kind of property that Moore presupposes, emotivism easily opposes this intuitive justification and claims that people use moral judgments to express their feelings. However, it was regarded by intuitionists that the “good” we encountered in actions was something that anyone could grasp. But the meaning of this “good” was not well-founded by intuitionism, leading it to be reduced to certain states of consciousness that could simply be roughly described as desires from human relationships and pleasures from beautiful objects.¹⁴¹

On the other hand, the non-cognitivist claim that there is an unbridgeable gap between fact and value and the intuitionist theory that natural features cannot explain moral concepts gives the impression that they are on the same side of the fact-value distinction. However, we should note that we cannot say Moore directly agrees with Hume’s traditional interpretation and takes the view that value propositions cannot be logically deduced from fact statements as a basis for his theory of “naturalistic fallacy”. This is because Moore deals with his

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 17

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁴¹ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 163.

theory, which opposes the reduction of moral concepts to natural properties, without referencing Hume. Besides, Moore seems to conflict with Hume's theory at one point. Hume reduces moral characteristics to features such as interest, desire, and want and describes these traits as just emotions, not natural properties. In this respect, he reduces moral characteristics to emotions, not factual ones. Moreover, considering the anti-traditional interpretation of Hume, Hume also seems to contradict Moore in the sense that when explaining the concept of justice, he explains it with a natural characteristic that is factual, such as "the long-term common interests of society". However, the common point is that, according to the traditional interpretation, Hume argues that moral judgments are in no way connected with factuality and exist as expressions of emotions. Moore, on the other hand, argues that moral concepts cannot be explained in terms of natural or factual properties. In this sense, a distinction is made between both the realm of fact and that of value. As already noted, in Hume, the moral realm is neither in "matters of fact" nor in "relations of ideas". For Moore, "what is" and "what ought to be" are separated from each other since the moral cannot be explained by anything non-moral. This is because Moore's claim that "good" exists in reality but cannot be explained by anything factual is not a very defensible claim. In other words, if Moore is to deal with ethical knowledge from a cognitive perspective, he must do so by rejecting the fact-value distinction directly. A cognitivist theory that allows the distinction between fact and value seems not plausible since, based on Hume's philosophy, the fact-value distinction emerged with such a conceptualization as the starting point of the issue. The fact that value is not factual emerges as a feature that takes it out of cognition.

As a result, although Moore opposes non-cognitivism by arguing that intrinsic value is objective, that the good is something independent of human beings and that moral judgments can have a truth value, the intuitive justification seems to be insufficient. On the other hand, he contributed to the fact-value distinction by claiming that moral concepts such as "good" are undefinable but intelligible and that natural features cannot explain them.

3.5. Concluding Remarks

When we consider philosophers like Ayer and Stevenson, we see that the main issue of non-cognitivist theory is to find a criterion for moral judgments. The fact-value problem is directly related to the criterion problem. According to this point of view, since morality varies according to people's feelings and preferences, no cognitive or factual criterion reveals the truth or falsity of ethical judgments. This means separating value from fact, meaning, and knowledge, as in traditional interpretation. In other words, evaluative judgments are neither analytical nor synthetic and cannot be grounded by reason or experimentation and observation. In this respect, they are cognitively meaningless, but their meanings can still be determined by psychological or sociological research, and this meaning has an emotive structure. They are not a presentation of reality but an emotive response to it. From this point of view, it is possible to see that emotions are not factual.

The traditional interpretation under the influence of the logical positivist view that it cannot be logically deduced from fact to value underlies the idea that this is a matter of "deduction" and not of "inference". However, no matter how logically impossible this transition may seem for non-cognitivist thinkers when we look at the definitions of moral value by philosophers such as Ayer and Stevenson, we see traces of some sort of inference from fact to value. In other words, they define some moral concepts with factuality. For example, Ayer talks about moral principles as behavior that increase society's benefit.

[T]he reason why moral precepts present themselves to some people as "categorical" commands. And one finds, also, that the moral code of a society is partly determined by the beliefs of that society concerning the conditions of its own happiness—or, in other words, that a society tends to encourage or discourage a given type of conduct by the use of moral sanctions according as it appears to promote or detract from the contentment of the society as a whole.¹⁴²

Similarly, Stevenson also proposes that we cannot logically derive value statements from factual statements. Still, we somehow justify our moral

¹⁴² Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, 113.

arguments by giving factual reasons like his example about two people discussing to go cinema or symphony.

MacIntyre argues that Hume made a similar inference in his search for justice. Just as in Hume, the concept of justice is defined with reference to the “long-term interests of the society”, so here Ayer reveals the relationship between moral judgments and harmful or beneficial behaviors to the whole society. At this point, although Ayer attempts to explain why moral judgments are perceived as normative, it is obvious that those judgments correspond to some factual situations related to society. However, research on the meanings of moral judgments or concepts for non-cognitivism has always been limited to their usage areas, and it has been argued that an effort to justify moral judgments is not based on logic or rationale because they are formed on emotions in terms of their usage patterns. While there is a causal relationship between the premises and the result, it cannot be expected that there is an irrational or non-causal and purely psychological relationship between moral judgment and the reasons that try to justify it. Moreover, when all the theories are considered, it is obvious that there is somehow an inference from fact to value. Therefore, dwelling on the possibility of making meaningful inferences in the transition from fact to value seems more reasonable than seeing the matter as a pure deduction. Indeed, it is clearly seen that “what ought to be” is always in a relationship with “what is”.

When we consider the discussions, one can argue that there is a similarity between non-cognitivist theories and naturalist theories. Both suggest that moral judgments are non-analytic and that any a priori explanation of them is meaningless. However, while non-cognitivism distinguishes moral judgments from both analytic and synthetic propositions, naturalism argues that they can be explained and verified as synthetic propositions. For naturalism, moral concepts can be reduced to natural properties and become properties of objects independent of humans. In contrast, for non-cognitivism, moral concepts and persuasive discourses as expressions of emotion are not reduced to natural properties. Another common point is that they deny normative characteristics of ethical statements while investigating the normative concepts such as “good”, which are at the base of ethics. While non-cognitivism already rejects normative

concepts as meaningless and regards them as mere expressions of emotion, naturalism argues that ethics is about the factual, not a normative discipline. However, advocating the unity of fact and value does not mean completely purifying ethics from normativity. If this is done, we can only understand the meaning of a normative concept as described, like in non-cognitivism and naturalism. However, if we can understand the relationship between normativity and factuality, then we have taken a step towards solving the problem. Of course, this task would require considering the concept of “fact” independent of traditional content.

In this way, naturalism, which tries to solve the fact-value problem without leaving the conceptualization of “fact”, as non-cognitivism describes, reduces the matter of value to a mechanistic, observation-based and human-independent understanding of “fact” taken within the same non-cognitivist scheme. When the value is tried to be defined with facts, the fact-value problem seems to be solved, but value research turns into a research object of pure psychology. The teleological causes of moral concepts are not questioned; their meanings are analyzed by looking at their usage areas as in non-cognitivist theory. Moreover, moral concepts or values such as “good”—even though they do not have an ontological field separate from the factual—represent real features of objects in the world, making them difficult to explain. That is why, for naturalists, “good” is nothing but a set of natural psychological characteristics that are called “what is desirable” or “what gives happiness”.

The idea underlying naturalism’s purely factual explanations for moral concepts is actually related to the fact that moral concepts are pure abstractions and mean nothing else. Consequently, one should not expect to get an explanation of the nature of a concept such as “good” in this context. Since there are no a priori arguments in the field of ethics and ethical judgments are tried to be understood only through experimentation and observation, this perspective has a limited view to reveal their meanings.

Intuitionism, which delves deeper into the nature of moral concepts, has given less place to the factuality of “what ought to be” and has made it an intuitive being acquired without any justification. “Good” emerges as a simple

property of the human mind, as a property of objects or facts independent of the human mind. It should be noted that naturalism shares the same claim. However, the difference between the two is that intuitionism maintains that the properties belonging to these phenomena and objects are not natural properties. However, naturalism claims that they are just natural properties. The main problem for both is that “good” is considered as a property of things or facts. Although Moore claims that moral judgments are cognitively meaningful, he has contributed to the basic thesis of non-cognitivist theory by seeing fact and value as two independent things. It is not surprising that a cognitive approach put forward without defending the fact-value unity advocates the intuitive justification. Moreover, although Moore was right to say that uses of moral concepts such as good are not mere definitions of them, his intuitive stance in arriving at knowledge of them is left uncertain for rational justification since he is unable to combine moral concepts with factuality. This is because there is neither factual nor rational justification for why “good” is good. Therefore, the fact-value problem does not seem to have been resolved in terms of intuitionism. On the contrary, a perspective that supports this distinction has emerged. If moral concepts cannot be explained and reduced to anything that is factual or natural, moral judgments and factual judgments appear as different kinds of judgments. Because they cannot be defined in terms of each other, according to Hume’s traditional interpretation, two propositions that differ from one another cannot be derived from each other. The distinction between the two propositions corresponds to both an ontological and an epistemological distinction in traditional interpretation, which seems the same for Moore.

Ultimately, emotivism already deepens the fact-value distinction, and the inability of naturalism and intuitionism to resolve the fact-value issue strengthens non-cognitivism. Also, it is evident that the theories which we have discussed will be insufficient to give answers to ethical questions such as what is the relationship between “what ought to be” or “what ought to be done” or between “what is” and “what ought to be”. Because while non-cognitivism and naturalism are not interested in these questions, intuitionism does not seem to provide a satisfactory answer.

After the discussions on meta-ethical theories based on their primary thinkers, in the next chapter, we will discuss two critical philosophers who oppose classical non-cognitivism and cognitivism and attempt to revise these ideas. Consequently, we will determine to what extent the fact-value problem can be resolved with these revisions.

CHAPTER 4

DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF COGNITIVISM AND NON-COGNITIVISM

In the previous chapter, we discussed non-cognitivist and cognitivist theories. The former is based on a study of the semantics of moral judgements and explains moral judgments on the basis of psychological states or emotions they express, which isolates them from the realm of fact and rational discourse. On the other hand, the latter reduces moral concepts to characteristics independent of the agent, as being natural or non-natural. We have seen the problems of this reductionist understanding in terms of the fact-value problem. Neither reducing moral judgments to natural features nor reducing them to non-natural ones did give us the fact-value association. Indeed, naturalism removes the distinction at the cost of falling into essentialism. It is interesting to observe the claim of the irrationality of moral judgments put forward by non-cognitivism has not received a satisfactory rebuttal from cognitive theories. Consequently, questions may arise as to whether an anti-essentialist cognitive theory is possible or whether a non-cognitivism in which moral judgments have rational meaning is possible. Thus, in this section, we will examine two philosophers who try to answer these two questions and revise cognitivism and non-cognitivism: John Mackie and R. M. Hare. Mackie tries to revise cognitivism by claiming that it should be separated from realism. On the other hand, Hare tries to establish a non-cognitivist view which is called “prescriptivism”, without referring to emotivism. Then in the following sections, we will identify the effects of anti-realism and prescriptivism on the fact-value issue.

4.1. Cognitivism without Realism: John Mackie

Mackie rejects all three theories: non-cognitivism, naturalism, and intuitionism. Basically, he refuses non-cognitivism by holding the idea that

“sincere utterances of moral sentences, like ‘Torture is wrong’ and ‘Happiness is good’ are assertions and not primarily expressions of non-cognitive attitudes.”¹⁴³ In addition, he opposes naturalism by thinking that “moral properties and facts are irreducibly normative and therefore not reducible to, or wholly constituted by, natural properties and facts.”¹⁴⁴ Mackie is characterized as a cognitivist in that he says moral judgments have a truth value, but an anti-realist in that he claims that moral judgments and concepts do not correspond to any fact, object or property in the world. He believes ethics is “more a matter of knowledge and less a matter of decision than any non-cognitive analysis allows.”¹⁴⁵ We have seen before that naturalism and intuitionism try to fulfil this demand. However, one of the most critical problems of cognitivism, which Mackie also objects to, is that moral concepts are part of a fact, object or feature independent of the agent. In both naturalist and intuitionist theories, the underlying reason why moral concepts take truth value and have a demand for objectivity is that they are mind-independent realities. Mackie opposes this essentialist idea and bases his thesis on three main principles: “Relativity”, “Error Theory”, and “The Argument from Queerness.” Before moving on to Mackie’s arguments, reviewing his ideas on the is-ought question will ultimately help to understand the fact-value problem.

4.1.1. The Is-Ought Question for Mackie

Moore’s argument for the naturalistic fallacy strengthens Hume’s traditional interpretation. According to Mackie, the sharp distinction between fact and value also leads to a discrepancy between evaluation and description.

¹⁴³ Jonas Olson, “Error Theory in Metaethics”, in *The Routledge Handbook of Metaethics*, ed. Tristram McPherson and David Plunkett, Routledge Handbooks in Philosophy (New York London: Routledge, 2018), 59.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁴⁵ John L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, Reprinted, Penguin Philosophy (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 33.

We can never explain or understand the evaluative field from a descriptive field.

¹⁴⁶ Within the metaethical debates, naturalism and non-cognitivism have made the same claim, attempting to understand what can only be described, not what is normative. According to Mackie, sentences containing “ought” are not only moral judgments but “ought” is also used in non-moral contexts. In this sense, “ought” is used synonymously with words such as “must”, “shall”, and “should”. Mackie thinks that some “ought” propositions seem to be deducible from several factual situations. However, these situations are not the same as the “new relation in transition from fact statements to value propositions” that Hume says should be explained because they are not moral “ought”. For example, in a game of chess, a person might say, “you must not move your rook diagonally”. There may be statements such as “you must not” or “you ought not to” in the game because the action made during the game does not comply with the rules required by the game under those conditions. Mackie says there is no difficulty in changing from “is” to “ought” in such a situation.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, there are rules about what the player can and cannot do within the game. When there are conditions or rules that determine actions, it makes sense under their guidance, and a certain factual situation is translated into an evaluative proposition. Here, there is no new relation in this situation since “ought” propositions are kind of analogous to “is” propositions. That is, “ought” propositions are almost like a statement of rules.

Likewise, there is no problem with “ought” propositions that hypothetically express necessity. For example, for someone who wants to go to London, if the only vehicle to get there is the 10:20 train, the person must catch the train. She ought to catch the ten-twenty train.¹⁴⁸ Another example is that if there is a fact that smoking has side effects, the sentence he ought to give up smoking for someone who wants to live longer and be healthy is not impossible

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

at all. For Mackie, “when we put in enough factual conditions about the agent’s desires and about causal, including psychologically causal relations, the ‘ought’ conclusion follows.”¹⁴⁹ However, once again, there is no new relationship here. He says that the “ought” agent here has a reason to do something, but his desires and these causal relationships constitute that reason.

On the other hand, the “ought” we use in moral judgments contains a new type of relationship and cannot be derived from “is” propositions. For the argument “doing x is wrong; therefore, you ought not to do x”, it seems as if an evaluative proposition is derived from a descriptive proposition. However, the predicate word “wrong” does not have the meaning of “ought” in it. That is, the sentence “doing x is wrong” is not actually an “is” sentence, that is, a factual sentence.¹⁵⁰ According to Mackie, value propositions derived from factual propositions do not threaten Hume’s Law, except in moral situations. That’s why he finds the effort of philosophers such as Searle to argue against Hume’s Law in vain. Let’s take Searle’s example of making a promise for example.

- (1) Jones uttered the words, “I hereby promise to pay you, Smith, five dollars.”
- (2) Jones promised to pay Smith five dollars.
- (3) Jones placed himself under (undertook) an obligation to pay Smith five dollars.
- (4) Jones is under an obligation to pay Smith five dollars.
- (5) Jones ought to pay Smith five dollars.¹⁵¹

Mackie argues that there is no moral “ought” here, but rather that “ought” refers to something that has to be done under certain rules and situations and has the meaning of “must”.¹⁵² Searle propounds that “the gap between description and evaluation, the sharp distinction that has made it seem impossible to derive

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁵¹ John R. Searle, “How to Derive ‘Ought’ From ‘Is’”, *The Philosophical Review* 73, no. 1 (1964): 43-58.

¹⁵² Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 71.

“ought” from “is”, is bridged by the recognition of a peculiar class of facts, institutional facts as opposed to brute facts.”¹⁵³ That is, for Searle, when institutional facts are written as a premise, instead of brute facts, an idea of necessity arises from this, and the “ought” statement may result. For Mackie, however, Searle’s argument for bridging fact and value does not challenge the traditional interpretation of Hume since there is no new relationship to explain and, accordingly, that the “ought” in question is not a moral “ought.”

It is necessary to accept that we make evaluative statements from factual statements only by speaking in an institution. However, it can itself be a part of ordinary language. He expresses this idea in the following way:

Such derivations can be linguistically orthodox: the forms of reasoning that go with the central moral institutions have been built into ordinary language, and in merely using parts of that language in a standard way, we are implicitly accepting certain substantive rules of behaviour. To bring out what does not go through, we have to isolate the key aspects of possible senses of “ought”, either the alleged objective intrinsic requirement or the speaker’s own endorsement of an institution and its demands.¹⁵⁴

For Mackie, saying that “is” statements can be derived from “ought” statements does not harm moral scepticism in ordinary language. It does not indicate that objective values, internal prescriptions, practical imperatives, and the like are part of the nature of things or a way of restricting approval or adherence to moral views. Also, this is not the analysis of moral concepts or moral language but the fundamental meta-ethical question; it is about the objectivity or subjectivity of values and needs.¹⁵⁵

Based on this, it is problematic for Mackie to derive value from facts, for example, to say that value is an intrinsic property of facts or objects in a naturalist sense. He emphasizes that “the distinction between the factual and the evaluative is not something with which we presented, but something that has to

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 73.

be achieved by analysis.”¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, as we have seen in Mackie’s examples when all evaluative propositions are considered, it is an indisputable fact that there is a relationship between fact and value.

4.1.2. Error Theory

Mackie objects to moral realism and objective morality by showing that moral judgements and principles vary from one society to another. Although moral issues are relative for Mackie, moral judgements can be cognitively meaningful. Since societies live within different moral codes, they have different moral judgements.¹⁵⁷ Unlike moral realism, there are no general moral rules shared by different societies. Thus, there are no objectively and categorically prescriptive moral facts.

“Error theory” basically implies that “the positive, atomic sentences of a particular region of discourse are systematically and uniformly false.”¹⁵⁸ In this sense, according to an “error theory” about morality, all moral judgements are systematically and uniformly false. From an anti-realist cognitivist perspective, moral judgements can be truth-apt, but this is not because of mind-independent moral properties. They have cognitive meaning, and we can understand them. Mackie argues that moral language is nothing more than an error since we use such language that assumes the existence of moral facts and involves objective moral claims. However, a conception of moral reality that says that moral judgments express beliefs about mind-independent moral properties and that they can therefore be true or false is completely false. According to Mackie, all moral judgments are wrong. “Lying is wrong” is false because the property of being wrong does not exist. “Lying is right” is false because the property of being right does not exist. In a nutshell, moral characteristics do not actually

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁵⁷ Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 36.

¹⁵⁸ Miller, *An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics*, 111.

exist. This is an error we made regarding ethical language. Mackie expresses this error with the following sentences.

The claim to objectivity, however ingrained in our language and thought, is not self-validating. It can and should be questioned. But the denial of objective values will have to be put forward not as the result of an analytic approach, but as an 'error theory', a theory that although most people in making moral judgements implicitly claim, among other things, to be pointing to something objectively prescriptive, these claims are all false. It is this that makes the name 'moral scepticism' appropriate.¹⁵⁹

The conjunction of the conceptual and ontological claims can be helpful in understanding Mackie better.¹⁶⁰ For the former, moral judgments have truth conditions, and their correctness may require the existence of objectively and categorically prescriptive facts. On the other hand, the latter emphasizes that there are no objective and categorical prescriptive facts or features. In other words, nothing in the world corresponds to moral concepts. No fact, object or property justifies moral judgments. In this respect, Mackie is a cognitivist philosopher, but his understanding of cognition opposes moral realism, which involves an ontological claim about moral judgments.¹⁶¹ Then, there are neither objective moral concepts nor moral judgments part of facts or properties independent of the agent. Mackie deliberately criticises objectivity because the claim for the objectivity of moral concepts is often defended by reducing them to agency-independent objects, facts or properties.

Mackie, who claims that there is relativity in the field of morality and thinks that all our moral judgments are wrong, spells out the argument from queerness in order to defend and further expand his thesis. This argument assumes that there is a metaphysical distinction between facts and values. In other words, values do not have any ontological relations, and they cannot be

¹⁵⁹ Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 35.

¹⁶⁰ Michael Smith, *The Moral Problem*, Philosophical Theory (Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1995), 63-6.

¹⁶¹ Miller, *An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics*, 112.

defended within a naturalistic view. According to Mackie, the moral world cannot be the same thing as the world physics describes. This is because no facts, objects or properties in the world involve values. In other words, values are not part of the “fabric of the world”.¹⁶² However, we can talk about morality and understand each other in a moral sense. If we give an example of moral concepts with an analogy, let’s suppose that all people believe in fairies. When we talk about fairies, this talk can cognitively mean something, but since there are no fairies, all judgements about them would be false. In other words, the statement “they have wings” is wrong because there are no fairies.¹⁶³ Therefore, we can conclude that we can talk about some concepts and objects, but this does not mean that they ontologically exist. Similarly, we can talk about colors as properties of objects, but this does not make them intrinsic and mind-independent properties which belong to the objects’ natures. The fact that moral judgements are cognitively meaningful does not mean there are entities corresponding to them. In this sense, like colors, moral concepts are dispositional concepts rather than categorical. Since we cannot say “true” to something that does not exist, ascriptions we attribute to these things are “systematically and uniformly wrong”.¹⁶⁴

4.1.3. The Argument from Queerness

Starting from the argument that moral judgments and concepts do not correspond to anything in the world, we can say that they are subjective, not objective things. To further clarify his denial of objectivity, Mackie puts forward an argument that says that if there were objective moral facts, they would be very strange things, and our knowledge of them would also contain something

¹⁶² Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 15.

¹⁶³ Michael Lacewing, *Philosophy for AS and A Level: Epistemology and Moral Philosophy* (London ; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 381.

¹⁶⁴ Miller, *An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics*, 114.

strange. The existence of a moral fact is dubious and queer in that “good” cannot be a natural or non-natural property of an object or fabric of the world. Mackie primarily criticizes the essentialist claim of naturalism and intuitionism. The objection typically presents itself in two ways: metaphysical and epistemological queerness.

4.1.3.1. The Metaphysical Queerness

The metaphysical trouble with objective values is “the metaphysical peculiarity of the supposed objective values, in that they would have to be intrinsically action-guiding and motivating.”¹⁶⁵ Mackie believes that if there were objective values, they would be strange entities, relations or properties and would also be different from other entities in the world. They would be such strange entities because while moral judgements motivate us, a natural property, shall we say, cannot do that. In other words, moral concepts have normativity which is action-guiding and motivating. However, it is ambiguous for an object or fact to provide a guide to us about which action is right or wrong. Indeed, only knowing something about how the world is does not necessarily mean being motivated to act in a certain way. In this context, moral qualities are not something discovered by sense-perception or science. To make it clear, Mackie gives an example from Plato.

The Form of the Good is such that knowledge of it provides the knower with both a direction and an overriding motive; something's being good both tells the person who knows this to pursue it and makes him pursue it. An objective good would be sought by anyone who was acquainted with it, not because of any contingent fact that this person, or every person, is so constituted that he desires this end, but just because the end has to-be-pursuedness somehow built into it. Similarly, if there were objective principles of right and wrong, any wrong (possible) course of action would have not-to-be-doneness somehow built into it.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 49.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

Consequently, Mackie argues that since moral judgements motivate us, if there were moral facts, they would do the same thing. However, it would be metaphysical queerness to be motivated directly by fact. Therefore, there are no moral facts or properties. We can conclude that what is normative cannot be reduced to any facts. Thus, the strange thing is the queerness of irreducible normativity. Mackie thinks that “there is no metaphysical mystery how there can be such facts, for facts about the law and grammar, and about rules of etiquette or chess, are all facts about human conventions.”¹⁶⁷ On the other hand, “for any fact that is normative in the rule-implying sense, e.g., that it is a rule of etiquette that one does not eat peas with a spoon, we can always ask whether we have reason to—or whether we ought to.”¹⁶⁸ As it can be clearly seen, the normative gives reason for us to act in a certain way. Therefore, normative judgements are irreducible and cannot be reduced to “facts about human conventions or about agents’ motivational states or desires.”¹⁶⁹

As can be seen, the metaphysical argument supports Hume’s argument that there are no mind-independent moral properties and facts. In the context of the fact-value issue, the physical world does not tell us anything about “what ought to be” or “what ought to be done”. That is, they do not give a reason for action. That leads to the conclusion that there are no moral facts in the world because if there were, there would be facts that give us reasons for action, which would be an odd thing to understand. Therefore, we can see that the biggest problem regarding cognitivist theories is this essentialist understanding. Mackie tries to overcome this problem by rejecting the essentialist idea. Another argument is the hypothetical epistemological argument about how we would know if moral facts exist.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 25-27.

¹⁶⁸ Christine M. Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); J. Broome, “Is Rationality Normative?”, no. 23 (2007): 161-178.

¹⁶⁹ Olson, “Error Theory in Metaethics”, 64.

4.1.3.2. The Epistemological Queerness

As a second objection, epistemological trouble involves the idea that if there were objective moral facts, the way we know them would also be queer. In other words, the problem is about “the difficulty of accounting for our knowledge of value entities or features and of their links with the features on which they would be consequential.”¹⁷⁰ For example, if courage or honesty has the property of being objective in themselves, and if it is a moral fact, how can we find out about this? For Mackie, none of them can explain morality if we consider the usual ways of knowing the world—sense perception, introspection, hypothetical reasoning, and even conceptual analysis.¹⁷¹ To say that we know “intuitively” that moral judgments are true or false is simply to say that we do not know them in any ordinary way. That’s why intuitionists do not give us a real answer for how we know facts intuitively. Mackie summarizes his epistemological argument with the following sentences.

If we were aware [of objective values], it would have to be by some special faculty of moral perception or intuition, utterly different from our ways of knowing everything else. These points were recognized by Moore when he spoke of non-natural qualities, and by the intuitionists in their talk about a ‘faculty of moral intuition’.¹⁷²

That is, if there were moral facts, we would have to have a special ability to know them. Because, as we mentioned earlier, it is not clear what the connection between natural characteristics and moral characteristics is. For example, we can generally say, “This is wrong because it is cruel.” If we take cruelty here to mean that which “causes pain for fun,” then cruelty will be a natural feature. It is a psychological fact that something causes pain, and it is another psychological fact that someone enjoys doing it. But what is the

¹⁷⁰ Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 49.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 38.

relationship between these facts and the “fact” that it is wrong to act this way?¹⁷³ It is precisely at this point that Mackie finds a notable issue. Intuitionism’s answer is that we can only understand it intuitively. In other words, intuitionism does not tell us how morality relates to anything else or how properties of objects of facts contribute to moral thinking. For Mackie, on the other hand, this is not an analytical reality, and we cannot deduce it in any way. So how can we talk about moral issues? Mackie answers that we can only talk about moral judgments in a subjective manner. He seems to think that moral judgments based solely on the idea of objective moral facts are wrong. This is because he maintains that “there are certain kinds of value statements which undoubtedly can be true or false, even if, in the sense I intend, there are no objective values”¹⁷⁴ On the other hand, it is problematic that, although subjectivity prevails, it would be absurd to argue about morality when all moral judgments are wrong. For Mackie, subjectivity is a self-consistent argument, but that all moral judgments are wrong seems to be an argument for debate.

As we can deduce from the epistemological argument, if moral facts exist, our knowledge of reaching them would be something like the moral intuition or moral perception Moore mentioned because we cannot explain the natural and moral relationship. Moral judgments and concepts are always action-guiding and motivating. However, natural properties or facts do not give us this motivation. Therefore, the realm of reality and the realm of value appear as two different areas. In Mackie’s theory, the fact-value distinction is concerned with the nature of values rather than focusing on language or evaluative judgments. In other words, we can see that what Mackie rejects is an essentialist conception of value about facts or objects since we can still have some sort of moral argument. So moral judgments have a cognitive meaning. In this sense, moral thought and discourse exist because “[w]e need [it] to regulate interpersonal relations, to control some of the ways in which people behave towards one another, often in

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

opposition to contrary inclinations.”¹⁷⁵ In this regard, we do not discover ethical truths but create them. We cannot have isolated objective moral values from agents like facts, but we can have values depending on context. Thus, the talk about morality only means something within a context or institution.¹⁷⁶

4.2. Universal Prescriptivism: R. M. Hare

Unlike Mackie, who tried to give a new impulse to cognitivism by rejecting realism, R. M. Hare developed a different non-cognitivist theory by rejecting the non-cognitivist view about the irrationality of moral judgments. His universal prescriptivism is seen as an attempt to detect faults in other ethical theories and correct them while preserving their content, thus synthesizing them. In this section, we will talk about Hare’s view about moral judgments and examine the implications of a revised non-cognitivist theory for the fact-value problem. Before going into the details of Universal Prescriptivism, it would be helpful to look at Hare’s criticisms of other meta-ethical theories to understand their deficiencies or faults.

4.2.1. Criticism of Non-Cognitivism and Descriptive Theories

Criticizing emotive theories, naturalism, and intuitionism, Hare argues that moral judgments, unlike non-cognitivism, have a rational and universalizable meaning. However, the way to do this is not to defend descriptive understanding as in cognitivism. According to him, naturalism and intuitionism are included among descriptive theories. They argued that moral judgments could be right or wrong because they thought they were descriptive. Non-cognitivist emotive theories, on the other hand, considered moral judgments

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁷⁶ John M. Mizzoni, “Moral Realism, Objective Values And J.L. Mackie”, *Auslegung: a Journal of Philosophy*, no. 20 (1995): 20.

to be non-descriptive and hastily concluded that there is no rational reason for moral questions.¹⁷⁷

According to Hare, it is ontologically problematic and misleading that descriptive theories claim that there are moral qualities or facts that exist in the world while non-descriptive ones deny this. Rather, ethics should be explored as “the logical study of the language of morals.”¹⁷⁸ Logical research is far from asking a causal question about the existence of moral quality or facts in the world. Ontological discussions in morality should be ended, and only a logical search for meaning should be done. As can be understood from this, Hare’s moral research does not have the same status as factual research. Since ethics is not based on ontological research, there are no ontological problems apart from the logical properties of words and facts.¹⁷⁹

Moral judgments for emotive theories are irrational because their meanings are defined by emotion-based concepts such as “verbal shoves” or “psychological prods”. They cannot take truth value as an expression of irrational approvals of attitudes. Moral questions have no rational reason since only factual problems can have a reason. However, Hare finds this inference erroneous and argues that these psychological criteria or emotions that determine the meaning for emotivists are not part of the meaning of moral judgments and actions.¹⁸⁰ That is, emotivism does not provide meaning for moral concepts. The essential feature that distinguishes prescriptivism from classical emotive theories is the claim that moral judgments can be rational. Thus, Hare rejects the idea that there can be no rational reason for moral questions.

¹⁷⁷ R. M. Hare, “Universal Prescriptivism”, in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer (Oxford: Blackwell Reference, 1993), 455.

¹⁷⁸ Richard Mervyn Hare, *The Language of Morals*, Reprinted, Clarendon Paperbacks (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), Preface.

¹⁷⁹ R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking: Its Levels, Method, and Point* (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1981), 6.

¹⁸⁰ Hare, “Universal Prescriptivism”, 455.

On the other hand, naturalism and intuitionism fall into relativism even if they want to show that there can be a rational morality that we would logically accept. According to naturalism, when the meanings of moral judgments are explained in terms of truth conditions, there will be conditions specific to a particular society that determine the truth or falsity of moral judgments. For example, when investigating the meaning of “ought” in the sentence “Wives ought to obey their husbands in all things,” we need to specify the set of non-moral ones. The truth of this sentence can be attributed to the fact that it is for the sake of the stability of society that women obey their husbands.¹⁸¹ For naturalists like Mackie, moral judgments are synthetic propositions since morality is explained by natural properties. Although the naturalist view here tries to explain the meaning of “ought” to a natural property such as the stability of society, for Hare, in this example, a moral principle that one should do what will contribute to the stability of society has been promoted to an analytical truth that is true because of the meaning of “ought”. That is, the “ought” in moral judgment is actually presented as an analytical reality because of its meaning. In other words, how the relationship between moral concepts and natural characteristics is explained in naturalism is controversial. From this point of view, we can also see that this situation does not spontaneously result in an objective situation because a feminist can reasonably contend that this sentence is wrong. This discourse would be contrary to the truth conditions of the society in which we bring to bear the truth of moral judgment.¹⁸² In addition, naturalists argue that psychological facts can explain moral judgments. But at this point, according to Hare, the emerging fact is a subjective one about what people disapprove of, rather than an objective one like “what happens in society if wives disobey their husbands”.¹⁸³ Since there are different societies and different social

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 453.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 453.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 454.

truth conditions, naturalism must accept that the meaning of “ought” means different things in different places, hence different conditions of reality.

It is more understandable how intuitionism leads to relativism. According to intuitionism, the conditions of truth that give meaning to moral judgments are common beliefs in every person with a certain moral intuition or perception. However, according to Hare, these beliefs differ from society to society. Although there are common beliefs in most societies, there are also non-mutual beliefs. This may be a universal belief in a society where women are required to obey their husbands. Likewise, in a feminist society that claims the opposite, their opinion can be considered a universal belief.¹⁸⁴ Thus, intuitions as the truth conditions of moral judgments cannot provide us with an objective criterion.

Contrary to all these theories, Hare argues that even though moral judgements have a descriptive side, their primary meaning is prescriptive. Since moral judgments contain a descriptive part, they have a cognitive part, but since their meanings are determined to be prescriptive, they cannot be true or false in the context of “truth-conditions theory”. Hare’s universal prescriptivism offers us a synthesis of cognitive and non-cognitive theories in that he says that moral judgments can have rational meaning but that their meaning is prescriptive rather than descriptive.

4.2.2. Hare’s Ethics

Hare’s ethical understanding focuses on the meaning and use of language. In this context, the meaning of value phrases and concepts is closely related to their usage. As we have seen before, this idea is accepted by non-cognitivist theories. However, there is a different point that determines the meaning in Hare.¹⁸⁵ As we know, non-cognitivist and emotivist theories thought the verification rule is central in searching for meaning. In other words, the

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 454

¹⁸⁵ Richard Mervyn Hare, *Freedom and Reason*, Oxford Paperbacks (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 7.

meaning of a sentence or its truth condition is determined either by looking at the facts or in an analytical way. However, Hare argues that there must be a different version of it. This truth condition theory does not hold true for all sentences because there are sentences and phrases whose meaning is not determined by truth conditions. Imperatives are a clear example of this: to know the meaning of a sentence like “close the door”, we do not need to know its truth conditions, and we cannot know it because it has no truth conditions.¹⁸⁶ The truth condition theory, which descriptive approaches refer to, cannot be used for moral judgments because truth conditions do not completely determine the meanings of moral sentences. According to Hare, evaluative language, including moral judgments, is prescriptive, which is a feature that should not be neglected. Then, for Hare, there is a distinction between the language of morality and factual language since it is clear that facts do not have a prescriptive but a descriptive feature. That is, they do not prescribe anything; they are describable in terms of reflecting what happened. This is why Hare criticizes theories that explain moral judgments from a descriptive point of view. We need prescriptive language because of our human condition, and this language is expressed in a way different from the rules of descriptive language.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, we cannot move from a descriptive field to an evaluative one. According to Hare, moral judgments have three essential properties: Prescriptivity, universalizability, and supervenience.¹⁸⁸

4.2.2.1. Prescriptivity

According to Hare, cognitivist theories claim that we can know the truth of some moral judgments, while non-cognitivist ones claim that we cannot. However, there is a perfect sense that non-descriptive theories allow us to

¹⁸⁶ Hare, “Universal Prescriptivism”, 452.

¹⁸⁷ Hare, *Freedom and Reason*, 8.

¹⁸⁸ Hare, *Moral Thinking: Its Levels, Method, and Point*, 55.

know.¹⁸⁹ That is the prescriptive meaning of moral judgments. Hare divides prescriptive language into imperatives and value judgments. Imperatives can be singular and universal, while value judgments can be divided into moral and non-moral.¹⁹⁰ Moral value judgments being prescriptive means that if someone says “I ought to do X”, that requires the command “Let me do X”.¹⁹¹ In this respect, moral judgments are prescriptive and commendatory. Still, unlike others, they can be associated with universal imperatives because when someone uses the word “good”, they must accept the “first-person imperative” and the “quasi-imperative” for all the people and times it contains.¹⁹²

The basic thesis of prescriptivism is this: “to call X good is to say that it is the kind of X we should choose if we wanted an X.”¹⁹³ So when I make such a sentence, I am recommending X, which shows that moral language tells us whether or not to do something. Since it is commendatory and prescriptive, it has a motivating and guiding effect for action in this sense, and this advice is done both for the person himself and everyone.

Hare does not deny that moral concepts have a descriptive aspect, but their primary and invariable meaning is their prescriptive meaning. While the descriptive meaning of “good” may vary from situation to situation, its evaluative or prescriptive meaning remains the same. Hare explains this situation with an example.

When we call a motor-car or a chronometer or a cricket-bat or a picture good, we are commending all of them. But because we are commending all of them for different reasons, the descriptive meaning is different in all cases. We have

¹⁸⁹ Hare, “Universal Prescriptivism”, 451.

¹⁹⁰ Hare, *The Language of Morals*, 3.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 168-9.

¹⁹² Philippa Foot, *Theories of Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), 6.

¹⁹³ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 166.

knowledge of the evaluative meaning of ‘good’ from our earliest years; but we are constantly learning to use it in new descriptive meanings, as the classes of objects whose virtues we learn to distinguish grow more numerous.¹⁹⁴

From this point of view, we can say that moral judgments have both a cognitive and a non-cognitive side. They are cognitive in terms of their descriptiveness and non-cognitive in terms of their prescriptive aspects. Then, when we look at Hare’s theory, it is possible to capture a cognitivist approach since moral statements do not have an utterly non-cognitivist content. The descriptive element in the sentence provides the content of knowledge. However, for Hare, his theory is seen as a non-cognitivist one because that factor does not constitute the actual meaning of the moral sentence, and it is the non-cognitivist element that creates the meaning.

4.2.2.2. Universalizability

Hare regards “universalizability” as the common feature of moral judgments with descriptive ones. Since moral judgments can be universalized, morality is a rational field. In addition, moral judgments differ from other prescriptive judgments, such as imperatives, by their universalizability.¹⁹⁵ Universalization gives the reason for rationality.¹⁹⁶ According to Hare, prescriptivism and universalizability are the elucidations of a question people ask when they are wondering what they morally ought to do.¹⁹⁷ Thus, we can question its logical reason for a value judgement. If we can form a moral judgment we make in any given situation for all other cases that are exactly like that situation, then that is universalization. However, Hare also states that we do

¹⁹⁴ Hare, *The Language of Morals*, 118.

¹⁹⁵ Hare, *Freedom and Reason*, 5.

¹⁹⁶ Hare, *The Language of Morals*, 176.

¹⁹⁷ Hare, *Freedom and Reason*, 123.

not need to judge universalization strictly. “Moral principles do not have to be as general as ‘never tell lies’; they can be more specific, such as ‘never tell lies except when it is necessary in order to save an innocent life, and except when...and except when...’”¹⁹⁸ In addition, universality should not be confused with objectivity. Moral judgments must be considered to include “the characteristics of people in the ‘situation’, including their desires and motivations.” According to Hare’s example, a speaker would not contradict universalizability if he said that “*a* ought do something to *c*”, but “*b* ought not do the same thing to *d*” due to the different desires of *c* and *d*. This is because different desires mean different situations.¹⁹⁹

The rationalization of moral judgments seems to be an essential step for the non-cognitivist tradition. The idea that rationality is revealed through prescriptivity, not descriptivity, is a distinct feature of Hare’s philosophy. Moreover, the supervenient feature of moral concepts seems to support their universalizability. For better understanding, let’s move on to a detailed explanation of that feature.

4.2.2.3. Supervenience

Hare uses the concept of supervenience to distinguish between evaluative and purely descriptive words such as “good,” “right,” and “ought.”²⁰⁰ In this sense, evaluative judgments are divided into moral and non-moral judgments. So, there is a difference between the sentence “it is a good knife” and the sentence “she is a good person”. In the former, there is no supervenience, while in the latter, there is. For example, knife *a* and knife *b* are similar knives in all respects, but we can say that knife *a* is good, and knife *b* is not. We can also say

¹⁹⁸ Hare, “Universal Prescriptivism”, 457.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 456.

²⁰⁰ Hare, *The Language of Morals*, 145.

that “that book is the same as the other book except that it is red.”²⁰¹ However, we cannot say that x and y are the same persons in all respects, but the first one is good, and the other is bad. Such notions are supervenient because, as an implied attribute of an object or action, they make it completely different from the others.

However, Hare’s distinction between moral and no-moral evaluative words prevents us from attributing goodness to any object that is precisely the same as an object that is good in all physical respects. So, since goodness is not linked to a functional or physical property, the supervenient property of moral concepts seems to cause a distinction between moral and non-moral evaluative judgments. Supervenience does not depend on physical properties at this point. While the good used in the example of the knife is descriptive, it has evaluative meaning in the example of the “good person”. Therefore, the meanings of moral concepts are not descriptive for Hare.

On the other hand, the goodness of a blade can be supervenient to physical properties. For example, if the goodness of a knife is supervenient in some properties like “sharpness”, “being a good handle”, and “strength”, then two knives that meet these physical properties will not differ in goodness. It sounds plausible if we think the blade’s goodness cannot be outside of its core physical properties. However, while Hare can regard two knives the same in terms of physical qualities, as one good and the other bad, we cannot call two people who are the same in every respect, one good and the other bad. Here, there is a problem with how the goodness of a thing is defined. For example, if goodness depends on the function of an object or being, without distinction between moral and non-moral, then two objects or creatures of the same kind that perform their roles can be good. In other words, both knives can be good if they meet the required physical functions, and two people can be good in the same way. In other words, the fact that properties like good are supervenient does not make a difference between moral and non-moral evaluative terms because they can be applied to both. Moreover, there is a difference between the red feature used in the red book example and the goodness of the knife. The

²⁰¹ Hudson, *Modern Moral Philosophy*, 165.

concept of good, which is thought to be used non-moral here, cannot be reduced to a color feature such as red.

When we analyze Hare's example for the concept of supervenience, we can see the same system of thought.

- (1) XIII 3 is a nice room, but XII 3, though similar in all other respects, is not a nice room;
- (2) XIII 3 is a duck-egg blue room, but XII 3, though similar in all other respects, is not a duck-egg blue room;
- (3) XIII 3 is a hexahedral room, but XII 3, though similar in all other respects, is not a hexahedral room.²⁰²

According to Hare, here (1) contradicts itself, but (2) does not. If it is similar in all respects, then (3) also contradicts itself and (1) since it will also be similar in the hexagonal property. For Hare, this test helps explain the concept of supervenience. The word denoting value here is the word "nice", and it is supervenient. So the XIII 3 is nice, unlike and in addition to its other physical features. In other words, we can say that the "nicety" of a room has a different meaning from the physical characteristics of that room. However, as we mentioned above, when moral concepts are explained in terms of physical or functional features, there is no distinction between moral and non-moral evaluative judgments. Thus, in this case, the "nicety" of a room can be explained by the physical characteristics that we understand from a room's nicety, such as "having nice furniture", "being large", or "getting good light".

We can easily conclude that the idea of supervenience yields a criticism of naturalist and intuitive theories. According to naturalists, the goodness of anything can be explained by its natural properties. However, according to Hare, there is no necessary relation between the supervenient feature of moral concepts and naturalistic description. In other words, no evaluative conclusion can be drawn from descriptive statements. From this point of view, Hare agrees with Moore because moral concepts that are supervenient have a non-descriptive meaning; on the other hand, unlike intuitionism, the former claims that this

²⁰² R. M. Hare, *Essays in Ethical Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 67.

relationship cannot be revealed through intuition.²⁰³ Hare's distinction between descriptive and evaluative moral concepts also provides the basis for his interpretation of Hume's is-ought paragraph which we will analyze in the next section.

4.2.3. The Is-Ought Question for Hare

Moral judgments have rationality by being universalizable. But when we consider the traditional truth condition theory, they cannot be true or false since their meanings are determined by their prescriptive parts, not the descriptive parts. Seeing a moral judgment as right or wrong is determined by the truth-conditions of the society. According to Hare's example,

[I]n any moderately stable society, the principles that people accept and invoke in their moral judgements will be fairly uniform and constant. As a result, when one person says that somebody did what he ought in the circumstances, anybody who knows the circumstances and shares these commonly accepted moral principles will assume that, if he did what he ought, what he did was in accord with them: so he will think he knows what in particular the speaker was saying he did. If, then, it turned out that the person did not do that, he will say that the speaker was speaking falsely.²⁰⁴

Thus, in the former, a moral judgment may be regarded as true, while in the latter, it may be seen as false. As we have seen, to say that an action is morally good is to say that it is universalizable rather than ascribing moral goodness to it, which means "ought" has no meaning on its own.

The fact-value problem focuses on the meaning of moral judgments being prescriptive rather than descriptive. Since moral judgments are not descriptions, they do not express facts or objects. It is easy in their theories to derive value from fact in terms of naturalism and intuitionism. If we say that moral judgments are descriptive, then we say that their meanings are also descriptive and correspond to certain facts. However, this is a completely erroneous inference

²⁰³ Hudson, *Modern Moral Philosophy*, 167.

²⁰⁴ Hare, "Universal Prescriptivism", 458.

because although moral judgments are part of the descriptive, their meanings are prescriptive. On the other hand, naturalism accepts the statement that in Saudi Arabia, if a woman disobeys her husband (fact), it is obvious that she is doing something she ought not to do (moral judgment). Likewise, to those who have been morally educated in this society, the truth of this judgment may be intuitively obvious, and intuitionism must admit it.²⁰⁵

Hare, making the same criticism as Mackie, claims that facts do not have the property of motivating people to act like moral judgements. It is easy to understand that descriptivist theories maintain that some non-moral factual statements make “ought” consequences inevitable. However, according to Hare, prescriptivists reject this idea because moral judgments drive the speaker to motivation and actions, but “non-moral” facts alone cannot.²⁰⁶ As we have seen, Stevenson also argues that the first function of moral judgments is to motivate. But he does so by arguing that, unlike the Hare, they are irrational and emotion-based. While for Moore, this motivating element of moral judgments is seen as something intuitive, for naturalists, it is part of what they saw as natural properties. However, according to Hare, neither of these theories tells us by which rational process we can explain moral judgments. Descriptive theories simply say that moral judgments inevitably arise from facts.²⁰⁷ Therefore, for Hare, there is a fact-value distinction arising from the distinction between descriptive and prescriptive. A sentence expressing a factual situation conveys a certain situation to a person, while an imperative sentence says that a position should be brought to another situation.

However, Hare’s idea that facts alone do not prompt action does not seem to be a sufficient reason to say that there is an unbridgeable gap between fact and value. Of course, brute facts are not motivators on their own because an agent who sees them as motivators is required. In this regard, Hare makes a much

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 459.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 459.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 460.

stronger argument about the idea that evaluative statements cannot be derived from factual statements.

Ethics is not in the realm of fact, and ethical judgments are explained outside the realm of truth and falsity.²⁰⁸ Therefore, ethics has a non-cognitive nature, as ethical judgments do not provide knowledge. In addition, for Hare, evaluative statements cannot emerge from mere factual statements. Evaluating Hume's paragraph to fit the traditional interpretation, Hare says that Hume is talking about a basic rule of logic there: "No imperative conclusion can be validly drawn from a set of premises which does not contain at least one imperative."²⁰⁹ He continues his explanation as follows.

If we admit, as I shall later maintain, that it must be part of the function of a moral judgement to prescribe or guide choices, that is to say, to entail an answer to some question of the form 'What shall I do?'—then it is clear, from the second of the rules just stated, that no moral judgement can be a pure statement of fact.²¹⁰

In other words, according to Hare, if we think that the answers to questions such as "what shall I do" that govern or regulate one's choices lie in the function of a moral judgment, then it becomes extremely clear that no moral judgment can be a purely factual proposition. Here, however, the problem is the logical approach that makes morality a functional field. The most fundamental problem is to center the logical explanation based on Hume's traditional interpretation. That is to see the fact-value problem as a matter of deducibility. This view is not surprising to Hare, for he says from the beginning that ethics, as he understands it, is the logical study of moral language.

In evaluating moral judgments, we may make certain kinds of explanations for facts, but these facts do not necessarily entail moral judgments. We have to add a premise to evaluate such arguments since there is not

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 457.

²⁰⁹ Hare, *The Language of Morals*, 28.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

necessarily a requirement. This underlying moral premise is generally either implied or assumed in arguments. In other words, drawing a moral conclusion without an evaluative proposition implied in the argument is impossible. If we express Hare's thesis logically, one can assert that "x is lying" and "Then, x did something morally wrong." However, we cannot move from the act of lying to the conclusion that the person has done something morally wrong. We must add another proposition to the premises: "It is morally wrong to lie." Such a proposition is obviously an evaluative proposition. Therefore, no evaluative conclusion can be drawn from mere factual propositions. There must be at least one imperative statement among the premises.

4.3. Discussions

We can see Mackie and Hare's theories as attempts to eliminate the problematic aspects of cognitivist and non-cognitivist theories. Mackie opposes the issue of essentialism or realism, which is often seen as the thorniest problem of cognitivist theories, with the idea that the existence of objective moral concepts leads to both ontological and epistemological queerness. On the other hand, according to Hare, since non-cognitivist emotive theories do not see moral judgments as descriptive, they have concluded that they are irrational. Hare focuses on the rationality of morality and the possibility of moral discussion. Thus, he argues that moral judgments are universal and prescriptive and can be explained and have a rational meaning.

However, when we look at both theories, neither Mackie's cognitivist theory nor Hare's non-cognitivist theory can give us the fact-value association. On the contrary, both thinkers have put forward theories that support Hume's traditional interpretation. While Mackie sees fact and value as ontologically separate fields, Hare thinks that evaluative propositions cannot be derived from factual propositions and that morality should only be investigated logically. For Mackie, rejecting realism seems to mean defending the fact-value distinction as well. On the other hand, Hare seems to have found a way between cognitivism and non-cognitivism. When we make a moral judgment in a situation, we can

make the same judgment for the same other situations we encounter, and moral judgments have a cognitive meaning; then, moral judgments are not just preferences and tastes. This is a way of defending non-cognitivism without resorting to other emotive theories.

Mackie agrees with the non-cognitivist view of the non-existence of objective values. However, while, for Ayer, the sentence “murder is wrong” expresses the attitude and feelings of the person who said it, for Mackie, this sentence has a truth value and does not express the person’s feelings. In other words, when we say “murder is wrong”, we make a meaningful sentence about murdering is wrong. However, moral judgments are literally false because they are not a part of the fabric of the world. Although Mackie’s “error theory” rejects realism and involves the idea that moral judgments can take truth values, the fact that all moral judgments are false causes certain problems. Consider the sentence “Torture is morally wrong”. If all moral judgments are false, then that judgment will be false. However, by the law of excluded middle, we can say that “it is true that torture is not wrong.” This would be an ethical judgment, not a meta-ethical judgment, as Mackie claims. In other words, this judgment becomes the first-order moral view, not the second-order.²¹¹ Moreover, we would logically say that a moral judgment can be true.

In addition, Mackie bases his claim that moral judgments are systematically and uniformly wrong on the thesis that they do not exist ontologically. Considering the fairy example we gave above on this subject, we can say that there is a problem between moral facts and facts about fairies. The analogy is flawed in this respect: since fairies do not exist, the judgments about them cannot be true. However, when we consider the concept of fact as a social phenomenon regarding moral judgments, moral actions and practices constitute a kind of factuality. In this sense, they are not non-existent fictional things like fairies. Unlike fairies, they are things that all people can practice and see their reflections in their life. The facts we can find in our lives to confirm the judgments about fairies and the facts we can find in our lives to confirm moral

²¹¹ Olson, “Error Theory in Metaethics”, 60.

judgments are clearly not the same thing. Then, moral characteristics are not queer because when we consider moral facts as social and cultural phenomena belonging to the human world, we can see how they overlap with the understanding of human life. For example, we could even characterize psychological processes as perhaps facts; whether or not someone is happy is not mind-independent in a way because it is a fact about the mind. On the other hand, whether someone is happy or not is not right or wrong based on what someone else thinks.²¹² While Mackie argues here that there are no objective values and that all moral judgments are wrong, he assumes that objective values are primary or intrinsic properties of things or things that we might call brute facts. However, the explanation of values by facts does not necessarily require this, which we will see detailed in the neo-Aristotelian approach in the sixth chapter. However, at least, we can say that the concept of fact is not necessarily an object of purely physical factualism in the sense that it can be conceived as a phenomenon that emerged within human practices, communities or traditions.

As a result, facts and values are different both metaphysically and epistemologically. Thus, his queer argument does not allow for the fact-value association. Moreover, Mackie agrees with the traditional interpretation of Hume's paragraph. Assuming a metaphysical and epistemological distinction between fact and value seems to favor non-cognitivism because all moral judgments are false, and there are no corresponding facts. In other words, something that does not exist cannot be true. There is a moral discourse in this case, but a discussion ground for their truth disappears. Then, "error theory" merely identifies, but does not offer a solution, that moral facts do not play an explanatory role in forming moral judgments and beliefs and, more generally, in moral practice.

Considering prescriptivism, we see that moral judgments are not irrational and that moral argument is possible, yet they are not true or false. Unlike emotivism, prescriptivism does not preclude argumentation in morality. In this respect, Hare's theory is an important step toward eliminating non-

²¹² Lacewing, *Philosophy for AS and A Level: Epistemology and Moral Philosophy*, 377-378.

cognitivism's rigidly irrational stance on moral judgments. Hare has shown how an evaluative or imperative conclusion can be drawn from an argument with factual statements in it if we look at the is-ought problem from a logical standpoint. He thinks that what Hume says needs to be explained is just a logical relation. This is possible only if there is at least one imperative proposition within the premises. However, this point of view ignores the historicity of the fact-value problem and insists that the problem is only logical. Hare's solution simply repeats Hume's traditional interpretation.²¹³ It is a logical condition that at least one of the propositions must be an evaluative proposition. Thus, such a logical formulation of morality does not provide a moral answer to how value and reality states are interconnected. It simply provides a formulation of our moral arguments. But moral reasoning does not seem to work in such a way when it comes to ethics.

As we discussed earlier, we cannot construct the sentence "x is lying about something, then it is morally wrong". To establish this, we need a prescriptive sentence such as "lying is morally wrong". However, even if the logical part of the matter is solved, how we construct this sentence should also be questioned. According to MacIntyre, at the end of this chain of reasoning, there is a principle that we must bind ourselves to by choice.²¹⁴ According to Hare, how we construct this sentence or the criteria for constructing it may be explained by the universalizability of moral judgments. However, it seems that it is ultimately up to the first-person singular that we will universalize which principle according to what. For example, about a man who argues that other people should be treated unpleasantly simply because their skin is black, we might always ask the question: "Are you then prepared to allow that you should be treated in the same way if your skin were black?" MacIntyre says that Hare thinks that people's answer to this question is mostly no. However, the other way

²¹³ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 166.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 167.

around is also possible.²¹⁵ The problem with universalization of moral judgments, therefore, is that there is no greater authority behind one's moral evaluations and choices than one's and that what one calls "good" and thinks one ought to do again depends solely on one's evaluations. There is no logical limit to these evaluations. Hare, too, denies that there is any authority independent of one's motivations to accept moral judgments, calling his theory "internalist" in this respect.²¹⁶ In the case of facts, truth criteria are independent of our choices, while our choices restrict criteria for evaluation. According to MacIntyre, this view makes the moral subject "an arbitrary sovereign who is the author of the law that he utters and who constitutes it law by uttering it in the form of a universal prescription."²¹⁷ When we think of our attitudes and prescriptions, they have authority because they belong to us, but when we use words like "ought" or "good," we are invoking a standard that has a different authority than our attitudes and commands.²¹⁸

On the other hand, moral judgment is more than just the universalization of an attitude. Although descriptive and factual reasons can be presented as reasons for value judgments in Hare's prescriptive theory, since these are not part of their meaning, the meaning of moral judgment will remain only as any form of formal universalization of an attitude. At this point, Philippa Foot's criticism appears to be highly significant. For example, when we consider the word "rudeness", to consider some behavior rude by anyone's standards is to form a value judgment. However, there can be objective criteria for deeming some behavior rude, which leaves no room for choice. Foot claims that the criteria for the application of value judgments such as "rudeness" and

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 167.

²¹⁶ Hare, "Universal Prescriptivism", 458.

²¹⁷ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 167.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 169.

“courageous” are factual.²¹⁹ When a man spits in the face of an acquaintance he barely knows and who has never done him any harm, then that man is definitely being rude in a society where spitting on one’s face is considered an insult rather than praise. Likewise, a man who would save the lives of others by sacrificing his own is certainly courageous. Consequences such as “This man is rude” or “This man is courageous” may emerge from an argument in which the factual, necessary, and sufficient conditions necessary to justify these adjectives are written as premises.²²⁰ Still, Hare would object to such criticism based on the idea that there should be an evaluative proposition among the premises about what it is to be rude or courageous. It is a question of limiting moral issues to a logical explanation.

Hare and Mackie agree that values cannot be objective. For Hare, universality is not the same thing as objectivity. Mackie, on the other hand, rejects the existence of objective values because he thinks they are ontologically and epistemologically queer. However, it is wrong for Mackie that moral judgments are universalizable in the sense that they are both descriptive and prescriptive. Descriptions arising from the uses of “good” do not give the meaning of it.²²¹ On the other hand, Hare claims that he and Mackie have some differences in the claim that values cannot be objective. According to him, Mackie’s theory of error is concerned with the factual properties of moral judgments, not their logical properties. In other words, unlike Hare’s, Mackie’s theory is not a view of the meanings of moral words because, for Mackie, people think that actions have some moral properties, but they do not have them because there is no such quality.²²² On the other hand, Hare agrees with Mackie that

²¹⁹ Philippa Foot, “Moral Arguments”, *Mind* 67, no. 268 (1958): 502-513.

²²⁰ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 168.

²²¹ Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 86.

²²² Hare, *Moral Thinking: Its Levels, Method, and Point*, 78.

when philosophers say that an action is wrong, they somehow attribute an objective character to that action, which is clearly wrong.²²³

Both Hare's and Mackie's theories support Hume's traditional interpretation. The claim that there is an unbridgeable gap between fact and value is strengthened because "what ought to be" cannot be explained by "what is". However, when we look at all non-cognitivist and cognitivist theories, we see that we make use of factual statements when explaining values or giving reasons why something is "good". Although Hare and Mackie defend the fact-value distinction, it is possible to say that they both realize this fact in that the former thinks that value judgments have a descriptive side, and the latter says that value propositions can be derived from factual statements only by staying within the institution. In general, however, the problem becomes more complex by dividing value propositions into moral and non-moral. That is when we say "a good watch", "a good farmer", and "a good horse" these situations are non-moral, factual and not open to choice, while the sentence "a good person" is a moral one that is regarded as confusing and detached from reality.²²⁴ Hare's concept of supervenience assumes that "a good person" cannot be explained in the same way as "a good watch" because the former has a moral concept and the second has a non-moral one. However, just as there can be some features of the watch about how a good watch ought to be, there can also be some human features about how a good person ought to be.

In the last instance, it is possible to encounter an epistemological problem related to the fact-value problem that we have discussed in cognitivist and non-cognitivist theories.²²⁵ If we accept that moral judgments can be explained within rational discourse, then we need to be naturalist, anti-realist like Mackie, or intuitionist within existing theories. If we say that value statements can be

²²³ *Ibid.*, 80.

²²⁴ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 168.

²²⁵ Sturgeon, "Ethical Naturalism", 223.

inferred from factual statements, as naturalism advocates, fact and value must be exactly on the same ontological footing. On the other hand, if we claim that there is a gap between fact and value, we cannot make this inference, so we intuitively get the knowledge about value directly. So, is there any other solution that defends the unity of fact and value without falling into the essentialist error of naturalism and keeping moral judgments within rational discourse? We will discuss the possibility of this in the next section.

CHAPTER 5

DISSOLVING THE DICHOTOMY

Considering the cognitivist and non-cognitivist theories discussed, the traditional interpretation of Hume's paragraph reveals a logically unbridgeable gap between fact and value. This logical gap brings out the idea of an ontological and epistemological distinction by virtue of meta-ethical theories built upon the traditional interpretation. We can list four basic features related to the elimination of this problem. First, a discussion of whether value can be logically deduced from the fact leads us to treat the issue as pure deducibility. Accordingly, values emerge independent of facts and rational discourse, and it becomes difficult to defend moral judgments cognitively within the unity of fact and value. In other words, if we defend the fact-value distinction, we are compelled to accept that moral conclusions cannot be based on anything reason can establish. Therefore, it is logically impossible that any genuinely assertive factual truth can provide a basis for morality.

On the other hand, when we do not consider the problem as a matter of deducibility, the truth emerges that there is a relationship between facts and values, and we cannot explain "what ought to be" independently of "what is". We suggest many factual reasons to explain moral concepts and judgments regarding the theories discussed. In this sense, the anti-traditional interpretation we mentioned in the second chapter has a crucial role. Accordingly, there is an "inference" relationship between fact and value rather than an "entailment" relationship. Hume also claims a legitimate explanation of this relationship needs to be investigated. Therefore, understanding the issue in terms of how we can explain the relationship between "what is" and "what ought to be" and on what basis we should do moral reasoning will lead us to eliminate the problem rather than relying on the idea of an unbridgeable gap between fact and value. So much so that the understanding of deducibility already implies seeing fact and value as

two different realms. Also, since morality is not something so mechanical and explicitly formulated, the fact-value problem should not be read as a matter of deducibility. Therefore, making a purely textual interpretation of Hume's passage and reducing the issue to a logical impossibility rather than a rational inference makes the issue more challenging. Thus, to better understand the problem, it is necessary to make a contextual reading on behalf of the paragraph and finally to think about the unity of "what is" and "what ought to be".

Second, meta-ethical discussions are empty without ethical discussions because meta-ethics is a neutral activity in terms of human behavior. Indeed, most philosophers of meta-ethics see what they do as merely examining moral judgments and just determining their meanings or uses. But one must move from meta-ethics to ethics since after meta-ethical research has yielded no benefit for ethical research, it remains only to identify what can be described. The common point in meta-ethical theories is that they do not provide a moral criterion to decide the validity of moral judgments; rather, they work on a logical criterion about their validity. With their inheritance from Hume, they simply examine moral concepts independently of their normativity, within a network of purely logical, linguistic and emotional relations, and explore ethics as a linguistic analysis rather than a practical field. This perspective deepens the gap between fact and value because "what ought to be" has lost its factual reality in such a web of relations. Of course, meta-ethical research is useful for ethics because it analyzes the uses and meanings of ethical judgments and concepts. However, they do not give us an answer as to what the connection is between the moral judgments and behaviors we draw from the factual reality of life. Therefore, it does not seem sufficient on its own, at least in relation to "what is" and "what ought to be", to express the true meanings of moral concepts and judgments. More clearly, meta-ethical theories deal with theories that dwell on words and concepts without producing practical solutions, but accepting fact-value association begins with acknowledging ethics as a practical field. *Praxis* means that values are grasped in practices and that they have a factual basis. In this context, it means an action with a purpose. As we shall see later, Aristotle also defines the good as what the human being aims at characteristically. "When

actions follow upon a deliberate choice (*proairesis*), they may be judged moral or immoral and hence fall within the scope of the “practical” sciences, i.e., ethics and politics, which have as their object the good that is aimed at by action.”²²⁶ Unless the purposefulness of human action is understood, it becomes challenging to understand ethical behaviors and judgments. Ethics is precisely to understand the purposiveness between “what is” and “what ought to be”.

Third, concerning the second, the emergence of the fact-value distinction was accompanied by the rejection of the Aristotelian understanding of teleology. The disappearance of teleological thinking has led to the emergence of an autonomous moral agent. Thus, analytical philosophy failed to answer the question: “Each moral agent now spoke unconstrained by the externalities of divine law, natural teleology or hierarchical authority; but why should anyone else now listen to him?”²²⁷ A gap has emerged between the meaning of moral expressions and their uses. We are taught to see ourselves as autonomous moral agents, but at the same time, each of us is surrounded by “modes of practice, aesthetic or bureaucratic” that force us to enter into guiding relationships with others.²²⁸ The emergence of this autonomous moral agent involves a rejection of the Aristotelian teleological view that gives factual context to evaluative claims. With this refusal, both the concept of value and fact gain a new character. Therefore, the view that evaluative or moral conclusions cannot be deduced from factual premises is not a widely held truth. However, from the late 17th century through the 18th century, what had hitherto been considered by all to be factual premises and conclusions that were considered evaluative or moral have changed.²²⁹

²²⁶ Francis E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 163.

²²⁷ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 68.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

²²⁹ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 77-78.

The fact that the fact-value problem is seen as a matter of purely logical deducibility, that the distinction between “matters of fact” and “relations of ideas”, which have an important role in Hume’s philosophy, has a decisive heritage in this way, and that ethics is not seen as a teleological field with the rejection of Aristotelianism creates the idea that there is a gap between fact and value.

It can be understood by looking at Aristotle’s philosophy why the fact-value problem does not manifest itself in a teleological understanding of ethics. The distinction between moral and non-moral evaluative judgments discussed in contemporary meta-ethical theories does not exist in the Aristotelian tradition. The sentences “a good clock” and “a good person” are formed within the same understanding and have factual references. Here teleology co-exists with the concept of function. According to the Aristotelian understanding, in these examples, the purpose of the “clock”, that is, what it means to be a good clock, is included in the definition of being a clock. That is, it depends on whether it meets the necessary conditions to become a clock. In the example of a good person, being good for a person depends on a definition of human and human nature that reveals what a human is. Thus, there are agreed factual criteria for the use of the “good”, not only for the “good clock” but also for the “good person”. However, in our current understanding of morality, our idea of human nature or human activity does not seem to have a teleological character. As we have seen in meta-ethical theories, there is no correlation between what is good for humans and the purpose of human life. The failure to include teleology in ethics within a factual context reveals the idea that there is no authority outside the moral agent’s desires, feelings, and preferences. When we speak of society in the Aristotelian sense, there is a clear difference between evaluative language and the language of liking. “I may tell you what I like or choose, and I may tell you what you ought to do, but the second makes a claim upon you which the first does not.”²³⁰ In this context, teleology serves to build a bridge between fact and value. At the same time, the meta-ethical theories have revealed that “non-

²³⁰ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 169.

moral” judgments containing functional meanings can be explained by factual statements. When considered with an Aristotelian understanding, the lack of distinction between moral and non-moral evaluative propositions also supports the relationship between value and fact.

Fourth, as a result of the discussions, defending the fact-value association in a rational discourse primarily required a solution to the problem of essentialism. In the framework of the theories discussed, the most fundamental problem in defending the fact-value association is to explain the relationship between values and facts, which are seen as an independent field. The fact that objects have values in themselves or that values are explained by natural features, for example, reducing concepts such as good to some natural features such as desire and interest, brings together the problem of essentialism. However, it will be seen that in the Aristotelian approach, “what ought to be” is also based on a certain kind of essentialist teleology. “What ought to be” is due to the function and purpose of the nature of beings, and this purpose and function are based on Aristotelian biology. On the other hand, the neo-Aristotelian approach, which we will present in Chapter 5, will help us to solve the fact-value problem by eliminating essentialism.

From this perspective, MacIntyre’s neo-Aristotelian understanding will be examined in order to dissolve the problem. But before moving on to that, in this section, it would be useful to first look at his anti-traditional interpretation of Hume’s paragraph for the claim that there should be a rational inference between fact and value, rather than deducibility. Secondly, to better understand his neo-Aristotelian approach, it would be useful to remind Aristotle’s philosophy.

5.1. MacIntyre on “Is” and “Ought” Question

There are many interpretations of Hume’s famous paragraph in the literature.²³¹ As we have seen before, the most influential and widespread of these interpretations is the traditional one that a “set of non-moral premises does

²³¹ Further discussions also see, W. Donald Hudson, *Is-Ought Question* (London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 1969).

not entail a moral conclusion”, and the following argument that moral propositions cannot be logically deduced from factual propositions formulated as “no ought from is”. Although there are many anti-traditional interpretations like MacIntyre and Hunter, the traditional interpretation and Hume’s moral philosophy contributed to the development of emotivism and non-cognitivism. Undeniably, the standard interpretation of the passage creates an unbridgeable gap between “fact” and “value”. Therefore, this section will be a reference point for MacIntyre’s neo-Aristotelian philosophy that tries to give an anti-traditional interpretation of the is-ought passage.

MacIntyre argues that the word “deduction” in Hume’s paragraph is taken as “entailment” by the thinkers who think that one cannot pass from “fact” to “value”. This idea implies that something that does not exist in the premises cannot be included in the conclusion. If we reversely state, something inclusive in the end must logically necessarily be present in the premises. MacIntyre interprets Hume’s paragraph differently by opposing this explanation and claims that he uses the word “deduction” as an “inference” in the passage. Based on the idea that every concept can be understood in its own historicity, he examines the usage of the word “deduction” in the period when the passage was written, namely in the 18th century.²³² Accordingly, the concept of “deduction” is used for all kinds of discursive reasoning. Also, for MacIntyre, Hume, in some of his other writings, uses the concept of “deduction” for the concept today called “induction” and the “demonstrative argument” for the concept today understood as “deduction”.²³³

MacIntyre opposes the traditional distinction between factual and moral or evaluative propositions and places his philosophy in a framework where such a gap cannot exist. For him, ethics is closely tied to what a human being is. If we understand what a human being is, only then will we be able to decide how she ought to be. In this context, no value is independent of factuality. It does not

²³² A. C. MacIntyre, “Hume on ‘Is’ and ‘Ought’”, *The Philosophical Review* 68, no. 4 (1959), 460.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 451.

have to be an essentialist understanding of human nature because what a thing is or its definition can also be thought of as something known within its historicity; thereby, we can make a claim about how one ought to behave or how one ought to be. From this point of view, he opposes Hume's traditional interpretation that if it was correct, he argues, Hume himself would have developed a moral theory contradicting his passage.

MacIntyre argues that one can infer from the standard interpretation of Hume's passage that Hume was opposed to the idea of "what Prior has called the attempt to find a 'foundation' for morality that is not already moral."²³⁴ At this point, we have already stated that there is a distinction between "matters of fact" and "relations of ideas" in Hume's philosophy and that morality does not correspond to either of these fields. In other words, for morality, there needs to be a foundation that is also moral. In this sense, the distinction between "fact" and "value" already seems open to being read as two different things in Hume's philosophy. As we have discussed in the second chapter, it is not a coincidence that the traditional interpretation's idea is that there is a logical gap between fact and value. However, MacIntyre thinks that Hume draws the very moral from a non-moral place "according to his philosophy," rather than seeking a moral foundation for morality. In other words, he wants to show that there is no such unbridgeable gap between fact and value and that Hume is aware of it.

We have stated that one can find many points in Hume's philosophy that fit the anti-traditional interpretation. MacIntyre also explains these points in more detail and offers us different perspectives. In order to justify these ideas, he mentions four basic steps that he will take. He first reveals that Hume was inconsistent with the standard interpretation and then shows that if this interpretation had been correct, Hume would have contradicted his own theory of fact-value. Thirdly, he presents a piece of evidence showing the falsity of the

²³⁴*Ibid.*, 452.

standard interpretation. Finally, he elucidates how his understanding of Hume brings to the debates in moral philosophy.²³⁵

5.1.1. The Oppositeness of the Interpretations of Hume's Passage

According to MacIntyre, interpreters of this passage like Hare and Nowell-Smith, have widely misunderstood Hume's skepticism. The puzzling point is this: they have concluded in their texts that they can achieve moral results through syllogism. For example, like Hare's interpretation which we have discussed in the fourth chapter, Nowell Smith also argues that the proposition "God created us, then we must obey him" is flawed unless supported by the proposition "We must obey our creator." In other words, the proposition "a creature ought to obey his creator" has to exist in the premises for a moral result to emerge.²³⁶ The proposition of "we must obey God" cannot emerge by itself from the factual statement of "God created us". Therefore, moral conclusions cannot be drawn from a set of factual premises. However, within the premises, there must be at least one moral premise like "the creature ought to obey his creator".

This approach can be intelligible for MacIntyre only if it is basically assumed that "arguments must be deductive or defective". This assumption stems from Hume's skepticism about induction. This skepticism is based on Strawson's misunderstood claim known as "induction shall be to be really a kind of deduction". To deduce an "ought" proposition from an "is" statement, it must be either deductive or inductive. According to Hume, this situation is not deductive because deductive arguments are based on the principle of "entailment" and have properties such as universality and necessity. However, in a manner consistent with his general philosophy, Hume is skeptical of universality and necessity because such principles cannot be established by sense experience. For Hume, factual premises cannot entail moral conclusions because

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 452.

²³⁶ MacIntyre, "Hume on 'Is' and 'Ought'", 453.

they are different in their nature. To deduce from an “ought” statement from an “is” statement is passing from something deductive to inductive.²³⁷

At this point, MacIntyre gives Strawson’s example: To derive the proposition “So it will be boiling by now” from the proposition “The kettle has been on fire for ten minutes”, we can write a premise like “Whenever kettles have been on fire for ten minutes, they boil.” However, MacIntyre, here specifically in Hume’s case, suggests that the problem is to justify induction itself. Thus, our major premise itself contains an inductive claim that needs to be justified: “The fact that the kettle has been boiling in 10 minutes on the fire in the past shows that it will be like this in the future.” Also, the transition that creates this problem is justified in the course of the transition from minor premise to major premise.²³⁸ Therefore, it is the inductive argument itself that needs to be grounded.

In this respect, if any valid inference from fact to value is either deductive or defective, it can be inferred from factual propositions that value propositions cannot be logically derived; this view may prevent us from elucidating the character of moral arguments.²³⁹ Therefore, we need to think that the matter is not a deducibility, but at the same time, it does not also have to be a matter of defectiveness since the relationship between fact and value cannot be reduced to mere logic.

5.1.2. Hume is his own Lawbreaker

By drawing attention to Hume’s explanation of the concept of justice, MacIntyre argues that he constructs an argument about value issues based on factual ones. To go beyond the passage, MacIntyre examines Hume’s concept of justice. Here are Hume’s pertinent words about justice in the *Treatise*:

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 453.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 454.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 453-454.

But however single acts of justice may be contrary, either to public or to private interest, 'tis certain, that the whole plan or scheme is highly conducive, or indeed absolutely requisite, both to the support of society, and the well-being of every individual. 'Tis impossible to separate the good from the ill. Property must be stable, and must be fix'd by general rules. Tho' in one instance the public be a sufferer, this momentary ill is amply compensated by the steady prosecution of the rule, and by the peace and order, which it establishes in society.²⁴⁰

MacIntyre says that what Hume is doing here is to point out both a moral-sociological and logical point. Hume here clearly states that the justification of the rules of justice lies in the fact that the long-term interest of everyone who abides by those rules and that those who follow the rules will gain more than those who do not. To say this is to derive an evaluative conclusion from a factual statement. In this sense, justice as a value is derived from factual practices about what people's interests are. In other words, Hume justifies the rules of justice through factual propositions and affirms that this way of justification is valid, as in the paragraph below.

And even every individual person must find himself a gainer on ballancing the account; since, without justice, society must immediately dissolve, and everyone must fall into that savage and solitary condition, which is infinitely worse than the worst situation that can possibly be suppos'd in society.²⁴¹

Then, the justification of moral rules lies in the idea that they conform to the long-term common interests of individuals. We must abide by these rules because, with such obedience, no one does not gain more than he loses. From this point of view, MacIntyre explains how this transition happened by appealing to some premises. The proposition "obedience to this rule would be to everyone's long-term interest" represents the minor premise, while the proposition "we ought to do whatever is to everyone's long-term interest"

²⁴⁰ David Hume, Lewis A. Selby-Bigge, and P. H. Nidditch, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 2. ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 497.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 497.

represents the major premise. Therefore, the conclusion can be derived as “we ought to obey this rule”.²⁴²

5.1.3. Hume’s Essential Claim

According to MacIntyre, one could say that Hume’s claim about justice is correct since the basic idea he opposes is that factual statements can entail value statements. This view would be a false interpretation since Hume is actually after the possibility of intelligible fact-based morality. Firstly, Hume does not say that we cannot pass from “is” to “ought”; instead, he says that this transition “seems altogether inconceivable”.²⁴³ From this perspective, MacIntyre claims that this is a search for justification since Hume’s statement does not specify any clear judgement about the transition. Otherwise, it would create a contradiction in terms of Hume’s own philosophy, such that he often uses the statements that observations about human relations can be attributed to moral judgments, as we see in the concept of justice.²⁴⁴

Secondly, the asserted statement of “entailment” is an idea put forward by traditional interpreters of Hume. Hume does not use the word “entailment” but “deduction” in the passage. Also, in the places where Hume talks about “deductive arguments”, he uses the term “demonstrative arguments”. In the 18th century, the word “deduction” was used as a synonym for the word “inference”, not for “entailment”. To justify this idea, MacIntyre argues that Hume expresses the concept that is defined as “induction” today as “deduction” and the concept we describe as “deduction” today as “demonstrative argument”. He grounds this

²⁴² A. C. MacIntyre, “Hume on ‘Is’ and ‘Ought’”, *The Philosophical Review* 68, no. 4 (1959), 457.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 459-460.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 461.

claim with an example from Hume and argues that it is somehow “odd” to think that the word “deduction from” is used as “be entailed by”.²⁴⁵

So great is the force of laws, and of particular forms of government, and so little dependence have they on the humours and tempers of men, that consequences almost as general and certain may sometimes be deduced from them as any which the mathematical sciences afford us.²⁴⁶

Indeed, it seems plausible to think that Hume uses “demonstrative argument” to talk about being “valid” and uses the word “deduction” to talk about “inference” in general. For instance, Kant, who lives in the same century as Hume in *Critique of Pure Reason*, uses the word “deduction” not in the sense of “valid argument” used today but in the sense of legal justification or inference.²⁴⁷

5.1.4. MacIntyre’s Anti-Traditional Interpretation on the Passage

MacIntyre attempts to explain how Hume infers evaluative statements from factual statements. This inference was made with the concept of “wanting”, which is one of the concepts providing the transition between fact and value. Similarly, he notes that in examples of Aristotle’s practical syllogisms, antecedents containing terms such as “suits” or “pleases” appear.²⁴⁸ In this respect, there is a link between them and moral concepts. According to MacIntyre, when one goes beyond the passage, the connection between “what is” and “what ought to be” can be seen in Hume’s concept of “desire” and his own notions of “wanting”, “requiring”, and “needing”. In other words, Hume

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 460.

²⁴⁶ Essay III, in Hume, *Theory of Politics*, ed. by F. Watkins (London, 1951), 136.

²⁴⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood, 15. ed, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 219.

²⁴⁸ A. C. MacIntyre, “Hume on ‘Is’ and ‘Ought’”, *The Philosophical Review* 68, vol. 4 (1959), 463.

creates “what ought to be” in his own philosophy over “what is”.²⁴⁹ Although Hume reduces “what ought to be” concepts such as desire, want and interest, it should not be forgotten that the source of moral judgments is centred around the notion of emotion independent of the facts, as we have stated before. However, from MacIntyre’s anti-traditional interpretation, we can see that Hume’s concepts such as “interest” and “wanting” are based on matters of fact rather than emotional ground. That means Hume tries to establish a relationship between fact and value through an empiricist conception of the mind. Behind moral behaviors, there are passions and sympathies that enable social life to function and express a factual reality. Therefore, Hume tries to prove that the issue of value does not depend on supra-factual or abstract reasoning as metaphysical theories claim.

MacIntyre emphasizes that the point that Hume criticizes in his passage is a claim against those who try to make the transition from fact to value invalidly. He proposes that, as Hume also states in the passage, people he opposes are those who “subvert all the vulgar system of morality”. Since Hume uses the word “vulgar” interchangeably with “the generality of mankind” in *Treatise*, his main objection is to the ordinary (religious) morality, which was commonly accepted as a system in the 18th century.²⁵⁰ In other words, MacIntyre seems to suggest that the customary religious morality of Hume’s time had philosophical difficulties in transitioning from fact to value and that the search for a factual basis for morality stemmed from this philosophically inconceivable transition. Hence, Hume also stands against bringing a religious basis to morality.

Therefore, since Hume did not make any determination as to “entailment”, MacIntyre asserts that he does not argue for the autonomy of morality in the passage because he does not believe it. Hume explores how, if there is a factual basis for morality, we can legitimately talk about the relationship between that basis and morality. Therefore, it is the main logical problem for Hume that the investigation of this subject means realizing in which

²⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 465.

²⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 464.

situations the logical transition from fact to value is possible or not. In addition, MacIntyre thinks it is necessary to go beyond the passage and look at Hume's moral philosophy to understand the transition better.

Thus, MacIntyre does not think that Hume advocates the autonomy of morality, contrary to what philosophers such as Moore, Hare, and Ayer have claimed. As we have mentioned before, the similarity between many cognitivist and non-cognitivist philosophers is to regard fact and value as two distinct concepts and to try to solve whether there is a logical necessity between them. This point of view is based on the traditional interpretation of Hume's passage. However, what MacIntyre wants to do here is to show that, contrary to the traditional interpretation's idea of deducibility, the real problem is how the factual basis is related to morality. Concerning MacIntyre's interpretation of the passage, there are many opposing critiques. In this context, the next part will analyze them and elucidate his position on the "is-ought" question.

5.1.5. The Criticisms of MacIntyre's Interpretation

There are many different interpretations of Hume's passage and his ethics as a whole in the is-ought question. However, since it will be beyond the confines of this work to discuss all interpretations of the passage, only those related to MacIntyre's article will be considered. In this context, three remarkable criticisms of his article on Hume are those of Atkinson, Hunter, and Hudson.

At the centre of MacIntyre's article, he rejects the traditional interpretation that Hume is a defender of autonomy in moral issues. On the contrary, Hume is not against "the attempt to find a foundation for morality which is not already moral." In his article "Hume on 'is' and 'ought': A reply to Mr MacIntyre", Atkinson argues that MacIntyre's arguments about the standard interpretation do not come to a conclusion, and his interpretations of Hume are

not consistent in the sense that what it means for morality to be “autonomous” is not clear.²⁵¹ He gives two different definitions of autonomy:

Autonomy 1: Moral conclusions cannot be entailed by non-moral premises.

Autonomy 2: Factual statements are logically irrelevant to (in a sense stronger than that of “do not entail”) moral judgements.²⁵²

Atkinson suggests that Autonomy 1 is often confused with the idea that “evaluative conclusions cannot be deduced from non-evaluative (usually factual) premises.”²⁵³ In this sense, like MacIntyre, he also draws attention to the difference between “entailment” and “deduction”. According to Atkinson, these two definitions are different from each other, but they are related in one point in the sense that Autonomy 2 entails Autonomy 1 but not the other way around. To elucidate the position of MacIntyre, he analyses his two main arguments about Hume. The first one is the idea that Hume does not assert the impossibility of transition from “is” to “ought”, but its difficulty. The second one is about the usage of the logical concepts that Hume does not use the word “entailment” but “deduction”, and the usage of the word “deduction” in the 18th century means “inference” in today’s context. Atkinson argues that the first argument of MacIntyre is in opposition to Autonomy 1, whereas the second one is to Autonomy 2.²⁵⁴

Moreover, MacIntyre’s these two arguments do not seem to be convincing for Atkinson since, although Hume is a relatively ironic philosopher, the passage in question is not a passage written ironically. To illustrate, Atkinson argues that when Reid, who is Hume’s contemporary, interprets Hume, he

²⁵¹ R.F. Atkinson, “Hume on ‘is’ and ‘ought’: A reply to Mr Macintyre”, within *Controversies in Philosophy: The Is-Ought Question* (Macmillan, 1969), 51.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 51.

²⁵³ *Ibid.* 51.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

suggests that Hume uses the concept of “deduction” in the sense of “entailment.”²⁵⁵ On the other hand, regarding MacIntyre’s interpretation of the religious morality that Hume opposes, Atkinson purports that Hume uses the word “vulgar” in the sense of “pejorative rather than a purely classificatory sense”.²⁵⁶ Therefore, he is not solely against religious morality in his time. While Atkinson supports MacIntyre’s warnings about standardizing Hume’s ethical thoughts, he considers MacIntyre’s arguments as insufficient.²⁵⁷

If we consider the traditional interpretation of the passage, it seems to be involved in Autonomy 2 in the sense that the concept of “fact” and “value” are two different things. Since Autonomy 2 entails Autonomy 1, MacIntyre seems to be against both of them. Since Hume’s moral philosophy as a whole gives us many clues about the transition from factual statements to evaluative statements like his analysis of “justice”, MacIntyre has tried to point out the contradiction between Hume’s moral philosophy and the standard interpretation of his passage. In his analysis of the concept of “vulgar”, Atkinson, by using the word “pejorative”, seems to argue that Hume, in general, saw a difficulty in the transition from fact to value, and hence there is a logical irrelevance between them. In this regard, Atkinson’s critique indicates the position of moral statements that Hume has placed in his total philosophy. He asserts that there needs to be “small attention” to Hume’s philosophy as a whole. His aim is not only “subvert all the vulgar systems of morality” but also to show that “the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceived by reason.”²⁵⁸ Thus, his criticism shows us that the standard interpretation is not accidental.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 54-55.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 55-56.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

Another view that opposes the traditional interpretation that propositions about what people ought to do are entirely different from purely factual propositions and that value propositions cannot be derived from factual propositions was produced by Hunter. While he is against the standard interpretation, which is defended by some philosophers such as Hare, Nowel-Smith, Ayer and Flew, he argues that he can prove what MacIntyre wants to do in a much shorter way. He tries to argue for the claim that the “Brief Guide Interpretation” of Hume is wrong, and for Hume, factual statements and moral statements come from the same kind.

He purports that the sentence “this action is vicious” means the “contemplation of this action causes a feeling or sentiment of blame in me” for Hume. Hunter thinks that then the latter is a statement of fact. Indeed, one action creates a feeling upon “me” when “I” contemplate that action, which is a matter of fact. He argues that in order to legitimize the transition between “is” and “ought”, Hume has reduced the issues of morality to matters of facts.²⁵⁹

Since “there is a causal relationship between the speaker’s contemplation of some actual or imagined state of affairs and his feeling certain “peculiar” feelings or sentiments”,²⁶⁰ in Hume’s moral theory, moral judgements are statements of fact in consequences of being expressions of feelings. From this perspective, Hunter suggests that “ought” propositions are a sub-class of “is” propositions in the sense that “is” propositions are about certain sorts of feelings. Therefore, he thinks that Hume has regarded “ought” propositions are logically equivalent to “is” propositions. That’s why the standard view that “no is-proposition can by itself entail an ought-proposition” is absurd.

Starting from this point of view, Hunter argues that there are two possible interpretations:

²⁵⁹ Geoffrey Hunter, “Hume on Is and Ought”, within *Controversies in Philosophy: The Is-Ought Question*, ed. W. Donald Hudson (Macmillan, 1969), 59.

²⁶⁰ David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Lewis A. Selby-Bigge, 2. ed. (Clarendon Press : Oxford University Press, 1963), 472.

(i) It seems inconceivable that ought-propositions should be deducible from is-propositions, but it is not in fact “inconceivable”.

(ii) Ought-propositions cannot ever be deduced from is-propositions. But the reason for this is that sentences expressing ought-propositions are paraphrases of certain sentences expressing is-propositions, and paraphrasing is not deducing.²⁶¹

For the first one, Hunter thinks that “seems inconceivable” is not the same thing as “is inconceivable”. In this regard, since Hume has thought that there was a failure in previous explanations about the transition from fact to value in terms of legitimizing, the passage does not involve the idea that “ought cannot be deduced from “is”, but Hume has just criticized the earlier writers.²⁶² For the second one, evaluative statements cannot be deduced from the factual statements since the first one is a kind of paraphrasing of the latter. They have meaning by virtue of being expressions of feelings and none other than that. Thus, differently expressing something is not a deduction but paraphrasing.²⁶³ Hume’s view of moral propositions as expressions of emotion leads Hunter to see this way of thinking as reducing value to fact.

Even if Hume is making a transition from facts to value, he does not do so by claiming that the field of value is in the realm of reason. In other words, according to this criticism, moral propositions can be considered as a mere expression of facts or a paraphrase of “is” propositions without being in the field of reason and fact. The assertion of Hume as to the position of moral statements seems to be quite clear: “the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceived by reason.” Hunter argues that

[t]he distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, because it is founded on the sentiments felt by people contemplating

²⁶¹ Geoffrey Hunter, “Hume on Is and Ought”, within *Controversies in Philosophy: The Is-Ought Question*, ed. W. Donald Hudson (Macmillan, 1969), 60-61.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 60.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 61.

relations of objects. It is not perceived by reason alone, because these sentiments themselves are the objects not of reason but of feeling.²⁶⁴

Hunter argues in the passage that previous writers made a mistake in explaining this deduction, while MacIntyre, along the same line, suggests that those who made this illegitimate explanation were trying to find a religious basis for morality and that Hume used concepts such as human needs, interests, desires and happiness to be able to make a legitimate transition. In fact, Hume does not think “no ought from is” for both philosophers; he just thinks that this transition was not done legitimately. For MacIntyre, Hume is trying to explain exactly how this transition was made, while Hunter says that Hume’s analysis of moral judgements is mistaken since he has reduced the moral statements to the factual statements.

The third criticism of MacIntyre’s article belongs to W.D. Hudson focuses on two important points in his article, “Hume on *is* and *ought*”: “(i) What was Hume’s opinion in this matter of *is* and *ought*, and (ii) What is the correct view?” Hudson criticizes both Hunter and MacIntyre, but due to the scope of the thesis, only his account of MacIntyre will be analyzed. MacIntyre’s argument that the “consensus of interests can explain Hume’s conception of ‘ought’ ” seems ambiguous for Hudson. Although Hume establishes a relation between the idea of “obligation” and the “consensus of interests”, he argues that Hume does not reduce “ought” to “consensus of interests”.²⁶⁵ In other words, he does not make a transition from factual statements to moral statements by deriving any moral argument from the concept of common interest. To say that we ought to do something does not necessarily affirm that there is a commonly accepted rule since Hudson suggests Hume does not say that a commonly accepted rule entails a consensus about our interests. It is by no means an “entailment”, but he only says that if we realize any rule in our interest, we will tend to be ready to accept that. In this context, even if there is a relation between

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁶⁵ W. Donald Hudson, “Hume On Is And Ought”, within *Controversies in Philosophy: The Is-Ought Question*, ed. W. Donald Hudson (Macmillan, 1969), 77.

the concept of “common interests” and the concept of “obligation”, this does not mean that “x is in the common interests by itself does entail that x is obligatory”.²⁶⁶ Moreover, according to Hudson, if there is a situation in which there is no such thing as “common interests”, as a matter of fact, the fundamental idea (so-called “consensus of interests”) of Hume would become nonsense. Therefore, moral concepts cannot be reduced to that concept.²⁶⁷

Although Hudson agrees that Hume refers to concepts such as wants, needs, desires, pleasure, and happiness and that moral concepts are formed in situations related to our “factual” wants and needs, he claims that this does not show that Hume passes from “fact” to “value”. According to Hudson, saying that a game is played under certain conditions does not mean that those conditions are part of the game;

football is played in winter, entertains great crowds, gives many people their living, but these are not rules of the game. If you score, you may win a bonus at football, and your motive in trying so hard may be desire, or need, for the extra money; but what 'scoring' means in this game is logically distinct from the motives which induce men to try to do it or the profits they reap by doing it.²⁶⁸

Hudson seems to accept the idea that Hume is against religious justification about morality, and he tries to put legitimate concepts for morality instead of religious concepts. However, he argues that this does not give us a sufficient reason to believe that Hume was deducing “ought” from “is”. According to Hudson, MacIntyre criticizes philosophers who oppose Hume’s idea of induction based on the idea that the arguments are either deductive or defective. Hudson suggests that, surprisingly, he criticizes this and does not see the transition from fact to value. On the other hand, Hudson suggests that it would be surprising if Hume made the transition from “fact” to “value”, although it is clear to him that the moral arguments and this transition are not

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

deductive.²⁶⁹ It would be very odd if Hume doubted her own thinking about induction and, at the same time, was willing to make the transition from fact to value.

5.1.6. Concluding Remarks

MacIntyre's opposition to the traditional interpretation and his anti-traditional interpretation seems to be consistent with the frame of his own philosophy. On the one hand, he opposes a purely textual reading of Hume's passage and argues that a contextual reading should be done, which requires digging deeper into Hume's moral philosophy and a historical approach to it and its concepts. On the other hand, he is already far from the idea that fact and value are two different concepts. Therefore, he thinks that every moral theory has to read "what ought to be" over "what is", and he thinks that Hume also does this reading within his theory. On the other hand, as seen in the critiques, all three philosophers regard MacIntyre's interpretation as a valuable contribution to the literature. However, regarding Hume's philosophy as a whole in the second chapter, one general remark is worth making. Both three critiques point out that Hume does place moral arguments neither in "the relation of ideas" nor in "the matters of fact". That's why morality is not involved in the rational and the factual world. Although MacIntyre argues that Hume sees the necessity of making a connection between fact and value, the passage "is" and "ought" is interpreted in a way that hides this need. It seems that we cannot derive such a conclusion that the standard interpretation is nothing to do with the view that Hume is propounding his moral philosophy. On the other hand, MacIntyre's importance is to show that since the relationship between fact and value is not a matter of deducibility but some kind of inference, Hume did not consider the issue as deducibility while explaining moral concepts in his philosophy; on the contrary, he resorted to concepts such as "wanting", "desire", and "interest" in order to infer value from the fact.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

In conclusion, whatever the differences in interpretations of the passage, the traditional interpretation has widened the distinction between fact and value, making matters more complex. The way of thinking that no set of non-moral premises entails a moral conclusion has settled as a philosophical way of thinking, and a debate arises as to whether value can be deduced from fact or not, considering fact and value as two independent concepts. Therefore, rather than trying to find out what Hume really means in the passage, after determining where this problem fits in its historicity and what it means in terms of ethical knowledge, it will be much more plausible to look at a way of thinking about how to eliminate it. If we consider MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian philosophy, we can realize that the standard interpretation is unacceptable, and the relationship between fact and value is not a matter of deducibility or logical impossibility since ethics is not a logical field but a practical one. The distinction between "what is" and "what ought to be" should not exist in the first place that both constitute a whole in ethics. Before moving on to MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian approach, we need to touch upon a few essential points in Aristotle's philosophy to understand the revised version, which takes its roots from Aristotle's virtue ethics.

5.2. From Aristotle's Biology to Ethics

Aristotle, in the first book of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, distinguishes between ethical research and the exact sciences in terms of their methods. Accordingly, research either draws conclusions from the first principles or tries to go to their principles by starting from the results. The method of mathematics is the first and tends to draw conclusions from the first principles, which is called the proof.²⁷⁰ On the other hand, the study of morality is done by a different method. It is about facts, moral facts and beliefs about them. These beliefs are

²⁷⁰ Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics", in *Readings in Ancient Greek philosophy from Thales to Aristotle*, ed. S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C. D. C. Reeve, 4. (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 2011), (1095a30 – b5).

not always clear and often not consistent. However, ethics is essentially about the experience, the particular contingent things.

To have a solid grasp of Aristotle's "good", it is necessary to look at his books *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *De Anima* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. His teleological understanding of nature and the view of four causes he put forward in *Physics*, the idea of what human is presented in *De Anima*, and his analysis of what is best for humans in *Nicomachean Ethics* will give us an understanding of teleological good. Thus, in this section, we will outline the core view of Aristotle's ethical perspective before turning our attention to the Neo-Aristotelian thinking of MacIntyre.

In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle makes a beginning with his famous words that "every craft and every investigation, and likewise every action and decision, seems to aim at some good; hence the good has been well described as that at which everything aims."²⁷¹ The word translated here as "craft" is *techne*, which includes skills, art, or applied science.²⁷² The word translated as "action" is *praxis*, that is, action in the field of living together, action on how to live well together.²⁷³ In this sense, *praxis* involves ethical and political components. On the other hand, "decision" is *proairesis*, that is, our decisions or deliberate choice before action, our decision-making power before action.²⁷⁴ If there is an action that something is imposed on us, then there is only doing; it is not an action. However, the opposite is indicated here; there is a deliberate choice or purpose in action. That is unless recognizable humankind of purpose is implicit in the behavior, unless the agent knows under a definition what he or she is doing, and we find a principle of action in his behavior, what we have is not an action but

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, (1094a).

²⁷² Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon*, 190.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 163.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 163

just a bodily movement.²⁷⁵ In this context, the orientation toward the good as something that everything desires is present in every action of humans. In other words, “good” comes to life in the reality of human life. From this point of view, Aristotle thinks every living thing has a purpose related to its *ergon*, which needs to be fulfilled. The definition of “good” is also related to this purpose and function because realizing its purpose means that something fulfils its function and reaches the “good”. It should be noted here that Aristotle uses the word *ergon*, which is different from the word “function” we use in the modern sense. He employs the word *ergon* either in the sense of “the activity of a thing” or as “the product of that activity.” He states “some activities have as their end or product, while others have as their telos the activity itself.”²⁷⁶ Therefore, for Aristotle *ergon*, *telos* and *energeia* are interrelated concepts. These connections will be better understood in the following sections. But, first, it would be useful to mention his understanding of metaphysics and biology.

5.2.1. Aristotle Metaphysics

Aristotle’s metaphysics reveals four basic causes for beings because for him to know something involves knowing its *aitia* (causes).²⁷⁷ These are *hyle* (material), *eidos* (formal), *kinoun* (efficient) and *telos* (final causes). The material cause is about the matter of being and gives what it is made of. For example, the material cause for the bronze statue is the matter of bronze. The formal cause is the form of being in the sense that the form of the statue of Aphrodite is the shape of Aphrodite. The efficient cause is the mover cause, that is, the cause of a child is his father, or the efficient cause of a person’s health is the physician. The last but not least cause is the final cause which involves the

²⁷⁵ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 48.

²⁷⁶ Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon*, 61.

²⁷⁷ Aristotle, “Physics”, in *Readings in Ancient Greek philosophy from Thales to Aristotle*, ed. S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C. D. C Reeve, 4. (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 2011), (II. 3.)

telos of being. For example, the oak tree seed has a *telos* to become an oak tree; otherwise, it would not be an oak tree. Just as there is a purpose in things made by human hands, for Aristotle, there must be a *telos* to explain becoming in natural things. If healthy nutrition is the reason for being healthy, then health is the reason for healthy nutrition. Thus, there is a final cause in all-natural or artistic things or becomings. As it is seen, it is their purpose for all beings to realize their own forms or *telos*. At this point, Aristotle considers the formal reason and the final cause identical except for artificial objects. Purposes are forms that have not yet been realized.

When the oak tree seed becomes an oak tree, it attains its form; that is, it fulfils its *telos*. There is a potential to become an oak tree within the seed. When it becomes an oak tree, it turns this potential into actuality and reaches its best. In other words, it fulfils its function because it acts in accordance with its nature as an oak tree. In Aristotle, the concepts of *telos* and function are determined by the nature of something. That's why the *telos* of natural objects, plants, or animals are related to their nature. Before moving on to the distinction that Aristotle makes between living things to define these natures, it is necessary to mention his ideas about potentiality and actuality.

Aristotle's concept of potentiality and actuality is about becoming. Everything in nature is in occurrence. Living things are born; they grow, they die. There is a change in the structure of beings, such as a seed growing into a tree and a baby growing into an adult human being. In other words, it is the transition of a certain thing from its current state to another state. From this point of view, a part of something that exists necessarily existed before. There is a potentiality within a seed to become a tree. When it realizes this potential and becomes a tree, it will have attained its actuality or purpose. Then, this potential to become an oak tree already exists within the seed before becoming a tree. Aristotle calls the unfulfilled state of the *telos dynamis* (potentiality) and the realized state *energeia* (actuality). The first means "active and passive capacity", while the second means being in the state of activity, "actualization", "activity",

or “functioning”.²⁷⁸ Aristotle explains *energeia* by carrying out a discourse on *ergon* (function). This is not accidental because “function” is what something is naturally inclined to do, which already exists in being as a potential. Aristotle connects the concept of *telos* with *energeia*. Actuality is the purpose, and living things potentially carry this purpose. *Energeia* is the state of the builder relative to the one who has the ability to build or the awake person to the sleeping person. In these different relationships, the first state is actuality, while the second state is potentiality.²⁷⁹ For Aristotle, actuality is prior to potentiality, as he argues in *Metaphysics, Theta*.

5.2.2. Teleological “Good” in Aristotle

As it can be seen, organisms also have a *telos* or form in order to realize themselves. Behaviors of living things are interpreted in terms of whether they perform their forms, nature or functions. Aristotle will reach the definition of “good” starting from here. He first begins with the question of what the functions of living things are. In this sense, his idea of the “good” comes from a factual place that includes *ergon*. When we know the biological functions of living things, the measure of their being good will be determined by whether they act according to their own nature. “A ‘good’ animal, then, was one who performed its characteristic role properly; to feed itself, survive, and reproduce in its characteristic fashion, for all animals, and to provide food, clothing, or service to its master in the case of domesticated ones.”²⁸⁰ So what does a good person mean then? Aristotle first asks what the purpose of man is. The answer is about what the human function is. He continues with these words.

²⁷⁸ Francis E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 42-43; 55-56.

²⁷⁹ Aristotle, “Metaphysics”, in *Readings in Ancient Greek philosophy from Thales to Aristotle*, ed. S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C. D. C. Reeve, 4. (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 2011), (1048b).

²⁸⁰ James Lennox, “Aristotle’s Biology”, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2006, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-biology/>.

Well, perhaps we shall find the best good if we first find the function of a human being. For just as the good, i.e. [doing] well, for a flautist, a sculptor, and every craftsman, and, in general, for whatever has a function and [characteristic] action, seems to depend on its function, the same seems to be true for a human being, if a human being has some function.²⁸¹

So, humans should have a function, just as the aim of a good flautist is to play the flute well or the aim of a good sculptor is to sculpt successfully. In this context, Aristotle asks whether humans have a specific activity or function of their own as members of the human species in terms of being human.

Aristotle puts forward a definition of soul shared by all living things in *De Anima*. Here, the soul is not something independent of matter but rather the actuality of the material thing that makes one alive. The nutritive soul is common to all living things. It is the only kind of soul that plants can have. Animals, on the other hand, have a perceptive, desiring soul apart from the nutritive soul. They have hunting and breeding features and basic desires and drives. On the other hand, humans, unlike plants and animals, have the capacity for reason in addition to the nutritive and perceptive soul.²⁸² Based on this distinction, Aristotle claims that the function of man, unlike other living things, is to act in accordance with the activity of the soul, and this activity is to act in accordance with reason. That is, the function of humans is defined as the rational activity of the soul, thanks to their nature. In other words, “human function is the soul’s activity that expresses reason—as itself having reason—or requires reason – as obeying reason.”²⁸³

The virtue of something does not refer to an abstract quality independent of its physical properties. On the contrary, the virtue of a thing depends on its functioning in the material world. For example, what makes a “good” knife is

²⁸¹ Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics”, (1097b25).

²⁸² Aristotle, “De Anima”, in *Readings in Ancient Greek philosophy from Thales to Aristotle*, ed. S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C. D. C Reeve, 4. (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 2011), (413a20-413b15)

²⁸³ Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics”, (1098a5-10).

inherent in the very concept of the blade: that is, it is sharp. Virtues are closely related to whether a person acts in accordance with reason.

Virtue then is (a) a state that decides, (b) [consisting] in a mean, (c) the mean relative to us, (d) which is defined by reference to reason, (e) i.e., to the reason by reference to which the intelligent person would define it. It is a mean between two vices, one of excess and one of deficiency.²⁸⁴

It is important to note here that Aristotle's reasoning is rather unlike that of Hume. Unlike Hume's claim, desires and emotions do not govern our actions; if they did, we would be no different from animals. When it comes to morality, for Aristotle, moral actions and judgments are not governed by emotions or desires. Moreover, pleasure cannot be *telos* because pleasure in doing something is not an indication that we have reached our goal and, therefore, should stop. Instead, pleasure is the reason for continuing the activity. Thus we cannot identify pleasure as a *telos* external to activity.²⁸⁵

On the other hand, since *telos* of human beings is to perform their function, this function is to act rationally, and virtue is the rational act of the soul; people can be virtuous and perform their functions only when they act rationally. This gives us the definition of a "good person". But all this is done for "the best good". There is something in actions that we want for itself and not for something else. We choose it not for anything else but for itself.²⁸⁶ The thing that is never preferred for anything else but always preferred for itself is the ultimate *telos* which is a criterion for human actions. If we aim at something, simply aiming is certainly not enough to justify calling everything we aim for "good", but if we call what we aim for "good", we are indicating that what we seek is

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, (1107a).

²⁸⁵ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 53.

²⁸⁶ Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics", (1094a18-22).

what is usually sought by people who want what we want.²⁸⁷ This shows the importance of teleology in the definition of “good”, unlike the theories we discussed earlier. So what is this highest *telos*? Some people want wealth, some people want pleasure, and some want fame, but these are not purposes in themselves. *Eudaimonia* means the well-being of the human soul. In this sense, it corresponds to something that all people pursue in common, which means “living well” or “doing well”.²⁸⁸ It is the ultimate practical good for people.²⁸⁹ In other words, *Eudaimonia* is “the soul’s activity that expresses virtue”.²⁹⁰ The characteristic of human purpose, then, is to attain happiness and the good life. To understand what human function is to understand happiness. It is crucial to note here that *eudaimonia*, translated as “happiness”, reflects a meaning that virtue and happiness cannot be separated from each other, unlike today, as it includes both “the notion of behaving well” and “the notion of faring well” in Ancient Greece.²⁹¹

As a result, the concepts of “a good animal”, “a good person”, and “a good clock” are defined within the same system of thought. The important thing is to realize its function and purpose and to move from a certain potential state to the actual state. Still, the functional characteristics that make a good person “good” differ from those that make a good animal “good” since the functions are not the same as we mentioned above. According to Aristotle, humans differ from other animals in two ways. They are different from them in that they have the

²⁸⁷ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 38.

²⁸⁸ Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics”, (1095a17).

²⁸⁹ Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon*, 66.

²⁹⁰ Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics”, (1098a16).

²⁹¹ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 39.

rational capacity and are political animals.²⁹² We must realize that this is an ethical discourse in the sense that rationality means something together with the concepts of happiness and a good life, and it includes some factual and moral activities and practices.

Human beings display two features of their nature in moral actions: deliberation and decision.²⁹³ “Decision will be deliberative desire to do an action that is up to us; for when we have judged [that it is right] as a result of deliberation, our desire to do it expresses our wish.”²⁹⁴ In this regard, with “deliberation”, we make rational calculations about achieving a particular end, and “decision” is a kind of desire to act in some way. Aristotle’s view of choice is that it is a desire for what is within our power, a desire that results from deliberation over what we have and can do, and a desire based on reason.²⁹⁵ Thus, we see an explanation of how virtues or vices are possible. The decision here is not about mere desire. If it were “desire”, non-rational animals would have preference and choice in their actions. As we can see, desires have an important role in motivating us towards action. However, unlike Hume, there is a deliberation process based on these desires for Aristotle. Thus, mere desires are not enough to find out virtuous action. That’s why moral judgements or behaviors are not expressions of our emotive states. Aristotle gives a more detailed explanation of this idea in Book VII of *Nicomachean Ethics*. He says that there are three faculties of moral action: perception, desire, and understanding.²⁹⁶ According to him, the source of action cannot be a perception

²⁹² Aristotle, “Politics”, in *Readings in Ancient Greek philosophy from Thales to Aristotle*, ed. S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C. D. C. Reeve, 4. (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 2011), (1253a1-5).

²⁹³ Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics”, (1112a13-18).

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, (1113a12-14).

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, (1111b5 - 1113a15).

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, (1139a18)

because although animals have sensations, their behaviors cannot be regarded as actions. So the source of action must be either reason or desire. Aristotle thinks it cannot be “understanding” alone since reason by itself moves nothing. Nor can it be desire alone because there is a choice in the source of action, and choice is different from desire. The source of action, then, is the reason, which pursues a *telos* together with desire. As we said above, it is the “correct desire”.²⁹⁷

Human virtues, then, appear as what make people good or happy or just and enable them to function in accordance with their nature. Aristotle divides virtues into two: intellectual and moral virtues or virtues of thought and virtues of character. These are made possible by training or teaching and then developing, cultivating, or experiencing good behavior.²⁹⁸ That is, virtues are learned through practice so that one becomes brave by practising being brave. Intellectual virtues originate from the rational part of the soul, while character virtues originate from the soul taking part in the reason. The former is about knowing necessary things such as wisdom, intelligence or prudence, while the latter are virtues of character such as liberality and temperance.²⁹⁹ Thus, while intellectual virtues are acquired by teaching, character virtues are acquired through habit and exercises.

So what is necessary for humans to be able to act on what is good or bad for them? The virtue of *phronesis* takes moral precedence over these other virtues, and those who do not have it cannot have other virtues. According to Aristotle, there is no absolute form of action independent of circumstances. MacIntyre suggests that what is courage in one situation may be rashness in another situation and cowardice in another situation. Virtuous action, then, is something that a person with *phronesis* can have, who knows how to take circumstances into account and apply general principles to particular

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, (1139a30-b5).

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, (1103a14-6).

²⁹⁹ MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to The Twentieth Century*, 42.

situations.³⁰⁰ A man cannot be virtuous without *phronesis*. For example, if a person acts bravely for fear of punishment, that person does not have *phronesis*.³⁰¹

As we discussed in the previous chapters, moral judgments are motivating while facts are not. This criticism was one of the most important ones of non-cognitivism and some cognitivist theories advocating the fact-value distinction. However, the question of why we should be motivated toward moral actions is not a very meaningful question for Aristotle. To want the good is to want to fulfil its own function, and to perform a function is to do what is in its nature. In other words, for happiness, the question of why we should want happiness is not asked.³⁰² Since what motives here is the character itself, and the fulfilment of the function itself is desirable, there is a desire to act morally, but this desire does not arise from any moral law or rule itself. This desire comes precisely from humans' vital orientation toward fulfilling their function, and this orientation is entirely based on factual foundations.

Since the definition of function comes from specific features of the nature of things, Aristotle's understanding of the good actually derives from an essentialist approach based on his teleological biology. However, actions are not good or bad in themselves. What is good or bad has to do with whether the characters fulfil their role or function in achieving the ultimate *telos* or happiness. The agent's interests are not the central factor in motivation, but the important thing is the agent's character. In this regard, virtue cannot be reduced to the interests, desires and preferences of individuals. On the other hand, the function of humans depends on essentialist explanations. The goodness of a thing depends on its essential features, namely its function. This means that the function has a unique property of that thing. Just as the nature of the eye is to see and the nature of the arm to hold, so the nature of virtue of humans as a whole is

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 41.

to act in accordance with reason. In this sense, it would be correct to define the human good as the activity of the soul in accordance with virtue since the *telos* of humans is a rational activity, and doing in an excellent manner is their virtue. Here, the nature or function of a thing appears as a feature of its “whatness”, and it is found in things as a *dynamis* that the fulfilment of these functions will be to reach “good” or happiness. So, is it possible to find a non-essential approach to *telos* in human life that is not based on Aristotelian biology? That is, if teleology is an important element for the fact-value association, then how can human purpose or function be determined in different ways rather than an essentialist and naturalistic approach? We will seek the answer to this question in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

MACINTYRE'S NEO-ARISTOTELIAN APPROACH

The fact-value dichotomy that arises with the abandonment of the Aristotelian understanding of nature led to the removal of ethical knowledge from rational discourse. What is lacking in naturalism and intuitionism is the failure to demonstrate purposefulness in moral behavior. The naturalist view tries to reduce values to facts, which are the objects of science and makes ethics an area of psychology. Intuitionism, on the other hand, was insufficient in solving the problem due to the fact that it could not provide the fact-value association with intuitive justification and the distinction made between values and natural properties. On the other hand, non-cognitivist emotive theories are already the initiator of this distinction and seem to be responsible for the current state of morality reduced to personal feelings and preferences. To elucidate the situation of the fact-value problem for cognitivist and non-cognitivist, we need to look at what MacIntyre calls the three distinct stages of the “scheme of moral decline”.

[A] first at which evaluative and more especially moral theory and practice embody genuine objective and impersonal standards which provide rational justification for particular policies, actions and judgments and which themselves in turn are susceptible of rational justification; a second stage at which there are unsuccessful attempts to maintain the objectivity and impersonality of moral judgments, but during which the project of providing rational justifications both by means of and for the standards continuously breaks down; and a third stage at which theories of an emotivist kind secure wide implicit acceptance because of a general implicit recognition in practice, though not in explicit theory, that claims to objectivity and impersonality cannot be made good.³⁰³

The first stage can be understood as a level that requires rational justification for moral judgements, objectivity, and impersonal standards. The

³⁰³ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 18-19.

second stage is related to the failure of this task to be adequately fulfilled, which can be given as an example of the cognitivist theories that we have criticized before. The third stage is associated with the non-cognitivist and emotivist theories in the sense that they cannot theoretically and practically bring their theories to life since emotivism is built on the claim that every attempt to justify an objective morality rationally is doomed to be unsuccessful. Thus, a necessity for the rational justification of morality within a unity of fact and value emerges.

On the other hand, it is undeniable that there is a further problem with essentialism coming from Aristotle's biology into that naturalism falls. One of the main criticisms of non-cognitivism is that value is not the intrinsic quality of an object. Thus, it could be argued that the problem of essentialism is the most critical one in its debate with non-cognitivism. In this sense, this chapter aims to develop a neo-Aristotelian approach that dissolves the dichotomy and ousters the essentialist understanding by putting forward a concept of *telos* emerging not from biological facts but sociological facts.

6.1. The Current Situation of Ethics

MacIntyre suggests a hypothetical scenario in which science encounters a disaster and nearly everything about science and its practices disappears. Scientists have nothing in their minds about the old science and its concepts, but even in such a situation, they try to continue the scientific activity. In this situation, people do not have real scientific concepts and knowledge, just fragments about them. He makes an analogy between that world and today's understanding of ethics in the sense that some fragments of moral concepts pertaining to a certain conceptual scheme lost their context, which gave them meaning. Therefore, we do not have real morality but its image that we have lost both theoretical and practical comprehension of the field of morality.³⁰⁴

This challenging situation of morality led to the disappearance of a rational way which provides ethical consensus in our culture. The main feature

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 2.

of contemporary moral debates is that they are irresolvable and inexhaustible. Competing conclusions such as “All modern wars are unjust”, “Only anti-imperialist wars of freedom are right”, “All abortion is murder”, or “Everybody has a right to incur such and only such obligations as he or she wishes, to be free to make such and only such contracts as he or she desires and to determine his or her own free choices” are rationally defended, and they have incommensurable premises.³⁰⁵ These arguments involve some moral concepts, but each premise employs different normative and evaluative concepts from others; they have conceptual incommensurability.³⁰⁶ The incommensurable premises of these opposite arguments, which have historical roots, expand a large field. For instance, we can trace the concept of justice back to Aristotle’s virtues, the idea of abortion back to Bismarck, Clausewitz, and Machiavelli and the notion of freedom back to Marx and Fichte.³⁰⁷ Therefore, each moral concept has different historicity, which gives them meaning. MacIntyre argues that moral pluralism exists and that in pluralism, there is no well-ordered dialogue about moral concepts and judgments; morality is a mixture of misclassified fragments.

Moreover, there is confusion in the sense that we use ethical arguments as a performance of our rationality carrying an idea of universality, but at the same time, we take them as subjective ideas. Therefore, he suggests that each philosophical concept is understood within historicity that involves sociological and cultural conditions. We cannot isolate philosophers from the conditions in which they live.³⁰⁸

To show the state of modern morality, MacIntyre makes another analogy between the concept of “taboo” and moral concepts. Accordingly, the set of habits and behavior that are called taboo turn into a set of habits and practices

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

that are maintained without questioning since they lose the normative context in which they gain meaning. Taboos are prohibitions that acquire meaning in a practice of life, and in this sense, they are embodied in the environment, giving them intelligibility. Therefore, if they are isolated from the historical and cultural conditions in which they were formed, they appear as an arbitrary and accidental set of prohibitions. Moral concepts, likewise, lose their authority when they lose the historical and normative conditions in which they gain meaning and are perceived as prohibitions without meaning and causality.³⁰⁹ Just as we have to refer to the Polynesian history of the late 18th century to understand the meaning of “taboo”, so for moral concepts, we must look at their historicity. According to MacIntyre, we have fragmental moral concepts, the causalities of which we do not know because theories such as emotivism consider them as partial concepts rather than taking them holistically. Therefore, we must understand the relations between fact-value and theory-practice, which disappeared with the rejection of Aristotle’s view of nature, by approaching moral concepts holistically and by considering them in their historicity. If we examine the relationship between social life forms and ethical concepts, we can create a moral field that can be discussed rationally without conflict.

In this regard, the concepts like “fact”, “value”, “duty”, “virtue”, and “justice” have changed throughout history. The question then becomes: how should we read the history of these changes? For philosophy cannot be conceived independently of history, ethical concepts need to be understood within historicity. In this manner, MacIntyre takes the fact-value dichotomy within a history which is formed by the conditions beginning with the abandonment of Aristotelian philosophy. This abandonment has many consequences for ethical knowledge in that emotivism, as one of the proponents of the dichotomy, leads to interminable disagreements in moral discourse—for the ethical propositions are reduced to expressions of emotions, a kind of relativism prevails in ethical discourse. The question of why we should oppose it

³⁰⁹ Alasdair MacIntyre, “A Crisis in Moral Philosophy: Why Is the Search for the Foundations of Ethics So Frustrating?”, *The Roots of Ethics*, ed. Daniel Callahan v and H. Tristram Engelhardt (Boston, MA: Springer US, 1981), 3-20.

is vital since, in case of approval, we accept that the moral inquiry cannot be made within a rational level.

As we have discussed before, emotivism involves the idea that all evaluative judgements are utterances of attitudes and feelings. Thus, it ignores deliberation processes with regard to why we prefer one attitude to others and proposes that this preference is not based on rational choice; rather, it is about the expressions of our emotions based on “approve” or “disapprove.”³¹⁰ This kind of scenario means that the factual element and moral element sharply diverge into two different things factual statements can be “true” or “false”, whereas evaluative or moral judgments are neither true nor false with regard to being expressions of attitudes and feelings. Moreover, it is an emotivist conviction that a universal rational criterion guarantees agreement about what is true or false in the factual field. In contrast, moral judgements cannot be guaranteed with any rational method since no such criterion exists.

Therefore, regarding the fact-value dichotomy, we can list four remarks. First, “fact” and “value” belong to two different fields. Second, facts are observable and belong to the scientific world, while values do not belong to the same world. Third, in the field of facts, there is a rational criterion as to agreement, while in the field of ethics, there is no such criterion because moral judgements are expressions of emotions, and they have no rationality. And fourth, we mean rationality to be able to talk about agreement; therefore, ethics do not have rationality. Although naturalism reduces values to natural characteristics, or there are thinkers like Hare or Mackie who argue that there is an agreement in the field of ethics and ethical judgments have a cognitive meaning, the gap between fact and value has not disappeared. Cognitivist theories such as naturalism and intuitionism failed to rule out emotivism.

The fact-value problem requires understanding the reality of moral judgments and the meanings of concepts. In order to understand this factuality, the idea that there is no distinction between moral and non-moral evaluative judgments in Aristotle can help us because this idea is important to reflect that

³¹⁰ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 11-12.

not every evaluative judgment is an expression of feelings and preferences. For instance, how should a pilot be? Here, there is an “ought” statement, but that evaluative statement refers to a fact about what a pilot is.³¹¹ Of course, it can be said that being a pilot is a profession, and there is certain kind of characteristics associated with it. However, this is precisely where the problem lies. Indeed, this example emphasizes the importance of Aristotelian philosophy in that he does not make a separation between a moral statement and a function statement. Just as a good pilot becomes a good pilot under certain conditions, a good person becomes so according to her function. Then we need to ask what the function of a human being is.

6.2. The Concept of “Function”

In this regard, our task is to find a teleological and functional explanation of moral practice to dissolve the fact-value dichotomy and, thus, to be able to talk about agreement within a factual and rational level in the field of ethics. For such a task to be accomplished, MacIntyre focuses on revisiting Aristotle’s virtue ethics and tries to show that moral activity can be socially embodied.

He defines a modern individual as an emotivist person that regards teleology as “superstition”. With modernity, emotivist individuals constituted the sovereignty in their own field and lost their traditional boundaries involving the understanding of purpose-oriented human life.³¹² In this context, if we consider the legacy of Aristotelian understanding, purpose-oriented human life is associated with an understanding of an individual who is fitted into social and political structure in the sense that she is not independent as a mere individual in both political and ethical issues. Human beings and “what she is” are something to be understood in a society, not in her singularity because she is *zoon politikon*.

Lots of moral theories are consistently justified by an understanding of human nature. Even Hume himself builds his theory upon human nature based

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 34.

on the characteristics of human desires. Also, although he is against human nature as a “thing in itself”, Kant justifies his moral theory in accordance with the “universal and categorical character of human reason”.³¹³ MacIntyre suggests that what is common in these projections of human nature is the structure that Aristotle analyzed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Within that teleological scheme, there is a fundamental contrast between man-as-he-happens-to-be and man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature. Ethics is the science which is to enable men to understand how they make the transition from the former state to the latter. Ethics, therefore, in this view, presupposes some account of potentiality and act, some account of the essence of man as a rational animal and above all some account of the human *telos*.³¹⁴

As we have discussed before, the concept of human nature is closely related to having a *telos* which is only understood within the idea of “function”. Indeed, the concept of “function” is a concept that can only be understood in society. One can learn her *telos* in the direction of the reason that by using it, she can make the transition from “man-as-he-happens-to-be” to “man-as-could-be”. The latter can be conceived as “man-as-ought-to-be” in the sense that one, as an agent, passes from oneself, which is “what is” to oneself, which is “what ought to be”. This process can only be successful if one comprehends her *telos* within a social structure; thus, MacIntyre argues that Aristotle’s understanding of ethics is much more related to the world we live in. In the case of the fact-value problem, once the concept of fact is separated from the value, it means that what we call value is also separated from the world and is located in another world, such as a godlike world. If that’s the case, it is not possible for one to find out her *telos* in this world.³¹⁵

Therefore, for a plausible moral project, teleology is a necessary condition. The aim of ethics, both practical and theoretical, is to enable the

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 52.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 52.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

transition from the current state of one to the state she aims to. However, MacIntyre claims that the rejection of Aristotelian thinking, both scientifically and philosophically, leads to an abandonment of the notion of *telos* in all kinds, and there remains a mass of injunctions that have lost their teleological context and a view of untutored-human-nature-as-it-is.³¹⁶ He argues that the disengagement of moral injunctions from teleology and the understanding of human nature can be seen in the texts of 18th philosophers, such as Hume's famous paragraph. As we have mentioned before, according to that paragraph, in a valid argument, anything that is not contained in the premises cannot be contained in the conclusion. However, there are many valid argument types that there is something is not contained in the premises but the conclusion and MacIntyre gives two examples, the first of which belongs to A.N. Prior;

[H]e is a sea-captain', the conclusion may be validly inferred that 'He ought to do whatever a sea-captain ought to do'. This counter-example not only shows that there is no general principle of the type alleged; but it itself shows what is at least a grammatical truth - an 'is' premise can on occasion entail an 'ought' conclusion.

[F]rom such factual premises as "This watch is grossly inaccurate and irregular in time-keeping" and "This watch is too heavy to carry about comfortably", the evaluative conclusion validly follows that "This is a bad watch."³¹⁷

The examples clearly show that we can deduce "ought" propositions from "is" propositions, which means statements about "what is" give us information about "what ought to be". Although many philosophers of meta-ethics reject this idea by arguing that these examples do not include any ethical terms but functional ones, it seems to refute Hume's argument since Hume's Law involves all kinds of evaluative judgements, including functional ones. Moreover, the critique indicates how far we are from the idea that ethical concepts include the concept of function. As we have stated before, within the cognitivist and non-cognitivist discussions, the separation between moral and non-moral evaluative

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

statements is what needs to be resisted. For an ethical theory in which there is no distinction between fact and value, we have to figure out that ethical concepts have functional and teleological characteristics by conceiving all evaluative judgements within a holistic view. Aristotle's philosophy precisely advocated this integrative view, placing the concepts of function and *telos* at the foundation of all evaluative propositions. Put it differently, being a good person for one who is a captain is related to being a good captain in terms of being a captain in the sense that as an ethical concept, "good" depends on the same basis as the fact about what being a captain is. Just as how a watch ought to be (good or bad) is related to what the watch is (it can be defined such as "timely correct", "faultless", "regular", and "weighed enough to carry" which have factual implications), being a good human being is related to what human being is. Here, the crucial point is to find out the function or *telos* of humans since *telos* is defined according to a function. The conclusion can be quickly reached that neither the concept of "a watch" can be defined independently of the concept of a "good watch" nor the concept of a "sea-captain" independently of the concept of a good "sea-captain". In this sense, the criterion for a thing to be a watch and that for being a good watch cannot be seen as independent things.³¹⁸

MacIntyre argues that in the classical tradition, which includes all Aristotelian understandings, what means "human" is "good human", just as what means "watch" is "good watch".³¹⁹ Aristotle draws an analogy between "man" and "living well", which is a starting point of ethical inquiry.³²⁰ MacIntyre leans towards the idea that the usage of "human being" as a functional concept is not on Aristotle's biology but the forms of social life. Since being a human means carrying out a set of rules, each involving its own meaning and purpose, such as being "a member of family, citizen, soldier, philosopher, and servant of God", "human" is not thought of as a functional concept if she is regarded as an

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 58.

³²⁰ Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics", (1095a16).

individual separate from all these roles.³²¹ That is, when the use of good is used in such a society with cultural identities and roles, what has considered good means that it has a specific purpose or function. Thus, to call something good is also to give a factual explanation because the rightness of action carries a factual requirement to state that that is what a person would do in such a situation. But suppose there is no purposive future projection in the sense of transitioning from the situation one is in one's life to the situation one can be, then it becomes absurd to think of moral judgements as factual statements.³²²

That's why the idea of the individual as independent of and prior to society is meaningless and vacuous. With the abandonment of the Aristotelian understanding of nature, the idea of the teleological nature of human beings and action has also disappeared. The understanding of Aristotelian "action" depends on the idea that the concept of a "human being" is functional, and every kind has a special natural purpose. That's why explaining human actions, behaviors, and changes means explaining the moral agent's purpose, whose practices manifest themselves within the factual area. Therefore, MacIntyre aims to show that the purpose of "human beings" can be conceived as "goods" that lead them to behave. That purpose is also explained by virtues and the practical reasons given for them. Therefore, human action should be explained within a teleological view rather than a mechanical one. Understanding human action in mechanical terms means to conceive it in terms of "antecedent conditions understood as efficient causes."³²³ To illustrate, the reason why I am in this room can be explained via entering the room through the door, which is a mechanical explanation, that is, an effective reason. However, this explanation ignores the teleological reason for the action since my existence in that room has a specific purpose. Therefore, explaining a moral action requires research on purpose and intentions, unlike its usage areas or mechanical explanations in meta-ethical

³²¹ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 58.

³²² *Ibid.*, 59.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

theories. According to MacIntyre, the Aristotelian approach has such a structure in which it is impossible to exclude teleological reasons. In this regard,

[T]he notion of 'fact' with respect to human beings is thus transformed in the transition from the Aristotelian to the mechanist view. On the former view human action, because it is to be explained teleologically, not only can, but must be, characterized with reference to the hierarchy of goods which provide the ends of human action. On the latter view human action not only can, but must be, characterized without any reference to such goods. On the former view the facts about human action include the facts about what is valuable to human beings (and not just the facts about what they think to be valuable); on the latter view there are no facts about what is valuable. 'Fact' becomes value-free, 'is' becomes a stranger to 'ought' and explanation, as well as evaluation, changes its character as a result of this divorce between 'is' and 'ought'.³²⁴

In this sense, as a neo-Aristotelian approach, we need to explain human actions, values, virtues and life within factual and aim-centered human factors. Since there is a unity between "is" and "ought", it seems more reasonable to explain "what ought to be" through the "what is". For that task, we need to find a ground for virtues and recognize that the question of "how one ought to live?" is not related to the question of "what rules we ought to follow?".³²⁵ Therefore, Aristotelian understanding of ethics is not something like rule-following; rather, it requires investigating a view of unity in human life that involves purpose and function. However, the problem is about how we can understand and establish the idea of "some given specific purpose or function".

6.3. MacIntyre's Neo-Aristotelian Perspective

As we have discussed before, since the understanding of human nature coming from the Aristotelian biology establishes the idea of *telos* from a non-historical and a kind of essentialist ground, MacIntyre rejects both the concept of non-historical *politikon zoon* and of some given teleology in nature. Here, it is important to note that his neo-Aristotelian approach mainly reflects his early

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 118.

thoughts in *After Virtue*. Later, in his book *Dependent Rational Animals*, MacIntyre finds his early thoughts incomplete and turns to the concept of human nature and states that the factual and physical side of human beings has an important role in forming their moral side. That is, the biological nature of a human (what she is) has an impact on her moral structure (what ought to be) because a human agent cannot be thought of as free from his own biology. However, this thesis focuses on MacIntyre's early ideas and argues that the sociological, historical and teleological character of "what ought to be" is essential.

According to Aristotle's non-historical essentialist view, women and enslaved people are not considered to be political animals in their nature. Although this view is regarded as plausible within the Ancient *polis*, it does not satisfy today's contemporary conditions. Therefore, although it seems consistent with the justification of a given essentialist understanding of nature within the Aristotelian philosophy itself when the critiques about essentialism and the situation about the fact-value problem are considered, it is hard to be defended. Aristotle separates human beings, as a biological kind, from the other animals. The "good", which is peculiar to humans, is conceived as the activity proper to their *soul*. Humans can only live well with the activity of the soul towards reason, and this activity is wanted for the sake of happiness itself. In this perspective, virtues are regarded as character qualifications coming from a biological understanding. However, according to MacIntyre, virtues need to be justified not by metaphysical explanation depending on human nature but by some kind of historicity. On the other hand, while rejecting Aristotle's biology, MacIntyre inherits his understanding of *telos* in human life.

6.3.1. The Understanding of the Unity in Human Life, Practices, Narrativity and Tradition

In his analysis of the unity of human life, as opposed to the fragmental understanding of emotivism deprived of integrity about moral issues, MacIntyre tries to show the importance of harmonically and consistently unifying the

political and moral character of society. For that kind of task, one question that needs to be asked is how is this: How possible to defend the Aristotelian ethics on the ground that there is no metaphysical biology and the concept of society such as *polis*? MacIntyre answers this question by developing a neo-Aristotelian understanding of ethics depending on some concepts such as *practices, the narrative unity of human life and moral tradition*.

In the first step, he makes a new description of virtue based on the concepts of practices and *telos*. Based on the idea of the historical nature of human nature, he somehow pursues the Aristotelian understanding of virtue.³²⁶ By examining different Aristotelian approaches such as that of Homer, Sophokles, Aristotle, the new testament, and the Middle-ages, he gives a core definition of virtue applying to all;

A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods.³²⁷

An activity cannot be regarded as virtuous unless it can be understood within practices, the narrative unity of human life and tradition. Now, we can proceed to analyze these three stages respectively.

6.3.1.1. Practices

MacIntyre's view of virtue develops within the frame of these three focal points. He argues that the concept of "practice" has vital importance for the arena in which the virtues are learned, and their meanings are acquired. As a part of virtue, "practices" are socially embodied human activities. He clearly describes what he means by "practice" in the following sentences.

³²⁶ John Haldane, "MacIntyre's Thomist Revival : What Next?", *After MacIntyre : Critical Perspectives on The Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, ed. John Horton and Susan Mendus , Polity Press, 2007), 94.

³²⁷ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 191.

By a ‘practice’ I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.³²⁸

The point is about the background which determines virtues and social practices. For example, while in Homeric society, the criterion about virtue is about ideally fulfilling social roles, for Aristotle, the criterion is about the aim of reaching a well-life for humans as a biological kind.³²⁹ Social facts forms practices in which virtues are learned. Virtues cannot be learned without experiencing a practice since some of them, MacIntyre says, are internal to practices which give them factual meaning.

In this perspective, as social activities, practices constitute the first stage of his definition of virtue. All practices involve specific characteristics with regard to “good” and “excellence”. For a more detailed understanding, MacIntyre expands on the example of chess. Let’s imagine a child being taught to play chess. However, suppose that she is a child who is not very eager to learn, loves sugar very much, and is not allowed to eat sweet food too much. Let’s tell this child that we are going to give her candy on the condition that she plays chess once a week with us, and if she wins, she gets an extra piece of candy. We tell her that the chance of winning is very small but not impossible. Thus, the motivated child starts playing chess and plays to win. MacIntyre argues that as long as the “good” reason for the child to play chess is only candy, then the child can cheat. For the child to achieve “goods” in the game of chess, he must be motivated to try to be *excellent* in almost every situation that the game of chess requires. The child has such motivation when he acquires a special kind of analytical reasoning, strategy, and struggling, which are pertaining to the game of chess. These abilities as internal goods can only be obtained by playing the game of chess. In this sense, MacIntyre argues that

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 183-184.

practice has both external and internal goods. For the chess game, external goods are attributed to practices by social conditions, such as candy for the child, dignity, position, and money for other people. These often turn out to be things achieved at the end of practice. Internal goods, on the other hand, are inherent in the practice. In other words, these goods can only be determined and known by the experience of taking part in the practice in question. Then, internal goods are intertwined with experiences and practices. Without this kind of factuality, it is not possible to reach them.³³⁰

Therefore, for the first stage, virtues emerge as a kind of ability that allows access to the good inherent in some social practices and are gained within that practice.³³¹ In this regard, one can only be virtuous not by following some imposed external rules but by maintaining such internal goods in the practice in question. On the other hand, while external goods refer to a kind of goods as socially determined, such as respectability, reputation and power, internal goods are the goods coming from within the practices.³³² Moreover, practices, as activities, involves specific *telos* along with the internal goods. Indeed, the internal goods appear as the *telos* of people who want to be in practice.

What being in practice means for one is to accept “standards of excellence”, “achievements of goods”, and “the authority of those standards” within that practice. Thus, each practice has a history which those standards coming out. The agent who wants to participate in one practice needs to apply those standards as a kind of student and learn the internal goods within that practice. MacIntyre argues, “If, on starting to play baseball, I do not accept that others know better than I when to throw a fast ball and when not, I will never

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 188.

³³¹ J. B. Schneewind, “Virtue, Narrative, and Community: MacIntyre and Morality”, *The Journal of Philosophy* 79, no: 11 (1982), 655.

³³² Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians*, 2nd ed (Oxford ; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1996), 83.

learn to appreciate good pitching, let alone to pitch.”³³³ And, of course, those practices are the activities that are formed around the conception of good for a specific purpose, which includes standards of excellence that are socially determined and adopted in a certain society and in a certain period of time. It seems that even the practices of protest and organizing can be counted as an example of socially and historically embodied practices. From this point of view, the achievement of internal goods means to be good for the community in general, which is constituted by everyone who joins that practice. Also, it is a distinctive characteristic of internal goods. On the other hand, external goods serve an individual basis.³³⁴ At this stage, we need to point out that internal goods are not in the nature of the practices. MacIntyre does not give such an essentialist explanation in relation to internal goods; rather, they are somehow about the experiences which are determined within the practices and by social and historical circumstances. The practices and their standards of excellence can change according to historical transformations in one tradition.

Let’s consider an analogy between the Homeric society and MacIntyre’s view of the practice. It can be concluded that just as doing what the roles in the society require means fulfilling its function and purpose, how a good architect should be is realized with the acquisition of the good in architectural practice. What determines the judgment about how a good architect ought to be is, as a matter of fact, the historical conditions of those practices. For MacIntyre, there is a view of a “community” whose people participates in a certain practice and comes together around the common good. Internal good is also good for everyone who participates in that practice. We can understand this structure, which he probably built with the understanding of *polis*, as opening a school, hospital or art gallery. The very image of this structure in Ancient Greece can be thought of as organizing a campaign, a religious cult or establishing a city. In addition, those who participate in such practices must develop virtues by continuing to practise. Then, virtues are “qualities of mind and character which

³³³ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 190.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 190.

would contribute to the realization of their common good or goods”.³³⁵ At this point, it may be asked what brings about the common good. The answer, for MacIntyre, is not human nature. In other words, the notion of the common good or the notion of good *per se* does not come from any essentialist understanding. Indeed, it is conceived through historicity in the sense that moral concepts and practices have a history, which can also be thought of as a history of experiences. Therefore, the notion of the common good acquires its meaning within the histories of the practices themselves. However, since such a notion requires widespread consensus within a community about the virtues and the goods, MacIntyre argues that it is difficult to happen in a liberal modern society. There is a type of friendship in the *polis* that socially embodies the acceptance of the common good among people and the pursuit of this good. However, due to the individualist, fragmental, and relativist perspective in the modern world, what is lacking today is the absence of a conception of the political community about the human good.³³⁶

Concerning the diversity of practices, MacIntyre argues that the more activities and practices, the greater will be the multitudes of purposes and goods. In this case, the varieties of internal goods in one practice can be in conflict with that of other practices, such as those of politics and art, which require a kind of decision-making. Then, that decision-making also requires a criterion that the emotivist individual lacks, which leads her to live her life within a moral arbitrariness. MacIntyre, to avoid such arbitrariness and to properly determine the contexts of certain virtues, argues that we need an understanding of “*telos* which transcends the limited goods of practices.”³³⁷ Such transcendence means that certain goods of practices can only have their meaning with the teleological “unity of a human life” since each person has a certain ongoing history extending from the past. Each practice and behavior of human beings makes

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 151.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 156.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 203.

sense within the history in question.³³⁸ Since practices cannot give an answer to the Aristotelian question of “what is the good life for a human being?”, he passes into the second stage of his definition of virtue.³³⁹

6.3.1.2. The Narrative Unity of Human Life

MacIntyre rejects the view that regards human action as fragmental and atomistic. Therefore, the meaning of an action or virtue needs to be conceived within historicity rather than their partiality. This historical view creates the foundation for understanding the unity of human life. He maintains that the question of “how we are to understand or to explain a given segment of behavior” can only be answered within that historicity since we cannot consider a “behavior independently from intentions, beliefs and setting”.³⁴⁰ He means by “setting” as a social notion like institutions or practices and as something that possesses a “history within which the histories of individual agents not only are but have to be, situated.” “Setting” also allows for a teleological explanation for understanding an action rather than a mechanical one because understanding a moral action requires understanding both the history of the person performing the action and the history of the environment in which she is involved. Thus, without settings and their changes through time, the history of an individual cannot be conceived.³⁴¹ MacIntyre explains how *telos* is constituted in a social sense in the context of narrativity which “links birth to life to death as narrative

³³⁸ Schneewind, “Virtue, Narrative, and Community: MacIntyre and Morality”, 656.

³³⁹ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 201.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 206-208.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 206.

beginning to middle to end”.³⁴² In more detail, he explains what he means by “narrativity” in the following sentences.

We identify a particular action only by invoking two kinds of context, implicitly if not explicitly. We place the agent’s intentions, I have suggested, in causal and temporal order with reference to their role in his or her history; and we also place them with reference to their role in the history of the setting or settings to which they belong. In doing this, in determining what causal efficacy the agent’s intentions had in one or more directions, and how his short-term intentions succeeded or failed to be constitutive of long-term intentions, we ourselves write a further part of these histories. Narrative history of a certain kind turns out to be the basic and essential genre for the characterization of human actions.³⁴³

MacIntyre’s whole philosophy depends on the idea that human actions need to be rationally explained in the context of ethics since human beings can be held responsible for their actions. In this sense, contrary to modern thinking and emotivism, values can also be explained with facts in terms of practices in which such actions occur. Indeed, such an explanation can only be possible within historicity involving the narrative unity of human life instead of individual partialities, choices, or emotions. As the quotation suggests, the life of a human being can be regarded as a form of narrative in the sense that one can try to find an answer to the question of “what ought to be done” within her narrativity.

The narrative of the unity of human life is about the human being towards action and his progress towards completion in terms of virtues. Since a human is a being with a future project and purposeful action, her whole life is narrative. Even while watching a movie, when we ask if the movie is good, we must watch the whole thing to answer adequately. That’s why human life is a whole, and it is necessary to look at it as a whole in order to make sense of it and human actions. From this, we can understand that “good” is also a holistic concept. For example, we cannot say that one person is a good person at her working place and she is a

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 205.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 208.

bad person at home. In order to make sense of whether it is good or not, it is necessary to know the whole of that person's life and ask the following questions: What is the purpose of that person? What are their conditions in life? Just as practices have historicity, human also has historicity, which is the narrative of their life from birth to death. Practising a single virtue once is not enough to be virtuous; being virtuous is a matter of character. Therefore, it is necessary to apply virtues continuously in practice. Thus, whether a person is a good person or not can only be revealed at the end of his life.

The idea that a human being is an animal who tells narratives should not be regarded as an essentialist claim because MacIntyre argues that she is a teller of narratives that desire the truth not as a necessity from her nature but as coming from within her history.³⁴⁴ Thus, for the idea that an image always presents itself with an image of purpose, *telos* with regard to human being derives from the narrative structure of the unifying form of life and social traditions within which individuals are embedded.³⁴⁵

However, the narrative life of human beings has two characteristics: unpredictability and teleology in the sense that “if the narrative of our individual and social lives is to continue intelligibly—and either type of narrative may lapse into unintelligibility—it is always both the case that there are constraints on how the story can continue and that within those constraints there are indefinitely many ways that it can continue.”³⁴⁶ Therefore, the life of a human being must be regarded as a narrative unity towards a direction which involves a specific purpose; in this sense, the conceptions of virtues and excellence are

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 216.

³⁴⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre, “The Claims of After Virtue”, *Analyse & Kritik* 6, no. 1 (1984): 71-72.

³⁴⁶ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 216.

internal to practices realized within human actions, efforts and thoughts.³⁴⁷ That's why a teleological explanation is important in contrast to a mechanical one in the sense that human actions must be analyzed according to a purpose to understand this unpredictability better. It is concluded that practices and the narrative character of human life are based upon the facts in human life, and without them, one cannot learn virtues at all.

According to MacIntyre, practices are both about the narrative structure of human life and the settings. Indeed, the concept of settings refers to the historicity on which practices depend. Since any social structure is formed by a variety of activities involving their own internal goods and rationalities, to participate in practice means to be in relation not only with the people currently in practice but with those who were in such practice in the past.³⁴⁸ Then, for describing an action, we try to understand the agent's intentions within her own narrative history and also, we need to look at the intentions of their own history. Indeed, practices have their own history and tradition; for example, the criteria of "goods" in portraiture have their meaning within its history and tradition. Likewise, human action and narrativity can only be understood within the society and tradition to which they belong.³⁴⁹ Therefore, MacIntyre passes through the third stage of his description of virtue, which is called tradition, as transcending all practices makes the narrative history of human beings intelligible.

³⁴⁷ Peter Johnson, "Reclaiming The Aristotelian Ruler", *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives On the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, ed. John Horton and Susan Mendus (University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 56.

³⁴⁸ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 193-194.

³⁴⁹ L. Gregory Jones, "Alasdair Macintyre On Narrative, Community, And The Moral Life", *Modern Theology* 4, vol 1 (1987), 57.

6.3.1.3. Tradition

The community in which the individual lives imposes some roles on herself, and individuals, unlike modern individuals, cannot be thought independently of their society, and the standards of rationality in the tradition of the community somehow show what is good and what is bad. Thus, we are

“bearers of a social identity” in the sense that “I am someone's son or daughter, someone else's cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this clan, that tribe, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be good for one who inhabits these roles. As such, I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations, and obligations. These constitute the given of my life, my moral starting point. This is in pan what gives my life its own moral particularity.”³⁵⁰

The narrative history of each individual exists within a wider narrative history in the sense that the identity of individuals is formed by social structures rather than individual experiences. From this perspective, an individual cannot realize her search for good by herself. MacIntyre argues that although an individual does not have to accept the limitations of the tradition she belongs to, she has to start with the “moral particularities” within these limitations. In other words, individuals learn moral understanding of their own tradition first, and then the search for universal can be analyzed.³⁵¹

The concept of tradition is not something just about the narrative identity of humans but about the practices. We have emphasized that practices always have a specific history. Maintaining the relationships required by virtues and practices means connecting the present with the past and the future. However, the traditions that enable individual practices to reshape and come to the present

³⁵⁰ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 220.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

can never exist independently of broader social traditions. If so, what constitutes these traditions?³⁵²

Traditions have their own concept of “good” in the sense that such understanding of “good” makes them changeable and dynamic. For example,

When an institution—a university, say, or a farm, or a hospital—is the bearer of a tradition of practice or practices, its common life will be partly, but in a centrally important way, constituted by a continuous argument as to what a university is and ought to be or what good farming is or what good medicine is. Traditions, when vital, embody continuities of conflict.³⁵³

Therefore, the concept of tradition emphasizes the importance of historicity, which helps us to understand the concepts and practices. In this sense, we cannot separate moral concepts from the traditions in which they occur. Moreover, rational inquiry depends on tradition since every community involves their own practical rationalities. Therefore, the criteria of rationality come from the historicity of tradition, and since the tradition has a dynamic and changeable character, those criteria try to transcend those before them. Thus, they justify their truth.³⁵⁴

As a result, tradition is a kind of arena by which the understanding of the “good” is formed within the context of practices and the narrative unity of human life. However, MacIntyre maintains that the inquiry as to an individual's good does not end because traditions can also get lost in their unity and break down. That’s why, in order to protect traditions, it is necessary to continue virtues and practices. Then, virtues are necessary for traditions.

The virtues find their point and purpose not only in sustaining those relationships necessary if the variety of goods internal to practices are to be achieved and not only in sustaining the form of an individual life in which that individual may seek out his or her good as the good of his or her whole life but

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 221.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁵⁴ Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (London: Duckworth, 2001), 7.

also in sustaining those traditions which provide both practices and individual lives with their necessary historical context.³⁵⁵

The starting point of moral philosophy, therefore, is the social world which has historical contexts. Every moral philosophy has social context and content, and we cannot firmly understand its ideas without considering how its social embodiment occurs. MacIntyre, in this regard, handles the fact-value problem within its historical and contextual conditions. Rationality means the principles for one or community to judge what is true or false; the content of moral concepts is embodied throughout the historical atmosphere. From this perspective, political, social, and moral history cannot be regarded as irrational and independent from each other. Thus, facts and values are concentric concepts.

On the other hand, rational inquiry with regard to morality has to occur within a certain tradition and depend on it. It is possible and natural that there are different traditions and, accordingly, different practices and customs determine the truth or falsity.³⁵⁶ The matter is to understand the function or *telos* of human beings within those practices and the narrativity of human life to discuss morality within the tradition in question rationally. MacIntyre, with the example of “good captain” or “good watch”, urges us to examine the function or *telos* of the human being through practices, the narrative unity of life and tradition. In this respect, MacIntyre’s theory does not include ethical statements which lost their teleological context since if an ethical concept loses its *telos* and context, its possibility of being true or false becomes meaningless. Let’s consider an action that is regarded as morally true according to the social conditions of a different tradition from ours. Thus, a person can behave virtuously and the condition of such an act to be virtuous is about the conditions of practices and tradition in which such an action occurs. That virtuous action cannot mean anything within our moral understanding and tradition. That’s why it does not have any *telos* in

³⁵⁵ MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 223.

³⁵⁶ Micah Lott, “Reasonably Traditional: Self-Contradiction and Self-Reference in Alasdair MacIntyre’s Account of Tradition-Based Rationality”, *Journal of Religious Ethics* 30, vol 3 (2002): 318-319.

those conditions since there is no context. What *telos* means for MacIntyre can be found in the concept of “function”, which relates to the social context and practices created within the tradition. If the conditions of traditions change, the *telos* of human beings change accordingly. Therefore, for MacIntyre, the concern about values manifests itself in the practices of the community centered around a common good. In this sense, his theory embodies fact and value based on common goods in a social arena.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This study can be seen as a critical work on certain famous accounts that tend to dissociate ethics from factuality and rationality, to leave no impersonal standards for ethics by reducing ethical judgments to personal preferences and feelings. Also, the thesis criticizes some approaches reducing them to purely psychological facts and arguing that moral concepts are meaningless without a psychologically based ethical conception. This critical study is based on the idea that the problem of fact-value was brought about mainly by the value-independent and mechanical understanding of the concept of “facts” arising from the rejection of Aristotle’s account of nature. Therefore, the problem cannot be resolved within the existing conceptualizations, and a neo-Aristotelian approach can be a relatively attractive solution.

For this purpose, in the second chapter, Hume’s is-ought paragraph has been analyzed in terms of both traditional and anti-traditional interpretations, based on his own moral philosophy. According to most philosophers, the paragraph discusses a logical gap between fact and value. In other words, there is a deducibility problem between them. The traditional interpretation claiming that there is an unbridgeable gap between fact and value enforces the idea that there can be no inductive relationship at all between “is” and “ought” propositions and that non-moral statements do not entail moral ones; that is, no ought from is. The incompatibility of fact and value allows us to explain and understand the value or “what ought to be”, neither by reason nor by facts. In this sense, the way to explain moral judgments is to accept them as expressions of emotions. We showed that many findings in Hume’s philosophy fit the traditional interpretation. The fact that the source of knowledge is not mental data but senses, moral judgments are impressions based on emotions obtained from relationships with other people, not any rational principle, led to the criterion of

human behavior being seen as emotion-based approbation or censure. This situation seems to support the traditional idea since the concept of *value* is separate from the field of reason and matters of fact. In addition, based on the idea that the human mind consists of impressions and ideas, meaningful sentences are divided into either “matters of fact” or “relations of ideas”, and ethical judgments are based on neither reason nor experience, as morality does not enter any of these areas. Since what is central in caring for people or thinking about the interests of society is a common sense of sympathy for all people, rather than a process in which the mind plays a role, the fact that moral sentiment is based on morality and that morality is determined according to pleasure also justify the traditional interpretation. Thus, the concept of the common interests of society appears to be based on a moral feeling rather than a rational or factual basis.

On the other hand, we can see that Hume puts forward the importance of reason related to moral issues and uses factual concepts while grounding values. In this respect, it is possible to say that the main problem, in accordance with the anti-traditional interpretation, is to give an explanation of the legitimate transition from fact to value. In other words, Hume does not say that there is an incompatible gap between fact and value; on the contrary, he argues that the relationship between fact and value should be grounded. Accordingly, he includes all emotions, desires, and senses within sense impressions. He tries to find the impression of value since he reduces the value to emotions because if we find an impression of “what ought to be”, then we can accept it as meaningful. Therefore, we can conclude that Hume seeks a justification for moral issues rather than rejecting them outright. Although this justification eventually leads to a feeling called moral sentiment, and although moral judgments are considered expressions of emotions, there are also statements that reason and facts play a role in grounding values. First, Hume uses a concept called “the long-term common interests of society”. Although caring for the common interests of society seems to be based on a common sense of sympathy in everyone, it is a rational process to determine what the common interests of society are and what are not. Talking about the role of reason in the transition from personal interests

to taking care of other people's interests and his use of factual concepts such as the common interests of society while explaining justice as a value shows that Hume does not reject a relationship between fact and value. Moreover, he tries to establish a moral theory based on observable knowledge of human behavior and psychology, considering that every ethical understanding that is not based on factual observation should be rejected by applying the experimental method in natural sciences to human sciences as well. Although reason alone is not sufficient for Hume in terms of moral action, his concept of "the principle of humanity" plays a role in determining what the common interests of society are, what is beneficial to society and what is harmful. In this respect, the reason that uses this principle also has dominance over emotions.

However, Hume has been more analyzed through the traditional interpretation. Thanks to Hume's emotivist legacy, this analysis has been embraced by non-cognitivist theories, and the gap between fact and value has deepened. The findings of this study in the third chapter indicate that the epistemological and ontological distinction between fact and value has created various problems regarding the explanation and interpretation of "what ought to be". The character of the fact-value problem has changed in relation to the ontological and epistemological problems that are asked about whether moral facts exist and whether moral judgments have the status of knowledge.

First, non-cognitivism deals with only the describable part of the ethical problem. Therefore, they cannot go beyond how moral judgments are used. Moore is right about one point: moral judgments and concepts' meanings are not the same as their usage. This understanding of non-cognitivism is understandable because it defends the gap between fact and value and argues that moral judgments have no truth values and can be reduced to relative and personal feelings and preferences. Although it claims to be a theory about the meanings of moral judgments, simply looking at their uses and equating personal emotion or preference expressions with evaluative expressions does not give their meaning. On the other hand, the non-cognitivist and emotive understanding make the disagreement on moral issues endless because everything depends on people's subjective feelings and preferences. Thus, it defends the fact-value distinction

both logically, epistemologically and ontologically, starting from the traditional interpretation. In addition, it is against any attempt to evaluate moral judgments within rational discourse. The upshot of this is the possibility that ethics turns into an arbitrary field when it comes to values since there is no objective criterion other than people's feelings and preferences.

On the other hand, cognitivist views that emerged as a reaction to the meaninglessness of moral judgments and their reduction to personal feelings and preferences could not give satisfactory answers to defend ethics within the fact-value association and within a rational level. For naturalism, the problem of fact-value can be seen as solved. Still, it is necessary to explain how moral concepts correspond to facts and objects that are the object of science and the relationship between the moral and the natural. Also, by explaining values or moral concepts with natural properties, naturalism reduces them to purely psychological facts, but this is not enough to find their true meaning. Indeed, the desirable is not the same as the good, and the meanings of moral judgments cannot be their mere uses. On the other hand, intuitionism, which claims that moral conceptions are also properties of facts and objects independent of humans, but are non-natural properties, allows neither a rational nor factual explanation for them. There is no justification in Moore's theory for why what is good should drive us to action or why we should choose this action over the next. The answer is that we can intuitively feel what is good when we encounter it. Although he claims that moral judgments can have truth values and cognitive meanings, he does not offer a rational justification for moral actions and judgments.

Moreover, intuitionism, contrary to naturalism, appears as a theory that serves to distinguish between fact and value. The fact that moral concepts cannot be explained by anything factual or natural creates the idea that there is a difference between moral propositions and factual ones. Two things that cannot be explained in terms of each other cannot be deduced from each other. The distinction between factual and evaluative propositions corresponds to an epistemological and ontological distinction.

It is possible to make the following inference regarding non-cognitivist and cognitivist theories: The traditional interpretation of Hume's paragraph has

formed a conceptualization of fact and value. Discussions proceed according to the character of this conceptualization. While the concept of fact is used for things that are independent of value and are only the object of science, value is located in a different place from it as a type. In this conceptualization, either the fact is tried to be connected to the value, or the two are entirely separate. Also, the traditional interpretation treats the fact-value problem as a matter of deducibility. But as we have seen, we provide factual reasons when explaining values. It is the existing relationship between fact and value that needs to be explained because it emerges from “what ought to be”. In other words, epistemology coexists with ontology.

In the fourth chapter, we focused on the idea that the dichotomy continues in the theories of Mackie and Hare, who consider cognitivism and non-cognitivism from different angles. Although they argued that their moral judgments have a cognitive meaning, they defended the fact-value distinction. For a non-cognitivist like Hare, claiming that moral judgments have descriptive aspects and cognitive meanings can be regarded as considerable progress. On the other hand, Mackie claims that it is possible to deduce evaluative judgments from factual propositions only with the institutional facts and that what makes this possible is non-moral evaluative judgements. Anti-realism is an anti-essentialist approach opposed to the claim that value or moral concepts are the property of objects or phenomena independent of the subject. Universal prescriptivism, on the other hand, is an anti-emotivist approach in that it claims that moral judgments cannot be an expression of personal feelings.

However, both theories do not seem sufficient to defend ethics within the integrity of fact-value. For Mackie, there is a difference between moral and non-moral evaluative propositions. Propositions in which “ought” is used only in non-moral contexts can be deduced from factual propositions, but this is not enough to refute Hume’s Law because the type of relationship Hume seeks to explain is that between moral propositions and factual propositions. Therefore, the relations of non-moral contexts with factuality are insufficient to solve the fact-value problem. It does not seem possible to switch from a descriptive field to an evaluative field. But the problem is precisely this distinction between moral

and non-moral evaluative propositions. Moreover, Mackie argues that all moral judgments are false because there is no factual reality to which they correspond. The argument that if they were moral facts, they would be queer things, both metaphysically and epistemologically, marks a sharp distinction between fact and value because moral concepts motivate us to act, whereas nothing factual motivates action. The concept of “fact” mentioned here also seems to correspond to a value-independent understanding of mechanical value, which is the object of natural sciences and has been inherited from Hume. In addition, if all moral judgments are wrong, how would a discussion on morality be possible? Or how to talk about the correctness of a moral judgment and how it drives us to action? Thus, anti-realism merely determines that moral facts do not exist and that there is no factual role in establishing moral judgments but does not offer anything else in return.

On the other hand, universal prescriptivism criticizes theories such as emotivism, naturalism and intuitionism, arguing that moral judgments can have cognitive meanings within a non-cognitivist theory but independently of emotivism. However, the fact that the meanings of moral judgments are prescriptive rather than descriptive prevents them from being right or wrong. Yet their universalizability appears as a property that gives them their rationality. In other words, rationality is evaluated in terms of the universalizability of prescriptive judgments, but it seems that it is up to the first person’s discretion to generalize moral judgments. On the other hand, Hare also opposes the realist understanding that value is a property of a reality independent of the subject since he argues that ethics should be regarded only as a study of logic and ontological debates should come to an end. Starting from the same logical line, he sees the fact-value distinction as a matter of deducibility and supports Hume’s Law. There is a distinction between evaluative language and descriptive language, and then fact and value appear as two separate fields. For a moral proposition to emerge from an argument containing factual propositions, at least one moral proposition must be present as a premise. But how do we construct that moral proposition? The generalizable properties of moral judgments can explain this, but what we can and cannot generalize seems arbitrary. This is why

Hare calls his theory an internalist theory; that is, he does not accept any authority other than one's motivations for moral judgments. The truth value of moral judgments does not lie outside of our choices and evaluation. However, as we saw in MacIntyre, there may be objective criteria about moral concepts in a society about what they are, and they can exist from a factual basis within the practices of that society.

Like the non-cognitivist theories and Moore, both theories conceive of explaining value with facts as seeing an intrinsic property of an object independent of human beings. However, to consider a relationship between value and fact is not necessarily to defend essentialism. How can we provide factual reasons when explaining moral judgments? Explaining this relationship means separating the concept of fact from the mechanistic understanding. This criticism of essentialism is somewhat understandable because, based on the meta-ethical theories we discussed, when we accept that moral judgments are in rational discourse, naturalism, intuitionism or Mackie's anti-realism appear as three options. Advocating fact-value associations does not necessarily mean asserting that moral judgments or concepts are natural or unnatural properties of phenomena and objects independent of humans.

The fifth chapter focused on an alternative interpretation of the passage and characterized Aristotelian philosophy for the neo-Aristotelian approach aimed at eliminating the fact-value problem. MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian ethical understanding allowed us to dissolve the problem of fact-value and keep morality in rational discourse without falling into this essentialism problem by rejecting to reduce it to people's preferences and feelings. In other words, this alternative proposes to present a critique of the existing meta-ethical debates and dissolve the problem rather than being part of it. According to the Aristotelian understanding of virtue, the understanding of the good depends on the realization of human function and purpose and does not allow for distinction between moral and non-moral evaluative propositions. However, this distinction within meta-ethical theories also shows how morality differs from reality.

Eliminating the fact-value problem begins with acknowledging that our moral judgments or concepts have factual validity, apart from our personal

preferences and emotions, in our society and relationships. In justifying our value judgments, we provide factual reasons, and values cannot be understood independently of our experiences and relationships. Explaining values through some facts is something Hume did within his own philosophy, according to MacIntyre's anti-traditional interpretation. Although Hume's philosophy includes ideas that will contribute to the traditional interpretation, we can better understand the relationship between the two if we see the relationship between them as an inference rather than a purely logical and modern understanding of deduction. Otherwise, we cannot understand the true character of moral arguments since morality is not a field that can be understood through logical and purely linguistic inquiry but rather a practical one. That's why it is obvious that meta-ethical theories have difficulties presenting a rational understanding of morality in the unity of fact and value.

There is a crisis in morality, as MacIntyre argues, whose the most important part is the fact-value problem. If there are atomistic individuals who are independent of their practices and the teleological unity of human life and who are disconnected from the tradition or community to which they belong, then a theory like emotivism is inevitable. This is because values are not seen as things that can have objective criteria in society and therefore subject to an agreement, but only as personal preferences and feelings. However, moral reasoning depends on some criteria, standards and traditions. Therefore, moral concepts should be investigated within their traditions and historicity. Then, the fact-value distinction, which makes moral discussions meaningless, should be eliminated.

The crisis in which ethics is involved causes us to perform ethical judgments as common and rational things but consider them subjective things. When ethical concepts are treated as mere prohibitions independent of their historicity, their meaning and causality disappear, as in MacIntyre's "taboo" example. Emotivism constitutes the reason for our moral understanding in the form of fragments. When we consider the purpose-oriented understanding of human life, which disappeared with emotivism, we realize that man is a social and political animal and cannot be detached from political and ethical issues as a

mere individual. In this sense, what a human is and her purpose is understood not in her individuality but in her society. Since moral judgments are not seen in the sense of tradition and historicity in the theories discussed, their causality and purpose are lost because *telos* means something in a context. For example, a virtuous act in one tradition may not be considered virtuous in another tradition because their purpose, context, and traditions differ. Therefore, when we look at historically, we can reveal the relationship between “what is” and “what ought to be” because ethics is the transition from one’s state to the state she can be, that is, the actualization of human potential, that is, acting in accordance with its purpose or function, or the transition from the current state to the intended state. At this point, the mechanical explanations that started with Hume have eliminated purpose-oriented thinking. The teleological factual context, then, plays an important role in dissolving the fact-value distinction.

However, an Aristotelian understanding of biological teleology cannot be valid for today’s societies because, as we have seen in discussions of naturalism, presenting value as natural qualities completely independent of humans in an essentialist approach is difficult to defend. In addition, based on Aristotle’s understanding of human nature, ideas such as the fact that women are not rational or political beings by nature have become invalid in current conditions. Precisely for this reason, virtues and values should be explained by their historicity rather than a metaphysical explanation of human nature. This historicity provides the fact-value association by giving us the purpose and function of human life from a sociological point of view, not from a biological one.

In the sixth chapter, we focused on MacIntyre’s core definition of virtue which shows that the good of the individual and the good of the community are interconnected both in principle and in fact. The moral agent has to determine what he ought to do and how he ought to behave by looking at the responsibilities brought by the situation he is in, by taking into account his relations with other people and the expectations of the social tradition in which he lives. This is possible by understanding the concepts of practices, the narrativity of human life and tradition. There is a factual arena where virtues find

their meaning and are learned. This arena consists of practices, which are socially embodied human activities. When we consider the farming practice, there are internal goods within it, and these goods or virtues cannot be learned without being in farming practice. The meanings of these values are also formed in practices. Since virtues and social practices are interconnected, values have a factual meaning. For example, what constitutes the internal goods in farming practice lies in its historicity. In other words, standards such as how it is done well or what kind of good is gained by farming come to the present day in the history of farming practice. As practices are socially constructed and collaborative activities, they serve the community's common good, not just individuals. In this regard, there is an understanding of activity in which the aims of the action are contained in that activity itself, and this comes from an Aristotelian understanding. Just as actions and practices gain meaning in their historicity, we also make human life meaningful by revealing the narrative structure that gives it meaning. Bringing a narrative unity to our lives is possible by pursuing a purpose that will give meaning to our lives. This teleological integrity of human life ensures that the choice one makes is not arbitrary when the internal goods in one practice conflict with those in another practice.

Likewise, human practices and the narrative of human life find their meaning in a particular society and tradition. Each person first learns their own moral understanding within their own tradition. The tradition we live in gives us our identity because each of us is someone's father, mother, child or citizen of a country. What is essential in this respect is that to understand an agent's behavior, she must be conceived within a socially accepted form of practice or activity. We begin our search for the good as a member of a tradition. Behaviors cannot be explained independently of intentions, and it is a tradition as an environment that makes these intentions and behaviors meaningful. As the subject of a story from birth to death, a person is responsible for himself and others for the purpose of his behavior. And this happens only with the idea of *telos* since, from MacIntyre's point of view, tradition gives that ultimate purpose to the fragmented individual. Thus, what is lacking in the theories that we have discussed is the idea of the ultimate purpose or purpose of human life, which is

what we mean by moving from meta-ethics to ethics. The unity of the narrative embodied and purposeful in life gives integrity to individual life. To ask what is good for man is to ask how he lives in that unity, both theoretically and practically, in accordance with his purpose. In this respect, values are placed in a teleological factual context and cannot be understood independently of it.

To state in a nutshell, the aim of this study is *not* what Hume really tried to say in the paragraph or whether he said something contrary to his own philosophy. Although that subject is obviously related to the subject of the thesis, it is an issue that goes beyond its scope and requires a separate study. However, as we have seen in Hume's philosophy and many non-cognitivist theories, we use many factual reasons for our moral concepts or judgments when explaining them. In this sense, "what is" is associated with "what ought to be" since without revealing a truth about what something is, we cannot reveal what something ought to be. The meta-ethical theories do not seem to be able to elucidate this relationship. Against this background, the main thesis of the present work is that moral judgments or behaviors cannot be understood independently of a notion of human purpose, based on the idea that the way to explain this relationship begins with the recognition that value and ethics are a factual field. In this vein, this thesis affirms MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian interpretation, which provides that sort of a perspective to the fact-value problem. Adopting this interpretation is important in terms of putting our understanding of morality in the historical context. This perspective places morality on both a factual and rational basis. Indeed, there seems to be no rational way to achieve moral consensus within our culture. As individuals detached from its historical context and from an idea of *telos*, we are in a position to transform into a character offered by emotivism. Our concepts of theory and practice, or fact and value, lose their relevance because we prioritize our self-interest and desires in our moral judgments and behaviors and lack the idea of a purpose involving caring for ourselves and others.

Yet, one can ask why teleology is important for ethics or why it is important to dissolve the fact-value dichotomy. Without a notion of purpose to realize in practice and embody in reality, our moral judgments appear as an

expression of our preferences and feelings. Oddly enough, however, we want our moral judgments to apply to other people as well. We as humans are purposeful beings, so *praxis* is the act of intentional beings. As Aristotle says at the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, every action and decision involves a *telos* towards some good. The important thing is that ethics is a practical field which requires actions and behaviors. These actions and behaviors affect not only us but also the other people around us. In this regard, the question of “how one ought to live” is related to the question of “how we ought to live well together within society”. So it is against that sort of an intersubjective portrayal one can put forward the idea that ethics is about turning towards good or purpose. Only in this way can people be held responsible for their actions and behaviors.

If there is no purpose in action, if the agent does not know what she is doing and why she is doing it, and cannot find a principle in this framework for her actions, then what the agent does is not an action; it is just bodily movement. Acting aimlessly or acting purely for pleasures and desires cannot form the basis of moral action because then we would be no different from other organic beings moving in nature in conformity with their natural capacities and survival instincts. This is exactly why moral behaviors and judgments cannot be reduced to emotions. Good cannot be the same thing as pleasure because for the concept of good and the whole realm of ethics, one needs deliberation and a purpose. A human being is a purposeful creature with a future projection. In this sense, teleology has a central position for ethical understanding since moral actions and discourses involve decision and deliberation. Of course, this process requires desires. I desire my purpose and my own well-being, but what I desire is not always good for me. That is why deliberation and desires are indispensable.

The fact that action comes with deliberation involves realizing a desire for a purpose. Therefore, ethics is not about actions that we blindly perform with our desires; it is about reflection on desire, that is, action towards a goal with a *correct desire*. Otherwise, ethics would be a field of personal and arbitrary actions in which we try to fulfill our feelings and desires, which would mean that there is not much difference between animals and us. What MacIntyre tries to

put forward is that we should read the purposefulness behind behaviors and discourses of human beings in a historical way. In other words, rather than saying that man is a purposeful being by nature, one can say that goals and goods of human are formed and created within narratives and traditions of human life. Therefore, moral philosophy should have a sociological and historical basis. An agent's goals are revealed and realized through certain narratives and traditions. This seems to be a reasonable and adequate way to analyze ethical behavior and discourse. The understanding of virtues and values within actions, practices and the integrity of human life and within a *telos* also gives us the fact-value association because "what ought to be" emerges within a sociological and historical setting.

Virtues such as justice, honesty and courage can be understood in a *telos* within the practices of social production. Therefore, the Enlightenment's view of mechanical explanation is not sufficient to elucidate moral actions. Indeed, social practices such as agriculture can teach us the virtue of patience, while the game of football or a union activity can teach us solidarity. Or, as a practice, a mother's raising her child, which is a sophisticated and historically cultivated process, has its own good. Therefore, a self-isolated conception of value independent of practices is not possible.

Since social practices are variable, there is no absolute definition of virtue. Because *the standards of excellence* within the practices change, such a situation enables those practices to produce different goods. For example, when the good of architectural practice reaches its better thanks to the standards of excellence, it means that the goods of that practice have changed. With a broader explanation, the content of *eudaimonia* may differ socially and historically. In this sense, good is not something that can be separated from human needs and practices. For example, it is good for a baby to be breastfed by its mother. It is an objective reality independent of people's ideas and arises from a baby's needs and potential. Here, the challenging issue is to define human good. "Good" is about realizing a practice properly and purposefully. However, as long as the question of what human is has not ended, the search for what is good for humans

will continue. This is so because human practices and traditions are in a state of constant change.

Since there are no absolute and immutable practices, this constant change in practices can create a conflict between thinking about our own good and those of others. At this point, a person may need both to maintain relationships with other people and realize her own good, and at the same time, choose between good and bad or two goods. One must go through a process of deliberation in determining her own individual good and prioritizing. The following question becomes important: Which is better for me? The answer to this question, of course, cannot be thought of independently of the values that a person acquires from her tradition, family, and society in which she lives. So, at this point, one has to use the practical reason of her tradition, where the virtue of *phronesis* emerges. From this perspective, MacIntyre seems to offer a rational understanding of ethics. A human being uses practical rationality in determining her own good, which entails applying what is general to particular situations. From this point of view, we can conclude that a general truth never works. What is good for me? And what is good for the person I am helping right now? What is my responsibility? In questions like these, practical rationality comes into play. MacIntyre's approach is one of the theories that best apply the virtue of *phronesis* in the meaning of examining conditions. A relationship emerges between the determination of individual good and the good of society. When we oppose or defend a judgment, what we learn in our own community significantly impacts that opposition or defense because morality is not something we ponder over and choose but something we are born into. However, this does not mean that we will accept every thought and behavior in our tradition and society. It just means that our own tradition constitutes the basis or ground of our moral understanding, and then we can move on to the search for universal tenets about morality.

Of course, MacIntyre's concept of a person who wants the common good both for himself and other people with whom she is related in the society and who achieves this good by fulfilling her roles and functions in the society is not a strange thing for Ancient Greek societies. However, the integrative and goal-

centred understanding of the Classical age seems to be contrary to today's societies since there are no properly and purposefully determined roles and functions of people which cannot be grasped without an understanding of a unity of human life within a tradition and community. This anomaly stems from the individualistic and emotivist morality of the modern individual, which, as MacIntyre claims, perceives itself as fragmented, disconnected from the history of his own life and society and the reality of his social background. Changing this understanding can be possible by overcoming contradictions and realizing both the good of the people and the good of society. However, this lifestyle cannot be established by the individual's own efforts because there is a need for a social structure to support and sustain these lifestyles. In this way, the necessity of a political community to form the common good arises. This brings to bear academic political studies since after the boundaries of ethics are drawn, politics begins. In this regard, this study has tried to present a neo-Aristotelian moral understanding that can elucidate the fact-value association on a rational level and, by analyzing the ethical foundations of a new society and human concepts, hopes to be a prelude or source of inspiration to political studies that can be done in the future. Political studies can be a starting point for the question of how MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian understanding of virtue will be embodied and adapted in today's societies because there seems to be no answer to this question for a purely ethical study free from a political one. Researching what kind of political system is best and how that system should be organized then begins the investigation into politics. As Aristotle said at the end of the last book of the *Nichomachean Ethics*, *let us discuss this, then, starting from the beginning*.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez iki temel amaç taşımaktadır. İlk olarak, çalışma Hume'un ünlü "olan-olması gereken" paragrafıyla başlayan olgu-değer ikiliğinin, konuyu salt mantıksal bir tündengelim sorunu olarak ele alarak geleneksel yorumu savunan ya da pratik çözümler sunmadan salt ahlaki kelimler ve kavramlar üzerinde duran meta-etik kuramlarla çözülemeyeceğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda Hume'un ahlak felsefesinin geleneksel yoruma uyan ve uymayan kısımları incelendikten sonra, sorunun meta-etik kuramlara yansımaları tartışılmaktadır. Bu analiz, gayri-bilişselci ve bilişselci görüşleri savunan önde gelen düşünürler aracılığıyla sunulmaktadır. Alfred Jules Ayer ve Charles Stevenson gayri-bilişselcilik kapsamında analiz edilirken, Moritz Schlick ve George Edward Moore doğalcılık ve sezgicilik açısından incelenmektedir. Tartışılan teorilerden iki temel problem ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bunlardan birincisi, bilişsel teorilerin içine düştüğü özcülük problemidir. İkincisi ise, gayri-bilişselciliğin ortaya çıkardığı ve çözülmesi gereken bir sorun olarak ahlaki yargıların irrasyonelliği problemidir. Bu iki problemi çözmek adına, bilişselciliğe ve gayri-bilişselciliğe farklı açılardan yaklaşan iki filozofun daha irdelenmesi ihtiyacı ortaya çıkmıştır. Buradan yola çıkarak, John Mackie ve Richard Mervyn Hare olgu-değer problemi bağlamında analiz edilmektedir. İncelemenin sonunda, tartışılan meta-etik teorilerde olgu-değer birlikteliğini rasyonel bir düzlem içerisinde sunabilen bir teoriye rastlanmamıştır. Böylece hem özcülüğü ortadan kaldıracak hem de ahlaki yargıların rasyonelliğini savunacak ve bunu "olan" ile "olması gerekenin" ilişkisi ile ortaya koyacak bir teorinin gerekliliği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu tezde, ikinci amaç ikiliğin çözülmesi için olgu ve değer tarihsellik ve teleoloji bağlamında sunulduğu MacIntyre'nin neo-Aristotelesçi yaklaşımını ortaya koymak ve tartışmaktır.

Hume ve Olgu-Değer Problemi

Antik Yunan ve Orta Çağ'ın insan anlayışı bütüncül bir yaklaşımdır. Olgu-değer sorunu, bir noktada, insan anlayışının bir bütünlük içerisinde değil de , parçalar halinde anlaşılmaya başlandığında ortaya çıkmıştır. İnsanın politik bir hayvan olarak olgusal ve değerlendirci bir yanı olduğu fikri bütünlüğünü yitirmiş ve bu yönler iki farklı alan haline gelmeye başlamıştır. 16. ve 17. yüzyıllara kadar doğanın teleolojik yapısı olarak anlaşılan değerler ve değerlendirme pratiği, Aristotelesçi teleolojik doğa anlayışının reddedilmesiyle doğa bilimlerinden farklı bir insan pratiği olarak görülmüştür. Bu değişim, doğa bilimlerine dayalı gözlem ve deney nesnesi olan “olgu” kavramı ile etik, estetik ve politik alanlara özgü kabul edilen değer kavramı arasında kesin bir ayırım yapılmasına yol açmıştır. Olgu kavramı tipik olarak değerden bağımsız, mekanik, tamamen deneyimsel ve herhangi bir teleolojik anlayıştan yoksun olarak dar bir bakış açısıyla sunulur. Bu anlamda sadece “olan”ın bilgisine sahip olunabilirken, “olması gereken” kişisel duygu ve tercihlere indirgenmiştir.

17. yüzyıl İngiliz filozoflarından David Hume'un, *İnsan Doğası Üzerine Bir İnceleme* kitabındaki ünlü olgu-değer paragrafı bu ayırımın derinleşmesine neden olmuştur. Bu paragraf, geleneksel yorumu benimseyen Ayer, Hare ve Nowell Smith gibi düşünürler tarafından, olgusal önermelerden değerlendirci yargıların tümdengelimsel olarak çıkarılmayacağı şeklinde yorumlanmıştır. Diğer taraftan, geleneksel yoruma karşı çıkan Alasdair MacIntyre, Geoffrey Hunter gibi düşünürler tarafından da olgu ile değer arasında bir ilişki olduğu ve bu ilişkinin açıklanması gerektiği şeklinde ele alınmıştır. Yani, Hume olgudan değer mantıksal olarak çıkarılamayacağını söylemez, sadece bu ilişkinin meşru bir şekilde temellendirilmesi gerektiğini dile getirir.

Bu minvalde, bu bölümde Hume'un paragrafı ve Hume'un ahlak felsefesinin hem geleneksel yoruma hem de gelenekselci olmayan yorumlara uyan tarafları saptanmıştır. Çünkü her iki yorum için de Hume'un felsefesinde önemli noktalar bulmak mümkündür.

İlk olarak, Hume'un felsefesinde bilgi empirik gözlemlere dayalı bir şeydir ve bilginin kaynağı akıl değil duyu verileridir. Anlamli yargılar ise ide ilişkileri dediği alana giren matematiksel yargılar gibi yargılar ya da olgu

durumları dediği alana giren ve deneysel olarak doğrulanabilen yargılardır. Bu anlamda, ahlaki yargılar ne ide ilişkileri ne de olgu durumları ile alakalıdır. Onlar diğer insanlarla kurulan ilişkilerden alınan duygulara dayalı izlenimlerdir.

Ahlaki yargılar herhangi bir rasyonel prensibe dayanmaz. İnsan davranışının ölçütü onama ya da kınama ile mümkündür. Bu anlamda, onlar duyguların ifadeleri olarak karşımıza çıkar. Hume, kendi çıkarlarımızdan diğer insanların veya toplumun çıkarlarını umursamaya geçişte merkezi olanın akıl değil, herkeste ortak olan bir sempati duygusu olduğunu dile getirir. Bu açıdan, ahlak aslında bir duygu yoluyla başkaları ile kurduğumuz bir ilişkidir. Bu duygu ise hazlar ve arzular yolu ile meşrulaştırılır.

Diğer yandan, Hume'un felsefesinde değerler temellendirilirken aklın rolünden ve olgusal kavramlardan da bahsedilir. Hume'un bu açıdan ahlaki yargıları hiçbir anlamı olmayan şeyler olarak reddetmediğini ama ona gözlemlenebilir bir temel bulmaya çalıştığını söylemek mümkündür. Bu temellendirmeyi de doğa bilimlerindeki metodu insan bilimlerine uygulanması ile yapmaya çalıştığını söyleyebiliriz. Çünkü, Hume'a göre, kendisinin de bizzat dile getirdiği gibi olgusal olarak gözlemlenmeyen hiçbir etik anlayış kabul edilmemelidir.

Hume'un ahlak felsefesinde, aklın rolünün olgusal kavramlardan daha az vurgulandığını söylemek mümkündür. Çünkü onun için akıl kişisel çıkarların ötesine geçip toplumun çıkarlarını umursamak için yeterli değildir. Akıl kişisel çıkarları düşünmede öne çıkar ve karşıdaki kişinin çıkarlarını düşünmek ancak bir duygusal bağ ile mümkün olur. Ancak, ahlaki eylemlerde önemli bir rolü olan *principle of humanity* diye bir kavramdan bahseder. Bu prensip toplumun yararına olan şeyin ne olduğunu neyin yararlı neyin zararlı olduğunu söyler. Bu açıdan çıkarların ne olduğunun belirlenmesinde duyguların değil aklın bir rolünün olduğunu görmek mümkündür.

Ayrıca Hume, adalet kavramını açıklarken, “toplumun uzun vadedeki ortak çıkarları” diye bir kavram kullanır. Ortak çıkarlar ise topluma uzun vadede neyin yararlı neyin zararlı olacağına dair olgusal ve pratikte ortaya çıkan fenomenlere dayanır.

Sonuç olarak, Hume'un olgu-değer paragrafını onun felsefesine bakarak iki türlü de okumak mümkündür. Ancak buradaki amaç, Hume'un paragrafta gerçekte ne dediğini ortaya çıkarmaktan çok, geleneksel yorumun olgu ve değer arasındaki ilişkiyi nasıl derinleştirdiğini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Aynı zamanda, Hume'un paragrafından bağımsız olarak aslında olgu ve değer arasında bir ilişki olduğunu, olanın olması gerekenden bağımsız açıklanamayacağını savunmak adına geleneksel olmayan yoruma da bakılması gerektiğini göstermektir. Bu minvalde, diğer bölümde meta-etik teoriler olgu-değer problemi açısından ele alınır. Çünkü Hume çoğunlukla geleneksel yorum tarafından ele alındığından bilişsel ve gayri-bilişsel teoriler de bu çerçevede tartışmalar üretmiştir.

Olgu-Değer Problemi Çerçevesinde Gayri-Bilişsel ve Bilişsel Teoriler

Meta-etik teorilerin 3 çeşit temel problem ile uğraştığını söyleyebiliriz. Ontolojik olarak ahlaki olguların var olup olmadığı, eğer böyle olgular var ise bunların bilimsel olgular ile aynı statüde olup olmadığıdır. İkincisi, ahlaki kavramların ve yargıların bilgi statüsünde olup olmadığı onların doğru ya da yanlış olup olamayacağı üzerinedir. Üçüncüsü, ahlaki yargıları nasıl temellendirdiğimiz ile ilgilidir ki bu soru ilk iki soruya verilen cevaplardan yola çıkarak cevaplanır. Olgu-değer problemini ilgilendiren nokta da burada başlar diyebiliriz. Yani şu sorular önem taşır: ahlaki yargıları olgular yolu ile temellendirebilir miyiz ya da değerler olgulara indirgenebilir şeyler midir?

Gayri-bilişsel ve bilişsel teoriler bu sorulara çeşitli cevaplar vermişlerdir. Böylece, ahlaki olguların var olup olmadığı ve ahlaki yargıların bilgi statüsünde olup olmadığına yönelik sorulan ontolojik ve epistemolojik problemlerle ilgili olarak olgu-değer probleminin karakteri değişime uğramıştır.

Gayri bilişselcilik için birinci soruya verilen yanıt ahlaki olguların olmadığıdır. İkinci soruya verilen yanıt böyle olgular olmadığından onları bilmemizin yolu bilimsel olguları bilmemizle aynı olamaz. O zaman olgu ve değer birbirlerinden ayrıdır. Bu durumda olgulardan değer çıkmaz. Bu teoriler geleneksel yoruma bağlı kalarak kendi duygucu teorilerini de geliştirmişlerdir.

Geleneksel yorumda mesele bir tümdengelimsel çıkarım olarak anlaşılırken, olgu ve değer arasındaki ilişkinin ne olduğu ve bunun açıklanması

gerektiğini iddia eden karşı iddia ise bunun bir çeşit akli çıkarım olduğunu düşünür. Yani meseleyi salt mantıksal bir çerçeveden ele almaz. Hume, duygucu ahlakı ve bu paragraf sayesinde, gayri-bilişselciliğin ve duyguculuğun kurucusu olarak düşünülür. Gayri-bilişselcilik için değer ve olgu arasında köprü kurulamaz bir boşluk vardır. Bu teoriler Hume’u miras alarak “olan” ve “olması gereken” arasında bir mahiyet farkı olduğunu düşünürler. Bu açıdan, olgu-değer arasında ontolojik ve epistemolojik bir ayırım ortaya çıkar.

Gayri-bilişselcilik çerçevesinde tartışılan Ayer ve Stevenson, geleneksel yorumun sahipleri olarak olgu-değer ayırımını savunmuşlardır. Onlara göre ahlaki yargılar ne analitik ne sentetik yargılardır çünkü onlar duyguların ifadeleridir. Normatif olan önermeleri “sözde kavramlar” olarak değerlendirip, değerlendirci yargıların sadece betimlenebilir olanları ile ilgilenmişlerdir. Ayer’den farklı olarak Stevenson için ahlaki önermeler sadece duyguları betimlemez aynı zamanda karşıdaki kişiyi eyleme motive edici de bir duygusal anlam taşırlar. Ayer, etik yargıların duygu ve tercihleri ifade etmeleri bakımından, etiğin psikolojinin bir dalı olduğunu düşünürken, Stevenson ise onların anlamlarının salt betimsel olmadığını düşünmesi açısından, etiğin salt davranışsal psikoloji olmadığını çünkü psikoloji biliminin betimleyici bir bilim olduğunu vurgular.

Sonuçta bakıldığında, iki düşünür de ahlaki yargıları hem akıl alanından hem de olgusal alandan ayrı tutar. Onlar için empirik olgular ahlaki yargılar için bir temel oluşturmazlar. Çünkü ahlaki yargılar olgulara ya da doğal özelliklere ne indirgenebilir ne de onlarla açıklanabilir, onlar sadece duyguları ifade etme ve karşıdaki kişiyi duygusal olarak ikna etme anlamı taşırlar. Bu anlamda geleneksel yorumu savunmaları, olan ile olması gereken arasında zorunlu bir gerektirmenin olamayacağını iddia etmeleri nedeniyle, olgu ve değer hem mantıksal hem epistemolojik hem de ontolojik olarak birbirlerinden ayrılır.

Bilişselci teorilere geldiğimizde, olgu-değer problemini ahlaki kavramlar ve yargıların doğal ve doğal olmayan özellikler ile açıklanıp açıklanamayacağı tartışması üzerinden görürüz. Bilişselcilik, gayri-bilişselciliğin aksine, ahlaki yargıların duyguları değil, doğruluk değeri alabilen inançları yansıttığını iddia eden bir teoridir. Doğalcılık ise ahlaki yargıların doğruluk değeri almasındaki

ölçütün insan düşüncesinden bağımsız olgular olduğunu öne sürer. Yani ahlaki kavramları bilimin nesnesi olan doğal özelliklere indirger. Sezgicilik ise bu ahlaki özellikleri yine insan düşüncesinden bağımsız olguların doğal olmayan özellikleri olarak görür. Bilişselci teoriler içerisinde, doğalcılık Moritz Schlick aracılığı ile ele alınırken, sezgicilik G. E. Moore yolu ile ortaya konmuştur.

İndirgemeci doğalcılığı savunan Schlick, etiğin psikolojinin, doğal bilimlerin ve sosyal bilimlerin bir kolu olduğunu dile getirir. Gayri-bilişselcilikten iki şekilde ayrılır. Birincisi, etik yargıların bilişsel anlamının olduğunu ve onların insandan bağımsız olguların doğal özellikleri olduğunu iddia eder. İkincisi ise, her ne kadar ahlaki kavramları duygulara, hazlara, çıkarlara indirgese de, gayri-bilişselciliğin tersine bunlar olgusal olan psikolojik süreçler olarak ortaya çıkar. Etik araştırma insan davranışlarını açıklamak olduğundan, etik davranışsal psikolojiye indirgenir.

Doğalcılık için olgu değer birlikteliğini değerın zaten kendi başına bir şey olmaması ile anlayabiliriz. Örneğin, toplumun yararına olan şey ahlaki iyi olduğundan bu ikisi olgusal bir şeye karşılık gelir. Ahlaki iyi toplumun çıkarından, faydasından başka ve fazla bir şey ifade etmez. Bu açıdan olgu-değer ayrımını doğalcılıkta göremeyiz.

Diğer yandan, doğalcılık, ahlaka ahlaki olmayan bir temel bulmaya çalışırken, sezgicilik buna doğalcı hata teorisi ile karşı çıkar ve ahlaki terimlerin doğal olmayan, analiz edilemez, basit şeyler olduğunu ve onların doğruluğunun sezgisel bir şekilde edinilen kendinden apaçık doğrular olduğunu iddia eder.

Moore'a göre bir şeyin tanımlamak onun gerçek doğasını ortaya koymaktır. O yüzden, doğalcı veya gayri-bilişselci teoriler ahlaki kavramların gerçek doğalarını ortaya koyamamışlardır. Çünkü onların kullanımlarını ne olduğunu saptamak onların anlamlarını vermez. Açık soru argümanı ile bunu daha detaylı anlatır. Buna göre, iyi haz veren şeydir dendiğinde iyinin haz olup olmadığını sorabiliyorsak ve yanıt alamıyorsak, iyi ile haz özdeş değildir. Çünkü "iyi" gibi ahlaki kavramlar parçalarına ayrılamayan basit ve apaçık kavramlardır.

Moore ahlaki yargıların kişisel duyguları dile getirmek, öznel yaşantıları dışa vurmak yerine, nesnel olguları öznenen bağımsız durumları ifade ettiğini savunur. Bu anlamda iyi insandan bağımsız olarak vardır ve biz onun bilgisine

sezgi yolu ile ulařırız. “İyi” kavramı öznel bir Őey olmadığından ve analiz edilemeyen ama herkes tarafından sezilebilen bir Őey olduğundan, ahlaki yargılar da öznel değildir diyebiliriz. Dolayısıyla, *içkin değer* tanımından da anlayabileceğimiz üzere, duygucu teorilerin tersine, bir Őeyin “iyi” olması kişilerin tercihlerine veya duygularına baēlı değildir. Böylelikle, etik kavramlar diğer doēal kavramlara benzemediklerinden ve onlarla açıklanamadıklarından dolayı ahlak özerk bir alan teşkil eder. Doēal olmayan bir nitelik olarak “iyi”nin ancak dolayimsız bir sezgi edimiyle kavradığından onun neden iyi olduğuna dair rasyonel veya olgusal bir temellendirmeden bahsedilemez.

Olgu-deēer problemi açısından Moore’un geleneksel yorumu benimsediğini söylemek pek mümkün değildir çünkü olgusal önermelerden değerlendirci önermelerin mantıksal olarak çıkarılamayacağına dair kesin bir Őey söylemez. Ancak doēal ve doēal olmayan özellikler arasında yaptığı ayırım olgu ve deēer arasında onların anlamlarına yönelik bir mahiyet farkı olduğunu ortaya koyar. Ayrıca doēal olan ile olmayanın ilişkisinin de ne olduğu tam olarak açıklanmadığından, olgu ve deēer farklı iki Őey olarak karşımıza çıkar. Çünkü birebirlerine indirgenemez ve açıklanamazlar ama bir yandan da ahlaki kavramlar doēal olmayan özellikler olarak olgulara ve nesnelere aittirler.

Bu tartışmalardan olgu-deēer problemi ile ilgili iki temel sorun olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Birincisi bilişsel teorilerin deēeri insandan baēımsız nesnelere doēal ya da doēal olmayan özellikleri olarak görmelerinden dolayı ortaya çıkan özcülük problemidir. İkincisi ise, gayri bilişselci teorilerin ahlaki yargıların irrasyonelliēi iddiasına doēalcılıēın ve sezgiciliēin tatmin edici bir cevap verememesidir.

Çünkü doēalcılıkta ahlaki kavramların nasıl bilimin nesnesi olan olgulara ve nesnelere karşılık geldiēi açık değildir. Ayrıca “iyi”nin neden iyi olduğuna dair ya da olması gerekenin ne olduğuna yönelik bir araştırma yoktur. Etik salt psikolojik olgulara indirgenir. Deēerlerin bu tarz doēal özellikler ile açıklanmaları ise onların gerçek anlamlarını vermez çünkü Moore’un dediēi gibi gerçekten de iyi haz ile ya da arzulanan Őey ile aynı Őey değildir. Ayrıca, doēalcılık da gayri-bilişselcilik gibi ahlaki kavramların sadece “olgusal” diye

adlandırdığı betimlenebilir kısımları ile ilgilenir. Bu tavır ise onların normatifliğinin ne olduğunu açıklamaya yetmez.

Diğer yandan, sezgicilikte ise olguların ne şekilde doğal olmayan özelliklerinin olabileceği, ahlaki olan ile ahlaki olmayan arasındaki ilişkinin nasıl bir ilişki olduğu açıklanmaz. Bu özelliklerin ilişkilerine dair tatmin edici bir cevap olmadığı için onlara ulaşmadaki yolda da tatmin edici bir cevap bulunamaz. Sezgisel temellendirme ne rasyonel ne de olgusal bir açıklamaya izin verir. İyi olan neden iyidir? Bunun sorununun rasyonel ve olgusal bir cevabı yoktur çünkü o kendinden menkuldür.

Ahlaki yargıların irrasyonel olduğu iddiası ise gayri-bilişselciliğin geleneksel yorumu benimsemesinden ve duygu temelli bir teori ortaya koymasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Ancak bizler ahlaki yargılarımızı açıklarken onlara olgusal nedenler sunarız. Peki bunu nasıl yapabiliyoruz? Buradan yola çıkarak, bu ilişkinin mantıksal bir ilişki olmadığını ama açıklanması gereken bir ilişki olduğunu düşünmek çok da akla yatkın bir hal alır. Yani olgu ve değer arasında zorunlu bir gerektirmeden ziyade akli bir çıkarımın olduğunu ve bu ilişkinin nasıl açıklanabileceğine odaklanmak gerekliliği ortaya çıkar. Çünkü olan hakkında bir hakikat ortaya koymadan olması gereken hakkında bir hakikat ortaya koyamayız.

Tartışmalar göstermektedir ki, olgu-değer probleminin çözümünde ortaya çıkan özcülük ve ahlaki yargıların irrasyonelliği problemi, özcü olmayan bilişsel bir anlayışın olanağı ya da ahlaki yargıların irrasyonel olarak düşünülmediği bir teorinin mümkün olup olmadığı sorusunu ortaya çıkarır. Bu minvalde, özcü olmayan bir bilişsel teoriyi savunan John Mackie ve ahlaki yargıların rasyonel olduğunu savunan gayri-bilişselci düşünür R.M. Hare olgu-değer problemi açısından ele alınmıştır.

Mackie'ye göre, sezgiciliğin ve doğalcılığın içine düştüğü özcülük reddedilmelidir. Çünkü "iyi" gibi ahlaki kavramlar bir nesnenin ne doğal ne de doğal olmayan bir özelliği olabilir. Buradan yola çıkarak, Mackie bir hata teorisi ortaya atmıştır. Buna göre, bilişselci teoriler ahlaki kavramları insandan bağımsız nesnelere ve olguların özellikleri olarak görmeleri bir hatadır. Çünkü onlar insan düşüncesi dışında hiçbir olguya karşılık gelmediğinden varlıkları

hakkında konuşulmaz. Bu tür kavramlar gerçekte var olmadığından ve nesnel olmadığından, ahlaki yargılar sistematik olarak ve eşit oranda yanlıştır. Örneğin yalan söylemek ahlaki olarak yanlıştır dediğimizde ahlaki olarak yanlış olma durumu var olan bir şey değildir. Bir nesnenin ya da özelliğın varlığına karşılık gelmez.

Her ne kadar ahlaki yargılar bilişsel bir anlama sahip olup, rasyonel tartışma mümkün olsa da, Mackie bunu ahlaki olguların varlığına bağlamaz. Nesnel ahlaki olgulara karşı çıktığı argüman *Queerness* argümanı olarak bilinir. Buna göre, eğer ahlaki olgular var olsaydı bunların metafizik olarak tuhaf şeyler olacağını düşünür. Çünkü ahlaki yargılar bizi eyleme sevk ederken, olguların böyle bir özelliğı yoktur. Eyleme sevk eden olguların olması bir tuhaflık yaratmış olacaktır. İkinci olarak, bu ahlaki olgulara ulaşmak için bizde özel bir yeti olması gerekirdi ki bu yeti de yine tuhaf bir şey olacaktır. Ona göre, ahlak hakkında sadece öznel bir yerden konuşabiliriz. Ahlaki gerçekleri keşfetmeyiz yaratırız. Failden bağımsız izole edilmiş nesnel ahlaki değerler yoktur.

Ayrıca, Mackie Hume'un paragrafına yönelik geleneksel yorumu destekler. Ahlaki olan ve olmayan değerlendirici yargılar arasında bir ayırım yapar. Böylece, bir takım olgusal önermelerden ahlaki olmayan değerlendirici yarguların çıkarılabileceğini ancak bunun Hume'un teorisini çürütmediğini düşünür. Çünkü Hume, ona göre olgudan değere geçişte ahlaki olan ilişkinin açıklanmasını dile getirmiştir. Yani bu "yeni ilişki" dediğı ilişki ahlaki olmayan değerlendirici yargılar ve olgular arasında değil, tam da ahlaki olan ve olgusal olan yargılar arasındadır. Mackie'nin realist olmayan teorisine göre olgu ve değer birbirleri ile açıklanmayan ve birbirlerine indirgenmeyen iki şey olarak ortaya çıkar. İkisi arasında ontolojik bir farklılık vardır. Bu anlamda, Mackie de olgu-değer birlikteliğini görmek mümkün olmaz.

Gayri-bilişselciliğın farklı bir versiyonu olan Hare'nin *Evrensel Preskriptivizm*'i diğer gayri-bilişselci teorilerin ve bilişselci teorilerin eksiklerine bir yol bulma girişimi olarak görülebilir. Hare, ahlaki yarguların gayri bilişselci bir teori içerisinde ama duyguculuktan bağımsız olarak bilişsel anlamlarının olabileceğini savunur. Etik onun için dilin mantıksal bir çalışmasıdır. Hare'ye göre doğruluk koşulu teorisi ahlaki yarguların anlamlarına karar vermede bir

ölçüt olamaz. Çünkü bu betimsel yargılar için geçerli bir şeydir. O yüzden gayri bilişselciler ahlaki yargıları betimsel olmadıkları için reddetmişlerdir. Bilişsel teoriler ise onların betimlenebilir olduklarını düşündüklerinden dolayı rasyonel olduklarını düşünmüşlerdir. Ancak, Hare ahlaki yargıların ne gayri-bilişsel teoriler gibi duygu temelli ya da psikolojik şeyler olduğunu düşünür ne de bilişsel teoriler gibi onların anlamlarının betimleyici olduğunu söyler. Ona göre, ahlaki soruların da olgusal problemler kadar rasyonel nedenleri olabilir. Duyguculuk ahlaki yargıların ve kavramların anlamlarını vermez çünkü psikolojik ölçüt veya duygular ahlaki yargıların ve eylemlerin anlamlarını oluşturmaz. Bilişsel teorilerin aksine ise, Hare için ahlaki yargıların her ne kadar betimsel bir tarafları varsa da ahlaki yargılara anlamını veren kural koyucu yanlarıdır.

Ahlaki dil kural koyucu bir özelliğe sahiptir. Ancak olgusal dilin böyle bir özelliği yoktur, o sadece betimlemek için vardır. Bu anlamda betimleyici alandan değerlendirici alana geçemeyiz. Hare'ye göre kural koyucu dilin evrenselleştirilebilir özelliği vardır ve ahlaki yargılar bu şekilde rasyonelliklerini kazanırlar. Bu da bir durum için kurduğumuz ahlaki yargıyı ona benzer tüm durumlar için de kurabilmektir.

X iyi demek seçmem gereken bir x var demektir ve bu x hem benim hem de herkesin tercih edeceği bir x demektir. Bu açıdan ahlaki yargılar eyleme sevk eder. Birincil kişi emirinden diğer insanlar için de geçerli olan bir kural koyuculuğa geçilir.

Hare olgu-değer ayrımını da kabul eder. Geleneksel yorumu benimseyerek, olguların zorunlu olarak değerleri doğurmadığını savunur. Meseleyi mantıksal bir şekilde ele alır. Değerlendirici bir önermenin çıkması için önermeler arasında en az bir tane ahlaki önermenin öncül olarak bulunması gerekir. Dolayısıyla, Hare'de her ne kadar ahlaki tartışma mümkün gözükse de, olgu ve değer ayrımının olduğunu görürüz.

Tartışılan meta-etik teorilerden hiçbirinin olgu-değer problemini ortadan kaldırmadığını söylemek mümkündür. Bu problemi ortadan kaldırmak için birkaç temel husustan söz edilebilir. İlki, olgu-değer arasındaki ilişkiyi zorunlu bir gerektirme ilişkisi olarak görmemektir. Meseleyi tümdengelimsel bir mesele

değil ama olgu değer arasında olan akli bir çıkarım olarak görmek mümkündür. Çünkü etik mantığa indirgenebilecek kadar açıkça formüle edilebilir bir şey olmaktan ziyade pratik bir alandır. İkincisi, meta-etik tartışmaların yaptığı gibi salt ahlaki kelimeler ve kavramlar üzerine odaklanılmaması gerekir. Etiği salt psikolojiye ya da mantıksal ilişkiler yolu ile ele almamak gerekir. Meta-etikten etiğe geçilmelidir. Bu da insan davranışlarını ve söylemlerinde amaçsallığın araştırılması demektir. Üçüncüsü, etik amaçsallık içerdiğinden “olan” ve “olması gereken” ilişkisi bu amaçsallık çerçevesinde araştırıldığında değerler olgusal temelde bir anlam ifade edebilir. Dördüncüsü, tartıştığımız teorilerde de görüldüğü gibi özcülük problemi çözülmesi gereken bir sorun olarak ortaya çıkar. O yüzden ahlaki kavramları insan pratiklerinden bağımsız kendinde varlıklar ya da özellikler olarak görmekten ziyade, onları belirli bir tarihsellik ve amaçsallık ile aldığımızda olgu-değer problemi çözülebileceğini söyleyebiliriz.

Bu amaçla, meseleye mantıksal olarak bakmayan MacIntyre’ın geleneksel yoruma karşı çıkan Hume paragrafı yorumu bize olgu ve değer arasındaki bu ilişkinin ortaya çıkarılmasında yardımcı olabileceği söylenebilir. Olgu-değer paragrafını ve Hume’un genel felsefesini ele aldığımızda olgu ve değer arasında zorunlu bir gerektirme ilişkisinden daha ziyade bir temellendirme probleminin olduğu ve bu ilişkinin açıklanması gerektiği sonucu çıkabilir. Çünkü MacIntyre’a göre Hume paragrafta ‘entailment’ kelimesini değil ‘deduction’ kelimesini kullanır ve bu kelimenin o dönemde çıkarım ya da temellendirme anlamında kullanıldığı görülür. Ayrıca Hume adalet gibi bir kavramı açıklarken “toplumun uzun vadedeki çıkarları” gibi olgusal nedenlere başvurduğundan asıl meselenin olgu ve değer arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklamak olduğu söylenebilir. Ancak burada tezin amacı Hume’un paragrafta ne demek istediğini ortaya çıkarmak değildir. Bu yorumun önemli olmasındaki asıl nokta meselenin mantıksal bir mesele olmadığını ve olgu değer arasında biçimsel bir geçerlilikten çok birbirleri ile aralarında nasıl bir ilişki olduğuna bakılması gerektiğini göstermektedir.

Hume’un geleneksel yorumunda olan ve sonrasında Hare tarafından da gösterilemeye çalışılan şey değerlendirci bir önermenin ancak ve ancak öncüllerinin içerisinde değerlendirci bir öncülün olduğu bir önermeden

çıkabileceğidir. Bu ise tamamen ahlakın mantıksal bir noktadan okunması ile ilgili bir problemidir. Ancak ahlak alanı matematik ve mantık alanından farklı bir alandır. Dolayısıyla, onların metotları ile incelenmesi alanın kendisi ile uyuşmayan bir tavidir. O yüzden ahlakta mantıkta matematikte olduğu gibi geçerli bir çıkarım aramayı bırakmamız gerekir.

Buradan yola çıkarak, olgu ve değer birlikteliğini rasyonel bir düzlemde ortaya koyan MacIntyre'in neo-Aristotelesçi yaklaşımı önem taşımaktadır. Çünkü bu yaklaşım meta-etik teorilerin içine düştüğü özcülük ve ahlaki yargıların irrasyonelliği problemini ortadan kaldırıyor görünmektedir. Aristoteles felsefesine baktığımızda, olgu-değer problemi açısından önemli olan şey ahlaki olan ve ahlaki olmayanlar değerlendirici yargılar arasında bir ayrım yapılmamasıdır. İyi kavramı bir tür fonksiyon ve amaçsallık ile tanımlanır. Bir şeyin veya eylemin iyi olması amacına uygun yapılması veya fonksiyonunu gerçekleştirmesidir. Nasıl ki iyi bir saati iyi yapan saatin tanımının ne olduğuna bağlı ise iyi bir insanı iyi yapan da aslında insanın tanımının ne olduğuna bağlıdır. Bu tanım da onun fonksiyonunun ve amacının ne olduğu ile ilgilidir.

MacIntyre'in Neo-Aristotelesçi Yaklaşımı

MacIntyre Aristoteles'in insanın doğasına ait olan bu fonksiyon ve amaçsallık kavramını alıp insan pratiklerine, hayatına ve geleneğine dair sosyolojik bir yerden çıkarır. İnsanın iyilerinin ne olduğu da bu amaçsallığın gerçekleştirilmesinde cisimleşir. MacIntyre'a göre ahlaki kavramlar bir gelenek anlayışı ve tarihsellikleri içerisinde anlaşılmaya çalışılmadığı için onların bir *telos*'u yoktur. Amaç, bağlam içerisinde bir şey ifade eder. Örneğin antik Yunanda erdem sayılan bir davranışın başka bir gelenek içerisinde erdem sayılmaması gibi. Ancak günümüzde, tarihselliklerinden uzak fragmanlar şeklinde ahlaki içeriklere sahibizdir. Ahlaki yargılar tarihselliklerinden ve kültürlerinden bağımsız olarak salt yasaklamalar olarak ele alındığında onların anlamları ve nedensellikleri kaybolur. Fragmanlar şeklinde bir ahlak anlayışına sahip olmamızın temel nedeni de duyguculuktur. Çünkü duyguculuk amaç merkezli insan hayatı anlayışını da ortadan kaldırmıştır. Ahlaki eylemler ve

söylemler kişisel tercih ve duygulara indirgenmiştir. Bu açıdan ahlak keyfi bir alana dönüşmüştür.

Ancak insan sosyal ve politik bir hayvandır ve politik ve etik meselelerden salt birey olarak bağımsızlaştırılmaz. Bu anlamda insanın ne olduğu ve amacının ne olduğu da onun salt tikelliği içerisinde değil toplumu içerisinde anlaşılır. Böylelikle olandan olması gerekeni çıkarabiliriz. Çünkü etik bir insanın olduğu durumdan olabileceği duruma geçiş yani olandan olması gerekene geçiştir.

MacIntyre olgu ve değer ilişkisini pratikler, insan hayatının öyküsel bütünlüğü ve gelenek kavramlarının ilişkisini görebiliriz. Değerler insan doğasına bağlı özsel bir açıklamadan ziyade, tarihsel ve sosyolojik olarak açıklanır. Onların anlamlarını bulduğu ve öğrenildiği olgusal bir arena vardır. Bu arena MacIntyre’ın sosyal olarak şekillendirilmiş insan aktiviteleri dediği pratiklerden oluşur. Pratikler aslında bize ne yapmamız ve nasıl davranmamız gerektiğini öğrendiğimiz alanı da oluşturur diyebiliriz. Pratikler sadece bireylerin iyilerine değil toplumun iyisine yani ortak iyiye hizmet ederler. Aslında “iyi”nin anlamının nasıl öğrenildiğinin ve bu öğrenmenin durumlara nasıl uygulandığının cevabını diğer meta-etik teorilere nazaran, MacIntyre bize pratikler ile verir. Örneğin mimarlık, tarım, futbol oyunu hatta sendikal bir aktivite bile sosyal pratikler olarak birtakım iyiler içerir. Bizler erdemleri bu pratikler içerisinde öğreniriz. Her pratik kendine özgü iyiler içerir. Bizler tarım pratiğinden sabrı, futboldan ya da sendikal bir aktiviteden dayanışmayı ya da mücadeleyi öğrenebiliriz. Bu iyilere o pratik içerisinde eylemeden ulaşamayız. Pratiklerin amaçlarının ya da iyilerinin ne olduğu ise yine o pratiklerin tarihselliği içerisinde ortaya çıkar. Tarım pratiğinin ne olduğu bitkilerden ne koşullarda nasıl verim alınacağı, neyin yanlış neyin doğru olduğu tarım pratiğinin tarihselliği içerisinde belirlenmiş ve bugüne kadar gelmiştir. Bu anlamda pratiklerin mükemmellik standartları vardır bu standartlar sürekli değişime uğrayabilir. Mimarlık pratiğini daha ileriye taşıyan standartlar oluştuğu zaman o pratik içerisinde edinilen değerlerde farklılaşır. Bu anlamda iyi insan ihtiyaçlarından ve pratiklerinden bağımsız düşünülemediğinden değer ve olgu iç içedir. “Mutluluğun” içeriği

sosyal ve tarihsel olarak deęişir. Çünkü insan pratikleri ve gelenekleri de deęişim
Indir.

Nasıl ki pratikler anlamlarını ve iyilerini tarihsellikleri içerisinde kazanıyorsa, aslında insan hayatı da böyledir. Onun da bir tarihsellięi vardır ve bu bütünlük içerisinde deęerlendirildiğinde ancak onun amaçları ve iyileri anlaşılabilir. Bu noktada MacIntyre insan hayatının öyküsellilięi kavramını ortaya koyar. Bir film izlerken bile filmin iyi olup olmadığını tüm filmi izleyerek anlayabiliriz bazı bölümlerini izlemek bu deęerlendirme için yetmez.

Aynı şekilde insan hayatı da doğumundan ölümüne kadar bir bütündür. Bu bütünlük bir amaçsallık çerçevesinde anlaşıldığı zaman insanın seçimleri ve eylemleri keyfi olmaz. Pratiklerin ve insan hayatının öyküsellilięinin de kendi anlamlarını bulduğu daha geniş bir çember vardır ki bu da gelenek kavramıdır. Bizler ahlaki anlayışımızı ait olduğumuz geleneğin rasyonalite standartlarına göre oluştururuz. Yani ahlak ile ilgili önce kendi geleneğimizi öğreniriz ancak ondan sonra evrensel bir düşünmeye geçebiliriz. Çünkü gelenek bize kimliğimizi verir; her birimizi bir ülkenin vatandaşı, bir annenin ya da babanın çocuğuyuzdur. Gelenek kavramı aslında ahlaki eylemi ve maksadı anlamlı kılan bir arka plan oluşturur diyebiliriz.

MacIntyre bu bağlamda olgu-deęer sorununu tarihsel ve bağlamsal koşulları In ele alır. Pratik, öyküsellik ve gelenek kavramları ile de olgu ve deęer ilişkisini bize sunar. Deęerler teleolojik bir olgusalılığın içine oturtulmuştur. Farklı geleneklerin ve buna bağlı olarak doğruyu ve yanlışı belirleyen farklı pratiklerin olması doğaldır. Mesele, söz konusu gelenek Inki ahlakı rasyonel bir şekilde tartışabilmek için bu pratiklerin insanın işlevini veya *telos* 'unu ve insan yaşamının öyküsellilięini anlamaktır.

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