CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Human life reflects continuous process of self-sustaining and self-generating actions evolved into a complex social fabric which delicately runs on the principles of liberty, equality and justice. Life requires action based on the principles and action requires common values. Ethics is one of the dominant concepts, which has been influencing the men and women for generations together throughout the world and more so in the context of contemporary globalization. While each generation battles with similar ethical issues those are historic in nature, however there is always need for reapplying the age-old ethical principles to address the contemporary social issues and find solutions generating common good. Through this research we dig deeper into the foundations of a comprehensive framework of ethics that is embedded within the religion, value systems, social justice and try to extrapolate the quintessence of such framework to address the challenges those we face in the context of globalization phenomena, and more so within the context of Applied Ethics.

Ethics considers human as the measure of all things and keeps it at the centre for its value system. It is a program directed towards the realization of the inherent potentialities of human being and is
concerned with overall development, welfare and happiness of human being. Ethics is committed to the values of life and continues to be an unrelenting quest for truth. Many people tend to equate ethics with their feelings of right and wrong. However, being ethical is clearly not a matter of following one's feelings. A person following his or her own feelings may not necessarily conduct in a fashion which is common good for many. In fact, feelings frequently deviate from what is ethical. Prof Louis P. Pojman (1935 -2005) a contemporary American philosopher and a renowned scholar says:

“Ethics is the philosophical study of morality. Ethics can be viewed as understanding the foundation and structure of morality regarding how we ought to live.”

The domain of ethics broadly falls into two major areas of inquiry, namely, ethics as a subject matter and ethics as an area of study concerning the standards of morality. Almost all the discussions and debates in ethics are focused on the ‘accepted standards of moral conduct’. These accepted standards of conduct regulate human behavior in general. In public life, one is expected to follow some standards of behavior which are approved by the society. The interesting point is that these standards of behavior cannot reflect the true nature of an individual. Morality is a discussion about such

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1 Louis P. Pojman., Environmental Ethics-II, p. VII.
generally accepted standards of morality in society. Ethics denotes such philosophical study of morality.²

**Definition of Ethics:**

According to philosophy, the word ethics is derived from the Latin *Ethos*, which means character. In this way, ethics is the science of character, habits of activity or behavior of human beings. Ethics is also called Moral Philosophy. The word moral is a derivative for the Latin word ‘*mores*’ meaning conventions or practice. In this way ethics literally means the science of convention or practice. Ethics is the science of human conduct. Habits and behavior are related to the permanent peculiarities of human character. Conduct is the reflection or mirror of one’s character. Thus ethics is the science of character or habit. It evaluates human habits, character and voluntary determinations and discusses their propriety or otherwise.³ Prominent contemporary Indian scholar on this subject Prof Y.V. Satyanarayana writes:

“In everyday parlance, the words ‘ethics’ and ‘morality’ are used synonymously, but sometimes they can be used differently. The word ‘morality’ refers to the customs and practices of an individual or a social group, whereas the word ‘ethics’ is used to refer to a

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³ Ram Nath Sharma., *Outlines of Ethics*, p. 4.
set of moral principles and rules explicitly held by that individual."\textsuperscript{4}

Ethics considers the duties of human beings. It is an ethical science and it pronounces ethical decisions upon conduct. There is a motive in each person’s conduct. In it there is voluntary determination. It manifests character. Character is manifested in determinations. Determination is the activated form of one’s character. Therefore, it studies what is right and what is wrong in character. But the propriety of habits and determination can be determined by measuring piety of habits and determination can be determined by measuring them with the ideals of life. These goods too have classes. Supreme good determines the propriety of the immediate good. Thus ethics is, above all, the science of the supreme good. It studies the ideals of human life. It shows what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. In the words of Prof. James Seth (1860 - 1925) a renowned Scottish Philosopher:

“As the science of the Good, it is the science par excellence of the ideal and the ought.”\textsuperscript{5}

Ethics is different from the natural and factual sciences. It is the science of character and it is a normative science. According to Prof

\textsuperscript{5} Seth J., \textit{A Study of Ethical Principles}, p. 37.
John Henry Muirhead (1855 - 1940), a contemporary British philosopher

“Ethics is related not merely to temporal behavior but to behavior in the form of the basis of legal decision.”\(^6\)

Ethics has been accepted as the study of both right and good. But there is difference between right and good. Prof. John Stuart Mackenzie (1860-1935) a contemporary British philosopher defines:

“Ethics can be defined as the study of what is right or good in conduct.”\(^7\)

The word ‘Right’ has been derived from the Latin word ‘Rectus’ which means straight or according to law. Thus good behavior will correspond to law. Good comes from the German word ‘gut’ meaning that which is useful for the supreme good. In this instance, good is that which leads to supreme good. Mostly, good is taken to mean an end, not a means to an end.

In the definition of Mackenzie, it has reached a compromise between two conflicting doctrines. The first doctrine is of the intuitionists according to which ethics is the science of right. Right is the basic concept. There is obligation in ethical laws. They ought to be

\(^{6}\text{Muirhead, J.H., The Elements of Ethics, p. 33.}\)
\(^{7}\text{Mackenzie, J.S., A Manual of Ethics, p. 1.}\)
obeyed under every circumstance. It is a duty to act in accordance with ethical laws. And wrong is to act against them. Obeying moral laws is ethical. Lawful activity is right and unlawful activity is wrong. Ethical law is the determinant of good or bad in human actions. According to this school, ethics is the science of right. It searches for ethical laws. These ethical laws are unrelated ideals and man is bound to follow them. Thus theory becomes duty predominating ethics.  

According to the formalists, ethical laws are ends in themselves. They are not the means to some other ideal. For duty Immanuel Kant (1724 -1804 AD) presented the theory of duty, and accepted goodwill as the only good. He says that there is nothing in the world, or even out of it, that can be called good without qualification, except a goodwill. In Kant’s view, goodwill is itself good. Its goodness is not dependent upon its result. Goodwill is a will according to moral law. Formalists believe that the ethical laws stand self-proved. The conscience is innate and it acquires the knowledge of good and bad easily. Ethical laws are universal. They are simple and of categorical nature.

Teleological View:

Teleologists believe that good is the supreme element. For them ethics is the science of good, but not about right. They differ with

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8 Ram Nath Sharma., *Outlines of Ethics*, p. 5.
intuitionists and formalists. Their point of view is teleological in nature. Duty is for ethical emancipation, not for duty’s sake. Laws are not for the sake of laws, but for the attainment of good. Teleological ethics searches for the supreme good of human beings. That supreme good is the highest end. Any act leading to it is considered good while any act hindering its progress is evil. Mackenzie synthesizes the above mentioned view points as:

“What Ethics is the science or general study of the ideal involved in human life.”

**Religion and Ethics:**

Most religions, of course, advocate high ethical standards. Yet if ethics were confined to religion, then ethics would apply only to religious people. But ethics applies as much to the behavior of the atheist as to that of a saint. Religion can set high ethical standards and can provide intense motivations for ethical behavior. Ethics, however, cannot be confined to religion nor is it the same as religion. Judaism holds the view ‘thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self’ (The Bible, Leviticus, 19:18), Christianity asserts, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so them’ (The Bible, Mathew, 5”18), Hinduism insists on the concept of *Dharma* which asserts one’s moral

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duties towards family and the society. Buddhism pronounces, ‘hurt not others with that which pains yourself, (Udanavarga, 5:18), Confucianism announces ‘What one does not want,.. One does not do not do to others, (Analects, 15:23).

Religion and ethics both share the postulates concerning the existence of God and the immortality of soul. Whatever is ideal in the world becomes real in God. It is the same spiritual Reality behind the obligation of ethical ‘ought’. Human spirit is the incomplete manifestation of divine light. Thus he is naturally disposed towards the perfect one. Without the basis of God ethical ideal is mere imagination. According to Urban:

“When we think out what is implied in moral conduct and moral judgments, in principle at least, the same as that which is held by reflective religion. In other words, we are led to postulate the reality of what the religionist calls God.”

Unless ethical laws are founded in truth, they cannot become obligatory. Ethical ideals motivate us because they are based on that perfect light by whose effulgence we all are illuminated. God is manifestation of perfection, the treasure of virtues, reservoir of all values. Similarly, ethics also demands that the soul be immortal. Human life is short and limited, ethical ideal is great and unlimited. The

attainment of its ideal in this short life is manifestly improbable. Ethical ideal can be attained only successively in an unlimited life. The unrestricted urge of the human, for the realization of knowledge, beauty and good cannot be satisfied in one life. An ethical life is itself the proof of the immortality of the soul. Contemporary Educational Philosopher Dr. Ram Nath Sharma writes:

“Both ethics and religion take man, by the path of volition and emotion respectively to the ultimate good, beauty, knowledge and complete perfection, the God. Both impress each other and both are indispensable for the integral development of the human being.”

Normative Ethics: Normative Ethics: Normative Ethics: Normative Ethics: Normative Ethics:

Normative ethics takes on a more practical task, which is to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. This may involve articulating the good habits that we should acquire, the duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behavior on others.

Normative ethics can be broadly defined as principles and concepts that are put forth in support of ethical judgments. The examination of normative ethical theories is unavoidable in any ethical issues. This is because of an important feature of ethical concepts that they are based on reason and logic. Normative ethical principles form

\[11\] Ram Nath Sharma., *Outlines of Ethics*, p. 31.
the crux of moral discourse in any society. It is about “what is to be valued for itself”. The development of normative ethics is most crucial in the history of environmental ethics. Before the development of normative ethics, the main focus of ethical theories was man and his attitudes. But as normative ethical system grew, it opened the chances of applying ethical categories to areas in which they were never thought of. So development of normative ethics expanded the scope of the subject to non-human domain. contemporary Indian author, Isaac Benerjee says:

“The scope of the normative ethics is far more comprehensive. The questions of truth, beauty and good can arise in almost every act and about object. Normative ethics is what ought to be and a study of values. Its conclusions are axiological.”

Normative ethics involves arriving at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. In a sense, it is a search for an ideal litmus test of proper behavior. We should do to others what we would want others to do to us. The key assumption in normative ethics is that there is only one ultimate criterion of moral conduct, whether it is a single rule or a set of principles. Three strategies will be noted here: (1) virtue theories, (2) duty theories, and (3) Consequentialistic theories.

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13 Isaac Benerjee, S., Ethical Studies, p. 45.
Virtue and Vice:

The concept of moral virtue is conjoined to that of duty. It is a virtue to form habit of doing one’s duty and abstaining from doing what he should not do. Doing something immoral is a vice. While duties are related only to particular activities, virtue is a permanent characteristic of one’s character. It is acquired and not innate. It is manifested in the form of habit, formed by willful repetition of duty. In this way, virtue is formed when fulfillment of duty becomes a habit.\textsuperscript{14}

Virtue ethics, however, places less emphasis on learning rules, and instead stresses the importance of developing good habits of character, such as benevolence. Historically, virtue theory is one of the oldest normative traditions in western philosophy, having its roots in ancient Greek civilization. Greek philosopher Plato (428 - 347 BC) emphasized four virtues in particular, which were later called cardinal virtues:

- Wisdom - able to judge between actions with regard to appropriate actions at a given time.

- Courage - Forbearance, endurance, and ability to confront fear and uncertainty, or intimidation.

\textsuperscript{14} Sharma, R.N., \textit{Outlines of Ethics}, p. 65.
- Temperance - Practicing self-control, abstention, and moderation.

- Justice - Proper moderation between self-interest and the rights and needs of others.

Plato identified them with the classes of the city described in “The Republic”, and with the faculties of man. Temperance was common to all classes, but primarily associated with the producing classes, the farmers and craftsmen, and with the animal appetites, to whom no special virtue was assigned; Courage was assigned to the warrior class and to the spirited element in man; Wisdom to the rulers and to reason. Justice stands outside the class system and divisions of man, and rules the proper relationship among the three of them. In the Republic Plato narrates a discussion of the character of a good city where the following is agreed upon. “Clearly, then, it will be wise, brave, sober, and just.”

Other important virtues are fortitude, generosity, self-respect, good temper, and sincerity. In addition to advocating good habits of character, virtue theorists hold that we should avoid acquiring bad character traits, or vices, such as cowardice, insensibility, injustice, and vanity. Virtue theory emphasizes moral education since virtuous

15 Plato., *The Republic*, 427e.
character traits are developed in one’s youth. Adults, therefore, are responsible for instilling virtues in the young.

Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC) argued that virtues are good habits that we acquire, which regulate our emotions. For example, in response to one’s natural feelings of fear, one should develop the virtue of courage which allows him/her to be firm when facing danger. Analyzing eleven specific virtues, Aristotle argued that most virtues fall at a mean between more extreme character traits. With courage, for example, if one does not have enough courage, one develops the disposition of cowardice, which is a vice. If he has too much courage he develops the disposition of rashness which is also a vice. According to Aristotle, it is not an easy task to find the perfect mean between extreme character traits. In fact, we need assistance from our reason to do this.

The right action, according to Aristotle, is to follow the middle course or the golden mean between the two extremes. Virtue is located as a mean between two vices, the vice of deficiency on the one side and the vice of excess on the other. Aristotle says:

“To determine whether or not a particular act is moral, the guiding principle is the golden mean. Moral virtue is a mean between two vices, one of which is marked by excess and the other by deficiency and that it is a mean in
Aristotle follows Socrates and Plato in taking the virtues to be central to a well-lived life. Like Plato, he regards the ethical virtues (justice, courage, temperance and so on) as complex rational, emotional and social skills. But he rejects Plato's idea that training in the sciences and metaphysics is a necessary prerequisite for a full understanding of our good. What we need, in order to live well, is a proper appreciation of the way in which such goods as friendship, pleasure, virtue, honor and wealth fit together as a whole. In order to apply that general understanding to particular cases, we must acquire, through proper upbringing and habits, the ability to see, on each occasion, which course of action is best supported by reasons. Therefore, practical wisdom, as he conceives it, cannot be acquired solely by learning general rules. We must also acquire, through practice, those deliberative, emotional, and social skills that enable us to put our general understanding of well-being into practice in ways that are suitable to each occasion.

After Aristotle, medieval theologians supplemented Greek lists of virtues with three Christian ones, or theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity. Interest in virtue theory continued through the middle ages and

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16 Aristotle., *Nicomachean Ethics*, 103a, 16-19.
declined in the 19th century with the rise of alternative moral theories below. In the mid 20th century virtue theory received special attention from philosophers who believed that more recent approaches to ethical theories were misguided for focusing too heavily on rules and actions, rather than on virtuous character traits. Alasdaire MacIntyre (1984) defended the central role of virtues in moral theory and argued that virtues are grounded in and emerge from within social traditions. Contemporary Scottish philosopher, Alasdaire MacIntyre's approach to moral philosophy has a number of complex strains explaining this phenomena. Although his project is largely characterized by an attempt to revive an Aristotelian conception of moral philosophy as sustained by the virtues, he nevertheless describes his own account of this attempt as a "peculiarly modern understanding" of the task.17

Moral Duty:

Whatever man ought to do for the ultimate good is man’s moral duty. This duty includes his duties to the society and his duties to himself. A characteristic of moral duty is the feeling of moral obligation attached to it. This obligation is not an external imposition upon us. Man imposes this obligation upon himself, being a moral person. Nobody can compel people to lay down their lives willingly for their

17 Alasdaire MacIntyre., After Virtue, xii.
country. It is their internal self, their moral intuition, their sense of duty which inspires them.¹⁸

Duty theories base morality on specific, foundational principles of obligation. These theories are sometimes called deontological, from the Greek word *deon*, or duty, in view of the foundational nature of our duty or obligation. They are also sometimes called non-consequentialist since these principles are obligatory, irrespective of the consequences that might follow from our actions. There are four central duty theories. The first is that championed by 17th century German philosopher Samuel Pufendorf (1632-1694), who classified dozens of duties under three headings: duties to God, duties to oneself, and duties to others.

A second duty-based approach to ethics is “Rights Theory”. Most generally, a “right” is a justified claim against another person’s behavior, such as one’s right to not to be harmed by others. Rights and duties are related in such a way that the rights of one person imply the duties of another person. The most influential early account of rights theory is that of 17th century British philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), who argued that the laws of nature mandate that we should not harm anyone’s life, health, liberty or possessions.

He was another prominent Western philosopher who conceptualized rights as natural and inalienable. Locke was a major social contract thinker. He said that man’s natural rights are life, liberty, and property. It was once conventional wisdom that Locke greatly influenced the American Revolutionary War with his writings of natural rights, but this claim has been the subject of protracted dispute in recent decades. For example, the historian Ray Forrest Harvey declared that Thomas Jefferson and Locke were at "two opposite poles" in their political philosophy, as evidenced by Thomas Jefferson’s use in the Declaration of Independence of the phrase "pursuit of happiness" instead of "property."19

Jefferson and others rights theorists maintained that we deduce other more specific rights from these, including the rights of property, movement, speech, and religious expression. There are four features traditionally associated with moral rights. First, rights are natural insofar as they are not invented or created by governments. Second, they are universal insofar as they do not change from country to country. Third, they are equal in the sense that rights are the same for all people, irrespective of gender, race, or handicap. Fourth, they

19 Harley, Ray Forrest., A Jean Jacques Burlamaqui: A Liberal Tradition in American Constitutionalism, p. 120.
are inalienable which means that one cannot hand over one’s rights to another person, such as by selling oneself into slavery.

A third duty-based theory is that by Immanuel Kant which emphasizes a single principle of duty. Influenced by Pufendorf, Kant agreed that we have moral duties to oneself and others, such as developing one’s talents, and keeping our promises to others. However, Kant argued that there is a more foundational principle of duty that encompasses our particular duties. It is a single, self-evident principle of reason that he calls the “categorical imperative.” A categorical imperative, he argued, is fundamentally different from hypothetical imperatives that hinge on some personal desire that we have. Kant gives at least four versions of the categorical imperative, but one is especially direct: Treat people as an end, and never as a means to an end. That is, we should always treat people with dignity, and never use them as mere instruments. For Kant, we treat people as an end whenever our actions toward someone reflect the inherent value of that person. Donating to charity, for example, is morally correct since this acknowledges the inherent value of the recipient. By contrast, we treat someone as a means to an end whenever we treat that person as a tool to achieve something else. Kant believes that the morality of all actions can be determined by appealing to this single principle of duty. The categorical imperative, however, may be based only on something
that is an "end in itself". That is, an end that is a means only to itself and not to some other need, desire, or purpose.  

Kant believed that the moral law is a principle of reason itself, and is not based on contingent facts about the world, such as what would make us happy, but to act upon the moral law which has no other motive than "worthiness of being happy". Accordingly, he believed that moral obligation applies to all, but only, rational agents.  

In Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals, Kant also posited the "counter-utilitarian idea that there is a difference between preferences and values and those considerations of individual rights temper calculations of aggregate utility", a concept that is an axiom in economics. Kant writes:

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“Nothing in this world......could called good without qualification, except a good will.”
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A fourth and more recent duty-based theory is that by British philosopher Prof. W.D.Ross (1877 -1971), which emphasizes prima facie duties. Like his 17th and 18th century counterparts, Ross argues that our duties are “part of the fundamental nature of the universe.” W.

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21 Ibid., p. 420.
D. Ross was a moral realist, a non-naturalist, and an intuitionist. He argued that there are moral truths. He wrote:

“The moral order...is just as much part of the fundamental nature of the universe (and...of any possible universe in which there are moral agents at all) as is the spatial or numerical structure expressed in the axioms of geometry or arithmetic.”

Ross recognizes that situations will arise when we must choose between two conflicting duties. In a classic example, suppose one borrows one’s neighbor’s gun and promise to return it when his neighbor asks for it. One day, in a fit of rage, his neighbor pounds on his door and asks for the gun so that he can take vengeance on someone. On the one hand, the duty of fidelity obligates him to return the gun; on the other hand, the duty of non-malfeasance obligates him to avoid injuring others and thus not return the gun. According to Ross, one shall intuitively know which of these duties one’s actual duty is, and which one’s apparent or prima facie duty is. In this case, his duty of non-malfeasance emerges as his actual duty and he should not return the gun.

Theory of Consequentialism:

Consequentialism is an action, morally right if the consequences of that action are more favorable than unfavorable. Consequentialism is

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usually understood as distinct from deontology, in that deontology derives the rightness or wrongness of one's conduct from the character of the behavior itself rather than the outcomes of the conduct. It is also distinguished from virtue ethics, which focuses on the character of the agent rather than on the nature or consequences of the act (or omission) itself. Consequentialist theories became popular in the 18th century by philosophers who wanted a quick way to morally assess an action by appealing to experience, rather than by appealing to gut intuitions or long lists of questionable duties. The term "consequentialism" was coined 1958, by famous British philosopher Prof G. E. M. Anscombe (1919 -2001) in her essay "Modern Moral Philosophy", to describe what she saw as the central error of certain moral theories, such as those propounded by Mill and Sidgwick.25

Consequentialist normative principles require that we first tally both the good and bad consequences of an action. Second, we then determine whether the total good consequences outweigh the total bad consequences. If the good consequences are greater, then the action is morally proper. If the bad consequences are greater, then the action is morally improper. Consequentialist theories are sometimes called teleological theories, from the Greek word telos, or end, since the end result of the action is the sole determining factor of its morality.

Utilitarianism:

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832 AD) presented one of the earliest fully developed systems of utilitarianism. Two features of his theory are noteworthy. First, Bentham proposed that we tally the consequences of each action we perform and thereby determine on a case by case basis whether an action is morally right or wrong. This aspect of Bentham’s theory is known as act-utilitarianism. Second, Bentham also proposed that we tally the pleasure and pain which results from our actions. For Bentham, pleasure and pain are the only consequences that matter in determining whether our conduct is moral. This aspect of Bentham’s theory is known as hedonistic utilitarianism. Critics point out limitations in both of these aspects. Jeremy Bentham writes:

“Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think...”

The utilitarian theory of morality is a revolutionary idea in the sense that it has no reference to divinely given moral code or to a set of inflexible moral rules. The traditional form of morality consists in following the will of God, or adhering to a set of inviolable (which as are

not to violated) not be moral rules. Bentham disregards the traditional idea of morality and he holds that the traditional moral rules are valid only to the extent that they have practical utility. He says that ‘utility’ alone is the ultimate measure of right and wrong. It is the standard that determines what actions are right actions. Which rules should be accepted and which laws should be enacted. Prof Y.V Satyanarayana maintains that “Thus, the aim of utilitarianism is not simply to formulate a moral theory, but to change the traditional moral views to the requirement of practical experiences of people in their day-to-day life”.

Historically, hedonistic utilitarianism is the paradigmatic example of a consequentialist moral theory. This form of utilitarianism holds that what matters is the aggregate happiness; the happiness of everyone and not the happiness of any particular person. A famous British philosopher, John Stuart Mill, (1806-1873) in his exposition of hedonistic utilitarianism, proposed a hierarchy of pleasures, meaning that the pursuit of certain kinds of pleasure is more highly valued than the pursuit of other pleasures.

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Social Contract Theory:

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) developed a normative theory known as social contract theory, which is a type of rule-ethical-egoism and later on, the social contract theory was advocated by John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778).

According to this theory, everyone was born equal and free in society. The individual preceded society. He had his rights even outside the society. People agreed among themselves and formed society and invested it with some rights. In confiscating the natural rights of the individual, society can exercise its control over individual rights only in so far as it has been possessed with rights.\(^{28}\)

According to Hobbes, for purely selfish reasons, the agent is better off living in a world with moral rules than one without moral rules. For without moral rules, we are subject to the whims of other people’s selfish interests. Our property, our families, and even our lives are at continual risk. Selfishness alone will therefore motivate each agent to adopt a basic set of rules which will allow for a civilized community. Not surprisingly, these rules would include prohibitions against lying, stealing and killing. However, these rules will ensure safety for each agent only if the rules are enforced. As selfish creatures, each of us

\(^{28}\) Sharma, R.N., *Outlines of Ethics*, p. 287.
would plunder our neighbors’ property once their guards were down. Each agent would then be at risk from his neighbor. Therefore, for selfish reasons alone, we devise a means of enforcing these rules: we create a policing agency which punishes us if we violate these rules.

Hobbes conceived the state of nature as a dreadful and intolerable situation for human beings. Hobbes describes the state of nature as:

“…..no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain….consequently no culture of the earth.....no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”

In his book, “The Social Contract’, Rousseau also argues that it is illogical for a man to surrender his freedom for slavery; and so, the participants must be free. Furthermore, although the contract imposes new laws, especially those safeguarding and regulating property, a person can exit it at any time (except in a time of need, for this is desertion), and is again as free as when he was born. He says that we become a different kind of creature after entering civilized relations with others.

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29 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 82.
**Meta-ethics:**

The term “meta” means ‘after or beyond’ and consequently, metaethics is defined as the study of the origin and meaning of ethical concepts. When compared to normative ethics and applied ethics, the field of metaethics is the least precisely defined area of moral philosophy. It covers issues from moral semantics to moral epistemology. Two issues, though, are prominent: (1) metaphysical issues concerning whether morality exists independently of humans, and (2) psychological issues concerning the underlying mental basis of our moral judgments and conduct.

The upholders of the philosophical or metaphysical method include Plato, Aristotle, Hegel etc., the idealist philosophers. According to this school, ethical ideals can be deduced from the ultimate truth or reality. In this way, ethics depends upon ultimate truth or reality. In this way ethics depends upon metaphysics. According to this opinion, the ultimate aim of man is to achieve Eternal Truth by rising above his limits because Eternal truth is his real nature and internal truth. Thus perfection can be attained only by achieving it. The Ultimate Reality is manifested in nature and at the individual. The soul is a part of that ultimate element. It is the spiritual part of man. God is a treasure house
of values and ethical values are only a part of it. In this way, ethics is based upon metaphysics.³⁰

Metaphysics is the study of the kinds of things that exist in the universe. Some things in the universe are made of physical stuff, such as rocks; and perhaps other things are nonphysical in nature, such as thoughts, spirits, and gods. The metaphysical component of metaethics involves discovering specifically whether moral values are eternal truths that exist in a spirit-like realm, or simply human conventions. Philosophy is concerned with facts and ideals while ethics is limited to ideals. According to Seth:

“Its problem is the interpretation and explanation of our judgments of ethical value, as the problems of aesthetics and logic are respectively the interpretation and explanation of our judgments of aesthetics and of logical or intellectual values.”³¹

The philosophical school bases the knowable ethical ideals upon an unknown foundation. This renders the ethical ideals difficult when they are to be understood. Ethics is concerned with practical life. Thus it is not feasible to base it upon a philosophy which advocates duality between the worldly and transcendental life. There are two general

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³⁰ Ram Nath Sharma., Outlines of Ethics, p. 16.
directions that discussions of this topic take, one *other-worldly* and one *this-worldly*.

**Ethical Objectivism and subjectivism:**

Advocates of the *other-worldly* view normally hold that moral values are objective in the sense that they exist in a spirit-like realm beyond subjective human conventions. They also hold that they are absolute, or eternal, in that they never change, and also that they are universal insofar as they apply to all rational creatures around the world and throughout time. The most dramatic example of this view is Plato, who was inspired by the field of mathematics. When we look at numbers and mathematical relations, such as $1+1=2$, they seem to be timeless concepts that never change, and apply everywhere in the universe. Humans do not invent numbers, and humans cannot alter them. Plato explained the eternal character of mathematics by stating that they are abstract entities that exist in a spirit-like realm. He noted that moral values also are absolute truths and thus are also abstract, spirit-like entities. In this sense, for Plato, moral values are spiritual objects.

A different *other-worldly* approach to the metaphysical status of morality is divine commands issuing from God’s will. Sometimes called voluntarism (or divine command theory), this view was inspired by the
notion of an all-powerful God who is in control of everything. God simply wills things, and they become reality. He wills the physical world into existence, he wills human life into existence and, similarly, he wills all moral values into existence. Proponents of this view, such as medieval philosopher scholastic philosopher, William of Ockham (1288-1348), believe that God wills moral principles, such as “murder is wrong,” and these exist in God’s mind as commands. God informs humans of these commands by implanting us with moral intuitions or revealing these commands in scripture. William of Ockham believed:

“Only faith gives us access to theological truths. The ways of God are not open to reason, for God has freely chosen to create a world and establish a way of salvation within it apart from any necessary laws that human logic or rationality can uncover.”

The second and more ‘this-worldly’ approach to the metaphysical status of morality follows in the skeptical philosophical tradition, such as that articulated by Greek philosopher Sextus Empiricus (160-210 AD), who was a physician and philosopher, and has been variously reported to have lived either in Alexandria, Rome or Athens. His philosophical work is the most complete surviving account of ancient Greek and Roman skepticism, and denies the objective status of moral values. Technically, skeptics did not reject moral values

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themselves, but only denied that values exist as spirit-like objects, or as divine commands in the mind of God. Moral values, they argued, are strictly human inventions, a position that has since been called moral relativism. There are two distinct forms of moral relativism. The first is “individual relativism”, which holds that individual people create their own moral standards. Famous German philosopher and classical philologist, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), for example, argued that the superhuman creates his or her morality distinct from and in reaction to the slave-like value system of the masses. In ‘Daybreak’ Nietzsche begins his "Campaign against Morality.”34 He calls himself an "immoralist" and harshly criticizes the prominent moral schemes of his day including Christianity, Kantianism, and Utilitarianism. In ‘Ecce Homo’ Nietzsche called the establishment of moral systems based on a dichotomy of good and evil a "calamitous error",35 and wished to initiate a re-evaluation of the values of the Judeo-Christian world. He indicates his desire to bring about a new, more naturalistic source of value in the vital impulses of life itself. In both these works, Nietzsche’s genealogical account of the development of master-slave morality occupies a central place.

35 Nietzsche., *Ecce Homo, "Why I Am a Destiny"*, p. 3
Ethical subjectivism is a moral theory, which holds that our moral opinions are based on our feelings and nothing more. Y.V. Satyanarayana points out:

“There is no such thing as objective right, or wrong. It does not tell how we should live or what moral opinions we should accept. It is a theory about the nature of moral judgments. An ethical subjectivist holds that the view that when he is saying something is morally good or bad, he is simply expressing his opinion about it in the form of his feelings of approval or disapproval of it.”

Cultural Relativism:

Cultural relativism maintains that morality is grounded in the approval of one’s society and not simply in the preferences of individual people. This view was advocated by Sextus Empiricus. In more recent centuries this view was advocated by Michel Montaigne (1533 - 1592), who was one of the most influential writers of the French Renaissance, known for popularizing the essay as a literary genre and is popularly thought of as the father of Modern Skepticism. Famous American sociologist and philosopher, William Graham Sumner (1840 - 1910) writes:

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"The tribunal of nature a man has no more right to life than a rattlesnake; he has no more right to liberty than any wild beast; his right to pursuit of happiness is nothing but a license to maintain the struggle for existence..."\textsuperscript{37}

Cultural relativism is a theory about the nature of morality. We know that difference cultures have different moral codes and what is thought to be right in one culture may be disgusting to the members of another culture and vice versa. The conceptions of right and wrong differ from one culture to another culture. For cultural relativism, the idea of a universal truth in ethics is a myth. Every moral standard of “right and wrong” is culture-bound and there are no independence standards of morality. For example, abortion is condemned as immoral in Catholic Ireland, but it is morally permissible and practiced as a measure of birth-control in Japan. Hence, cultural relativism challenges the objectivity and universality of moral truth. The moral code of a society determines what is morally right within that society. There are no moral truths that hold good for all people at all times.\textsuperscript{38}

Hence, cultural relativism challenges the objectivity and universality of moral truth. The moral code of a society determines what is morally right within that society. There are no moral truths that hold good for all people at all times. William Graham Sumner observes:

\textsuperscript{37} William Graham Sumner., \textit{Earth-Hunger and other Essays}, p. 234.
“The right way is the way which the ancestors used and which has been handed down. The tradition is its own warrant. It is not held subject to verification by experience. The notion of right is in the folkways. It is not outside of them, of independent origin, and brought to test them. In the folkways, whatever is, right.”

In addition to exposing skepticism and relativism, this-worldly approaches to the metaphysical status of morality deny the absolute and universal nature of morality and hold instead that moral values in fact change from society to society throughout time and throughout the world. They frequently attempt to defend their position by citing examples of values that differ dramatically from one culture to another, such as attitudes about polygamy, homosexuality and human sacrifice.

**Ethics and Psychology:**

Metaethics involves the psychological basis of our moral judgments and conduct, particularly understanding what motivates us to be moral. We might explore this subject by asking the simple question, “Why be moral?” Even if one is aware of basic moral standards, such as don’t kill and don’t steal, this does not necessarily mean that one shall be psychologically compelled to act on them. Some answers to the question “Why be moral?” are to avoid

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punishment, to gain praise, to attain happiness, to be dignified, or to fit in with society. In the words of Stout:

“Ethics enquires how we ought to will not how we actually do will. Psychology, on the other hand, deals only with the process of volition as it actually occurs without reference to the rightness or wrongness, or to the ultimate conditions which make rightness and wrongness possible.”

Psychological Egoism:

One important area of moral psychology concerns the inherent selfishness of humans. 17th century British philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1711-1776), held that many, if not all, of our actions are prompted by selfish desires. Even if an action seems selfless, such as donating to charity, there are still selfish causes for this, such as experiencing power over other people. This view is called psychological egoism and maintains that self-oriented interests ultimately motivate all human actions. Closely related to psychological egoism is a view called psychological hedonism which is the view that pleasure is the specific driving force behind all of our actions.

Thomas Hobbes, the seventeenth century English Philosopher, was an important representative of psychological egoism in modern times. He believes that psychological egoism is probably true and he

made an attempt to explain how human actions could be understood in egoistic terms. He wanted eliminate altruism completely from our understanding of human nature. Even the most self-sacrificial such as saving the life a man drowning in the river or saving the life of a child from a burning house are branded as selfishly motivated acts. The proponents of psychological egoism say that such people may be motivated by a desire for getting awards or for getting recognition. This technique of attributing motives to the acts of altruism is adopted by Hobbes to eliminate altruism altogether in favor of some self-centered motives.  

Scottish philosopher and empiricist David Hume's (1711-1776) views on human motivation and action formed the cornerstone of his ethical theory: he conceived moral or ethical sentiments to be intrinsically motivating, or the providers of reasons for action. Given that one cannot be motivated by reason alone, requiring the input of the passions, Hume argued that reason cannot be behind morality. Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not

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conclusions of our reason. Hume's sentimentalism about morality was shared by his close friend Adam Smith.

18\textsuperscript{th} century British philosopher Butler Joseph (1692-1752) agreed that instinctive selfishness and pleasure prompt much of our conduct. However, Butler argued that we also have an inherent psychological capacity to show benevolence to others. This view is called psychological altruism and maintains that at least some of our actions are motivated by instinctive benevolence. Butler's ‘apologetic’ concentrated on "the general analogy between the principles of divine government, as set forth by the biblical revelation, and those observable in the course of nature, leads us to the warrantable conclusion that there is one Author of both." Butler's arguments combined a cumulative case for faith using probabilistic reasoning to persuade deists and others to reconsider orthodox faith.

**Applied Ethics:**

Applied ethics is the branch of ethics which consists of the analysis of specific, controversial moral issues such as abortion, animal rights, or euthanasia. In recent years applied ethical issues have been subdivided into convenient groups such as medical ethics, business

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42 David Hume., *A Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 325.
ethics, environmental ethics, and sexual ethics. Generally speaking, two features are necessary for an issue to be considered an “applied ethical issue.” First, the issue needs to be controversial in the sense that there are significant groups of people both for and against the issue at hand. The issue of drive-by shooting, for example, is not an applied ethical issue, since everyone agrees that this practice is grossly immoral. By contrast, the issue of gun control would be an applied ethical issue since there are significant groups of people both for and against gun control.

Applied ethics is often distinguished from normative ethics. The project of normative ethics is usually regarded as the attempt to discover the moral theory which makes the best sense of our considered moral intuitions. For example, some normative ethicists believe that our obligation is to do whatever promotes the most pleasure (and the least pain) for the most people involved in any decision. For other normative ethicists, rights are fundamental.

Given the recent challenges we have seen in the global context applied ethics definitely geared-up to play a significant role. For example, in applied mathematics (or engineering, and so on) we take our mathematical theories - which we know independently of any particular case to be true - and we apply them to concrete problems,
such as how much weight a particular bridge will bear given such and such forces acting on such and such a type of material.

If we extrapolate applied ethics framework in the same way, we may well explain the task of applied ethics is to take our normative theories which we know independently of any particular case to be true and apply them to concrete moral problems, such as information ethics, environmental ethics, medical ethics subject as abortion, euthanasia, and so on.