Chapter 4

Comparison between Kant and Hegel Concerning Is’ and ‘Ought’ Dichotomy
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In this chapter, I shall try to offer a comparative study between Kant and Hegel concerning ‘is’ and ‘ought’ problem. We know that, in Kantian philosophy, there is a dichotomy between ‘is’ and ‘ought’, or between the fact and value. Hegel has overcome the problem through his dialectical insight. Here, I shall mainly focus on how Hegel overcomes the Kantian distinction between fact and value or the ‘is’ and the ‘ought’ dichotomy.

For the sake of clarity, I have divided this chapter into the following three parts. In the Part-I, I shall discuss Hegel’s reformulation of the basic concepts of morality in Kant. I take up the ‘is-ought’ dichotomy in Kant, in the light of his epistemological, ontological and the moral frameworks. Kant conceives of two opposite ontological concepts- the concept of phenomena and the concept of noumena. The sphere of epistemology in the Kantian philosophy is the sphere of phenomena. The sphere of noumena transcends the validity of scientific knowledge. He conceives of the basis of the moral law in the sphere of noumena. Therefore, his epistemology and morality fall so widely apart that there remains an unbridgeable gulf between the ‘is’ and the ‘ought’. Kantian epistemology lies within the realm of subjectivity, and the external reality rests outside the domain of knowledge. The reason is that Kant gives categories subjective meaning and put aside the reality or the thing-in-itself outside the grasp of human cognition. Hegel wants to set aside this dichotomy. Hegel argues that as long as Kantian thing-in-itself exists beyond the capacity of cognition, there will always remain the gap between the epistemology and the objective reality. The epistemology will remain a mere subjective principle without command over the objective world. We know that Hegel in the Science of Logic uses categories both subjectively and objectively. In the field of knowledge, categories are the subjective concepts through which we do our thinking. In the field of ontology, categories are the objective concepts designating the Absolute
Truth. Thus, there is a unity between the laws of thought and the laws operate in the objective reality.

Again, there is a dichotomy between freedom and causality or between reason and inclination in Kantian philosophy. The moral law is based on reason and it refers to an unconditional obedience to it. One cannot question the moral law. The moral law is not derived from natural desires and inclinations. Hegel argues that Kantian morality in separating the concept of the right from the morality of our inclinations, expresses simply an ‘ought’ (Sollen). Something that ‘ought to be’ the case but cannot simply ‘is’ (Sein). According to Hegel, Kantian morality is abstract and formal and it has not provided content to moral obligations. Here we have an obligation to realize something, which actually does not exist. What ‘ought to be’ in contrasts with what ‘is’. Thus, there is a dichotomy between morality and nature in Kant.

In Part-II, I analyze Hegel’s ethical position considered as a sublation of Kant’s through overcoming the dichotomy between his earlier and later writings. In his earlier philosophical position, Hegel is influenced by the Christian notion of ‘love’ to overcome the opposition between reason and inclination. In Christianity, God loves and cares for everything in the world. Therefore, the soul that loves reaches God. Love restores all the dichotomies between spirit and nature. Hegel argues that Kantian morality, in separating the concept of the right from the morality of our inclinations, expresses simply an ‘ought’ (Sollen). But the religion of Jesus which unites the two is founded in an ‘is’ (Sein), a ‘modification of life’.

In his later philosophical position, Hegel tries to overcome the opposition in by arguing that freedom for us also includes giving proper importance to our natural inclinations, motives and intentions. An individual cannot achieve freedom by himself. In addition to one’s own independence, freedom requires the integration of one’s individuality into a larger life of which one is an inalienable part. Hegel argues that the spirit living in a people shows us laws, which are at the same time Sein, real existence. Thus, there is no dichotomy between the fact (Sein) and the value (Sollen), or between the ‘is’ and ‘ought’ in Hegel.

In Part-III, I discuss post-Hegelian moral criticisms, such as Moore’s Naturalistic Fallacy and Hare’s Prescriptivist moral language. Moore says that the term ‘good’ refers to a
simple, non-natural, unanalysable property. Any attempt to define 'good' in terms of a natural property or properties involves what he famously calls 'the naturalistic fallacy'. Moore levels two important charges against Kant. The first is the fallacy of supposing the Moral Law to be analogous to a natural law. That is, Kant's identification of the 'what is good' or 'what ought to be' with 'what is willed by a Pure Will'. The second criticism is that Kant commits the naturalistic fallacy by supposing that 'what is good' or 'what ought to be' means 'what is commanded by a 'super-natural authority'. I try to critically examine these charges made by Moore. Furthermore, I examine Hare's prescriptivism as a moral theory.

Part-I

Hegel's Reformulation of the Basic Concepts of Morality in Kant

In Kant's philosophy, the faculties of sensibility, understanding and reason have limited roles. Sensibility and understanding are applied to the sphere of human cognition only. Sensibility is the faculty of intuition and the understanding is the faculty of concepts. Objects are given to us by means of sensibility. They are thought through the understanding. Sensibility furnishes the manifold materials that are absolutely chaotic and unintelligible, while understanding gives them a meaningful order.

According to Kant, a representation is that through which an object is given to us. This is possible when the thing-in-itself acts on our senses and thereby produces the sensible intuitions. He further states that the power of the mind to know these representations is the categories of understanding. Kant argues that human cognition as synthetic a priori is possible through the transcendental unity of apperception, which provides all things and events in the form of space and time and comprehends them under the categories of understanding. The transcendental unity of apperception provides the highest unity to the sensible intuition through the categories of understanding. The transcendental unity of apperception is the subject of knowledge and provides universalizability and necessity to the object of knowledge. It gives us the knowledge of phenomenon.

The unity of apperception depends on the materials provided by the thing-in-itself. The thing-in-itself acts on our senses and thereby produces the materials for our
cognition. The thing-in-itself acts as the ground of appearances. As he says, "... things in themselves (although hidden) must lie behind appearances as their ground...."¹ But the thing-in-itself transcends the possibility of the knowledge of phenomena, because it can never be given in the manifold of sensible intuitions and hence, the categories of understanding cannot be applied to them.

Kant's concept of the existence of thing-in-themselves as the ground and the cause of appearances and yet as unknown and unknowable create certain contradictions. It is contradictory because, on the one hand, Kant says that the things-in-themselves exist and are the ground and the cause of appearances, and on the other hand, Kant points out that none of the categories of understanding can be applied to them and hence they are unknown and unknowable.

Hegel has vehemently criticized the Kantian dichotomy between the categories and the things-in-themselves. He points out that in Kantian philosophy, the origin of sensation must be left to the action of the things-in-themselves on our sensibility. Since, we cannot cognize the things-in-themselves, the origin of sensations is therefore incomprehensible to us. According to Hegel, "Identity of this formal kind [that is, of the forms of thought] finds itself immediately by or next to an infinite non-identity, with which it must coalesce in some incomprehensible way. On one side there is the Ego, with its productive imagination or rather with its synthetic unity which, taken thus in isolation, is formal unity of the manifold. But next to it there is an infinity of sensations and, if you like, of things in themselves. Once it is abandoned by the categories, this realm cannot be anything but a formless lump...In this way, then, the objectivity of the categories in experience and the necessity of these relations become once more something contingent and subjective....A formal idealism which in this way sets an absolute Ego-point and its intellect on one side, and an absolute manifold, or sensation, on the other side, is a dualism."²


Hegel however, interprets the unity of apperception differently. According to him, the self or thought and the object or being are not ultimately different but they are represented as different by abstractions that it is the end of philosophy to overcome. It thereby restores the original recognition of unity implicit in apperception itself. He explains, “In Kant the synthetic unity is undeniably the absolute and original identity of self-consciousness, which of itself posits the judgment absolutely and a priori. Or rather, as identity of subjective and objective, the original identity appears in consciousness as judgment. This original unity of apperception is called synthetic precisely because of its two-sidedness, the opposites being absolutely one in it. The absolute synthesis is absolute insofar as it is not an aggregate of manifolds which are first picked up, and then the synthesis supervenes upon them afterwards.... The true synthetic unity or rational identity is just that identity which is the connecting of the manifold with the empty identity, the Ego. It is from this connection, as original synthesis that the Ego as thinking subject, and the manifold as body and world first detach themselves.”

According to Hegel, the unity of apperception is the absolute identity between the thought and the objective reality. Whereas, Kant thinks that the unity of apperception lies within the realm of thought. Thus, there is a dichotomy between thought and reality in Kantian philosophy. Paul Guyer argues that, “For Kant, again the unity of apperception is a synthetic unity among one’s own representations. The task of empirical judgment may be conceived of as that of placing a dual interpretation on these representations, using the forms of judgment to interpret them as both representations of the successive states in the history of the self and representations of the successive states in the history of the world of objects external to the self, but there is no hint of any identity between the self and its objects themselves. For Kant, apperception, like judgment, remains confined within the sphere of thought. It may require us to represent a unified world of objects, but it is by no means identical with such a world.”

Hegel in the Lectures on the History of Philosophy argues that the subject of knowledge in Kant does not arrive at reason. It is merely an empty form of thought. According to him, Kantian epistemology lies within the realm of subjectivity, and the

3 Ibid., P. 182
external reality rests outside the domain of knowledge. Hegel says, "The knowing subject does not with Kant really arrive at reason, for it remains still the individual self-consciousness as such, which is opposed to the universal. As a matter of fact there is described in what we have seen only the empirical finite self-consciousness which requires a material from the outside, or which is limited. We do not ask whether these facts of knowledge are in and for themselves true or untrue; the whole of knowledge remains within subjectivity, and on the other side there is the thing-in-itself as an external."  

According to Hegel, there is always a unity between knowledge and reality or between epistemology and metaphysics. Hegel rejects the unknown and unknowability of Kant's thing-in-itself. He points out that all reality is accessible to cognition. No part of it is unknowable and inaccessible to cognition, behind the cover of the phenomena. In Kantian philosophy, there is always a gap between appearance and reality or between epistemology and metaphysics. Hegel criticizes Kantian thesis that the thing-in-itself is the ground and the cause of phenomenon yet thing-in-itself is something beyond phenomenon. Kantian dichotomy between the thing-in-itself and the phenomena cannot bridge the gap between reality and the appearance. The reason is that Kant gives categories subjective meaning and put aside the reality or the thing-in-itself outside the grasp of human cognition. As long as the thing-in-itself exists beyond the grasp of cognition, epistemology will remain separate from the objective reality. Hegel wants to set aside this dichotomy.

Hegel in the Science of Logic uses his categories both subjectively and objectively. In the field of knowledge, categories are subjective concepts through which we do our thinking. In the field of ontology, categories are the objective concepts designating the Absolute Truth. Thus, there is a unity between the laws of thought and the laws operating in the objective reality. The method of dialectic plays a pivotal role in deducing the categories. Hegel's logic and his method of dialectic are always dynamic. There is a dialectical unity between laws of thought and the laws of objective reality. This unity refers to its contradictory moments. There is a higher moment in which these

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contradictory moments are preserved. In this way, Hegel tries to formulate his dialectical method in the construction of the categories.

Kant holds that 'Reason' is not in immediate relation to the objects. The 'understanding' with its categories is in relation to the objects given in the manifold of sensible intuition. Kant states that the understanding cannot use its concepts to make a judgment on what is transcendent. Reason alone cannot make a judgment that is transcendent. It is reason, with the help of the concept of understanding makes a judgment, which is transcendent. He believes that when reason demands the absolute totality or the unconditioned, then there arises a conflict between idea of the unconditioned and the reality of the conditioned. Kant regards this conflict as an antinomy and he claims that reason can never resolve this antinomy.

Here, I shall mention only the third antinomy of the transcendental dialectic in the Critique of Pure Reason. This antinomy lies at the core of the dichotomy between the causality and freedom. This antinomy also rests on the distinction between 'is' and 'ought'. The antinomy is as follows-

**Thesis:** Causality in accordance with laws of nature is not the only causality from which the appearances of the world can one and all be derived. To explain these appearances it is necessary to assume that there is also another causality, that of freedom.

**Antithesis:** There is no freedom; everything in the world takes place solely in accordance with laws of nature.6

In the third antinomy, Kant uses causality into two different senses. The former supports the thesis and the latter supports the antithesis. In the thesis, it is argued that in the field of appearances, every event is caused by a preceding event and so on. But we must hold a first cause, in order to regard a beginning of the events. Kant maintains this to be 'free causality', which is not caused by anything else, while everything is caused by it. This free causality is freedom.

In the antithesis, Kant holds that the laws of cause and effect relationship determine everything in nature. In the phenomenal world, every effect is possible only in

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conformity to its cause. There is an endless chain of cause and effect relationship, which is not complete, and we cannot conceive the concept of free causality in the world of appearance. He, therefore, tries to show that there is no freedom in the sensible world.

Thus, there arises the dichotomy between causality and freedom. Causality rests on the phenomenal world and the freedom of will lies in the noumenal world. In the phenomenal world, we can apply our categories of understanding. Whereas, we cannot apply our categories in the noumenal world. Kant limits knowledge to phenomena in order to make room for the noumena or the unconditioned. The sphere of the unconditioned constitutes the realm of the spiritual wherein lies the basis of his moral law. He elaborates the moral law through his concept of the freedom of the will. Kant's construction of the freedom of will in the sphere of noumenon creates an unbridgeable gulf with the natural causal series in the phenomenal world.

According to Kant, all our natural scientific knowledge falls under the 'bounds of experience'. These bounds of experience, delimited by our sensible intuition and its two- \textit{a priori} forms prevent knowledge of anything truly unconditioned. At the same time, the knowledge of the unconditioned is possible only for a higher, the divine form of intellect. Such an intellect could not be possessed not by human beings. According to Kant, "'For what is demanded is that we should be able to know things, and therefore to intuit them, without senses, and therefore that we should have a faculty of knowledge altogether different from the human, and this not only in degree but as regards intuition likewise in kind-in other words, that we should be not men but beings of whom we are unable to say whether they are even possible, much less how they are constituted.'"

Thus, in Kant's philosophy, epistemology and morality, or 'is' and 'ought' are dichotomous. Hegel wants to set aside this dichotomy. Hegel argues that our knowledge is not restricted or limited in the Kantian sense. He overcomes the Kantian problem that our knowledge is restricted or limited, or that we cannot have knowledge of the things as they are in themselves. In James Kreines' words, "'.... Hegel seeks to show that there are real things, or real aspects of the world, which can be known only by going beyond Kant's limits; and to show that we ourselves have access to this knowledge, or"

\footnote{Ibid., p. 287.}
knowledge of things as they are in themselves.”

It is true that Hegel initially takes a Kantian position and says that we cannot have knowledge of the things in themselves. In his words, ‘‘What is in these things-in-themselves, therefore, we know quite well; they are as such nothing but truthless, empty abstractions.’’ But later on, he compares the thing-in-itself with the absolute, in which everything exist as one. Hegel states, ‘‘The thing-in-itself is the same as that absolute of which we know nothing except that in it all is one... what, however, the thing-in-itself is in truth, what truly is in itself, of this logic is the exposition, in which however something better than an abstraction is understood by ‘in-itself’, namely, what something is in its Notion; but the Notion is concrete within itself, is comprehensible simply as Notion, and as determined within itself and the connected whole of its determinations, is cognizable.’’

Hegel again says that the function of reason has a limited role to play in Kantian philosophy. The function of reason, according to Kant is not constitutive but regulative. The function of reason consists solely in applying the categories to systematize the matter given by perception. But it cannot furnish the absolute knowledge of the metaphysical reality. Hegel in his book Faith and Knowledge, criticizes that Kantian reason furnishes only postulates and it does not provide any knowledge of reality. Hegel says, ‘‘When the Kantian philosophy happens upon Ideas [of reason] in its normal course, it deals with them as mere possibilities of thought and as transcendental concepts lacking all reality...Kant’s philosophy establishes the highest idea as a postulate which is supposed to have a necessary subjectivity, but not that absolute objectivity which would get it recognized as the only starting point by philosophy and its sole content instead of being the point where philosophy terminates in faith.’’

In Kant’s philosophy, the function of reason becomes the ultimate source of the moral law. The moral law is possible in the noumenal world and it is reason that gives

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8 Kreine, James, ‘‘Between the Bounds of Experience and Divine Intuition: Kant’s Epistemic Limits and Hegel’s Ambitions,’’ Inquiry, Volume 50, Number 3, June 2007, p. 307.
10 Ibid.
the moral law in accordance with which one ‘ought to act’. The moral law, according to Kant, is derived neither from sensibility nor from inclination, but only from reason, so that it can be regarded as an unconditional command to all rational beings. The command, which is binding all human beings is known as the categorical imperative. A categorical imperative demands an unconditional obedience to the moral law for its own sake and not for the interests of others.

Hence, Kant argues that the moral law is biding a priori. This means that it cannot depend on the particular motives or inclinations. The moral law is purely formal. In being determined by the moral law binding on me, I express my freedom from all natural inclinations. I am free not as a natural being but as a pure moral will. Charles Taylor argues that, “This is the central, exhilarating notion of Kant’s ethics. Moral Life is equivalent to freedom, in this radical sense, of self-determination by the moral will. This is called ‘autonomy’. Any deviation from it, any determination of the will by some external consideration, some inclination, even of the most joyful benevolence, some authority, even as high as God himself, is condemned as heteronomy. The moral subject must act not only rightly, but from the right motive, and the right motive can only be respect for the moral law itself, that moral law which he gives to himself as rational will.”

Hegel is very much inspired by Kant’s conception of morality. Hegel shares with Kant that the moral law is apprehended by reason. The moral law is binding upon all human beings without considering the personal interests of the agents. W.H. Walsh observes that, “Both lay emphasis on the objective character of the moral law, which they take to be binding on agents without regard to their personal wishes; both argue that the content of the law is determined by rational principles and can accordingly be apprehended by reason.”

But Hegel also fundamentally differs from Kant on the issues of ethical formalism and the duty for the sake of duty. Hegel levels two important charges on

Kant. First, Hegel argues that Kant’s categorical imperative is formal and empty of content. Secondly, Kantian ethics offers no solution to the opposition between morality and self-interest. I shall try to explain and examine these two main charges against Kantian ethics below–

Kant holds that morality rests on pure practical reason, free from any particular motives or intention. The moral worth of an action lies in obeying the moral law for its own sake. Kant calls it ‘duty for the sake of duty’. An action is morally good if it is performed out of the motive of duty. He holds that we must have respect or reverence towards the moral law. Kant states, “Duty is the necessity to act out of reverence for the law.”¹⁴ The moral law is universally applicable to all human beings. It is ought to be obeyed for its own sake. As a result, Hegel thinks that Kantian moral law can yield only the bare, universal form, free from content.

Hegel argues that if duty is ought to be obeyed for its own sake and not for the sake of some particular motives or intentions then it becomes an abstract universal principle, which has identity without content. Hegel says, “Duty itself in the moral self-consciousness is the essence or the universally of that consciousness, the way in which it is inwardly related to itself alone; all that is left to it, therefore, is abstract universality, and for its determinate character it has identity without content, or the abstractly positive, the indeterminate.”¹⁵

According to Hegel, duty for the sake of duty is an empty notion. We cannot deduce from the notion of duty what we ought to do. We cannot consult our inclinations to determine a particular duty. Moreover, it also cannot tell us our specific duties, because we do not have any criterion for choosing a particular course of action. Hegel argues, “... no immanent doctrine of duties is possible; of course, material may be brought in from outside and particular duties may be arrived at accordingly, but if the definition of duty is taken to be the absence of contradiction, formal

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correspondence with itself—which is nothing but abstract indeterminacy stabilized—then no transition is possible to the specification of particular duties nor, if some such particular content for acting comes under consideration, is there any criterion in that principle for deciding whether it is or is not a duty.

Hegel frequently comments on Kantian conception of the ‘duty for the sake of duty’ to be an abstract conception, an identity without content. As he argues, “But if duty is to be willed simply for duty’s sake and not for the sake of some content, it is only a formal identity whose nature it is to exclude all content and specification.”

Kantian universal moral principle says that the individual ought to obey the moral law. He must so act on the moral law without self-contradiction. Thus, a man must not break his promise, because if the breaking of promises is made a universal rule, promises themselves will cease to exist. It will therefore be self-contradictory. We can elucidate more with the help of Kant’s own example. Kant gives us the maxim, “Whenever I believe myself short of money, I will borrow money and promise to pay it back, though I know that this will never be done’... I then see straight away that this maxim can never rank as a universal law of nature and be self-consistent, but must necessarily contradict itself. For the universality of a law that everyone believing himself to be in need can make any promise he pleases with the intention not to keep it would make promising, and the very purpose of promising, itself impossible, since no one would believe he was being promised anything, but would laugh at utterances of this kind as empty shams.”

We may agree with Kant that in these circumstances, the whole institution of giving and accepting promises would collapse without possibility of revival. What Kant wants to show is that one cannot accept the institution of promise keeping and repudiate something that goes with it. This universal form of the moral law, Hegel believes, is simply a principle of consistency or non-contradiction. According to Hegel, “Kant’s further formulation, the possibility of visualizing an action as a universal maxim, does lead to the more concrete visualization of a situation,

16 Ibid., p. 90.
17 Ibid.
but in itself it contains no principle beyond abstract identity and the ‘absence of contradiction’...”\(^{19}\) A right action is a self-consistent action that does not contradict itself. Hegel argues that mere consistency, obedience to the moral law without considering the consequences would not make concrete ethical principles. Hegel is quite right in saying that it is not possible for us to take out from this abstract ethical principle any content of its own. If the institution of promise-keeping exists in the world, Hegel believes, and then breaking promise is something that is self-contradictory. But why should this institution of promises exist in the world? Kant does not give us a satisfactory answer to this question.

Hegel also like Kant rests morality on reason, the universal principles. But the universal is not the empty or the abstract universal. It is the concrete universal or the Notion. The concrete universal produces its content. The concrete moral principle is capable in making concrete body of institutions. It tells us not only that if there are promises then they must be kept, but also why such promises at all arise in the world. The institution of ‘contract’ is associated with it. Hegel strongly feels that the application of the moral law depends on the introduction of content in the form of some uncritically presupposed moral principle or theory. Hegel states, “The absence of property contains in itself just as little contradiction as the non-existence of this or that nation, family, &c, or the death of the whole human race. But if it already established on other grounds and presupposed that property and human life are to exist and be respected, then indeed it is a contradiction to commit theft or murder; a contradiction must be a contradiction of something, i.e. of some content presupposed from the start as a fixed principle. It is to a principle of that kind alone, therefore, that an action can be related either by correspondence or contradiction.”\(^{20}\)

Hegel thinks that Kantian ethical principles represent only one side of the ought statements. It only shows what we ought not to do. But it does not say anything about what we ought to perform. W.H. Walsh observes that, “It is immediately obvious that the universalization test, as thus interpreted, is purely negative: if applied successfully,

\(^{19}\) Hegel, G.W.F., (1967), *Philosophy of Right*, translated by T.M. Knox, etc., p. 90.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
it will show what ought not to be done, but will not tell us what we positively ought to do.'\(^{21}\)

Moreover, Hegel also points out that any maxim when considered, as the universal principle of action without considering the consequences is ultimately self-nullifying. He refers to a maxim, 'help the poor' to be universally applicable. In this maxim, Hegel believes, we will find ourselves left with either of the two possible results, 'no more poverty' or with 'nothing but poverty'. If there is no more poverty then our maxim has no more application and we lose the opportunity to exercise our morality. If there is nothing but poverty then our duty to help the poor cannot be fulfilled, since there is no one left who can be able to fulfill it. If we consider either of these outcomes, then we will find that the universalizability test of our maxim leads to its own annulment or the self-destruction of morality. Sally S. Sedgwick argues that Hegel, '... thinks that the appeal to the universalizability test alone-without regard to relevant contextual considerations-leads to absurdities in its concrete application.'\(^{22}\)

Hegel further states that by appealing to the universalizability test, we may arrive at an undesirable consequence. As he argues, '... by this means any wrong or immoral line of conduct may be justified.'\(^{23}\) The reason is that we are looking for a universal applicability of the moral law and not its results. Therefore, there is a chance of reaching at an undesirable consequence. W.H. Walsh illustrates this point of Hegel with an example. According to Walsh, under certain systems of totalitarian government, even though the children have the right to obey the laws of the state, but the punishment to their parents is something, which is not desirable at all. This activity of the children is ethically unsound. In such a condition, mutual bond and trust among the family members will collapse and social life will disappear. We can relate this example with Kant. In Kant's moral philosophy, an agent is committed to a moral principle without considering the consequences and thereby there may be a possibility

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\(^{21}\) Walsh, W.H., (1969), Hegelian Ethics, etc., p. 22.


\(^{23}\) Hegel, G.W.F., (1969), Philosophy of Right, translated by T.M. Knox, etc., p. 90.
of arriving at an unpleasant situation. In Walsh's words, "Under certain systems of totalitarian government children are encouraged to inform the police if they overhear their parents criticizing the regime. Loyalty to the state, they are told, comes before loyalty to one's family, and even though the child's information may lead to the parents' punishment it is nevertheless right that it should be given. To the great majority of those living in other countries this practice of setting children against parents is morally abominable; it is one of the most revolting features of the whole totalitarian way of life. Kant himself, with his liberal outlook, would certainly have taken this view. But could a modern Kantian demonstrate to a convinced believer in totalitarianism the wrongness of this particular maxim of his? I very much doubt if he could."\(^{24}\)

Hegel's another major objection to Kantian ethics is that it offers no solution to the opposition between morality and self-interest. Kant has not answered the question 'why should I be moral?' According to Kant, we should perform our duty without looking for the consequences or the results of the actions. If we look for some other reasons is to deviate from the pure and the practical motive of the moral law. Peter Singer says that, "... the Kantian position divides man against himself, locks reason into an internal conflict with desire, and denies the natural side of man any right to satisfaction. Our natural desires are merely something to be suppressed, and Kant gives to reason the arduous, if not impossible, task of suppressing them."\(^{25}\)

Thus, there is a dichotomy between freedom and nature or between reason and the inclination in Kant's philosophy. But man as a natural being, must be dependent upon nature, and therefore they have desires and inclinations. The opposition occurs between the thought, reason and morality on the one hand and the desire and the sensibility on the other hand.

We can also explain this dichotomy in terms of 'what ought to be' and 'what is the case' or between the fact-value distinction. The moral law is described in terms of 'what ought to be the case', and the desires and the inclinations are described as the 'what

is the case'. Hegel strongly criticizes the dichotomy between the reason and the inclination or between the ‘is’ and the ‘ought’. He proposes a different solution for this problem. He thinks that reason has an active role to play. Hegel believes that at the level of understanding, the world is conceived as finite entities and is governed by the principle of identity and opposition. But he argues that isolation and the opposition is not the final state of affairs. The antagonism and the opposition should be grasped by reason. Reason has the task of reconciling the opposites and sublating them. The process of unifying the opposites touches every part of reality and it ends only when the reason has organized the whole, where the particulars can participate in the whole. Hegel argues that every individual entity has meaning and significance only in its relation to the totality. The final reality, where all the antagonisms are resolved, Hegel termed it as ‘the Absolute’.

We can therefore say that reason has an important role to play in Hegel’s philosophy. Hegel has identified rational with the real. According to him, the unity of the contradictory moments is made by reason and reality is that unity. In the next part, we shall examine, how Hegel with the help of the faculty of reason, tries to go beyond the Kantian distinction between morality and nature or the dichotomy between the ‘what is the case’ with ‘what ought to be the case’.

Part-II

Hegel’s Ethical Position as a Sublation of Kant

According to Hegel, reality is an all-inclusive whole that contains all the finite appearances. He strongly opposes the epistemological gap between the man and nature. Hegel believes that this opposition can be overcome in the fact that our knowledge of the world turns ultimately into the knowledge of the spirit or the Geist.

Hegel wonders how Kant has placed the reality beyond the grasp of our cognition. He argues, ‘... how can there be anything beyond knowledge, that is, beyond mind or Geist, for Geist turns out ultimately to be identical with the whole of reality? More specifically, the opposition is overcome in the fact that our knowledge of the world turns ultimately into Geist’s self- knowledge for we come to discover that the world, which is supposedly beyond thought, is really posited by thought, that it is manifestation of
rational necessity. And at the same time the thought which was supposedly over against the world, that is, our thinking as finite subjects, turns out to be that of the cosmos itself, or the cosmic subject, God, whose vehicles we are. In the higher vision of speculative philosophy, the world loses its otherness to thought, and subjectivity goes beyond finitude, and hence the two meet."\(^{26}\)

Hegel places the spirit or \textit{Geist} at the centre of everything. The spirit is identical with the whole of reality. According to him, the world that is supposedly beyond thought is posited by thought, that it is a manifestation of the rational necessity. Again, the thought, which is supposedly over against the world, that is, our thinking as finite subjects turns out to be identical with the cosmic spirit, God or the \textit{Geist}. We are the vehicles of this cosmic spirit. In the higher vision of speculative philosophy, the world loses its otherness to thought and the subjectivity goes beyond finitude. In this way, both the subject and the world meet. In Charles Taylor’s words, “We overcome the dualism between subject and world, between knowing man and nature, in seeing the world as the necessary expression of thought, or rational necessity, while we see ourselves as the necessary vehicles of this thought, as the point where it becomes conscious…This means that we come to see ourselves not just as finite subjects, with our own thoughts as it were, but as the vehicles of a thought which is more than just ours, that is in a sense the thought of the universe as a whole, or in Hegel’s terms, of God.”\(^{27}\)

Hegel’s solution to the man and nature dichotomy is that the finite subject culminates in the self-knowledge of the infinite subject. Finite subjects are the vehicles of the infinite subject. At the same time, the infinite subject also reveals through the various finite subjects.

Hegel says that the unity between man and nature is brought out by reason. Hegel’s reason holds negation and separation within one unity. For Hegel, reason is bound up with the ontological structure of things. In reason, the individual looks himself as united with the universal. We have gone beyond the opposition between the individual’s goal and the reality over them. The individual is united in his action with the external reality. This unity really comes when the \textit{Geist} reflected in the life of the people.


\(^{27}\) Taylor, Charles, (1975), \textit{Hegel, etc.}, p. 117.
The individual is a manifestation of the *Geist*. According to Taylor, "The spirit of the whole society is the underlying reality, from which the acts of individuals emanate. This spirit is not separate from the world. It cannot exist without them. But this is not to say that they are its helpless subordinates, rather they recognize themselves in it."\(^{28}\)

Hegel has overcome the Kantian dichotomy between the man and nature vis-à-vis morality and inclination. Kantian reason could not resolve the gap between the man and nature or between morality and inclinations. It tells us merely 'what ought to be the case'. It does not speak about 'what is the case'. Hegel also like Kant rests morality on reason, the universal principles. But the universal is not the empty or the abstract universal. It is the concrete universal or the Notion. The concrete universal produces its content. The concrete moral principle is capable in making concrete body of institutions. It is not just an ought (pure *Sollen*), something that should be. Rather, the norms we follow are those that are being lived out in the institutions, which exist in our society. Charles Taylor points out that the ‘...spirit living in a people shows us laws which are at the same time *Sein*, real existence.’\(^{29}\)

Hegel argues that men can only discover the real content of ethical life by seeing themselves as part of a larger current of life. Man achieves the greatest unity with nature, that is, with the spirit, which unfolds itself in nature. Man relates and finds himself with the cosmic spirit.

Hegel's solution of the Kantian distinction between morality and nature can also be found in his earlier work, *On Christianity: Early Theological Writings*. It contains several important essays. Hegel wrote these essays during 1799-1800. In an essay entitled 'The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate,' Hegel also discusses about the 'is-ought' problem. In this essay, he gives us a historical account of the moral and religious life of the Jews that begins with Abraham, continues through Moses and culminates in the moral teachings of the Jesus.

According to Hegel, in the ancient Jewish life, people had no individual freedom. People were subordinated to the external authority or God for gaining material help. The

\(^{28}\text{Ibid., p. 168.}\)
\(^{29}\text{Ibid., p. 170.}\)
actions of the external authority or God were regulated by the commandments. These commandments had to be obeyed by the Jewish people. People could not question these commandments. According to Taylor, "Men had part in this pure unity over against nature only by cleaving to God, and to this end the chosen people had to separate themselves rigorously from others and from the Gods of nature. But to give oneself to a God of Herrschaft (domination) is to submit oneself to his will, it is to become his slaves. Hence man, who is also and inescapably part of nature, had to be on the receiving end of a relation of domination, if he was himself to rule over nature; and nature as 'hostile' (...) could only be ruled over or rule himself."  

The religion of the Jews was founded by Abraham. As Hegel says, "With Abraham, the true progenitor of the Jews, the history of this people begins, i.e., his spirit is the unity, the soul, regulating the entire fate of his posterity."  

Hegel has pointed out that Abraham tore the original unity between the spirit and the nature. Nature could not be united with the spirit. Rather, the spirit or the God dominated the nature. As he says, "The same spirit which had carried Abraham away from his kin led him through his encounters with foreign peoples during the rest of his life; this was the spirit of self-maintenance in strict opposition to everything—the product of his thought raised to be the unity dominant over the nature which he regarded as infinite and hostile (for the only relationship possible between hostile entities is mastery of one by the other)."  

Hegel chooses few terms like 'separation', 'domination' to explain the dichotomy between nature and spirit in the Jewish life. According to Hegel, "The first act which made Abraham the progenitor of a nation is a dissonance which snaps the bonds of communal life and love. The entirety of the relationships in which he had hitherto lived with men and nature, these beautiful relationships of his youth he spurned."

This separation between the spirit and nature in the Jewish life, according to Hegel has led to the 'unhappy consciousness'. It is the consciousness of separation from nature, a consciousness in which unity and mutuality is replaced by domination and servitude between man and nature, between nature and spirit, and the separation between

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30 Ibid., p. 59.
32 Ibid., pp. 185–186.
33 Ibid., p. 185.
man and man. Hegel explains the term ‘unhappy consciousness’ in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. He states, "The Unhappy Consciousness itself is the gazing of one self-consciousness into another, and itself is both, and the unity of both is also its essential nature. But it is not as yet explicitly aware that this is its essential nature, or that it is the unity of both."  

Hegel believes that the rights of the individual have been restored by Jesus. Hegel writes, "The root of Judaism is the objective, i.e., service, bondage to an alien Lord. This was what Jesus attacked." The message of Jesus is an awakening to all human beings to bring back the lost unity between man and nature. It replaces the law, which unconditionally commands to all with the voice of the heart, that is, love. According to Hegel, "Over against commands which required a bare service of the Lord, a direct slavery, an obedience without joy, without pleasure or love, i.e., the commands in question with the service of God, Jesus set their precise opposite, a human urge and so a human need."  

Hegel thinks that just as there is total opposition between the spirit and the people in the Jewish life, with no option for the people but to obey the commandments of the spirit, so there is a dichotomy between morality and inclinations in Kantian philosophy. Hegel argues that to follow the moral law does not simply mean that we should respect the duties alone and to ignore the inclinations. Rather, he believes that to act in the spirit of the law refers to both our respect for the duties and giving equal importance to our inclinations. In Kant's philosophy, while acting accordance with the moral law, reason is given supreme importance but the inclinations, interests are subdued. According to Hegel, "One who wished to restore man’s humanity in its entirety could not possibly have taken a course like this, because it simply tacks on to man’s distraction of mind an obdurate conceit. To act in the spirit of the laws could not have meant for him “to act out of respect for duty and to contradict inclinations,” for both “parts of the spirit” (no other words can describe this distraction of soul), just by being thus divergent, would have

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36 Ibid.
been not in the spirit of the laws but against that spirit, one part because it was something exclusive and so self-restricted, the other because it was something suppressed.”

According to Hegel, Jesus does not remove the Jewish laws, but he tries to remove the inconsistencies by introducing inclinations into them. The inclination of the heart, that is love, fulfills the law and transforms its character. Through this union of the moral law with the inclination, the moral law loses its form. Hegel states, “In this Kingdom of Heaven [Matthew v. 17-20], however, what he discovers to them is not that laws disappear but that they must be kept through a righteousness of a new kind, in which there is more than is in the righteousness of the sons of duty and which is more complete because it supplements the deficiency in the laws [or fulfills them] ... This supplement he goes on to exhibit in several laws. This expanded content we may call an inclination so to act as the laws may command, i.e., a unification of inclination with the law whereby the latter loses its form as law. This correspondence with inclination is the ... [fulfillment] of the law, i.e., it is an “is,” which, to use an old expression, is the “complement of possibility,” since possibility is the object as something thought, as a universal, while “is” is the synthesis of subject and object, in which subject and object have lost their opposition.”

In this way, by introducing love, Hegel thinks that Jesus reconciles the opposition between morality and nature. In Kant’s philosophy, there is a gap between morality and inclination. But Hegel thinks that the moral law and inclinations are not different. They are always intermingling. Hegel argues, “… the inclination [to act as the laws may command], a virtue, a synthesis in which the law (which, because it is universal, Kant always calls something “objective”) loses its universality and the subject its particularity; both lost their opposition, while in the Kantian conception of virtue this opposition remains, and the universal becomes the master and the particular the mastered. The correspondence of inclination with law is such that law and inclination are no longer different....”

Hegel thinks that love restores the unity of man within himself, with other men and with nature. In love, all thought of duties vanishes. Hegel also regards ‘love’ as a

37 Ibid., p. 212.
38 Ibid., p. 214.
39 Ibid.
“modification of life”, “... (i.e., life expressing itself in a specific mode) and so as an attitude in which the lover’s whole self is at one; the lover’s reason and inclination are in harmony.”

Hegel argues that Kantian morality in separating the concept of the right from the morality of our inclinations, expresses simply an “ought” (Sollen). But the religion of Jesus which unites the two is founded on an “is” (Sein), a ‘modification of life’. Hegel writes, “A command can express no more than an ought or a shall, because it is a universal, but it does not express an ‘is’; and this at once makes plain its deficiency. Against such commands Jesus set virtue, i.e., a loving disposition, which makes the content of the command superfluous and destroys its form as a command, because that form implies an opposition between a commander and something resisting the command.”

Hegel further explains the unity between morality and inclination, or between ‘ought’ and ‘is’. According to him, “In the ‘fulfillment’ of both the laws and duty, their concomitant however, the moral disposition, etc., ceases to be the universal, opposed to inclination, and inclination ceases to be particular, opposed to the law, and therefore this correspondence with law and inclination is life and, as the relation of differents to another, love; i.e., it is an “is” which expressed as (a) concept, as law, is of necessity congruent with law, i.e., with itself, or as (b) reality, as inclination opposed to the concept, is likewise congruent with itself, with inclination.”

Hegel thinks that when Jesus uses the term ‘love’, he also uses it in terms of a command or imperative, but that is different from the Kantian categorical imperative. Jesus uses the term ‘love’ as a command for bringing harmony between man and man, man with other men and men with nature. But Kant uses the moral imperative in terms of an unconditional duties in accordance with the moral law. Hegel says, “When Jesus expresses in terms of commands what he sets against and above the laws (think not that I wish to destroy the law; let your word be; I tell you not to resist, etc.; love God and your neighbour), this turn of phrase is a command in a sense quite different from that of the ‘shalt’ of a moral imperative. It is only the sequel the fact that, when life is conceived in

40 Ibid., see footnote in p. 212.
41 Ibid., see footnote in p. 215.
42 Ibid., p. 215.
thought or given expression, it acquires a *form* alien to it, a conceptual form, while, on the other hand, the moral imperative is, as a universal, in *essence* a concept."^{43}

Kantian conception of morality is that it gives autonomy to the moral law and eschews any external authority. But Hegel argues that the difference between the man who obeys to the external authority and the man who listens to his own commands of duty is not that the "... former make themselves slaves, while the latter is free, but that the former have their lord outside themselves, while the latter carries his lord in himself, yet at the same time is his own slave."^{44} T.M. Knox further elaborates on this point. According to Knox, "Kant held that the only actions which had moral worth were those done "'from duty," and Hegel interpreted him as meaning that morality required us to follow the moral law of duty even to the thwarting of all our inclinations. Since the moral law is, in Kant's view, the law of man's own reason, to follow it is to be free. A man's will may be determined by impulses and other purely natural factors, and in that event he is not free but the slave of his passions; he is still a slave if it is determined by the "'positive"' commands of an external authority... i.e., by commands posited or laid down by fiat and not deducible from the rational will itself; but alternatively the will may be self-determining, i.e., obedient to the moral law issued by the rational will itself ... Hegel retorts that the man whose inclinations are in bondage to reason is also a slave, though a slave of himself; from the point of view of human needs and passions..."^{45}

Hegel does not accept the separation between morality and inclination in Kantian philosophy. He believes that this dichotomy can be bridged by the morality of love. T.M. Knox says that, "For Kant, man remains a duality; reason tries to thwart desire, but the two are never synthesized. Hegel attempts to show that a unification of the personality is possible through love and religion."^{46}

Hegel believes that man is governed by his own reason instead of some higher supernatural authority. According to him, what we ought to do is determined not by our religious faith or by the commands of God, but by our own commands, we give ourselves as rational beings. In this way, Hegel is similar to Kant in placing morality on reason

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^{43} Ibid., p. 212.
^{44} Ibid., p. 211.
^{45} Translator's remark appears as a footnote in "'The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate,'" p. 211.
^{46} Ibid.
rather than on some higher authority. But Hegel differs from Kant by giving equal importance to the natural side of man, that is, inclinations, emotions etc. According to him, man is not just a rational but a sensible being as well, therefore, his emotions, attachments and inclinations cannot be ignored. Charles Taylor says that, "The Kantian self is ultimately identical with the faculty which gives laws to ourselves, reason; man is thus free even against inclination. But Hegel holds fundamentally to the expressivist view of man: the self is the inner single source which expresses itself in the unfolding of reason and inclination alike."47

Hegel states that love overcomes all differentiations of life and thought and restores the original unity of all man. In Christianity, we know that God loves and cares for everything in the world. Therefore, the soul that loves reaches God. Love restores all the dichotomies between the spirit and the nature. According to Hegel, "To love God is to feel one's self in the "all" of life, with no restrictions, in the infinite. In this feeling of harmony there is no universality, since in a harmony the particular is not in a discord but in concord, or otherwise there would be no harmony ... Love alone has no limits."48

Hegel in his early philosophical writings was inspired by the Christian religion to overcome the dichotomy between morality and inclination. Hegel believes that philosophy, confronted with the problem of ultimate reconciliation, must let religion take the lead. But religion, as his historical studies has demonstrated, does not offer a final solution. As Hegel says, "It is the fate [of the Christian religion] that church and state, worship and life, piety and virtue, spiritual and worldly action can never dissolve into one."49

The original unity of all things is not for him the object of a mystical or poetical intuition, but a truth discovered by logic. In his later works, that is, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and in the *Science of Logic*, Hegel believes that the method of logic can help us to overcome the dichotomies between thought and life.

In fact, the attempt to reconcile the opposition between thought and life was there in the Romantic period. Fichte and Schelling were the important figures of this period.

49 Appears in the 'Introduction' to the *Early Theological Writings*, etc., p. 17.
For the Romantics, the unity between subjectivity and nature were achieved by intuition or imagination. Even though, Hegel has some great differences with the Romantic thinkers, but he is influenced by the writings of Fichte and Schelling, particularly their method to overcome the division between thought and life. Hegel insisted that the final solution could be given by a logical method alone. Logic is a systematic triumph over the fundamental contradictions of metaphysical speculation. It is therefore a science of the basic principles not only of knowledge and thought but also of Being and Existence. Richard Kroner says that, “The logical conclusion attained here seems a far cry from the theological approach of Hegel’s former writings. But the emphasis on reason is foreshadowed in those early papers; and the missing link between Hegel the theologian and Hegel the logician is supplied by the pamphlet on *The Difference Between the Systems of Fichte and Schelling.*”

Hegel’s logic undertakes to bridge the gap between thought and life. It is a logic of life, the logic he has been seeking ever since he has recognized life as the medium in which opposites both arise and dissolve. Again, it is also a logic of spirit. The intellect separates and objectifies, but spirit reunites. The intellect is not opposed to spirit, it is itself a phase or moment of the spirit. The spirit is that divides itself and unifies itself. This is also a logic of reason, for reason differs from the intellect or the understanding in being speculative. We know that at the level of understanding, the categories ‘being’ and ‘nothing’ exclude each other. But at the level of ‘reason’, ‘being’ and ‘nothingness’ exclude each other in as much as they supplement each other. Their exclusion is not permanent. What is permanent is their mutual growth.

Hegel believes that the ultimate synthesis incorporates division as well as unity. He has arrived at the ‘identity of identity and non-identity’. The division between the subject and the object is implicit in rational consciousness. In his early theological writings, he has a man-centered view of human regeneration. It appears that man is the only spiritual being, although he must unite with a larger life to recover wholeness. But Hegel thinks that Recovering unity with a larger current of life is now seen to be not enough for a spiritual being. On the contrary, reuniting with the whole must mean regaining contact with a cosmic spirit.

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According to Hegel, the spirit or the subjectivity is necessarily embodied in the world. The spirit (Geist) or subjectivity cannot exist separately from the universe, in which he manifests himself. On the contrary, the universe is his embodiment. Without the universe, the cosmic spirit will not exist. The opposition between the thought and life is overcome in the sense that our knowledge of the world turns ultimately into Geist's self-knowledge.

Hegel while overcoming the opposition between thought and life is influenced by the Christian notion of Trinity. There is the dogma of trinity in the Christian religion, according to which Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are three persons. But they are in principle three persons in one. The most important notion in the Christian religion about God is that He has been revealing himself through His Prophets and in the course of time, Jesus has revealed God most clearly. Hence, it may be said that ‘God is Jesus’, for Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. According to St. John, ‘Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.’ Jesus is regarded as the mediator between God and man. Jesus is also regarded as the son of God. He is the representative of God on earth. In other words, Jesus is the link between history and transcendence. According to Christianity, the relation between man and God is a relation of love. God is Father, forgiving and redeeming love. God loves and cares for everything in the world. Again, Jesus before his death promised his followers that he would send the Holy Spirit, who will teach and guide them about Jesus and God. Thus, there are three persons in one, namely-God the Father, God the Son and the God the Holy Spirit. Richard Kroner argues that Hegel is influenced by this Christian conception of trinity to overcome the opposition between transcendence and life. In his words, ‘Disunity and unity, connection and disconnection, are intrinsically conjoined. This spiritual relation obtains not only between man and God but also between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The holy trinity appears as a process by which the original unity of life is divided as well as restored. Hegel’s future method is clearly anticipated by this early Trinitarian speculation.’

Hegel sometimes equates the cosmic principle or the Geist as God. Hegel’s spirit or Geist, although he is often called ‘God’, is not the religious understanding of God, who is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. He is not a God who could exist quite

51 Ibid., P. 18.
independently of men. On the contrary, he is a spirit who lives as spirit only through men. Human beings are the vehicles, and the indispensable vehicles, of his spiritual existence. But at the same time, Hegel argues that Geist is not reducible to man, he is not identical with the human spirit, since he is also the spiritual reality underlying the universe as a whole, and as a spiritual being he has purposes and he realizes ends, which cannot be attributed to finite spirits.

We will now see how Hegel in his mature philosophical systems, tries to overcome the opposition. In fact, one of the basic motivations of Hegel’s philosophy is to reconcile the opposition between the finite and the infinite. Hegel’s point is that the true infinite is not simply opposed to the finite but is in reality one with it. As Charles Taylor argues, "What is it then for Geist to come to rational self-awareness in freedom? If the structure of the universe is as it is in order to be the embodiment/expression of Geist, then Geist comes to self-awareness when this is recognized. Of course, this can only be recognized by ourselves, finite spirits, for we are the only vehicles of awareness."52

Geist is thus necessarily embodied in finite spirits. Geist cannot be confined to the particular place and time of any one finite spirit. Geist embodies in many finite spirits. Finite spirits possess the capacity of expressive activity. They express through various ways, like making sounds, gestures, marks etc. Geist returns to himself out of opposition and division, or that his self-consciousness incorporates consciousness.

The goal towards which everything wants to achieve is the self-comprehension of spirit or reason. Man is the vehicle of this self-comprehension of spirit or the Geist. Therefore, that the spirit knows itself requires that man come to know himself and the world as they really are as an emanation of the cosmic spirit. This self-knowledge is expressed in art, religion and philosophy that constitute the domain of the absolute spirit. There is a form of life which man must attain in order to be an adequate expression of the cosmic spirit. That form of life, Hegel believes is the social form of life. Man cannot live a life of his own. He must live in a collective form of life. That is, he lives in the family or in a society and finally he must be a part of a larger life called, the state.

Thus, the cosmic spirit can come to know the universe through its embodiment in the human life in which it can recognize itself. The fulfillment of spirit requires the

52 Taylor, Charles, (1975), Hegel, etc., p. 91.
growth of a community which will fully express and embody reason. This fulfillment of the spirit and hence also the community of reason can be considered as the goal of history. According to Hegel, "The goal of world history is that Spirit come to a knowledge of what it truly is, that it give this knowledge objective expression [...] realize it in a world which lies before it, in short, produce itself as an object for itself [...]".

According to Hegel, an individual cannot achieve freedom by himself. But freedom also includes both my independence and integration into a larger life in which I am a part. My freedom is limited by my dependence on the greater framework of nature. The individual should share his freedom in a society, which has a culture that nurtures it and the social, political and the religious institutions that give full support to it. Charles Taylor says that, "The individual man is part not just of a larger social whole, he and his society are in turn set in a wider frame, mankind, and the whole of nature, with which they are in interchange and on which they depend.".

Hegel says that the will is free, because it is guided by reason. The will is expressed through thought. Thought is an essential property of the will. It is the substance of the will so that without thought there can be no will. Hegel argues, "Freedom is precisely thought itself; whoever ejects thought and speaks of freedom does not know what he is saying. The unity of thought with itself is freedom, the free will... The will is only free as thinking will." He says that the will, which is determined by thought or rationality, is the ultimate criterion of what is right. The concept of right originates in the will. He argues that the task of philosophy is to develop the idea of right. The system of right is the domain of freedom. It is this contention that gives freedom its content and specification. According to Hegel, "... freedom is both the substance of right and its goal while system of right is the realm of freedom made actual." The system of right, Hegel believes, is embodied in the laws and the institutions, which Hegel calls as the ‘substance’. The state is this substance.

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These institutions are to be regarded as inherently rational systems, embodying system of rights, which lead to the realization of freedom. These institutions together constitute the state is the divine ideas as it exists on earth. Freedom for Hegel consists in these laws and institutions and above all in the state. Hegel says that our obligation towards the state is our embodiment of the freedom. Hence, in a state, there is no difference between rights and duty. As he points out, "Duty is primarily a relation to something which from my point of view is substantive, absolutely universal. A right, on the other hand, is simply the embodiment of this substance and thus is the particular aspect of it and enshrines my particular freedom... In the state, as something ethical, as the interpenetration of the substantive and the particular, my obligation to what is substantive is at the same time the embodiment of my particular freedom. This means that in the state duty and right are united in one and the same relation."57

Hegel points out that an individual is free if he acts in accordance with the law and the terms and conditions of the institutions. According to Hegel, "For law is the objectivity of spirit; it is will in its true form. Only the will that obeys the law is free for it obeys itself, and, being in itself, is free."58

According to Hegel, the freedom of will develops through the following three stages-outward, inward and the absolute. Outwardly, the freedom of will embodies itself in external things like property. Inwardly it develops through the questions of motive, intention, goodness, badness, ought etc. it is the sphere of morality. It is a matter of human beings inner conscience. Both these abstract moments, that is, property and the moral life are absorbed in the absolute or the ethical life as its constituents. Hegel argues that the idea of goodness or badness lie not only in our thought but also in the objective world.

Hegel is here talking of freedom in a deeper, more metaphysical sense. Hegel’s concern for freedom is in the sense in which we are free when we are able to choose without being coerced either by other human beings or by our natural desires, or by social circumstances. Hegel believes such freedom can exist only when we choose rationally,

57 Ibid., p. 161.
58 Ibid., p. 53.
and we choose rationally only when we choose in accordance with universal principles. According to Hegel, freedom of the individual is embodied in an organic community. In such a community, individual interests and the interests of the whole are in harmony. Peter singer in his book *Hegel* says that, "In choosing to do my duty I choose freely because I choose rationally, and I achieve my own fulfillment in serving the objectives form of the universal, namely the State."\(^5^9\)

Morality is an abstract principle in Kant. It has no content. Whereas, Hegelian moral principle has a content. It develops through the concrete ethical institutions like family, civil society and the state. Freedom of the individual is first grown in the family, then it is developed in the society and finally it culminates in the state. The universal law is embodied in the concrete institutions of the State, and thereby it ceases to be abstract and empty. It prescribes to me specific duties and my role in the community.

The state comprises of moral laws and institutions. I am morally responsible for the rules and regulations and the laws of the state. This moral obligation, which I have towards the society, is known in German term as the *Sittlichkeit*. The term *Sittlichkeit* has been translated in English in various ways, such as- 'ethical life', 'objective ethics', 'concrete ethics'. *Sittlichkeit* is the usual German term for 'ethics'. The term 'ethical' here has a specific meaning. The German term *Sitte*, refers to custom. But Hegel gives a special meaning to it. The term *Sittlichkeit* refers to the moral obligation, which I have to an ongoing community, that is, towards the moral laws and institutions of a particular community that I am a part. It is Hegel's argument that the true freedom consists in my obligation towards the laws and institutions of the state. My duties towards the larger social order in which I am a part. It is not just an 'ought' (*Sollen*), something that should be the case. Rather, the norms that we follow are there in the institutions that exist in our society and my allegiance or obligations towards those laws of the institutions. Hegel argues that the spirit living in a people shows us laws, which are at the same time *Sein*, real existence. Thus, there is no dichotomy between the fact (*Sein*) and the value (*Sollen*) or between the 'is' and 'ought'.

Hegel argues that Kantian morality in separating the concept of the right from the morality of our inclinations, expresses simply an ‘ought’ (*Sollen*), something that ought

to be the case but cannot simply is (Sein). Kantian morality is abstract and formal and it has not provided content to moral obligations. Here we have an obligation to realize something, which actually does not exist. What ought to be in contrasts with what is. Thus, there is a dichotomy between morality and nature in Kant. Charles Taylor says that, “The doctrine of Sittlichkeit is that morality reaches its completion in a community. This both gives obligation its definite content, as well as realizing it, so that the gap between Sollen and Sein is made up.”

The doctrine that puts Sittlichkeit at the apex of moral life requires a notion of society as a larger community life, in which man participates as a member. Now this notion displaces the centre of gravity from the individual to the community, which is seen as the locus of a life or subjectivity of which the individuals are phases. The community is an embodiment of Geist.

Hegel uses number of terms to explain the relation between man and the community. The popular way to describe the relation between them is the ‘substance’. The state or the people is the substance of individuals. This relation is mentioned in his Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences. Hegel states, “The substance which knows itself free, in which absolute ‘ought’ is equally well being, has reality as the spirit of a people. The abstract diremption of this spirit is the individuation into persons, of whose independent existence spirit is the inner power and necessity. But the person as thinking intelligence knows this substance as his own essence-in this conviction [...] he ceases to be a mere accident of it-rather he looks on it as his absolute and final goal existing in reality, as something which is attained in the here and now, while at the same time he brings it about through his activity, but as something which in fact simply is.”

Hegel argues that the doctrine of Sittlichkeit provides a goal, which is at the same time realized through the activities of the individuals in the community. The community is the final goal or the essence of the individuals. The idea behind this

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60 Taylor, Charles, (1975), Hegel, etc., p. 377.
61 Hegel, G.W.F., (1827), Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, quoted from Charles Taylor, (1975), Hegel, etc., P. 379.
‘substance’ and ‘essence’ is that the individuals are what they are through their inherence in a community. As Hegel says, "Everything that man is he owes to the state; only in it can he find his essence. All value that a man has, all spiritual reality, he has only through the state." He again says that, "The individual is an individual in this substance... No individual can step beyond [it]; he can separate himself certainly from other particular individuals, but not from the Volkgeist."

According to Hegel, the state is the ultimate goal that every citizen wants to be a part. The freedom of the individual lies in being a member of the state and performs its duties towards the state. Hegel argues, "This substantial unity is an absolute unmoved end in itself, in which freedom comes in to its supreme right. On the other hand this final end has supreme right against the individual, whose supreme duty is to be a member of the state."

It should be pointed out that the relationship between the state and the individuals is not that one of means and the end relationship. The relationship of ends and means are, according to Hegel quite inappropriate to build up. The state or the community has a higher life; its parts are related as the parts of an organism. Thus, the individual is not serving an end separate from him, rather he is serving a larger goal, which is the ground of his identity. As Hegel argues, "The state is not there for the sake of the citizens; one could say, it is the goal and they are its instruments. But this relation of ends and means is quite inappropriate here. For the state is not something abstract, standing over against the citizens; but rather they are moments as in organic life, where no member is end and none means... The essence of the state is ethical life [...]."

Thus, we can say that the spirit of the whole society is the underlying reality from which the acts of the individual emanate. Indeed, the finite individual must come to see himself as a manifestation of this universal reason or the larger whole. But the full

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63 Ibid.
64 Hegel, G.W.F., (1967), *Philosophy of Right*, translated by T.M. Knox, etc., P. 156.
realization of the universal reason or the absolute spirit, Hegel believes presupposes a certain development of man in history. According to Hegel, "The goal is that it come be known that [spirit] presses forward only to know itself as it is in and for itself, that it brings itself in its truth to appearance before itself-the goal is that it bring a spiritual world to existence which is adequate to its own … concept, that it realize and perfect its truth, that religion and the state be so produced by it that it becomes adequate to its concept...."66 But the question arises-how does the individual express himself in this larger life?

According to Hegel, an individual can be a part of a community or a particular society through various ways. Hegel argues that when we talk of a human being, we do not simply mean a living organism alone, but a person who can think, feel, decide, respond, enter into relation with others etc. Hegel thinks that the language plays a major role in this. Language can help us to interpret our feelings, we can manage our relations with others. In this way, the individual situates himself in a cultural world and possess his identity. Therefore, language is one of the important modes of communication through which we can experience the world. Again, when we live in a particular culture, we perform certain activities as a matter of our customs or habit, like performing certain festivals, religious ceremonies, or of cheering at the victory of the home team, or of mourning at the demise of any great people, etc. Our experiences are largely shaped by these activities that fall on within the state. In the words of Charles Taylor, "So the culture which lives in our society shapes our private experience and constitutes our public experience, which in turn interacts profoundly with the private."67

There are certain norms and principles, which are already there in the society and the members of the society bring them about through their activities. While practicing the norms and principles of the community, the individual is actually participating in the larger life (VolksGeist). Man does not alone create the norms and principles. Rather, they are already there in the state. The state expresses the idea, the ontological structure of things. Man recovers his essential relation to this ontological structure, the other being in the modes of consciousness, which Hegel referred to as the absolute spirit. Thus, the

67 Taylor, Charles, Hegel, (1975), etc., p. 381.
state, which is fully rational, will be one, which expresses in its institutions and practices the most important ideas and norms which its citizens recognize, and by which they define their identity. And this will be the case because the state expresses the articulations of the Idea, which rational man comes to see as the formula of necessity underlying all things, which is destined to come to self-consciousness in man.

The distinction between the individual and the nature disappears in Hegel’s philosophy. Our individual and the collective life is in interchange with our surroundings expresses a larger rational plan and identify with it. The individual no longer looks himself as opposed to a nature, rather thinks that the nature itself is a part of the rational plan to realize the absolute whole. To quote Hegel’s own description of the situation: “For nature is not merely this completely free external mode in which, as a bare pure object, consciousness has to realize its purpose. Consciousness is per se essentially something for which this other detached reality exists, i.e. it is itself something contingent and natural. This nature, which is properly, its own, is sensibility, which, taking the form of volition, in the shape of impulses and inclinations, has by itself a determinate essential being of its own, i.e. has specific single purposes, and thus is opposed to pure will with its pure purpose. In contrast with this opposition, however, pure consciousness rather takes the relation of sensibility to it, the absolute unity of sensibility with it, to be the essential fact. Both of these, pure thought and sensibility, are essentially and inherently one consciousness...”

Thus, the rational subject finds himself identical with the absolute spirit. This absolute spirit comes to self-consciousness through us, because we are the vehicles of the cosmic spirit. According to Hegel, “That the True is actual only as system, or that Substance is essentially Subject, is expressed in the representation of the Absolute as Spirit—the most sublime Notion and the one which belongs to the modern and its religion. The spiritual alone is the actual; it is essence, or that which has being in itself; it is that which relates itself to itself and is determinate, it is other-being and being-for-self, and in

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this determinateness, or in its self-externality, abides within itself; in other words, it is *in and for itself.* 69

Hegel says that the finite existence cannot exist except as posited by a cosmic spirit. The subject who is necessarily embodied and whose embodiment is both the condition of his existence and the expression of what he is. The Absolute, what is ultimately real, or what is at the foundation of everything, is subject. The cosmic subject is such that he is both identical and non-identical to the world. *Geist* is identical to the world because it cannot exist without the world. Again, the cosmic spirit is in opposition to the world, for the world as externality represents dispersal, an unconsciousness, which *Geist* has to overcome to fulfill its goal as self-conscious reason. The Idea becomes its other, and then returns into self-consciousness in *Geist*. The life of the absolute subject is essentially a process, a movement, in which it posits its own conditions of existence to the universe, and then overcomes the opposition of these conditions to realize its goal of self-knowledge. As Hegel puts in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, “The true is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a result, that only in the end is it what it truly is; and that precisely in this consists its nature, viz. to be actual, subject, the spontaneous becoming of itself.” 70

Thus, *Geist* can exist only by overcoming its opposite. It can exist only by negating its own negation. The Absolute or the *Geist* is something, which essentially comes to be out of a process of affirmation and the denial of finite things. Thus, the absolute is essentially life, movement, and change. But at the same time, it remains itself, the same subject, the same essential thought being expressed, throughout this movement. Hegel describes this in the Preface of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as, “The True is thus the Bacchanalian whirl in which no member is not drunken; and because each, as soon as it detaches itself, dissolves immediately-the whirl is just as much transparent and repose.” 71

Self-consciousness has thus two objects, its embodiment and the object of desire. Its continued existence involves its overcoming or 'returning to itself out of' both. But

70 Ibid., see Preface, p. 11.
71 Ibid., see Preface, P. 27.
these two forms of return are related in that the return out of the first involves overcoming the second. Hegel argues, "'Consciousness, as self-consciousness, henceforth has a double object: one is the immediate object, that of sense-certainty and perception, which however for self-consciousness has the character of a negative; and the second, viz. itself, which is the true essence, and is present in the first instance only as opposed to the first object. In this sphere, self-consciousness exhibits itself as the movement in which this antithesis is removed, and the identity of itself with itself becomes explicit for it.'"\(^72\)

Man, as a being who depends on external reality, can only come to integrity if he discovers a reality, which could undergo a standing negation, whose otherness could be negated without its being abolished. But the negation of otherness without self-abolition can only be fulfilled by another self-consciousness. Hegel says, "A self-consciousness exists for a self-consciousness. Only so is it in fact self-consciousness; for only in this way does the unity of itself in its otherness become explicit for it. The 'I' which is the object of its Notion is in fact not 'object'; the object of Desire, however, is only independent, for it is the universal indestructible substance, the fluid self-identical essence. A self-consciousness, in being an object, is just as much 'I' as 'object'. With this, we already have before us the Notion of Spirit. What still lies ahead for consciousness is the experience of what Spirit is—this absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousness which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: 'I' that is 'We' and 'We' that is 'I'. it is in self-consciousness, in the Notion of Spirit, that consciousness first finds its turning-point, where it leaves behind it the colourful show of the sensuous here-and-now and the nightlike void of the supersensible beyond, and steps out into the spiritual daylight of the present."\(^73\)

Subject is necessarily a being who incorporates his other (his embodiment) and 'returns to himself' through this other, that is, comes to self-consciousness in his other. Hegel further says, "'If we give the name of Notion to the movement of knowing, and the name of object to knowing as a passive unity, or as the 'I', then we see that not only for

\(^72\) Ibid., p. 105.
\(^73\) Ibid., pp. 110–111.
us, but for knowing itself, the object corresponds to the Notion. Or alternatively, if we call Notion what the object is *in itself*, but call the object what *it* is *qua* object or *for an other*, then it is clear that being-*in-itself* and being-*for-an-other* are one and the same. For the *in-itself* is consciousness; but equally it is that *for which* an other (the *in-itself*) is; and it is *for* consciousness that the in-*itself* of the object, and the being of the object for an other, are one and the same; the ‘I’ is the *content* of the connection and the connecting itself. Opposed to an other, the ‘I’ is its own self, and at the same time it overreaches this other which, for the ‘I’, is equally only the ‘I’ itself.”

We have seen that man needs the recognition of another man. The subject finds himself in another self-consciousness. Hegel says that this has a double advantage. “... first, it has lost itself, for it finds itself as an *other* being; secondly, in doing so it has superseded the other, for it does not see the other as an essential being, but in her other sees its own self.”

Hegel explains the dialectic of self-consciousness with the famous dialectic of the lord and the bondsman. It is also sometimes referred to as dialectic of the master and the slave relationship. Hegel says that the lord or the master on the one hand is “... the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself.” And the bondsman or the slave, on the other hand, “... is the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another.”

The lord is the self-consciousness or simply the being-for-self. It is an immediate consciousness that excludes itself from everything else. Hegel says that, “... its essence and absolute object is ‘I’; and in this immediacy or in this [mere] being, of its being-for-self, it is an *individual*.” The bondsman is the consciousness that exists for another. The lord and bondsman exist as two opposite forms of consciousness.

The relationship between the lord and the bondsman has to be understood with the help of a third term, thinghood. The lord is the consciousness that exists for itself and is mediated through the aid of another consciousness, the bondsman. The bondsman is by nature bound up with an existence, which is independent, or thinghood. Hegel says that

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74 Ibid., p. 104.
75 Ibid., p. 111.
76 Ibid., p. 115.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid., p. 113.
the lord is related with both of these moments, the thinghood and to the bondsman, whose essential nature is in this thinghood. In his words, "The lord relates himself mediately to the bondman through a being [a thing] that is independent, for it is just this which holds the bondsman in bondage; it is his chain from which he could not break free in the struggle, thus proving himself to be dependent, to possess his independence in thinghood." 79

The lord is related to the material reality through the bondsman. The relation of the lord to what surrounds him is that of a pure consumer. The task of the bondsman is to transform things and to prepare them for consumption of his lord. The bondsman is the one who experiences the independence and resistance of his master. The bondsman works for his master. The master enjoys the works of the bondsman. Hegel states this point in the following words, "But the lord is the power over this thing, for he proved in the struggle that it is something merely negative; since he is the power over this thing and this again is the power over the other [the bondman], it follows that he holds the other in subjection. Equally, the lord related himself mediately to the thing through the bondman; the bondman, qua self-consciousness in general, also relates himself negatively to the thing, and takes away its independence; but at the same time the thing is independent vis-à-vis the bondman, whose negating of it, therefore, cannot go the length of being altogether done with it to the point of annihilation; in other words, he only works on it. For the lord, on the other hand, the immediate relation becomes through this mediation the sheer negation of the thing, or the enjoyment of it. What desire failed to achieve, he succeeds in doing, viz. to have done with the thing altogether, and to achieve satisfaction in the enjoyment of it. Desire failed to do this because of the thing's independence; but the lord, who has interposed the bondman between it and himself, takes to himself only the dependent aspect of the thing and has the pure enjoyment of it. The aspect of its independence he leaves to the bondsman, who works on it." 80

The lord achieves his recognition from the activity of another consciousness, the bondman. The bondsman, Hegel argues, sets aside its own being-for self and recognizes the works of the lord. Hegel explains this in the following words, "Here, therefore, is

79 Ibid., p. 115.
80 Ibid., pp. 115–116.
present this moment of recognition, viz. that the other consciousness sets aside its own being-for-self, and in so doing itself does what the first does to it. Similarly, the other moment too is present, that this action of the second is the first’s own action; for what the bondman does is really the action of the lord.**81

But the relation between the lord and the bondsman is one-sided. The bondsman works for the lord. The lord is simply the enjoyer of the works of the bondsman. The lord receives his due recognition from the works of the bondsman. But the lord does not recognize the activities of the bondsman. Hegel realizes this and explains, ‘‘The outcome is a recognition that is one-sided and unequal.’’82 Charles Taylor explains this point in the following words, ‘‘The recognition is one-sided; slave is forced to recognize master, but not vice versa. But for this very reason the upshot is of no value for the master. His vis-à-vis is not seen to be a real other self, but has been reduced to subordination to things. Recognition by him is therefore worthless; the master cannot really see himself in the other. Rather he is reduced to the parlous condition of being surrounded by beings which to him cannot be self-conscious; so that the surrounding world on which he continues to depend cannot reflect back to him a human visage. His integrity is thus radically undermined just when it seemed assured.’’83

We know that the lord has the advantages over the things. He is simply the enjoyer of the things that surrounds him. The bondsman experiences their independence and resistance. Hegel however argues that in course of time, the situation reverses. The lord cannot see himself in other things. The lord being in face of a world, which offers him no effective resistance. He is simply the being-for-self or self-consciousness (I=I). He is the consumer. Charles Taylor explains this in the following words, ‘‘The master we saw above has the advantage that his relation to things is that of simple enjoyment (…). It is the slave who experiences their resistance and independence. But with time, the advantages reverse. The master being in face of a world which offers him no effective resistance tends to sink back into a stupor of self-coincidence. He approaches the stagnant pole where I=I. He is simply the consumer.’’84

81 Ibid., p. 116.
82 Ibid.
83 Taylor, Charles. (1975), Hegel, etc., p. 154.
84 Ibid., p. 156.
At the same time, the bondsman always wants to transform himself to rise to the level of universal. According to Hegel, one of the fundamental factors for transforming bondsman to the level of universal is the fear of death. The possibility of death always quakes him. Hegel says that the bondman "... has been fearful, not of this or that particular thing or just at odd moments, but its whole being has been seized with dread; for it has experienced the fear of death, the absolute Lord. In that experience it has been quite unmanned, has trembled in every fibre of its being, and everything solid and stable has been shaken to its foundations."\(^8^5\)

Hegel says that the bondsman passes through the fear of death, because he is at the mercy of his lord. But the fear of death is not alone enough to transform the bondsman to the highest stages of self-consciousness. He must do the work for the service of his lord. Work also plays a very important role in transforming the lower levels of existence to the self-conscious embodiment of the universal. Therefore, it is the service and the fear of the lord lead to transform the bondsman to attain the universal spirit. The fear of the lord always reminds the bondsman of his existence and his services to the lord make him conscious of his existence. The slave by transforming himself through his work becomes a free thinker. He sees in the world of objects made by him the reflection of himself as universal, as a thinking being. Hegel therefore argues that, "... the fear of the lord is indeed the beginning of wisdom, consciousness is not therein aware that it is a being-for-self. Through work, however, the bondsman becomes conscious of what he truly is."\(^8^6\)

Hegel further says that, "Through this discovery of himself by himself, the bondsman realizes that it is precisely in his work wherein he seemed to have only an alienated existence that he acquires a mind of his own. For this reflection, the two moments of fear and service as such, as also that of formative activity, are necessary, both being at the same time in a universal mode. Without the discipline of service and obedience, fear remains at the formal stage, and does not extend to the known real world of existence."\(^8^7\)

\(^8^5\) Hegel, G.W.F., (1979), *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller, etc., p. 117.
\(^8^6\) Ibid., pp. 117–118.
\(^8^7\) Ibid., pp. 118–119.
To conclude this part, we can say that Hegel overcomes the Kantian dichotomy between the 'is' and 'ought', morality and nature. In his earlier philosophical position, Hegel was influenced by the Christian notion of love to overcome the opposition between reason and inclination. Hegel believes that love overcomes all differentiations of life and thought, and restores the original unity of all man. In Christianity, we know that God loves and cares for everything in the world. Therefore, the soul that loves reaches God. Hegel in his early philosophical writings believes that Love restores all the dichotomies between the spirit and the nature. Hegel argues that Kantian morality in separating the concept of the right from the morality of our inclinations, expresses simply an ‘ought’ (Sollen). But the religion of Jesus which unites the two is founded on an ‘is’ (Sein), a ‘modification of life’.

In his later philosophical position, Hegel tries to overcome the opposition in a different way. Hegel believes that we are guided by our reason and not under the control of any external authority. Hence, we are free as a rational being. But freedom for us also includes giving proper importance to our natural inclinations, motives and intentions. According to Hegel, an individual cannot achieve freedom by himself. But freedom also includes both my independence and integration into a larger life in which I am a part. My freedom is limited by my dependence on the greater framework of nature. The individual should share his freedom in a society, which has a culture that nurtures it and the social, political and the religious institutions that give full support to it. It is Hegel’s argument that the true freedom consists in my obligation towards the laws and institutions of the state. My duties towards the larger social order in which I am a part. It is not just an ‘ought’ (Sollen), something that should be the case. Rather, the norms that we follow are there in the institutions that exist in our society and my allegiance or obligations towards those laws of the institutions. Hegel argues that the spirit living in a people shows us laws, which are at the same time Sein, real existence. Thus, there is no dichotomy between the fact (Sein) and the value (Sollen) or between the ‘is’ and ‘ought’ in Hegel.

In the third part, I shall discuss post-Hegelian moral criticisms such as Moore’s Naturalistic Fallacy and Hare’s Moral Language.
G. E. Moore’s Naturalistic Fallacy

G.E. Moore’s contribution to ethics in the twentieth century is outstanding. His book, *Principia Ethica* (1903) stimulates a host of new ethical ideas and enquiries. We can point out two important issues in his moral philosophy. The first is his criticism of ethical naturalism. The second is his explication of the notion of goodness. I shall try to discuss both of these issues.

Ethical naturalism is a theory that tries to identify moral terms and properties with natural ones. It consists in substituting or defining some non-natural property like ‘good’ with a natural property or properties. According to Moore, “This method consists in substitution for ‘good’ some one property of a natural object or of a collection of natural objects; and in this replacing Ethics by some one of the natural sciences.” Further, ethical naturalism holds that moral judgments are equivalent in meaning to statements of sociological or linguistic non-moral facts. In R.M. Hare’s words, “An ethical theory is naturalistic if and only if it holds that moral judgments are equivalent in meaning to statements of sociological or linguistic non-moral fact.”

Ethical naturalism covers all such ethical theories such as Hedonism, Utilitarianism, Eudaimonism etc., which identify moral terms like ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘right’, ‘wrong’ with empirical states like ‘pleasure’, ‘welfare’, ‘happiness’ etc. At the root of such theories is the implicit belief that ethical words are identifiable with the empirical terms and properties and thereby implying the possibility of ethics being an empirical science.

Moore however argues that the naturalistic method is inconsistent with the possibility of any ethics. He asserts, “I have thus appropriated the name Naturalism to a

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particular method of approaching Ethics—a method which, strictly understood, is inconsistent with the possibility of any Ethics whatsoever." This method is inconsistent because it replaces ethics by some one of the natural or the social sciences, such that "... its conclusions could be all established by means of empirical observation and induction." 

Against the ethical naturalist, Moore defends the autonomy of ethics. According to Moore, ethical properties are different from natural properties. Natural properties involve empirical observations and therefore, they may be either true or false. But we cannot ascribe truth or falsity to the ethical properties. Moore explores the province of ethics "... as the whole truth about that which is at the same time common to all such [i.e., ethical] judgments and peculiar to them." But he raises a question, 'what is it that is thus common and peculiar to all ethical judgments? He replies that the term, which is peculiar and common to all ethical judgments, is 'what is good'. In his words, "... I may say that I intend to use 'Ethics' to cover more than this—a usage, for which there is, I think, quite sufficient authority. I am using it to cover an enquiry for which, at all events, there is no other word: the general enquiry into what is good." He further argues, "It is an enquiry to which most special attention should be directed; since this question, how 'good is to be defined, is the most fundamental question in all ethics.'

According to Moore, the term 'good' denotes a simple object of thought. It cannot be defined or analyzed. As he says, "Our first conclusion as to the subject-matter of Ethics is, then, that there is a simple, indefinable, unanalysable object of thought by reference to which it must be defined."

The term 'good' is a simple notion. He says that the term 'good' belongs to the class of those terms, which one can easily think or perceive them. If anyone cannot think of or perceive them then one cannot know its nature. In his words, "They are simply something which you think of or perceive, and to any one who cannot think of or

91 Ibid., p. 91.
92 Ibid., p. 53.
93 Ibid., p. 54.
94 Ibid., p. 57.
95 Ibid., p. 72.
perceive them, you can never, by any definition, make their nature known.’’\textsuperscript{96} He pointed out that ‘good’ can be compared to ‘yellow’, because both ‘yellow’ and ‘good’ are simple notions. It is not possible for us to define ‘yellowness’. We can simply point out the colour ‘yellow’ in the colours spectrum. But pointing out something and demonstrating are not identical. Similarly, we can point out what things are good, but we cannot define ‘good’. Moore argues, ‘‘My point is that ‘good’ is a simple notion, just as ‘yellow’ is a simple notion; that, just as you cannot, by any manner of means, explain to any one who does not already know it, what yellow is, so you cannot explain what good is. Definitions of the kind that I was asking for, definitions which describe the real nature of the object or notion denoted by a word, and which do not merely tell us what the word is used to mean, are only possible when the object or notion in question is something complex.’’\textsuperscript{97}

It is apprehended only in some kind of immediate awareness (intuition). Moore seems to suggest this intuition when he speaks of ‘good’ as being ‘actually before our minds’. He says that when we look at our minds we know that the term ‘good’ denotes a unique object logically different from other objects. Moore is not an intuitionist in the ordinary sense of the term. He has not used the word ‘intuition’ as equivalent in meaning to some sort of ‘cognition’. He has used the word ‘intuition’ in the sense in which it means ‘incapable of proof’. Moore asserts, ‘‘Again, I would wish it observed that, when I call such propositions i.e., propositions which are answers to the question, ‘what kind of things ought to exist for their own sake?’ ‘Intuitions’, I mean merely to assert that they are incapable of proof; I imply nothing whatever as to the manner or origin of our cognitions of them.’’\textsuperscript{98} His intuition is a self-evident truth. Philippa Foot argues that, ‘‘Moore’s central thesis was that goodness is a simple non-natural property discovered by intuition. The rest of his ethics was built on this foundation…..’’\textsuperscript{99}

Why Moore considered ‘good’ to be indefinable? The answer is that the notion of ‘good’ is simple; therefore, it is not definable. To analyze a concept or to define a concept, according to Moore, is to break it up into its constituent parts. The term ‘horse’, Moore says, is definable, because we can analyze horse. Moore says, ‘‘You can give a

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., p. 59.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid, p. X.
definition of a horse, because a horse has many properties and qualities, all of which you can enumerate. But when you have enumerated them all, when you have reduced a horse to his simplest terms, then you can no longer define those terms." But the term 'good' cannot be defined. The term good is a simple notion and anything that is simple cannot be defined or analyzed. He further argues, "... when we define horse, mean something much more important. We may mean that a certain object, which we all of us know, is composed in a certain manner: that it has four legs, a head, a heart, a liver, etc., etc., all of them arranged in definite relations to one another. It is in this sense that I deny good to be definable. I say that it is not composed of any parts, which we can substitute for it in our minds when we are thinking of it... there is nothing whatsoever which we could so substitute for good; and that is what I mean, when I say that good is indefinable."101

Thus, Moore argues that the ethical term 'good' is not capable of any definition, because the term 'good' is simple and has no parts. Moore declares, "'Good,' then, if we mean by it that quality which we assert to belong to a thing, when we say that the thing is good, is incapable of any definition, in the most important sense of that word. The most important sense of 'definition' is that in which a definition states what are the parts which invariably compose a certain whole; and in this sense 'good' has no definition because it is simple and has no parts. It is one of those innumerable objects of thought which are themselves incapable of definition, because they are the ultimate terms by reference to which whatever is capable of definition must be defined."102 He further says that, "If I am asked 'What is good?' my answer is that good is good, and that is the end of the matter. Or if I am asked 'How is good to be defined?' my answer is that it cannot be defined, and that is all I have to say about it."103 This reflects the motto of Principia Ethica, which is borrowed from Bishop Butler, 'Everything is what it is, and not another thing'.

Moore employs a famous argument to prove that the concept of 'good' is indefinable. This famous argument is known as the 'open question argument'. The open question argument, according to Moore, is that, "... whatever definition be offered, it

101 Ibid., p. 60.
102 Ibid., p. 61.
103 Ibid., p. 58.
may be always asked, with significance, of the complex so defined, whether it is itself good".¹⁰⁴ Let us take any definition of ‘good’, for instance, the definition, ‘to be good means to be pleasant’, or, we may write it as, ‘good’=df. ‘pleasant’. Considering this definition, wherever we use ‘good’, we may substitute ‘pleasant for good’, such that, when we say, ‘x is good’ is to say that ‘x is pleasant’. This definition points out that both ‘good’ and ‘pleasant’ are denoting the same thing. But if ‘good’ is identical with pleasure then asking the question ‘is pleasure good?’ would be tautologous to asking the trivial question ‘is pleasure pleasure?’ This definition of ‘good’ is not satisfactory. We find that whatever definition be offered of ‘good’, the further question-is it good? Can be asked. It shows that the ethical predicate ‘good’ is not defined in terms of any natural terms like ‘pleasure’, ‘red’ etc.

According to Moore, the term ‘good’ is a unique property. He points out that, “Every one does in fact understand the question ‘Is this good?’ ... It has a distinct meaning for him, even though he may not recognize in what respect it is distinct.”¹⁰⁵ It is a unique property in being different from other natural property.

Moore says that it is easy to find out which property is a natural property and which is a non-natural property. A property is said to be a natural property if it exists in time. A property is not a natural property if it is not exist in time. According to Moore, “It is to say which of them are natural, and which (if any) are not natural. But when we begin to consider the properties of objects, then I fear the problem is more difficult. Which among the properties of natural objects are natural properties and which are not? For I do not deny that good is a property of certain natural objects: certain of them, I think, are good; and yet I have said that ‘good’ itself is not a natural property. Well, my test for these too also concerns their existence in time.”¹⁰⁶ These tests are-

1. “Natural properties exist in time.”¹⁰⁷

2. Natural properties “... are in fact rather parts of which the natural object is made up than mere predicates which attach to it.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 67.
¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 68.
¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 93.
¹⁰⁷ Ibid.
¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

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3. Natural properties are "... substantial and give to the natural object all the substance that it has."\textsuperscript{109}

Any attempt to define 'good' is fallacious. According to Moore, it is fallacious to define 'good' in terms of any natural or non-natural objects. This fallacy is known as the Naturalistic Fallacy. In Professor D.K. Chakravarty's words, "Moore uses this fallacy as his main weapon in defending the autonomy of ethics and refuting the theories which assimilate the ethical property 'good' to any natural or metaphysical property."\textsuperscript{110} It is also the fallacy of confusing 'good' which is not a natural property with any natural object and thereby confusing 'ought' with an 'is'. Moore offers several definitions of the naturalistic fallacy. I shall try to put some of them below-

First, Moore says that when we try to define 'good' by naming some property other than 'good' then these properties are not simply 'other' but they are the same as goodness. In this way, Moore believes, we are identifying the other properties with goodness and thereby committing the naturalistic fallacy. According to Moore, "It may be true that all things which are good are also something else... And it is a fact, that Ethics aims at discovering what are those other properties belonging to all things which are good. 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'...."\textsuperscript{111}

Secondly, Moore argues that when we define a natural object, for instance pleasure with any other natural object is to commit the naturalistic fallacy. In his words, "And if any body tried to define pleasure for us as being any other natural object; if anybody were to say, for instance, that pleasure means the sensation of red, and were to proceed to deduce from that that pleasure is a colour, we should be entitled to laugh at him and to distrust his future statements about pleasure. Well, that would be the same fallacy which I have called the naturalistic fallacy."\textsuperscript{112}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., pp. 64–65.
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Thirdly, according to Moore when we confuse a natural object with any other natural object is not to commit the naturalistic fallacy. But if we confuse a non-natural term like 'good' with a natural term is to commit the naturalistic fallacy. Moore states, "When a man confuses two natural objects with one another, defining the one by the other, if for instance, he confuses himself, who is one natural object, with 'pleased' or with 'pleasure' which are others, then there is no reason to call the fallacy naturalistic. But if he confuses 'good,' which is not in the same sense a natural object, with any natural object whatever, then there is a reason for calling that a naturalistic fallacy...."\(^{113}\)

Fourthly, Moore believes that a naturalistic fallacy may be committed when we identify a simple notion like 'goodness' with any other notion. According to Moore, "... the naturalistic fallacy-the fallacy which consists in identifying the simple notion which we mean by 'good' with some other notion."\(^{114}\)

Moore says that the naturalistic fallacy reduces the ethical predicate 'good' either to tautologies or to a statement about the meaning of a word. Since both tautologies and statements about the meanings of words are non-ethical in character, ethical principles, when they are reduced to them, no longer remain ethical. The main point behind this argument is that what one calls ethical principles are not ethical but are either tautologies (that is analytic statements) or statements about the meanings of the word 'good'. Ethical properties, according to Moore are not tautologies and reports on usage. Therefore, we ought not to define 'good' with any other notion.

The naturalistic fallacy consists in defining 'good' with some other property. A question arises-is the naturalistic fallacy a logical fallacy? It may be said that in any definition it is necessary that both the definiens and the definiendum are logically equivalent, that the definiens does not say more or less than the definiendum. If the definiens says more than the definiendum then the definition is too wide. If the definiens says less than the definiendum then the definition is too narrow. Let us consider the definition of 'good'-

\[ 'Good' = \text{def.} \ '\text{Non-good}' \ (\text{for example, 'pleasure'}) \]

\(^{113}\) Ibid., p. 65.
\(^{114}\) Ibid., p. 109.
In this definition, the definiens says one thing and the definiendum says another thing. The definiens is not logically equivalent to the definiendum. Professor V.K. Bharadwaja says that, "It is clear from this analysis that in committing the naturalistic fallacy we are committing a fallacy of definition; and in this sense a logical fallacy."\(^{115}\)

Moore is also very critical of the views of the metaphysicians. I have pointed out Moore’s attack on the views of the ethical naturalists. I shall now discuss how he severely criticizes the views of the metaphysicians. According to him, metaphysicians can give us only the knowledge of the non-natural existence. He argues that by the term 'metaphysics', it refers to a knowledge of the supersensible reality. Moore says, "If, therefore, we are to define 'metaphysics' not by what it has attained, but by what it has attempted, we should say that it consists in the attempt to obtain knowledge, by processes of reasoning, of what exists but is not a part of Nature. Metaphysicians have actually held that they could give us such knowledge of non-natural existence... When, therefore, I spoke above of 'metaphysical' propositions, I meant propositions about the existence of something supersensible-of something which is not an object of perception, and which cannot be inferred from what is an object of perception by the same rules of inference by which we infer the past and future of what we call 'Nature.' And when I spoke of 'metaphysical' terms, I meant terms which refer to qualities of such a supersensible reality, which do not belong to anything 'natural'."\(^{116}\)

Moore accuses the ethical views of the Stoics, Spinoza, Kant that they try to define the non-natural term like 'good' with a metaphysical term. According to Moore, "They all imply, and many of them expressly hold, that ethical truths follow logically from metaphysical truths-that Ethics should be based on Metaphysics. And the result is that they all describe the supreme Good in metaphysical terms."\(^{117}\)

He further says, "I have said that those systems of Ethics, which I propose to call 'Metaphysical', are characterized by the fact that they describe the supreme Good in 'metaphysical' terms; and this has now been explained as meaning that they describe it in terms of something which (they hold) does exist, but does not exist in Nature-in terms of

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\(^{115}\)Bharadwaja, V.K., (1978), Naturalistic Ethical Theory, etc., p. 29.


\(^{117}\)Ibid., p. 161.
a supersensible reality... Such an assertion is made by Kant when he tells us that his ‘Kingdom of Ends’ is the ideal.”\^118

Moore’s position is that the non-natural term like ‘good’ is a unique in kind that it cannot be defined or reduced to any natural or metaphysical terms. As he argues, ‘‘... any truth which asserts ‘This is good in itself’ is quite unique in kind—that it cannot be reduced to any assertion about reality, and therefore must remain unaffected by any conclusions we may reach about the nature of reality.’’\^119 He argues that the metaphysical moralists’ reduction of the ethical term with a metaphysical term is entirely false. According to him, ‘‘Metaphysical Ethics,’ then, involve the supposition that Ethics can be based on Metaphysics; and our first concern with them is to make clear that this supposition must be false.’’\^120

Moore says that it is fallacious to define ‘good’ in any way. The fallacy consists in reducing or defining ‘good’ with a supersensible reality. Moore states, ‘‘Precisely the same error which leads them to suppose that there must exist a super-sensible Reality, leads them to commit the naturalistic fallacy with regard to the meaning of ‘good’.’’\^121

W.K. Frankena argues that, ‘‘Now, Mr. Moore coined the notion of the naturalistic fallacy in his polemic against naturalistic and metaphysical systems of ethics... The best way to dispose of them, then, is to expose this fallacy.’’\^122

Moore takes Kant’s ethics as an exemplar of heteronomous ethics and thereby accuses Kant of committing the naturalistic fallacy. Moore advances two serious charges against Kantian ethics. The first criticism is that the fallacy of supposing the moral law to be analogous with a natural law. That is, Kant’s identification of the ‘what is good’ or ‘what is ought to be’ with ‘what is willed by a Pure Will. According to Moore, ‘‘The fallacy of supposing moral law to be analogous to natural law in respect of asserting that some action is one which is always necessarily done is contained in one of the most famous doctrines of Kant. Kant identifies what ought to be with the law according to which a Free or Pure Will must act-with the only kind of action which is possible for it. And by this identification he does not mean merely to assert that the Free Will is also

\^118 Ibid., p. 164.
\^119 Ibid., p. 165.
\^120 Ibid., p. 166.
\^121 Ibid., p. 176.
under the necessity of doing what it ought; he means that what it ought to do means nothing but its own law—the law according to which it must act...It follows that what is necessarily willed by this Pure Will is good, not because that will is good, nor for any other reason; but merely because it is what is necessarily willed by a Pure Will.”  

The second criticism that Moore puts forward is that Kant commits the naturalistic fallacy by supposing ‘what is good’ or ‘what is ought to be’ means ‘what is commanded by a super-natural authority. According to Moore, this is the fallacy of supposing the moral law to be analogous with the law in the legal sense and, consequently, to be an imperative. Moore says, ‘And Kant also commits the fallacy of supposing that ‘This ought to be’ means ‘This is commanded.’ He conceives the Moral Law to be an Imperative. And this is a very common mistake. ‘This ought to be,’ it is assumed, must mean ‘This is commanded’; nothing, therefore, would be good unless it were commanded; and since commands in this world are liable to be erroneous, what ought to be in its ultimate sense means ‘what is commanded by some real supersensible authority.’ With regard to this authority it is, then, no longer possible to ask ‘Is it righteous?’ Its commands cannot fail to be right, because to be right means to be what it commands. Here, therefore, law, in the moral sense, is supposed analogous to law, in the legal sense....’

These are two most important criticisms that Moore has leveled against Kant’s philosophy. Moore offers critical arguments against Kant’s philosophy, but not all of them are true. I shall present in brief Kant’s conception of morality and examine how far Moore’s charges against Kant’s ethical position are tenable.

It should be noted that Kant has not define the ethical term like ‘good’ with a metaphysical or a supernatural term. Rather, he has identified ‘what is good’ or ‘what is ought to be’ with a goodwill. Kant holds, ‘It is impossible to conceive anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be taken as good without qualification, except a good will.” There is nothing called good’, except a good will.

124 Ibid., p. 178.
Kant asserts that a good will is good, even if it does not produce any result. It is good in itself. He looks for the good will in a sound natural understanding. In a sound natural understanding, the ‘good will’ is present as a ‘motive of duty’. Kant argues that it is the motive of duty, not the motive of inclination that gives moral worth to an action. The moral worth of an action does not depend upon the consequence or the result it produces. The moral worth of an action lies in obeying the moral law for its own sake. Kant calls it ‘duty for duty’s sake’. An action is morally good, if it is performed out of the motive of duty. Kant believes that the maxim of doing one’s own duty is a purely formal maxim. He writes, "Such a maxim is empty of any particular matter: it is not a maxim of satisfying particular desires or attaining particular results... It is a formal maxim." 126 The moral law is universally applicable to all human beings. It is to be obeyed for its own sake and not for the sake of some end.

According to Kant, the moral law is derived neither from sensibility nor from inclination, but only from reason, so that it can be regarded as an unconditional obedience to all rational beings under all circumstances. The moral law is not derived from nature. Moore’s criticism that Kant has identified the supreme good with a natural term and thereby committing the naturalistic fallacy is not correct. According to Kant, "‘Ought’ expresses a kind of necessity and of connection with grounds which is found nowhere else in the whole of nature ... We cannot say that anything in nature ought to be other than what in all these time relations it actually is. When we have the course of nature alone in view, ‘ought’ has no meaning whatsoever... This ‘ought’ expresses a possible action the ground of which cannot be anything but a mere concept; whereas in the case of a merely natural action the ground must always be an appearance." 127 Again, Kant’s moral law is formal principle. It has a formal identity without having any content. It has not to be found in the objective reality.

Kant postulates the existence of God on the basis that though the only thing that is good without qualification is the goodwill, yet goodwill is not the highest good. Kant says that we postulate the existence of God to promote the highest good. But the moral law is not derived from God. The moral law is not imposed from some supernatural

126 Ibid., p. 21.
authority. It is rather self-imposed. Therefore, Moore’s second criticism that Kant supposes ‘what is good’ or ‘what is ought to be’ means what is commanded by God is also not a valid criticism.

Hare’s Moral Language

The moral theory that R.M. Hare propounds is known as Prescriptivism. As a meta-ethical theory, prescriptivism is concerned with an analysis of the language and concepts used in ethical discourse. Prescriptivism is different from another contemporary ethical theory, emotivism. According to emotivism, a moral action expresses the feelings of the speaker and evoking the feelings of the hearer. Emotivism is advocated by C.L. Stevenson. According to emotivism, “The emotive meaning of a word is a tendency of word, arising through the history of its usage, to produce (result from) affective responses in people. It is the immediate aura of feeling which hovers about a word.” But prescriptivism maintains that the primary function of the moral language is to offer guidance to the hearer.

In his two prominent books- The Language of Morals (1952) and Freedom and Reason (1963), we find a clear account of the prescriptive theory. According to Hare, a moral judgment must have the following three important components. In his words, “It does require, however, three main premises which are to be found there, and which constitute the three most important truths about moral judgments.” These three important components are-(1) “Moral judgments are a kind of prescriptive judgments.” (2) “... they are distinguished from other judgments of this class by being universalizable.” (3) “… logical relations between prescriptive judgments....”

Like all meta-ethical philosophers, Hare distinguishes between the descriptive and the evaluative uses of language. Moral languages are primarily used for giving advice or instruction. In other words, they prescribe a particular course of action. According to

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130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
Hare, "'They are used primarily for giving advice or instruction, or in general for guiding choices.'\textsuperscript{133} Hare says that prescribing is a many-sided activity. It includes those uses of language such as, for example, commending a book, instructing pupils, or deciding questions of duty etc.

Hare says that value words such as, 'good', 'right', 'ought' possess supervenient or the consequential properties. According to Hare, "... one of the most characteristic features of value-words...is a feature sometimes described by saying that 'good' and other such words are the names of 'supervenient' or 'consequential' properties."\textsuperscript{134} The supervenient characteristics refer to the justification or the reason that we give to a value judgment. Value words always have descriptive characteristics. Hare holds that there may be good reasons for justifying ethical conclusions. It is always possible to ask for a reason 'why', when a moral judgment has been passed. For instance, if I say something 'good', then one can always raise the question-why I have regarded the things as 'good'. If I say that 'this is a good car' or 'this is the right way to go', then in these cases, one may always raise these questions-why I have regarded this car as good? or why I have chosen this path as the right path? The answer to these questions will be some factual descriptions about the things concerned. For example, this is a good motor car because it gives me a good mileage. Or this is a good path, because it is shorter than the other routes. Hare writes, "'good' is a 'supervenient' or 'consequential' epithet, one may always legitimately be asked when one has called something a good something, 'what is good about it?' Now to answer this question is to give the properties in virtue of which we call it good. Thus, if I have said, 'That is a good motor-car' and someone asks 'Why? What is good about it?' and I reply 'Its high speed combined with its stability on the road', I indicate that I call it good in virtue of its having these properties or virtues."\textsuperscript{135}

Hare says that when we are giving a factual reason for a value judgment, we are actually invoking or applying a general criterion, a standard, a rule or a principle. W.D. Hudson says that, "According to Hare, value judgments alone are supervenient ... The point which he notes about, e.g., "'X is good,' is not simply that one may ask a reason why and universalize the answer. It is rather that one can always ask 'what is good about it?'"

\textsuperscript{133} Hare, R.M., (1975), \textit{The Language of Morals}. London: Oxford University Press, p. 155.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., p. 80.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., p. 131.
and that the answer can never be "just its goodness." This is where "X is good" differs from e.g., "X is yellow." To "what is yellow about it?" the answer may, though it need not, be "just its yellowness." Goodness (and, equally, rightness or oughtness) is always necessarily supervenient upon other characteristics, as yellowness (or any other non-evaluative characteristic) is not. This shows that, value judgments are inherent in factual judgments and vice-versa.

Hare says that prescriptive language is in the form of imperative. An Imperative statement is in the form of a command. According to Hare, value judgment entails imperative, means that, when we say we ought to do x, we are committed to do ‘x’. Hare states, "We are therefore clearly entitled to say that the moral judgment entails the imperative; for to say that one judgment entails another is simply to say that you cannot assent to the first and dissent from the second unless you have misunderstood one or the other; and this 'cannot' is a logical 'cannot'-if someone assents to the first and not to the second, this is in itself a sufficient criterion for saying that he has misunderstood the meaning of one or the other. Thus to say that moral judgments guide actions, and to say that they entail imperatives, comes to much the same thing." The person who says that he ought to do x, but does not perform it, he either does not understand the meaning of the words which he is using or he may be insincere. Hare remarks that, "It is a tautology to say that we cannot sincerely assent to a second-person command addressed to ourselves, and at the same time not perform it, if now is the occasion for performing it and it in our (physical and psychological) power to do so. Similarly, it is a tautology to say that we cannot sincerely assent to a statement, and at the same time not believe it." Hare argues that if moral judgments imply sincere assent to a command, then it will be logically impossible to assent on a particular judgment and yet acting contrary to it. According to Hare, "For I said ... that I proposed to use the word 'value-judgment' in such a way that 'the test, whether someone is using the judgment 'I ought to do X' as a value-judgment or not, is 'Does he or does he not recognize that if he assents to the judgment, he must also assent to the command 'Let me do X'?'."

137 Hare, R.M., (1975), The Language of Morals, etc., p. 172.
138 Ibid., p. 20.
139 Hare, R.M., (1963), Freedom and Reason, etc., p. 79.
But Hare believes that in certain circumstances, this may not be the case. He says that sometimes, sincere people can be morally weak. It may be possible that someone thinks that he ought to do x but is failing to do it. Hare tries to describe this difficulty in the following words, "Nobody in his senses would maintain that a person who assents to an imperative must (analytically) act on it even when he is unable to do so."\(^{140}\)

Hare says that an imperative statement differs from an indicative statement. Let us take two examples—'shut the door' and 'you are going to shut the door'. The first one is an imperative statement and the second one is an indicative statement. According to him, "It is difficult to deny that there is a difference between statements and commands ... The distinction lies between the meanings which the different grammatical forms convey. Both are used for talking about a subject-matter, but they are used for talking about it in different ways. The two sentences 'You are going to shut the door' and 'Shut the door' are both about your shutting the door in the immediate future; but what they say about it is quite different. An indicative sentence is used for telling someone that something is the case; an imperative is not—it is used for telling to make something the case."\(^{141}\)

Hare differentiates between three kinds of meanings. They are descriptive, prescriptive and the evaluative meaning. He defines descriptive, prescriptive and evaluative meanings as, "An expression which, in a certain context, has descriptive meaning and no other, I call a descriptive term, word, or expression, as used in that context; one which has prescriptive meaning (whether or not it also has descriptive meaning) I call a prescriptive term; and one which has both kinds of meaning I call an evaluative term."\(^{142}\) According to Hare, value words have descriptive meaning. When we are passing a value judgment, we are actually invoking or applying a general criterion, a standard, rule or principle. This he refers to the supervenient character of the value judgments. According to Hare, "Value-words are indeed like descriptive words, both in that they have descriptive meanings, and in that the descriptive meanings of both are alterable, flexible and so on."\(^{143}\) Value judgments are primarily used to prescribe a

\(^{140}\) Ibid.
\(^{141}\) Hare, R.M., (1975), *The Language of Morals*, etc. p. 5.
\(^{143}\) Ibid.
particular course of actions. Hare however, says that the prescriptive meaning is constant for every class of object of which a value word may be used.

Evaluative words entail imperatives because they possess a commendatory force. Hare distinguishes between two kinds of meaning that an ethical statement can have. They are cognitive and the non-cognitive meaning. The cognitive meaning of a word or a statement is the factual or descriptive content it refers to. The non-cognitive meaning refers to the commendation or the favourable attitude that the speaker has towards the object. When we hear a person say, ‘X is good’, we know that he has a favourable attitude towards ‘X’, whatever ‘X’ may stands for. Therefore, irrespective of our knowledge of ‘X’, we know that the person favours it or has a pro-attitude towards it. This is the non-cognitive, commendatory meaning of a proposition. This meaning, according to Hare, is of primary importance in ethical discourse. Yet, a person commends an object or an event on the basis of certain factual characteristics that the object possesses. For example, when we recommend a book as good, we recommend it on the basis of certain factual properties that the book possesses like saying that it has an informative content. Thus, we see that the value judgment has both a cognitive and a non-cognitive meaning. Hare says that the cognitive meaning of a value word may vary, but the non-cognitive meaning remains constant. The cognitive meaning, which changes are primarily descriptive, while the non-cognitive or the commendatory meaning is primarily evaluative. Hare says that the evaluative or the prescriptive meaning of a value word like ‘good’ is always constant. According to Hare, “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 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.”

The prescriptive meaning is logically prior to the descriptive meaning, because any standard must be accepted before it is invoked. If we say that the books are good if they have funny characters, it must be because we have accepted that books with informative content are good.

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144 Hare, R.M., (1975), The Language of Morals, etc., p. 118.
Again, Hare says that we can use the evaluative word, in order to change the
descriptive meaning. The standard of goodness may vary down the ages. But the
evaluative meaning will remain constant. Hare argues, "What is happening is that the
evaluative meaning of the word is being used in order to shift the descriptive meaning;
we are doing what would be called, if 'good' were a purely descriptive word, redefining
it. But we cannot call it that, for the evaluative meaning remains constant; we are rather
altering the standard."145

Another important feature of moral judgment is that it is universalizable. This
means that when a person says that he ought to do something, he is committed to say that
anyone else in the same situation, given the same condition will have to do it. Hare says
that, "... moral judgments are a kind of prescriptive judgments and that they are
distinguished from other judgments of this class by being universalizable."146 He argues
that both the descriptive and the evaluative terms are universalizable. But there is a
significant difference between the universalizability of factual terms and evaluative
terms. While a factual term is universalizable on the basis of a meaning rule, evaluative
term necessarily call for a reference to a universalizable moral principle. According to
Hare, "For, as we have seen, it follows from the definition of the expression 'descriptive
term' that descriptive judgments are universalizable in just the same way as, according to
my view, moral judgments are. It is impossible consistently to maintain that moral
judgments are descriptive, and that they are not universalizable."147

According to Hare, universalizability is a necessary characteristic of a moral
judgment. The concept of universalizability is based on the very notion of meaning itself.
He believes that language is meaningful if it is used in accordance with rules. A
descriptive statement such as 'My car is red' is universalizable with regard to a meaning-
rule. If I call an object red, I am committed to calling anything else like it red. In saying
that 'my car is red', I am committed to holding that there is a feature 'r' of my car such
that any car having a feature which resembles 'r' will also be call red. According to Hare,
"If I call a thing red, I am committed to calling anything else like it red. And if I call a
thing a good X, I am committed to calling any X like it good. But whereas the reason in

145 Ibid., p. 119.
146 Hare, R.M., (1963), Freedom and Reason, etc., p. 4.
147 Ibid., p. 16.
the former case is that I must be using the word 'red' in accordance with some meaning-rule, the reason in the latter case is much more complicated. A descriptive term is universalizable with reference to a meaning-rule. An evaluative term is universalizable with reference to a standard or principle. When I call a thing 'good', I call it on the basis of some principle or standard that the thing possesses.

Hare maintains that there is room for rational discourse in ethics and that logical relations hold in moral argument. This he explains by maintaining a difference between what he calls 'Phrastic' and the 'Neustic' of a proposition. According to Hare, "'Phrastic' is derived from a Greek word meaning 'to point out or indicate,' and 'neustic' from a word meaning 'to nod assent'. Both words are used indifferently of imperative and indicative speech." Phrastic refers to indicative mood or a statement, whereas Neustic refers to the imperative mood. Hare says that two propositions may differ in the Neustic or an imperative mood though both may have the same phrastic or the propositional content. According to Hare, the logical relations can hold between an imperative as well as an indicative sentence because both of these sentences have the phrastic in common. Let us consider the sentences-

Shut the door.
You are going to shut the door.

Hare says that first sentence is in the imperative mood, whereas the second sentence is in the indicative mood. But there is something Common to both the sentences is a description or a state of affair, namely, 'you are shutting the door in the immediate future'. This common ground between both the imperative and the indicative is called the 'phrastic'. Hare says, "We have noticed that the two sentences 'You are going to shut the door' and 'Shut the door' are both about the same thing, namely, your shutting the door in the immediate future; but they are used to say different things about it.'

Obviously, there is a difference between the first and the second sentence. The first sentence is used in the form of a command whereas the second is used to indicate something. Hare illustrates the difference in the following words-

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148 Ibid., pp. 15–16.
149 Hare, R.M., (1975), The Language of Morals, etc., p. 18.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid., p. 17.
Your shutting the door in the immediate future, please.

Your shutting the door in the immediate future, yes. \(^{152}\)

The fourth sentence has an element called 'please' and shows that the sentence is an imperative. The fifth sentence has an element called 'yes' and shows that the sentence is an assertion. These two additional elements, that is, 'please' in the fourth sentence and 'yes' in the fifth sentence are called by Hare 'Neustic'. As he says, "I shall call the part of the sentence that is common to both moods ('Your shutting the door in the immediate future') the phrastic; and the part that is different in the case of commands and statements ('yes' or 'please'), the Neustic." \(^{153}\)

Thus, the phrastic is that part of the sentence, which is common to both moods, the Neustic is the part which is different in the case of commands and statements. Hare says, "The utterance of a sentence containing phrastic and neustic might be dramatized as follows: (1) The speaker points out or indicates what he is going to state to be the case, or command to be made the case; (2) He nods, as if to say 'It is the case', or 'Do it'." \(^{154}\)

Hare argues that the logical relations hold between imperative sentences (i.e., sentences which tell us to make, or not to make, something is the case) as hold between indicative ones, because logical words are best treated as part of the phrastic of sentences. Hare says that all moral reasoning is deductive. All deductive inference is analytic in character, that is, it depends solely upon the meaning of the words used, and particularly that of logical words such as the sign of negation 'not', the logical connectives 'if', 'and', 'or', and the quantifiers 'all' and 'some'. All these elements should be treated as parts of phrastic. In his words, "... in their ordinary uses the common logical connectives 'if', 'and', and 'or', like the sign of negation, are best treated as part of the phrastics of sentences. This means that they are common ground between indicatives and imperatives. The same is true, with a certain qualification...of the quantifiers 'all' and 'some'." \(^{155}\)

According to Hare, in a moral argument, there must be at least one value judgment in the premisses. We cannot derive a value judgment from premisses, which are purely factual. He therefore maintains that no imperative sentence can be derived from

\(^{152}\) Ibid.

\(^{153}\) Ibid., p. 18.

\(^{154}\) Ibid.

\(^{155}\) Ibid., p. 21.
merely a set of indicative sentences: "... from a series of indicative sentences about 'the character of any of its objects' no imperative sentence about what is to be done can be derived, and therefore no moral judgment can be derived from it either." Hare therefore holds that one of the premisses of the moral argument must be an imperative—a universal imperative or general principle of conduct. We cannot draw a prescriptive conclusion from purely descriptive premisses. He gives two rules that govern the principle that no imperative sentence can be derived from merely a set of indicative sentences. According to Hare, "Let me first state two of the rules that seem to govern this matter...The rules are:

(1) No indicative conclusion can be validly drawn from a set of premisses which cannot be validly drawn from the indicatives among them alone.

(2) No imperative conclusion can be validly drawn from a set of premisses which does not contain at least one imperative."

Thus, according to Hare, 'ought' conclusion cannot be derived solely from the 'is' propositions. In order to draw a value judgment, at least one of the premisses must be evaluative. Hare declares his adherence to Hume's law: no 'ought' from an 'is'. As he says, "In this logical rule, again, is to be found the basis of Hume's celebrated observation on the impossibility of deducing an 'ought'-proposition from a series of 'is'-propositions...."

In a deductive argument, the premisses justify the conclusion. The conclusion is already implicit in the premisses. Hare gives an example to illustrate the rules of the syllogism.

Take all the boxes to the station.
This is one of the boxes.
∴ You are going to take this to the station.

In this argument, the conclusion is already contained in the premisses. The major premise is a universal imperative. The minor is a particular indicative or informative. The conclusion is again a singular imperative, which is drawn from the above premisses. In Hare's moral syllogism, the facts, which are to justify a moral judgment, are stated in a

156 Ibid., p. 30.
157 Ibid., p. 28.
158 Ibid., p. 29.
descriptive minor premise and their relevance is guaranteed by an evaluative major premise. This argument satisfies Hare’s two rules of a syllogism.

In the conclusion, I have tried to summarize the main arguments of Moore and Hare. We have come across in Moore’s ethical position that the term ‘good’ refers to a simple, non-analyzable property. Any attempt to define a non-natural property like ‘goodness’ with a natural property or properties is fallacious. This is famously known as the Naturalistic Fallacy. Moore has alleged that Kant has committed naturalistic fallacy. But in my opinion Kant has not committed this fallacy. The argument that we can put forward is that the moral law is not found in the whole of nature. Moreover, Kant derives the moral law from reason alone, and not from natural desires and inclinations. Therefore, identifying the moral law with a natural law is not correct.

I have also discussed Hare’s Prescriptivism. According to Hare, moral language is primarily used for giving advice or instruction. In other words, it prescribes a particular course of action. Moral judgment must have both the descriptive and evaluative components. He argues that a value judgment is inherent in a factual judgment, but a value judgment is not derived solely from the factual judgment alone. In order to draw an ethical conclusion, one of the premisses must be evaluative.

In this way, we can say that both Moore and Hare try to defend the autonomy of ethics.