



A Critical Study on the Concept of *Ethics* and *Morality* in Comparative Philosophy

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Perspective

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Abstract

Ethics and *Morality* are a controversial study in comparative philosophy. In particular, both has recognized and conceptualized a somewhat different way. Because as a succinct analysis on *Ethics*, it systematically appears that deals with the epistemological background and psycho-socio influence indeed. However, *Morality* can identify as a simultaneous occurrence of *Ethics*. It often reflects the personality features of human beings as a scientific and common sense of behavioural acts. On the contrary, this conceptualized controversy has precisely built an excellent philosophic platform as a comparative way of thinking. Consequently, in this scholarly contribution, it has endeavoured to draw-up an analytic extent for the scope of *Ethics* and *Morality*. It has mainly worked here as a critical study of historiography, terminological differences, contrasted subject matters and categorical evolution. Hypothetically, it can continuously say that if even it is theoretically different, both should engage mutually and co-dependently.

Keyword: Ethics; Morality; Behavioural Acts; Personality

Introduction

In a normative sense it can often be identified as *Ethics*¹ in which science of the conduct of human beings living in societies. As a provisional recognition on *Ethics*, it would define as a systematic account of normative science and coherent influence of science². In particular, *Ethical* directions

always guide merely on individualistic characteristics of human personality³. It indeed conceptualized as a humanistic judgement for personal behavioural acts and deeds in their sustainable lives. In contrast, the term *Ethics*

ordinary, haphazard knowledge of uneducated people in being arranged in a definite coherent system.”
William Lillie, An Introduction to Ethics, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1948), pp: 2.

3 Here it does hope to say that *Ethics* seems to be an intellectual discussion and intensive branch of philosophy as far as. So It does suggest some quotation here:

“In ethics we are concerned with questions of right and wrong, duty and obligation, and moral responsibility. When ethicists use words like good or right to describe a person or action, they generally mean that the person or action confirms with some moral standard. A good person or action has desirable qualities or possess qualities desirable to humans.”
Vincent Barry, Applying Ethics: A Text with Readings, (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1989), pp: 5-6.

1 As a philosophical discipline of study, *Ethics* appears as a systematic achievement to realizing, analyzing, and differentiating matters of right and wrong, good and evil, and admirable and deplorable as they relate to the well-being of and the relationships among sentient beings.
Karen L Rich, Introduction to Ethics, Nursing Ethics: Across the Curriculum and Into Practice, (ed.) Janie B. Butts and Karen L. Rich, (Massachusetts: Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2013), pp: 4.

2 “This definition says, first of all, that ethics is a science, and a science maybe defined as a systematic and more or less complete body of knowledge about a particular set of related events or objects. In this account of science, the important word is systematic; scientific knowledge differs from the

has perhaps used synonymously with *Morality*. Whereas it contextually appears some incompatible features and sharp differences also. *Morality* defines some traditional beliefs, behaviours, and different ways of being derived from *Ethics*⁴. Then *Moral* values would judge throughout scientific ways of *Ethical* analysis. The reverse of *Morality* is *Immortality*, which terminologically means that a person's behaviour is in opposition to accepted societal, religious, cultural, or professional, ethical standards and principles⁵. So, however, it precisely seems that in between subject matter of *Ethics* and *Morality* would have some idiosyncratic and contradict features as a priori. Then in this writing, it does mind to study the above controversial proposition briefly and analytically.

Discussion

A Critical Overlook on History of *Ethics* and *Morality*

Primitively when we concerning on its linguistic history, it seems that vital to differentiating between *Ethics* and *Morality*. Although the terminologies have the idiosyncratic morphological meaning as their historical source on ancient philological science. Here the morpheme *Ethics* has derived from the Greek word '*Ethos*' means character whilst the morpheme '*Morality*' has descended from the Latin word '*Moralis*' which means custom or manner⁶.

The chronological history of *Ethics* can identify as three main evolutionary periods concerning their specific characteristics as follows⁷.

- The Greek Period (500 BC-500 AD)
- The Medieval Period (500 AD-1500 AD)
- The Modern Period (1500 AD Onwards)

Here each period has its characteristic ethical institution

4 Nevertheless, here has some contradictory argumentation presented by William K. Frankena (University of Michigan, 1963). According to his critique, Ethics is a branch of philosophy, and it is the Moral philosophy or philosophical thinking about Morality, Moral judgements, and Moral problems. For many fuller details, it can see the book below. William Frankena, *Ethics*, (USA: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1963), pp: 3-4.

5 Vincent Barry, *Applying Ethics: A Text with Readings*, (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1989), pp: 5.

6 According to this historical linguistic analysis, Ethics often refers to rules, principles, norms and values that are external to the individuals, whereas Ethics often refers to an individual's stance, principles and values of what is right and wrong. Göran Fransson, *Understanding Morality and Ethics: Maneuvering Ethical Dilemmas in Digital Educational Contexts*, (Pennsylvania: IGI Global Publisher, 2017), pp: 73.

7 This categorization was done by William Lillie (1948) while considering sharp attention on its earlier beginning, chronic evaluation to up today. For much details, also refer to this source below. William Lillie, *An Introduction to Ethics*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1948), pp: 92-98.

and qualitative ethical conceptualizations too. According to this historical derivation of *Ethics*, it has been determined by major twofold influences⁸:

- The Free Reflection that arose in the Greek City-States
- The Moral Tradition of Jews and Christians that was taught by the Church in the Middle Ages

The observation of *Ethics* seems like an ordinary circumstance of the developing concept of conscience since significantly earlier history in Western philosophic tradition⁹. Because the conscience has been the fundamental root or all-encompassing element for *Ethics* unavoidably, it denotes that every individual can be perceived the necessary judgements of ethical perspectives such as *right* or *wrong*, *good* or *bad*, *virtue* or *non-virtue* and so much on¹⁰.

When it does scrutinize towards on *Morality*, it should also derive parallel to the history of *Ethics*. The *Moral* philosophy is also descending from *Socrates* (469 C-399 BCE), *Plato* (429 C-347 BCE), and *Aristotle* (384 C-322 BCE) mainly¹¹. That precisely clarifies that the teachings of *Morality* also have undoubtedly correlated with ancient Greek philosophy and its evolutionary three chronological periods too.

Here especially as the middle age (476 CE) this view of *Morality* was continued and sustained with intellectualism

8 Ibid, 92.

9 "Different values, worldviews, and ways of moral reasoning have evolved throughout history and have had different points of emphasis in varying historical periods. In regard to some approaches to reasoning about moral issues, what was old becomes new again, as in the case of the renewed popularity of virtue ethics-the concept of reasoning as would a person with good character."

Karen L. Rich, *Introduction to Ethics, Nursing Ethics: Across the Curriculum and Into Practice*, (ed.) Janie B. Butts and Karen L. Rich, (Massachusetts: Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2013), pp: 8-9.

10 According to Göran Fransson (University of Gävle, Sweden, 2017), the understanding of moral and ethical issues in teaching, it should be regarded as a social, relational, and moral endeavour and discussed the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching and learning. Classical ethical frames, such as consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics, are described and problematized as guiding frames for the process of moral decision-making. Göran Fransson, *Understanding Morality and Ethics: Maneuvering Ethical Dilemmas in Digital Educational Contexts*, (Pennsylvania: IGI Global Publisher, 2017), pp: 72.

11 "In Western history, much of what is known about formal moral reasoning generally began with the ancient Greeks, especially with the philosophers... Though there are no primary texts of the teachings of Socrates (what we have of his teachings were recorded by Plato), it is known that Socrates was an avid promotor of moral reasoning and critical thinking among the citizens of Athens. Socrates is credited with the statement that "the unexamined life is not worth living", and he developed a method of reasoning called the Socratic Method, which is still used today..."

Karen L. Rich, *Introduction to Ethics, Nursing Ethics: Across the Curriculum and Into Practice*, (ed.) Janie B. Butts and Karen L. Rich, (Massachusetts: Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2013), pp: 9.

and contemporary cultural progress in Western Europe¹². At this movement, *Morality* extremely collaborated within monotheistic Christianity. Then *Morality* formatively differed from descendent Greek polytheism of course. Here It does suppose there were a couple of Catholic saints called *St. Augustine* (354 AD-430 D) and *St. Tomas Aquinas* (1225 AD-1274 AD) who provided the significant ethical influence during this revolutionary middle age on behalf of the remarkable religious renaissance¹³. Briefly the *Moral* philosophy co-mixed and then co-operated with ancient theology and obscure dogmatic slumber as it feels here.

The period of the modern age (1543 AD) the theoretical concept of *Morality* engaged with scientific innovations like mainly *Copernican Theory*, *Theory of Gravitation*, *Theory of Relativity*, and *Atomic Theory*. At this movement, *Moral* attitudes could struggle with Church dogma and rules¹⁴. In particular, during the 18th century Enlightenment era, it worked to gaining the glistening illumination of actual knowledge and ultimate perception of wisdom. Here the significant philosophers David Hume (1711 AD-1776 AD), George Berkeley (1685 AD-1753 AD) and Baruch Spinoza

(1632 AD-1677 AD) who mostly contributed continentally.

After the scientific hegemony of the enlightenment era, the concepts of *Ethics* and *Morality* began making scepticism at all survivals of human beings. That defined as '*Postmodernism*' (around 1950 AD, after the end of World War II) and then science and reason improved as an impact of humanistic movements of moral thinking¹⁵. The postmodern ethical period found out a pluralistic view, or diversity of intellectual and cultural influences. It always influenced by scientific investigation and rational questioning mind on multiple physical facts. The philosopher *Friedrich Nietzsche* (1844 AD-1900 AD) one who grossly connected with this sceptic and critical movement of *Moral* philosophy.

A Contrasted Subject Matters on Attitude of Ethics

In this manner, *Ethics* could almost clarify as the normative science of conduct¹⁶ compromisingly. Then *Ethics* can systematically categorize into two attitudinal baskets basically:

- Normative Ethics.

- Non-Normative Ethics¹⁷.

• Normative Ethics

Normative Ethics typically involves making various endeavours to determine precisely how would be the moral standards to following so that our actions may be morally right or fair. Then it might be capable of deciding or prescribing values, behaviours, and ways of being that are right or wrong, good or bad, admirable or deplorable¹⁸. When this attitude may be at work, humans can be adequately understood that what ought to be done in certain situations, what type of character one should have, or how one should be. Here there are two more sub-types of normative areas:

- Applied Normative Ethics

12 "In its broadest and most familiar sense, Morality is concerned with many forms of belief about right and wrong human conduct. These beliefs are expressed through terms such as "good", "bad", "virtuous", "praiseworthy", "right", "wrong", "ought" and "blameworthy". But several disciplines use these terms to evaluate human endeavors, and these disciplines sometimes involve Morality. Religion, law, etiquette, economics, and politics are examples, because they involve the evaluation of conduct and use a similar vocabulary of acting-directing term".

Tom. L. Beauchamp, *Philosophical Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1991), pp: 5.

13 Here it does hope to mention some quotation from one of the articles written by William K. Frankena (University of Michigan, 1999). Because he also interprets the concept of Morality as the same way in drawing-up a synonymous correlation with teachings of Ethics via multi-disciplinary distinctive aspects:

"This is one of the uses of "morality" that concerns us here. Notice that in a sense, there are many moralities (or ethics): Greek Morality, bourgeois Morality, my Morality, new Morality, professional Morality, and so far. In this sense,

Morality is not one thing; different moralities prevail in different times and places, as there are different etiquettes, laws, or religions, and these moralities may change. We can speak a morality in this sense, but not of "morality".

William K. Frankena, *The Concept of Morality*, *Great Traditions in Ethics*, (ed.) Theodore C. Denise and Others, (USA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1999), pp: 379.

14 "Dewey attacks two extremes in ethics: radical empiricism and rationalism. In the former, moral values are identified with subjective experiences of liking and disliking. Dewey regards experiences of this kind as providing only the possibilities of values. Values as such emerge only after examination of the condition under which liking and disliking occur, and of the results to which they lead. The distinction between an experience as much and a valuable experience is given careful and detailed attention."

John Dewey, *Scientific Method in Ethics*, *Great Traditions in Ethics*, (ed.) Theodore C. Denise and Others, (USA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1999), pp: 249.

15 That was mainly suggested by Karen L. Rich (2013) in his scholarly article named Introduction to Ethics. Furthermore, he had said there: "People who live in according to a postmodern philosophy acknowledge that reality is constantly changing and that scientific investigations cannot provide one grand theory or correct view of an absolute Truth that can be guide human behavior, relationships and life."

16 Here 'conduct' is a collective name for voluntary actions. William Lillie, *An Introduction to Ethics*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1948), pp: 3.

17 This fundamental categorization was introduced by Vincent Barry (1989). So for much fuller details, it also can refer in the following source. Vincent Barry, *Applying Ethics: A Text with Readings*, (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1989), pp: 6.

18 Karen L. Rich, *Introduction to Ethics*, *Nursing Ethics: Across the Curriculum and Into Practice*, (ed.) Janie B. Butts and Karen L. Rich, (Massachusetts: Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2013), pp: 6.

- General Normative Ethics¹⁹

- **Non-Normative Ethics**

Here *Non-Normative Ethics* mainly concerns on scientific and descriptive analysis of Morality towards on contextual investigation of moral behaviour. So this approach always tries to achieve for social sciences widely. Then apparently, it may probably seek a kind of epistemological perspective. Insofar it can also be divided into more a couple of sub-branches methodologically:

- Scientific or Descriptive Non-Normative Ethics
- Meta-Non-Normative Ethics²⁰

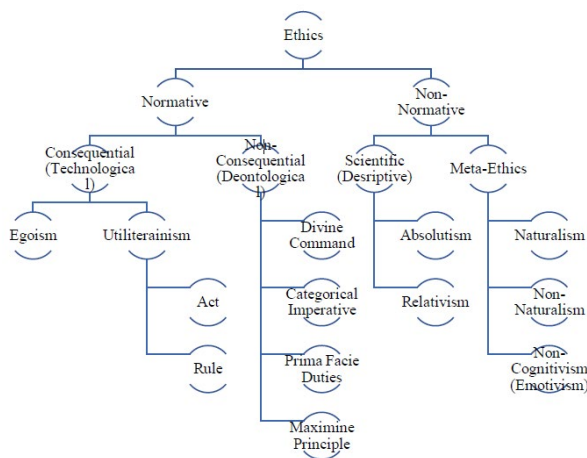


Figure 1: Paradigm or attitudinal draft of Ethical doctrine.

Moreover, when we do observe the multiplicity of attitudes *Ethical* doctrine, it precisely draws-up a very spread and multi-disciplinary branches and also sub-branches on its scientific and philosophic convictions. So here it does mind to make a paradigm or attitudinal draft of *Ethical*

19 Here Applied Normative Ethics is the attempt to explain and justify positions on specific moral problems, such as sex outside marriage, capital punishment, euthanasia, reverse discrimination, and so far. General Normative Ethics is the reasoned search for principles of human conduct, including a critical study of the major theories about moral actions and deeds. Then it often attempts to determine certainly what moral standards to follow in a better way.

Vincent Barry, *Applying Ethics: A Text with Readings*, (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1989), pp: 6.

20 This is adopted by Karen L. Rich (2013). As he defines here: Instead, Meta-Ethics is concerned with understanding the language of Morality through an analysis of the meaning of ethically related concepts and theories. Then Descriptive Ethics is often referred to as a scientific rather than a philosophical, ethical inquiry. It is an approach to investigate how people always behave in their day to lifestyles practically.

Karen L. Rich, *Introduction to Ethics, Nursing Ethics: Across the Curriculum and Into Practice*, (ed.) Janie B. Butts and Karen L. Rich, (Massachusetts: Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2013), pp: 6-7.

doctrine within concerning some more ethical theories and methodologies²¹. (This has attached at the end of the article as figure 1).

A Comparative Critique on *Ethics* and *Morality*

Now we have crucial and substantial subject matters of attitudes of *Ethics* and also *Morality*. Consequently, while us considering matters of *Ethics*, we autonomously falling into a more in-depth conversation of freedom relatively person by person. On the contrary, it depends upon a distinctive, individualistic personality. That is not very easy. Then *Moral* behaviour is usually contrasted with the prudence of self-interest *be-cause* *Morality* requires taking into account the interests of others and not merely our own. It seems like a social institution as law, etiquette, religion, justice²².

In particular, a natural exegesis to *Ethics* and *Morality* both is an undoubtedly valuable and substantive system to undertake the human virtuous behavioural acts and many deeds. Because it often formally guides to continue on personality discipline in many ways²³. However, both are indeed not entirely synonymous each other facts as having numerous judgements, measurements and standards of conduct of human survival in the everyday society. Now here It does mind to attempt to distinguish a few of basic comparative features in between *Ethics* and *Moral* doctrines in brief.

- Probably the most significant and substantial feature about on *Ethics* and *Morality* is that no one can avoid making moral or ethical decisions because the social connection with others necessitates that people must consider moral and ethical acts.

- Other people are always involved with one's moral and ethical decisions. Whereas private *Morality* not exist.

- Moral decisions matter because every decision affects someone else's life, self-esteem, happiness level.

- Definite conclusions or resolutions will never reach in ethical debates.

21 For drawing this philosophical paradigm, it could refer carefully to the following source. It can also go through on it for many fuller observations. Vincent Barry, *Applying Ethics: A Text with Readings*, (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1989), pp: 10.

22 These institutions are both social and action-guiding; they tell us what we must do or ought to do, and they demand that we pay attention to the interests of others. They have also seemed to some people to be the source or foundation of many of our moral beliefs.

Tom. L. Beauchamp, *Philosophical Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1991), pp: 7.

23 "Working toward a definition of morality involves him in exploiting the observation that a morality-a moral value system-is an action guide of a kind that can be distinguished from others."

William K. Frakena, *The Concept of Morality, Great Traditions in Ethics*, (Ed.) Theodore C. Denise and Others, (USA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1999), pp: 379.

- In the area of morals and ethics, people cannot exercise moral judgement without being given in a choice; in other words, a necessity for making a sound moral judgement can choose an opinion from among several choices.
- People use moral reasoning to make moral judgements or to discover the right actions²⁴.

Conclusion

We have already come across different kinds of critiques regarding the concepts of *Ethics* and *Morality*. It says that ethical doctrine and reasoning falling relatively subjectivism

24 For this distinguishing, it mostly refers to the book in following. To get more details on above, can go through on it.
Karen L. Rich, Introduction to Ethics, *Nursing Ethics: Across the Curriculum and Into Practice*, (Ed.) Janie B. Butts and Karen L. Rich, (Massachusetts: Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2013), pp: 5.

and objectivism. Then moral attitudes also standing on symmetrically to an ethical approach. Chronologically, it grossly proved, both are descending from the same ancient resource of Greek philosophic tradition. So evolutionary, it has become more phenomenological similarities and also some of the differences in the main crucial context of *Morality*.

Nevertheless, however, the ethical doctrine is more epistemological and intelligible rather than morals. *Morality* survives through an ethical doctrine of philosophy. On the contrary, *Morality* often denotes that the norms and values of a social community, occupational codes of conduct, religious principles, and so general. *Ethics* might also conceptualize as the philosophical critique of *Morality*. Then eventually, the above two components are working mutually with each other on a philosophic overlook.

