

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF A. J. AYER'S ELIMINATION OF EMOTIVE THEORY VALUES

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ABSTRACT: This research paper is aimed at demonstrating Ayer's conception about the theory of emotivism or emotive theory of value which he rejected categorically as pseudo-statement in the field of science. Ethical values which only express emotion, feeling, and command about a situation or a subject matter, has failed in all dimensions to help in the progress and evolution of modern science. From the analysis of Ayer as a logical positivist, moral, religious, and metaphysical values together called speculative branches of philosophy could not stand the test of the verifiability principle aimed at proving a proposition or a statement as true or false. Observed from the analysis of Ayer, applying the verifiability criterion of meaning to ethical values is automatically meaningless, nonsensical and helpless in the scientific acquisition of knowledge. Thus, Ayer is of the fact that, moral values are of no importance to man in view of its abstract and sentimental nature. Finally we shall propose an alternative view that ruptures with Ayer's conception with the aim of rehabilitating the necessity of moral and ethical values to human kind and it need to caution the works of modern science regarding its destructive activity to humanity.

KEY WORDS: *Emotivism, Ethical Values, Logical Positivism, Metaphysics, Modern Science, Verifiability principle.*

RÉSUMÉ : *Ce document de recherche vise à démontrer la conception d'Ayer sur la théorie de l'émotivisme ou la théorie émotionnelle de la valeur qu'il a catégoriquement rejetée comme pseudo-énoncé dans le domaine de la science. Les valeurs éthiques qui n'expriment que l'émotion, le sentiment et la maîtrise d'une situation ou d'un sujet, ont échoué dans toutes les dimensions pour aider au progrès et à l'évolution de la science moderne. De l'analyse d'Ayer en tant que logique positiviste, les valeurs morales, religieuses et métaphysiques réunies, appelées branches spéculatives de la philosophie, ne pouvaient pas résister à l'épreuve du principe de vérifiabilité visant à prouver qu'une proposition ou une déclaration est vraie ou fausse. Observer à partir de l'analyse d'Ayer, appliquer le critère de vérifiabilité du sens aux valeurs éthiques est automatiquement dénué de sens, absurde et impuissant dans l'acquisition scientifique des connaissances. Ainsi, Ayer est du fait que les valeurs morales n'ont aucune importance pour l'homme en raison de leur nature abstraite et sentimentale. Enfin, nous proposerons un point de vue alternatif qui rompt avec la conception d'Ayer dans le but de réhabiliter la nécessité des valeurs morales et éthiques à l'humanité et qui doit mettre en garde les travaux de la science moderne quant à son activité destructrice pour l'humanité.*

Mots clés: *émotivisme, métaphysique, valeurs éthiques, positivisme logique, principe de vérifiabilité, science moderne.*

I. INTRODUCTION

As a twentieth century philosopher of the analytic world, Alfred Jules Ayer, a logical positivist was very critical about the philosophical ideas of some of his predecessors. Bern in making philosophy a science¹ as a tradition, he engaged in the purification of philosophy from traditional philosophy (metaphysics) which he considered an obstacle to all human endeavours for centuries. Apart from eliminating metaphysics and religious values, emotive values, or ethical values under the tenet of moral philosophy were equally eliminated for its non-cognitive nature. He said it is based on feeling, desire without any logical or scientific substance thus,

¹ A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, London, Wadham College, 1946, p. 104. But if science may be said to be blind without philosophy, it is true also that philosophy is virtually empty without science. For while the analysis of our everyday language is useful as a means of preventing, or exposing, a certain amount of metaphysics, the problems which it presents are not of such difficulty or complexity as to make it probable that they will remain long unsolved

“theology and absolute ethics are two famous subjects which we have realised to have no real object.”² He is the first to talk about emotive theory of value or otherwise known as the theory of emotivism.

Emotivism is a theory which stipulates that, moral values are simple expression of feelings and our emotions towards a proposition making access to science so difficult. Philosophy must respond to the logic of science, in so doing, moral aspects which are defended positively by moralist must be discarded as worthless pretention in scientific activities for they cannot attain the test of the verifiability criterion of meaning. Ethical statements to Ayer are called *Sui generis*.³ A critical application of the verification to emotive value according to Ayer is fruitless. At the end of the investigations, we will be questioning Ayer’s elimination of moral values in the present society knowing fully well how fast decaying our society is becoming. If moral and ethical values are absent in the society, since we know how destructive the activities of modern science are, it therefore means all is permitted. This paper is armed at questioning the danger of disassociation of ethical values to science today.

II. AYER’S VIEW ABOUT EMOTIVISM (EMOTIVE THEORY OF VALUE)

Emotivism is a theory about meta-ethics which focuses on the fact that, ethical sentences simply express propositions about emotion. Ayer was celebrated for being the first person to develop so far the theory of emotivism in his work *Language, Truth and Logic* but was given a more analytic cover by C. L. Stevenson in his work *The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms*.⁴ Traces of this theory are seen right back with the British empiricist notable Berkeley and Hume. According to the former, to say something is good is just a form of expressing a passion about it while the latter in *An Enquiry Concerning the Principle of Moral* determines that, morality is all about sentiments and not of facts.⁵ With emotivism, moral statements neither express objective facts nor subjective truth. Instead, they express emotional reactions of approval or disapproval or emotional feeling in a situation. Objectivity relates to scientific statements like the case of modern science which succeeds because of that. Moral claims said Ayer is the expression of our individual attitude towards a situation or a pure emotive theory. Saying “Do not hate your brother”, “it is morally wrong to steal” goes contrary to the proposition of science.

One of the most powerful objections to emotivism, given by Ayer, is that which seems to entail an unsatisfactory view of ethical discussion. Saying “abortion is wrong” or “abortion is right”, is just an expression of disapproval or approval of the situation. Emotivism is all about ethical and moral judgement which expresses non-cognitive affection or cognitive attitudes. It claims that we are trying to influence other people’s feelings and actions. But trying to influence people without reasoning is just a form of manipulation. Ethical values are purely emotive, they do not express a proposition or make assertion of something that is either true or false hence meaningless in the eye of science. Here Stevenson refers to emotive theory of values as;

The emotive meaning of a word is the tendency of a word arising through the history of its usage, to produce effective responses to people. It is the immediate aura of feeling which hovers about a word. Such tendencies to produce effective responses cling to word very tenaciously. It will be difficult for instance to express merriment by using the interjection “alas” because of the persistence feasible to classified them as meaning⁶

Ayer’s attitude towards ethical statement is consistent with epistemological position. His theory of knowledge is mainly based on the assumption that all “Meaningful statements that can be termed true or false are either (a) formal truths (b) statement which are empirically verified.”⁷ Ethical statements according to him fulfil neither of these conditions and hence say nothing as he at one point put it.

Emotivism as a meta-ethical theory is non-cognitive, classified under those things that cannot be perceived with the use of sensory-organs. Reason why, Ayer only considers meaningful statements as those

² A. J. Ayer, *Philosophical Essays*, London and Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 1954, p. 231.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Idisha Biswas, “C. L. Stevenson and the Meaning of Ethical Terms” in *International Journal of research of Social and Natural Sciences*, Volume III, Issue 2, Dec 2018, pp. 1-2. A. J. Ayer first vividly discusses the theory. After him C. L. Stevenson state it in a more analytic way. Ayer think ethical words merely express an emotion of the speaker and want to arouse similar emotion in the hearer. Ethical utterances have no cognitive meaning and for this reason Ayer describes them as pseudo-concepts.

⁵ David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Produce by John Mamounand Charles Frank, Project Gutenberg EBook, 1912, p. 39.

⁶ C. L. Stevenson, “The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms” 1937 in *Logical Positivism* of A. J. Ayer, New York, The Free Press, 1959, p. 264.

⁷ LutforRahman, *The Critical Examination of A. J. Ayer’s Moral Philosophy*, Hanilton, Ontario, MacMaster University, June 1989, p. 11.

containing factual content responding to empirical matters of fact (sense-perception) through which science is produced placing the doctrine of emotivism meaningless statements for they belong to moral judgement that do not concern matters of facts in the description of the world but, simply giving an emotional answer to it. This is the reason why the judgement of a statement to be true or false is not the concern of moralist.

From this means, ethical statements to Ayer are not in any sense valuable. If a statement is taken to mean the utterance of a sentence just as to say something which is true or false they are according to Ayer, simply comparable to a cry of pain, joy, or what he called "ejaculation" rather statement of facts. Ayer summarized, by the following passage, his central thesis that the function of a normative⁸ ethical term in a statement is not to state a fact but to express emotion and feelings of approval or disapproval in a situation thus,

"If I say to someone, "You acted wrongly in stealing that money" I am not stating anything more than if I had simply said, "You stole that money". In adding that this action is wrong I am not making any further statement about it. I am simply evincing my moral disapproval of it. It is as if I had said, "You stole that money", in a peculiar tone of horror, or written it with the addition of some special exclamation marks. The tone, or the exclamation marks, adds nothing to the literal meaning of the sentence. It merely serves to show that the expression of it is attended by certain feelings in the speaker.

If now I generalize my previous statement and say, "Stealing money is wrong". I produce a sentence which has no factual meaning that is, expresses no proposition which can be either true or false. It is as if I had written "Stealing money" where the shape and thickness of the exclamation marks show, by a suitable convention, that a special sort of moral disapproval is the feeling which is being expressed. It is clear that there is nothing said here which can be true or false"⁹.

Ayer further asserted in view of the above quotation by resuming emotive theory of value as purely radical subjectivism of the speakers behaviour towards a situation. There are used in a non-cognitive sense, unverifiable. This is to show that Ayer is in total agreement with the logical fallacy of *argumentum Ad misericordiam* (appealing for pity) committed when one appeal for the feeling of pity or sentiment in other to get a conclusion accepted. A cry of pain, a word of command, pity does not express genuine propositions. For example do not send peter out of the class during fee drive because he is an orphan who has no one to pay his fees. Sending him out of the class will only increase his sorrow. Ayer's main contention is that (1) ethical concept is pseudo-concepts because they do not describe any fact and (2) as ethical concepts content pseudo-concepts, it therefore means they are meaningless, hence Colin Wilks affirms in defence of Ayer's point of view that, "when Ayer came to consider ethical statement and found that they were neither logical nor empirically verifiable, he concluded that, they were merely pseudo-significant or pseudo-meaningless."¹⁰

The quest for the translation of ethical values to empirical facts that is, claiming ethical judgements are assertion of facts is answered by the Subjectivist and the Utilitarian's. According to subjectivism, an ethical judgement is an assertion of feeling approving that certain persons or a group have toward such values. But this theory is mistaken since it is not contradictory for the speaker to say that he or she approves of something immoral hence, "subjectivism also seems ill-suited to explain the dynamic aspects of moral judgements."¹¹ The thesis of approving an action as right or good is denied by our quest for facts.

According to utilitarianism promoted by J. S. Mill, it stipulates that, a moral action is in Proportion as it tends to promote the greatest happiness for all concern and wrong if it tend to promote the reverse. But this theory is not self-contradictory to say that an action that promotes the greatest happiness is immoral. In Ayer's emotive theory as seen above, ethical judgements do not express any fact at all, they do not say anything, they are pure expression of feeling and as such do not come under category of truth and falsehood like the case of a murder performed so as to promote the happiness of those still living, to lie is not a good thing. All this produces emotions thus nothing factual can come out of it. Ayer affirms that: "Nevertheless we shall not adopt either a subjectivist or a utilitarian analysis of ethical terms"¹² because their propositions fall under the sub-class of psychology and sociological judgement.

Ayer divided moral statements into four classes; statements concerning the definition of ethical terms, the descriptions of the phenomena of moral experience, the exhortation of moral virtue and the actual ethical

⁸ Ayer distinguished between descriptive and normative used of the ethical terms or statements and insist that the formal kind of statements are meaningful. Sentences which contain normative ethical symbols are not equivalent to sentences which express psychological propositions, or indeed empirical propositions of any kind, ethical symbols are interpreted as symbols of the normative type hence both ethical and normative symbols and rejected by Ayer. To him, only descriptive symbol is acceptable since they are base in the description of facts.

⁹ A. J. Ayer. *Language, Truth and Logic*, p. 67.

¹⁰ Colin Wilks, *Emotion, Truth and Meaning in Defence of Ayer and Stevenson*, Kluwer Academic, 2002, p. 18.

¹¹ D. O. Brink, *The 19th and 20th Century Philosophy: The Emotivists: A. J. Ayer and C. L. Stevenson*, Winter 2013, p. 7.

¹² A. J. Ayer. *Language, Truth and Logic*, p. 65.

judgement.¹³ Only the first proposition said Ayer belongs to ethical philosophy and to an extend description of moral phenomena while the rest do not belong to any branch of philosophy or science hence, “A question which is often discussed by ethical philosophers is whether it is possible to find definitions which would reduce all ethical terms [...] But this question, though it undeniably belongs to ethical philosophy.”¹⁴ The thesis that a normative concept raises emotion without any view to empirical matters is a clear condition for the absolute nature of ethics. They are only controlled by a mysterious intellectual intuition.¹⁵

The objections of ethical values are also applied to aesthetic judgement¹⁶ since their manner of utility is same as those of ethics. This is observed with words like beautiful, hideous put in place without any factual implication just the expression and communication of emotion by appreciating works of art via feeling about them. Moral values and aesthetic can only give us information about mental and our physical make-up.

The elimination of this statement was successful via the application of a statement that responds to scientific and empirical parameters thus, saying the earth rotates around the sun is scientifically verifiable. This is the reason why Ayer applies his famous verifiability criterion of meaning to emotivism.

III. THE APPLICATION OF THE VERIFIABILITY CRITERION OF MEANING TO EMOTIVISM

The centred question of Ayer’s logical positivism was the analysis of language of science. This particularity becomes a burning issue on how meaningful statements are differentiated from meaningless ones. In this light, he adopted a verifiability criterion of meaning as a means to deal with this problem. A statement could only reach the status of meaningfulness if and only if it is confirmed by experience relating to what Francisco Ayala affirms that, “a hypothesis is empirical or scientific only if it can be tested by experience. A hypothesis or theory which cannot be at least in principle, falsified by empirical observations and experiments does not belong to the realm of science.”¹⁷ This citation only confines to the particular interest Ayer had for meaningful propositions as he defines the verifiability principle saying; “A sentence is factually significant to any given person if and only if he knows how to verify the proposition which its purports to express that is, if he knows what observation would lead him under certain conditions to accept the proposition as being true or reject it as being false.”¹⁸ Generally speaking, the verification principle states that the meaning of a statement is the method of its verifiability to talk like Moritz Schlick. From this assumption, the principle of verification must always rest upon observation, that is, on sense experience or sense-perception. Any statement therefore that cannot be verified by the method of observation is said to have no meaning. Thus, in the case of language which allows the expression of empirical propositions, it is though possible to mark out the special class of sentences which are referred to as observation or protocol or basic sentence.”¹⁹ It is clear that with such a rigorous criterion, ethical statement cannot pass the test of meaningfulness. This can be demonstrated by the following syllogism;

All ethical statements are empirically unverified
All empirically unverified statements are meaningless

Therefore: All meaningless statements are ethical statements

This verifiability criterion of meaning proposed by Ayer is supposed to furnish a path to determine whether or not a sentence is literally meaningful. A simple way to formulate it would be to say that a sentence had literal meaning if and only if the proposition it expressed was either analytic or empirically verifiable. To this, however, “it might be objected that unless a sentence was literally meaningful it would not express a proposition.”²⁰ For it is commonly assumed that every proposition is either true or false, and to say that a sentence expressed what was either true or false would entail saying that it was literally meaningful.

It was in the *Demonstration of the Impossibility of Metaphysics* that Ayer gave the first view about the verification principles illustrating that, “I understand a proposition if I know what observations I must make in order to establish its truth or falsity. This may be more succinctly expressed by saying that I understand a

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.72.

¹⁷ Francisco. Ayala, *Biological Evolution: Natural Selection or Random Walk*, Vol. 62, November-December, 1974, p. 700.

¹⁸ A. J. Ayer. *Language, Truth and Logic*, p. 6.

¹⁹ A. J. Ayer, *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1940, p. 85.

²⁰ M. Lazerowitz, *The Principle of Verifiability*, Mind, 1937, p. 372.

proposition when I know what facts would verify it.”²¹ In *Language, Truth and Logic*, he made a clear explanation of the principle since it was his weapon to eliminate metaphysics, ethical and religious values.

Moreover, only analytic and synthetic statements were true scientific statements because of their conformity to verification. From this optic, Ayer applies the criterion of verifiability to ethical statements as rigorously as he applies it to factual statements. Concerning ethical statements he asserts: “in so far as they are not scientific, they are not in the literal sense significant, but are simply expressions of emotion which can be neither true nor false.”²²

Statements of ethics cannot be analysed due to the lack of the means to test the validity of their judgement since they belong to the carnival of pseudo-concepts. Apart from the expression of feelings, ethical terms also arouse feelings, stimulate action, pass commands thus “the analysis of other ethical terms, such as **right**, **ought**, **duty** and **obligation** are similar to that proposed by **good**”²³ couple with Ayer’s expression that,

“The sentence it is your duty to tell the truth may be regarded both as the expression of a certain sort of ethical feeling about truthfulness and as the expression of the command “Tell the truth”. The sentence “you ought to tell the truth” also involves the command “Tell the truth”, but here the tone of the command is less emphatic. In the sentence it is good to tell the truth the command has become little more than a suggestion. And thus the meaning of the word **good**, in its ethical usage, is differentiated from that of the word **duty** or the word **ought**. In fact we may define the meaning of the various ethical words in terms both of the different feelings they are ordinarily taken to express, and also the different responses which they are calculated to provoke.”²⁴

Moreover, ethical values or judgements lack objectivity in their validity, in other words have no validity.²⁵ This is because sentences do not say something that can be true or false nor can be verified via the verifiability criterion of meaning. In fact ethical values make no statement at all, only expressing feelings about something, passing commands which are not scientific nor lead to the acquisition of scientific knowledge. Objectivity cannot be directed to things but to a person for his ascription of moral language to things said Allan in his writing who observed that “objectivity is here used in the sense of a person who believes that moral language ascribes properties to things and events and that this property are real independently of people’s desires, approvals, and so on.”²⁶

According to Ayer, it is obvious and coherent if in a dispute we argue about questions of fact rather than questions of values. If in an argument an opponent disagrees about the value of a certain action you should not just enter directly in argument to win the person or say that he is wrong in his view point. Ayer proposed that we should instead show “he is mistaken about the facts of the case”²⁷ by a misconception of the agent’s motive or the misjudgement of the effects of the action. All this is to make us understand the opponent about the nature of empirical facts so as to take the same moral behaviour as the others. If the opponent is unable to adopt the same moral behaviour as others, we consider our proposition as superior to his. This is without advancing any argument to prove such superiority or allow him to be convinced by argument. Urmson offers a contrary view about the equality of all facts in an argument in *The Emotive Theory of Ethics* that “no fact is logically more relevant to a disagreement in altitude than other fact.”²⁸ This is a method adopted by Ayer to show that those arguing with emotion by expressing feeling cannot express facts and therefore should be discarded in scope of scientific investigations for ethical philosophy or ethics as a branch of knowledge cannot be analysed and therefore metaphysical.²⁹

²¹ A. J. Ayer, *Demonstration of the Impossibility of Metaphysics*, From <http://Mind>, Oxford Journal at University of Sussex, 18 May 2012, p. 337.

²² A. J. Ayer. *Language, Truth and Logic*, p. 63.

²³ Leslie Allan, *A Defence of Emotivism*, Published Online, 16 September 2015, p. 4.

²⁴ A. J. Ayer. *Language, Truth and Logic*, p. 68.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

²⁶ Leslie Allan, p. 7.

²⁷ A. J. Ayer. *Language, Truth and Logic*, p. 70

²⁸ J. O. Urmson, *The Emotive Theory of Ethics*, London: Hutchinson, 1868, p. 48.

²⁹ A. J. Ayer. *Language, Truth and Logic*, p. 71. If anyone doubts the accuracy of this account of moral disputes, let him try to construct even an imaginary argument on a question of value which does not reduce itself to an argument about a question of logic or about an empirical matter of fact. I am confident that he will not succeed in producing a single example. And if that is the case, he must allow that its involving the impossibility of purely ethical arguments is not as Moore thought, a ground of objection to our theory, but rather a point in favour of it.

Having upheld our theory against the only criticism which appeared to threaten it, we may now use it to define the nature of all ethical inquiries. We find that ethical philosophy consists simply in saying that ethical concepts

Ethical statements are different from the statement of science based on evidence. It is absurd for ethical utterances to become meaningful. For if ethical predicates are the source of qualifying an action, Ayer said such an action is descriptive in nature. His attachment to facts as an argument to exclude emotive values, rightly designate what Robert Montague thinks, "Without investigating whether there be other possibilities, that the word "fact" include only what can be observed in sense-experience."³⁰ The empiricists are of the opinion that only statements about sensory phenomena (empirical facts) are legitimate. Knowledge will witness progress and evolution if all its branches take the direction and the spirit of science which is clear, observational with a language of logic thus, "Only science provides us with knowledge. Science has no limit; there is no question whose answer is in principle unattainable by science."³¹ From this optic, the activities of moral and ethical values are excluded in this study.

IV- THE NECESSITY AND URGENCY OF ETHICAL VALUES IN THE WORLD TODAY

It is a question in this area of study to rethink the importance of ethical values to humanity and on scientific activities. Those who stood against ethical values are promoting an evil type of society with no moral laws. The Darwinian doctrine of the struggle for life is a recapitulation where the weak have no right since they are crushed by the strong or in Spinoza's state of nature where big fishes need to eat small ones due to their sovereign right of nature measure to their physical power. These types of doctrines only take place in the society where moral and ethical values are absent.

Human conduct, behaviour and activities are govern by moral and ethical principle because of it systematisation, defence and recommendation of the concept of right and wrong. This seeks to caution human being on what to do. The priority is to discuss the negative impact of scientific activities on humanity face to techno-science. Science without conscience, without the respect of ethics and human life, a science where man become an object of experiment needs to be control and regulated through ethical law particularly the ethics of science. Many lives have been lost face to techno-science; human cloning becomes part of human nature where by a genetically identical individual is fabricated from a donor cell without sexuality as said Françoise Jacob. All this show the ills of science thus, a need for the rehabilitation of ethical values especially the ethics of science not to eliminate as Ayer did because of it emotive content.

Ethical values are need in all dimension of human like: scientific, political social, economic and even cultural. Scientifically as seen above, the concept of techno-science observed across the writings of Gilbert Hottois, Jürgen Harbemas, Jacque Ellul through the explanation of the "big science" paradigm of Robert Oppenheimer, shifted science from rationality (Plato and Aristotle), objectivity (Galilee and Francis Bacon), systematisation (Rene Descartes and Isaac Newton) to operability (Auguste Comte and Robert Oppenheimer). To talk of the operability of science today, scientific activities far from being an important instrument from the positive transformation and mutation in the world, in the technological, cultural, political, economic and in the philosophical dimension, it equally turns to be an instrument of domination and destruction (knowledge is power to Bacon). Techno-science of medicine is not more seen as wisdom and harmonious natural equilibrium but rather that of power, the will to do and undo.

The era of Ayer's imposition of eradicating ethical and moral values in the society was marked by the birth of bioethics around 1960s due to the fast decaying medical practices. The main orthodoxy prevailing in the mind of philosophers especially those of the English speaking world was that "philosophy deals with the analysis of moral terms."³² Moral philosophers become interested in issues that were not questioned before like,

are pseudo-concepts and therefore not analysable. The further task of describing the different feelings that the different ethical terms are used to express, and the different reactions that they customarily provoke, is a task for the psychologist. There cannot be such a thing as ethical science, if by ethical science one means the elaboration of a "true" system of morals. For we have seen that, as ethical judgements are mere expressions of feeling, there can be no way of determining the validity of any ethical system and indeed, no sense in asking whether any such system is true. All that one may legitimately inquire in this connexion is, what are the moral habits of a given person or group of people, and what causes them to have precisely those habits and feelings? And this inquiry falls wholly within the scope of the existing social sciences.

It appears then that, ethics, as a branch of knowledge, is nothing more than a department of psychology and sociology. And in case anyone thinks that we are overlooking the existence of casuistry, we may remark that casuistry is not a science, but is a purely analytical investigation of the structure of a given moral system. In other words, it is an exercise in formal logic.

³⁰R. M. Montague, *The basic Elements of the Philosophy of Alfred Jules Ayer*, University of Winter, 1957, p. 24.

³¹C. J. Misak, *Verificationism: Its History and Prospects*, London and New York, Routledge, 1995, p. 55.

³² K. Helga and P. Singer, *A Companion to Bioethics*, Second Edition, Wiley Blackwell, A John Wiley and Sons, Ltd. Publication, 2009,p. 7.

abortion, ethics of war, euthanasia and capital punishment, most of these issues were related on health practices and biological sciences thus, “this movement in philosophy helped to establish bioethics as a critical discipline”³³ to help humanity from the negative activities of science today.

To know this conception of scientific destruction well, we should go in the context of the Second World War through the “Manhattan Project” where a program was launched for the fabrication of the first atomic bomb with a formula given for practise by Oppenheimer. In 1945 the first atomic bomb was created that killed about 130.000 victims in Hiroshima Japan proving the destructive activities of science. We are totally in a “science without conscience”, a science that respects no moral, no respect of epistemological limit, a science to save the desire of finance and politics.

A similar activity which all started with the Nuremberg in Germany, where the practices of the Nazi were brought to broad day light in the world at large learning from that occasion during which the Nazi killed 70.000 people (mentally and physically handicapped) considered unnecessary to the society. This application of experiment to humanity violated his ontological nature and dignity. The most significant cases that revealed the need for establishing guidelines in research ethics were the abuses during World War II. Physicians conducting experiments under the Nazis forced people to drink seawater to find out how long a person could survive without fresh water. In regard of the violation of ethics and the sanctity of life principle in Jewish Chronis Disease Hospital, Helga and Singer observed that,

“It had become known that patients at the Jewish Chronis Disease Hospital in Brooklyn had been injected with live cancer cells, without their consent, that from 1965 to 1971, mentally retarded children at Willowbrook state hospital in new york had been inoculated with the hepatitis virus and that a 1930 study aim at determining the natural history of syphilis in untreated black men continued in Tuskegee, Alabama until the early 1970s.”³⁴

Talking in the context of Ayer where he eliminated ethics and termed it metaphysical, it is obvious that the atrocities cause by the invention of techno-science as seen in the citation above are to be judged and be regulated by ethics, the feeling about the value of human life. With the elimination of ethics and the ethics of science, what becomes of human nature? The value of Hippocratic Oath as a professional code of practice that participates in the deontological ethical theories is lost. “They are explicit about the physician’s role as including the projection of a certain moral standard to patients.”³⁵ The dehumanisation of scientific activities owes to what TsalaMbani calls *terrorisme ontologique*.³⁶ Observed via humancloning which he defined as “une forme de reproduction asexuée qui consiste à introduire dans une cellule réceptrice préalablement énucléée, la total du patrimoine génétique du donneur de la semence c’est-à-dire l’œuf d’une cellule donneur.”³⁷ The human embryo is subdued to unworthy experimentation hence a clone individual will genetically be identical from the cell of which it was obtained contrary to the procreative measure which is via sexuality. Far from being an instrument to solve human problems in the society today, science becomes a tool of destruction due to the lack of ethics to limit its experimental activities on humanity.

Schlick the founder of the Vienna Circle had a different conception about ethical questions which serves like a rupture from the conception of A. J. Ayer. For “if there are ethical questions which have meaning and are therefore capable of being answered, then ethics is science.”³⁸ Ethics designate a system of knowledge with truth as its objective, theoretical in nature as other sciences. As a branch of philosophy that involves in the distinction of morally good and morally bad behaviours, the question of morality which serves the standard of norms, human conduct, directs man to search only for what is good. This value helps to guide man to live harmoniously with his resemblance. From this optic, we come to the idea that Ayer’s rejection and elimination of ethical values is not consistent and solid because of the urgency and necessity of ethical values today although such values are relative.

IV. CONCLUSION

The elimination of ethical values for its emotive character by Ayer is not a question of today. The modern empiricist Berkeley and Hume earlier submitted it in to critics but it was with Ayer in the 20th century that such an elimination and the proclamation of the death of ethical value, metaphysics, religious and aesthetics values together term speculative knowledge or traditional philosophy, witness one of the highest moments. He

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 573.

³⁶ TsalaMbani (André Liboire), *Biotechnologies et Nature Humaine, vers un terrorisme ontologique ?* Paris, Edition Harmattan, 2007, p. 34.

³⁷ TsalaMbani (André Liboire), *L’Ingénierie Procréatique et L’émergence D’une Génération Batarde des Droits de L’homme*, Paris, Edition Harmattan, 2013, p. 86.

³⁸ Moritz Schlick, “what is the Aim of Ethics” 1930 in A. J. Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, op. cit., p. 247.

considers ethical values as the expression of emotions, feelings about a subject, cry of a pain and command as non-cognitive, lack of scientific base. Ayer observed that, such statements could not stand the test of the verifiability principle and is therefore meaningless and nonsensical. These respond to the scenario that, only empirical-analytic statements are scientific and confines to the language of science. As a logical positivist, Ayer was influenced by the writings of Hume and Berkeley in the modern era, Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, E. Mach, and G. Edward Moore in the contemporary era who in one way or the other posed only propositions which respects matters of facts. Introducing this doctrine in England, Ayer noticed that ethical statements could not help him in his philosophy of science, (empirical science) reason why he opted for total elimination of such values. Despite Ayer's hostility on ethical/moral values, our society today is urgently in need of these values, in view the moral decadence and the bad practices of scientific activities on humanity. The empirical-analytic method Ayer adopted to eliminate ethical statements is not solid. Ethical values are eminent and necessary in human nature to regulate and discipline his/her activities, and the activities of science today.

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