CONTENTS

Preface v
Salient Features vii

Chapter I — The Ethical Dimension of Human Existence
Value 2
Sources of Authority 8
Senses of the Self 14

Chapter II — Utilitarianism
The Principle of Utility 29
Principle of the Greatest Number 33
Justice and Moral Rights 35

Chapter III — Natural Law
Thomas Aquinas 46
The Greek Heritage 48
The Essence and Varieties of Law 54

Chapter IV — Deontology
Duty and Agency 66
Autonomy 68
Universalizability 72

Chapter V — Virtue Ethics
Happiness and Ultimate Purpose 83
Virtue as Excellence 87
Moral Virtue and Mesotes 89

Chapter VI — Synthesis: Making Informed Decisions
The Moral Agent and Contexts 102
Moral Deliberation 108
Self, Society, and Environment 116

References 137
Index 141

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

PREFACE

This is a textbook on Ethics. This book will not tell you what is right and wrong; it will help you in determining it for yourself. More specifically, it will present you with conceptual and analytic tools that will hopefully guide you in your ethical thinking.

The Commission on Higher Education had mandated that Ethics be a general education course required for all college students. As stated in Memorandum Order No. 20, series of 2013, "The fundamental purpose of higher education…is not only to develop knowledgeable and competent graduates in a particular field, but also well-rounded individuals who appreciate knowledge in a general sense, are open-minded because of it, secure in their identities as individuals and as Filipinos, and cognizant of their role in the life of the nation and the larger community." Ethics, then, is one of the courses that will ideally contribute to the development of your intellectual competencies and civic capacities, and to the development of your ability to comprehend the complexities of the social and natural realities around us, as well as your ability to think through the ethical and social implications of a given course of actions. This textbook strives to be faithful to the pursuit of this ideal.

In addition to being faithful with the rationale for the Ethics course, this textbook is also consistent with the structure of the course as specified in the Memorandum Order. The course is envisioned as being comprised of three parts.

First, the course description states, "The first part lays the groundwork—the meaning of ethics—and leads the students through the analysis of human experience, linking it to elements of the ethical dimension." The first chapter of this textbook serves as our initial discussion into the subject matter. Here, we recognize ethics as a significant dimension of human existence, and starts to explore how we may engage in careful ethical thinking.

Second, the course description states, "The second part of the course takes students through the various classical ethical frameworks—utilitarianism, deontological ethics, virtue ethics, and natural [law] ethics…. These frameworks also embed sets of values that students will be asked to examine." In Chapters II to V, we go in-depth through each one of these frameworks. This is in order to arrive at an understanding of the different ways that these theories provide us an avenue of determining ethical valuation.

Finally, the course description states, "The last part guides students through the analysis and evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the various ethical frameworks and their value to human life and society." The final chapter of this textbook involves an extensive engagement of these classical ethical theories with the real-life issues that confront us, calling for moral deliberation. The end goal is for us to be able to make informed decisions and judgments on significant concerns after careful thought.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Each chapter begins with the learning objectives for that particular chapter. There is at least one story or case derived from a news report to get us to begin reflecting on the specific lesson, and to highlight how we are concerned with actual issues; in this textbook, we draw materials, cases, and examples from Philippine realities, contexts, and experiences. Each chapter ends with a summary, a set of key terms, questions about the discussions points, and suggestions for further reading.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Understanding the foundations of moral valuation necessitates different approaches to the study and learning of ethics contextualized in contemporary Filipino experience. We have designed each chapter of this textbook to follow a philosophical pedagogy developed through years of teaching the course while at the same time fully complying with the CHED Memorandum Order No. 20, series of 2013. Aiming at interdisciplinarity, the text is interspersed with philosophical texts, historical overviews, and real-life case studies to challenge the students to come up with an informed ethical decision. Each chapter is divided into these salient features:

- *Chapter Objectives* – Articulated OBE learning outcomes that are observable and measureable.
- *Introduction* – A case study from a contemporary Filipino experience that raises the ethical question and that cuts through the entire chapter.
- *Philosopher's Box* – This features a philosopher/s who has played a critical role in the development of the ethical theory being discussed.
- *Text and Commentary* – Overview and in-depth discussion of the ethical theory, using engaging and commenting on primary philosophical sources.
- *Key Words* – A list of significant words in understanding the ethical theory.
- *Study Questions* – A list of questions to further the discussion in the class.
- *Suggested Readings*– A list of recommended readings to further inform one's knowledge of the subject matter.
- *Activity Pages* – A set of activities on special topics to deepen, strengthen, and apply students' understanding of ethical concepts and theories.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Aside from discussing the different ethical theories and thinkers, this textbook also analyzes the different dimensions of ethics (Chapter I) and ethical decision-making (Chapter VI). The first chapter allows the student to consider the different factors affecting her understanding of ethics and the pursuit of the good. The last chapter encourages the student to reflect further and to apply these various lessons in making ethical decisions.

CHAPTER I
THE ETHICAL DIMENSION OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. identify the ethical aspect of human life and the scope of ethical thinking;
2. define and explain the terms that are relevant to ethical thinking; and
3. evaluate the difficulties that are involved in maintaining certain commonly-held notions on ethics.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

INTRODUCTION

In August 2007, newspapers[1] reported what seemed to be yet another sad incident of fraternity violence. Cris Anthony Mendez, a twenty-year-old student of the University of the Philippines (UP), was rushed to the hospital in the early morning hours, unconscious, with large bruises on his chest, back, and legs. He passed away that morning, and the subsequent autopsy report strongly suggests that his physical injuries were most probably the result of "hazing" (the term colloquially used to refer to initiation rites in which neophytes may be subjected to various forms of physical abuse). What exactly happened remains an open question, as none of those who were with him that night came forward to shed light on what had transpired. Needless to say, none of them came forward to assume responsibility for the death of Cris.

Even as the leaders of the Sigma Rho fraternity publicly denounced the death of Cris, those members of theirs who had been with him that night vanished, avoiding and refusing to cooperate with legal authorities. Meanwhile, UP students and the general public clamored for justice. In a move that surprised the student body, the UP chancellor called on all fraternities to justify their continued existence. Meanwhile, the case of the tragic death of Cris Anthony Mendez was left unresolved. It remains that way up to this day.[2]

No one knows just what exactly happened. No charges have been filed, no definitive testimony has been forthcoming. But there is more to this for us than just a criminal mystery. Pondering on the death of Cris, we may find ourselves asking questions such as "What is the value of one's life?" "What exactly were the wrongs done to Cris by his so-called fraternity brothers?" or perhaps even "Is there any good to fraternities?" These questions that concern good and bad, or right and wrong—and these are questions concerning value—are the kind of questions that we deal with in ethics.

VALUE

Ethics, generally speaking, is about matters such as the good thing that we should pursue and the bad thing that we should avoid; the right ways in which we could or should act and the wrong ways of acting. It is about what is acceptable and unacceptable in human behavior. It may involve obligations that we are expected to fulfill, prohibitions that we are required to respect, or ideals that we are encouraged to meet. Ethics as a subject for us to study is about determining the grounds for the values with particular and special significance to human life.

CLARIFICATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Recognizing the notions of good and bad, and right and wrong, are the primary concern of ethics. In order to start, it would be useful to clarify the following points.

Kinds of Valuation

Our first point of clarification is to recognize that there are instances when we make value judgments that are *not* considered to be part of ethics. For instance, I could say that this new movie I had just seen was a "good" one because I enjoyed it, or a song I had just heard on the radio was a "bad" one because it had an unpleasant tone, but these are not part of a discussion of ethics. I may have an opinion as to what is the "right" dip (*sawsawan*) for my chicken barbecue, or I may maintain that it is "wrong" to wear a leather vest over a Barong Tagalog, and these are not concerns of ethics. These are valuations that fall under the domain of *aesthetics*. The word "aesthetics" is derived from the Greek word *aisthesis* ("sense" or "feeling") and refers to the judgments of personal approval or disapproval that we make about what we see, hear, smell, or taste. In fact, we often use the word "taste" to refer to the personal aesthetic preferences that we have on these matters, such as "his taste in music" or "her taste in clothes."

Similarly, we have a sense of approval or disapproval concerning certain actions which can be considered relatively more trivial in nature. Thus, for instance, I may think that it is "right" to knock politely on someone's door, while it is "wrong" to barge into one's office. Perhaps I may approve of a child who knows how to ask for something properly by saying, "please" and otherwise, disapprove of a woman that I see picking her nose in public. These and other similar examples belong to the category of *etiquette*, which is concerned with right and wrong actions, but those which might be considered not quite grave enough to belong to a discussion on ethics. To clarify this point, we can differentiate how I may be displeased seeing a healthy young man refuse to offer his seat on the bus to an elderly lady, but my indignation and shock would be much greater if I were to see a man deliberately push another one out of a moving bus.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

We can also consider how a notion of right and wrong actions can easily appear in a context that is not a matter of ethics. This could also be when learning how to bake, for instance. I am told that the right thing to do would be to mix the dry ingredients first, such as flour or sugar before bringing in any liquids, like milk or cream; this is the right thing to do in baking, but not one that belongs to a discussion of ethics. This could also be when learning how to play basketball. I am instructed that it is against the rules to walk more than two steps without dribbling the ball; again, obeying this rule to not travel is something that makes sense only in the context of the game and is not an ethical prohibition. We derive from the Greek word *techne* the English words "technique" and "technical" which are often used to refer to a proper way (or right way) of doing things, but a *technical* valuation (or right and wrong technique of doing things) may not necessarily be an ethical one as these examples show.

Recognizing the characteristics of aesthetic and technical valuation allows us to have a rough guide as to what belongs to a discussion of ethics. They involve valuations that we make in a sphere of human actions, characterized by certain gravity and concern the human well-being or human life itself. Therefore, matters that concern life and death such as war, capital punishment, or abortion and matters that concern human well-being such as poverty, inequality, or sexual identity are often included in discussions of ethics. However, this general description is only a starting point and will require further elaboration.

One complication that can be noted is that the distinction between what belongs to ethics and what does not is not always so clearly defined. At times, the question of what is grave or trivial is debatable, and sometimes some of the most heated discussions in ethics could be on the fundamental question of whether a certain sphere of human activities belongs to this discussion. Are clothes always just a matter of taste or would provocative clothing call for some kind of moral judgment? Can we say that a man who verbally abuses his girlfriend is simply showing bad manners or does this behavior deserve stronger moral condemnation?

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Ethics and Morals

Our second point of clarification is on the use of the words "ethics" and "morals." This discussion of ethics and morals would include cognates such as ethical, unethical, immoral, amoral, morality, and so on. As we proceed, we should be careful particularly on the use of the word "not" when applied to the words "moral" or "ethical" as this can be ambiguous. One might say that cooking is not ethical, that is, the act of cooking does not belong to a discussion of ethics; on the other hand, one might say that lying is not ethical, but the meaning here is that the act of lying would be an unethical act.

Let us consider those two words further. The term "morals" may be used to refer to specific beliefs or attitudes that people have or to describe acts that people perform. Thus, it is sometimes said that an individual's personal conduct is referred to as his morals, and if he falls short of behaving properly, this can be described as immoral. However, we also have

terms such as "moral judgment" or "moral reasoning," which suggest a more rational aspect. The term "ethics" can be spoken of as the discipline of studying and understanding ideal human behavior and ideal ways of thinking. Thus, ethics is acknowledged as an intellectual discipline belonging to *philosophy*. However, acceptable and unacceptable behaviors are also generally described as ethical and unethical, respectively. In addition, with regard to the acceptable and unacceptable ways of behaving in a given field, we have the term "professional ethics" (e.g., legal ethics for the proper comportment of lawyers and other people in the legal profession; medical ethics for doctors and nurses; and media ethics for writers and reporters).

Therefore, various thinkers and writers posit a distinction between the terms "moral" and "ethics" and they may have good reasons for doing so, but there is no consensus as to how to make that distinction. Ordinary conversation presents a much less rigid distinction between these terms, and in this book, we will lean in that direction as we do not need to occupy ourselves here with the question of how different thinkers and writers construe that distinction. So, in this book, we will be using the terms "ethical" and "moral" (likewise, "ethics" and "morality") interchangeably.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

> *Philosophy* is commonly thought of today as a particular discipline in a college curriculum, perhaps a subject that one could take, or a course in which one could get a degree. The word "philosophy" is rooted in the Greek words that translate to "love of wisdom" (*philia* is the noun often translated into English as some form of "friendship" or "love," while *sophia* is the noun often translated into English as "wisdom"). More specifically, the word "philosophy" had been first used by thinkers to refer to their striving to better understand reality in a maintained and systematic manner. Historically speaking, it can be said that philosophy started among the ancient Greeks around two and a half thousand years ago, when certain people in the Mediterranean made the mental effort of trying to make sense of the world and of human life in a unique way. As time passed, asking certain specific questions would develop into specific methods; these particular topics and the ways of addressing them established themselves as disciplines in their own right, which is why we now have the empirical sciences such as biology or the social sciences such as psychology. Philosophy remains as the unique discipline that asks significant questions that other fields are unable to address. The different branches or areas of philosophy correspond to some of these questions, generally stated as follows: *metaphysics* wonders as to what constitutes the whole of reality; *epistemology* asks what is our basis for determining what we know; *axiology* refers broadly to the study of value and is often divided into aesthetics, which concerns itself with the value of beauty, and ethics, which concerns itself with the value of human actions.

Descriptive and Normative

Our third point of clarification is to distinguish between a descriptive and a normative study of ethics. A *descriptive* study of ethics reports how people, particularly groups, make their moral valuations without making any judgment either for or against these valuations. This kind of study is often the work of the social scientist: either a historian (studying different moral standards over time) or a sociologist or an anthropologist (studying different moral standards across cultures). A *normative* study of ethics, as is often done in philosophy or moral theology, engages the question: What could or should be considered as the right way of acting? In other words, a normative discussion prescribes what we ought to maintain as our standards or bases for moral valuation. When engaging in a discussion of ethics, it is always advisable to recognize whether one is concerned with a descriptive view (e.g., noting how filial piety and obedience are pervasive characteristics of Chinese culture) or with a normative perspective (e.g., studying how Confucian ethics enjoins us to obey our parents and to show filial piety).

We need to go further. A philosophical discussion of ethics goes beyond recognizing the characteristics of some descriptive theory; also, it does not simply accept as correct any normative theory. A philosophical discussion of ethics engages in a critical consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of these theories. This will be our primary concern throughout this book.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Issue, Decision, Judgment, and Dilemma

As the final point of clarification, it may be helpful to distinguish a situation that calls for moral valuation. It can be called a *moral issue*. For instance, imagine a situation wherein a person cannot afford a certain item, but then the possibility presents itself for her to steal it. This is a matter of ethics (and not just law) insofar as it involves the question of respect for one's property. We should add that "issue" is also often used to refer to those particular situations that are often the source of considerable and inconclusive debate (thus, we would often hear topics such as capital punishment and euthanasia as moral "issues").

When one is placed in a situation and confronted by the choice of what act to perform, she is called to make a *moral decision*. For instance, I choose not to take something I did not pay for. When a person is an observer who makes an assessment on the actions or behavior of someone, she is making a *moral judgment*. For instance, a friend of mine chooses to steal from a store, and I make an assessment that it is wrong.

Finally, going beyond the matter of choosing right over wrong, or good over bad, and considering instead the more complicated situation wherein one is torn between choosing one of two goods or choosing between the lesser of two evils: this is referred to as a *moral dilemma*. We have a moral dilemma when an individual can choose only one

from a number of possible actions, and there are compelling ethical reasons for the various choices. A mother may be conflicted between wanting to feed her hungry child, but then recognizing that it would be wrong for her to steal is an example of a moral dilemma.

REASONING

Why do we suppose that a certain way of acting is right and its opposite wrong? The study of ethics is interested in questions like these: Why do we decide to consider *this* way of acting as acceptable while *that* way of acting, its opposite, is unacceptable? To put it in another way, what *reasons* do we give to decide or to judge that a certain way of acting is either right or wrong?

A person's fear of punishment or desire for reward can provide him a reason for acting in a certain way. It is common to hear someone say: "I did not cheat on the exam because I was afraid that I might get caught," or "I looked after my father in the hospital because I wanted to get a higher allowance." In a certain sense, fear of punishment and desire for reward can be spoken of as giving someone a "reason" for acting in a certain way. But the question then would be: Is this reason good enough? That is to say, this way of thinking seems to be a shallow way of understanding reason because it does not show any true understanding of why cheating on an exam is wrong or why looking after a member of my family is in itself a good thing. The promise of rewards and the fear of punishments can certainly motivate us to act, but are not in themselves a determinant of the rightness or wrongness of a certain way of acting or of the good or the bad in a particular pursuit. Is it possible to find better reasons for finding a certain way of acting either acceptable or unacceptable?

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

I am in a situation wherein I could obtain a higher grade for myself by cheating. I make the decision not to do so. Or I know that my friend was in a position to get a better grade for herself by cheating. She refuses to do so; I then make the judgment of praising her for this. In making this kind of moral decision or moral judgment, the question can be asked: Why?

Asking the question "why" might bring us to no more than a superficial discussion of rewards and punishments, as seen above, but it could also bring us to another level of thinking. Perhaps one can rise above the particulars of a specific situation, going beyond whatever motivation or incentive is present in this instance of cheating (or not doing so). In other words, our thinking may take on a level of abstraction, that is, detaching itself from the particular situation and arriving at a statement like, "Cheating is wrong," by recognizing proper reasons for not acting in this way. Beyond rewards and punishments, it is possible for our moral valuation—our decisions and judgments—to be based on a principle. Thus, one may conclude that cheating is wrong based on a sense of fair play or a respect for the importance and validity of testing. From this, we can define *principles* as rationally established grounds by which one justifies and maintains her moral decisions and judgments.

But why do we maintain one particular principle rather than another? Why should I maintain that I should care for fair play and that cheating is, therefore, wrong? Returning to the case of fraternity hazing where we started this chapter, why is it wrong to cause another person physical injury or to take another's life? We can maintain principles, but we can also ask what good reasons for doing so. Such reasons may differ. So, for example, what makes the death of Cris such a tragedy? One person may say that life is sacred and God-given. Another person may declare that human life has a priceless dignity. Still another may put forward the idea that taking another's life does not contribute to human happiness but to human misery instead. How exactly do we arrive at any of these claims? This is where we turn to theory. A *moral theory* is a systematic attempt to establish the validity of maintaining certain moral principles. Insofar as a theory is a system of thought or of ideas, it can also be referred to as a *framework*. We can use this term, "framework," as a theory of interconnected ideas, and at the same time, a structure through which we can evaluate our reasons for valuing a certain decision or judgment.

There are different frameworks that can make us reflect on the principles that we maintain and thus, the decisions and judgments we make. By studying these, we can reconsider, clarify, modify, and ultimately strengthen our principles, thereby informing better both our moral judgments and moral decisions.

Plato (427–347 BCE)

The Greek thinker Plato is credited as one of the pioneers of philosophy as his various writings bring up and discuss carefully and creatively some of the questions that later thinkers will find to be of lasting significance to humankind, such as "Can virtue be taught?" "What is beauty?" and "What is love?" He started a school in Athens which would be known as the Academy and is believed to be the first institution of higher learning in the Western world.

The next chapters of this book will explore different ethical frameworks that have come down from the history of philosophy. This is not an exhaustive list, and many worthwhile theories and thinkers have been set aside. But the choice had been made to discuss more deeply and at greater length just a few of the more significant and influential thinkers and ideas that have contributed to ethical discernment.

In *The Apology of Socrates* written by Plato, Socrates makes the claim that it is the greatest good for a person to spend time thinking about and discussing with others these questions on goodness and virtue. Hopefully, as we pursue these topics, you will come to agree with Socrates that this effort is indeed a good thing. We will be returning to Plato later in this chapter, as he guides us though some further difficulties.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Before turning to the ethical theories, we will spend the rest of this chapter exploring certain notions of ethics that are commonly maintained, but further thought on these notions will reveal that these are quite problematic. These involve either an appeal to a particular form of authority or to a particular way of understanding the self.

SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

Several common ways of thinking about ethics are based on the idea that the standards of valuation are imposed by a higher authority that commands our obedience. In the following section, we will explore three of such ideas: the authority of the law, the authority of one's religion, and the authority of one's own culture.

LAW

It is supposed that law is one's guide to ethical behavior. In the Philippines, Filipinos are constrained to obey the laws of the land as stated in the country's criminal and civil codes. Making this even more particular, in Cebu, residents are constrained to follow any provincial laws or city ordinances. One can easily imagine this becoming even more localized to the *barangay* or village level, where local or municipal layers of obligation are there for residents to follow. The term *positive law* refers to the different rules and regulations that are posited or put forward by an authority figure that require compliance.

At first glance, this seems to make a lot of sense. We recognize that there are many acts that we immediately consider unethical (e.g., murder or theft), which we also know are forbidden by law. Furthermore, the law is enforced by way of a system of sanctions administered through persons and institutions, which all help in compelling us to obey. Taking the law to be the basis of ethics has the benefit of providing us with an objective standard that is obligatory and applicable to all. So, we would not be surprised if we were to hear someone say, "Ethics? It is simple. Just follow whatever the law says."

However, there are some problems with this. Of course, we do maintain that, generally speaking, one should obey the law. However, the idea that we are examining here is a more controversial one: the more radical claim that one can look to the law *itself* in order to determine what is right or wrong. But the question is: can one simply identify ethics with the law?

One point to be raised is the prohibitive nature of law. The law does not tell us what we should do; it works by constraining us from performing acts that we should not do. To put it slightly differently, the law cannot tell us what to pursue, only what to avoid. Would we be satisfied thinking about ethics solely from the negative perspective of that which we may not do, disregarding the important aspect of a good which we could and maybe even should do, even if it were not required of us by the law?

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

In line with this, we might find that there are certain ways of acting which are not forbidden by the law, but are ethically questionable to us. For instance, a company that pads its profits by refusing to give its employees benefits may do so within the parameters of the law. The company can do so by refusing to hire people on a permanent basis, but offering them six-month contracts. Constrained to work under this contractual system, the employees are thus deprived not only of benefits, but also of job security. Here, no law is violated, yet one can wonder whether there is something ethically questionable to this business practice. The fact that one can make such a negative value judgment of the practice where there is no violation of the law is already a hint that one can look to something beyond the law when making our ethical valuations.

To make this point concrete, recall the story of a toddler who had been run over by a couple of vehicles. While there were many passers-by who witnessed what had happened, for quite a long while, no one did anything to help. The child later died in the hospital.[3] The law does not oblige people to help others in need, so none of these passers-by were guilty of breaking any law. However, many people reacting to this sad news report share a sense that those passers-by were somewhat ethically culpable in their negligence. In view of all this, perhaps one should think of ethics in a way that does not simply identify it with obedience to the law. Later, we shall see how the concept of law is creatively utilized in the **Deontology** of Immanuel Kant in a more ethically significant way.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

RELIGION

"Love the Lord, Your God, therefore, and always heed his charge: his statutes, decrees, and commandments." (New American Bible)

This verse is the first line of Chapter 11 of the book of Deuteronomy. It expresses a claim that many people of a religious sensibility find appealing and immediately valid: the idea that one is obliged to obey her God in all things. As a foundation for ethical values, this is referred to as the *divine command theory*. The divinity called God, Allah, or Supreme Being commands and one is obliged to obey her Creator. There are persons and texts that one believes are linked to the Divine. By listening to these figures and reading these writings, an individual discovers how the Divine wants her to act. Further, someone maintaining a more radical form of this theory might go beyond these instruments of divine revelation and claim that God "spoke" to her directly to instruct her what to do.

At first glance, this seems to make a lot of sense. Many of us had been brought up with one form of religious upbringing or another, so it is very possible that there is a strong inclination in us to refer to our religious background to back up our moral valuations. We are presented with a more-or-less clear code of prohibitions and many of these prohibitions given by religion—"Thou shall not kill," "Thou shall not steal," and "Thou shall not commit adultery"—seem to intuitively coincide with our sense of what ethics should rightly demand. In addition, there is an advance here over the law because religion is not simply prohibitive, but it also provides ideals to pursue. For instance, one may be called to forgive those who

sinned against him or be charitable to those who have less. Further, taking religion as basis of ethics has the advantage of providing us with not only a set of commands but also a Supreme Authority that can inspire and compel our obedience in a way that nothing else can. The Divine can command absolute obedience on one's part as the implications of her actions involve her ultimate destiny. Thus, we would not be surprised if we were to hear someone say, "Ethics? It is simple. Just follow whatever your religion says."

However, there are some problems with this. First, on the practical level, we realize the presence of a multiplicity of religions. Each faith demands differently from its adherents, which would apparently result in conflicting ethical standards. For instance, certain religions have prohibitions concerning what food may be consumed, while others do not share the same constraints. Are we then compelled to judge others negatively given their different morality? Are we called upon to convert them toward our own faith? How about the problem of realizing that not everyone is devout or maintains a religious faith? Would we be compelled to admit then that if religion is the basis of morality, some people would simply have no moral code? Differences, however, are not confined to being problematic of varying religious traditions. Experience teaches us that sometimes even within one and the same faith, difference can be a real problem. For instance, we can easily imagine a number of Christians agreeing that they should read and find their inspiration from the Bible; but we could also easily imagine them disagreeing on which particular lines they need to focus on. Which of the passages from the sacred Scriptures are they supposed to follow? All of them or only some? If so, which ones? Which pastor am I supposed to obey if I find them debating over how to interpret the scriptures, not to mention ethical issues? The problem of difference thus remains.

Second, on what may be called a more conceptual level, we can see a further problem where one requires the believer to clarify her understanding of the connection between ethics and the Divine. This problem was first elucidated in the history of thought by Plato in his dialogue titled *Euthyphro*.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Euthyphro

Plato

EUTHYPHRO:	But I would certainly say that the holy is what all the gods love, and that the opposite, what all the gods hate, is unholy.
SOCRATES:	Well, Euthyphro, should we examine this in turn to see if it is true? Or should we let it go, accept it from ourselves or anyone else without more ado, and agree that a thing is so if only someone says it is? Or should we examine what a person means when he says something?
EUTHYPHRO:	Of course. I believe, though, that this time what I say is true.
SOCRATES:	Perhaps we shall learn better, my friend. For consider: is the holy loved by the gods because it is holy? Or is it holy because it is loved by the gods?[4]

In the exchange between Socrates and Euthyphro, the question is raised as to how one is supposed to define "holiness." Euthyphro puts forward the idea that what is holy is loved by the gods. Socrates calls this into question by asking for the following clarification: Is it holy only because it is loved by the gods, or is it holy in itself and that is why it is loved by the gods? The relevance of these questions to our discussion becomes clear if rephrased this way: Is it the case that something is right *only because* God commanded it, or is it the case that something is right *in itself* and that is why God commanded it?

If we presume that taking another's life is wrong, we can ask the question: Is it the case that this is so only because God commanded it, or that killing is in itself wrong, and that is the reason why God commanded it? If we were to accept that it is wrong to take another's life because God commanded it, we are left with the difficult conclusion that there is nothing inherently wrong with killing. It is only because God said so—"Thou shall not kill"—that we consider such an act wrong. It would seem then that there is something arbitrary about it all, in the sense that God could will whatever He wants. On that basis and nothing further, we have the distinction between right from wrong. As a further disturbing thought, we may find an occasion wherein we could believe that God is suddenly commanding us to do otherwise—that killing *might* now become acceptable. History reveals many sad instances of people believing that God so wills it, allowing them to kill their fellow human beings in His name. The Crusades of the Middle Ages are a tragic case in point. Can we be satisfied with this idea that the divine will could be arbitrary?

If, on the other hand, we were to accept that killing is in itself wrong, then we acknowledge that perhaps there are standards of right and wrong that we can refer to independently of God. But if this is the case, then we actually do not obey a command because God commanded it, but are looking for those objective standards of right and wrong, to which God simply concurs. One would not even have to think in terms of obeying God—or even believing in Him—in order to abide by such ethical standards.

Having said this, we maintain that, generally speaking, it is a good thing for a person of faith to abide by the teachings of her particular religion. But the divine command theory demands more than this as it requires us to identify the entire sense of right and wrong with what religion dictates. The conceptual problem we have seen and the practical difficulties of simply basing ethics on the divine command are reasons enough for us to wonder whether we have to set this way of thinking aside. Now, let us clarify this point: Our calling into question of the divine command theory is not a calling into question of one's belief in God; it is not intended to be a challenge to one's faith. Instead, it is an invitation to consider whether there may be more creative and less problematic ways of seeing the connection between faith and ethics, rather than simply equating what is ethical with whatever one takes to be commanded by God.

Later, we shall see one way that we can have a more subtle and yet powerful presentation of how one's faith may contribute to ethical thought when we look at the **Natural Law** theory of Thomas Aquinas.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

CULTURE

Our exposure to different societies and their cultures makes us aware that there are ways of thinking and valuing that are different from our own, that there is in fact a wide diversity of how different people believe it is proper to act. There are aesthetic differences (Japanese art vs. Indian art), religious differences (Buddhism vs. Christianity), and etiquette differences (conflicting behaviors regarding dining practices). In these bases, it may become easy to conclude that this is the case in ethics as well. There are also various examples that seem to bear these out: nudity can be more taboo in one culture than in another. Another example would be how relations between men and women can show a wide variety across different cultures, ranging from greater liberality and equality on one hand, to greater inequality and a relation of dominance versus submission on the other. From the reality of diversity, it is possible for someone to jump to the further claim that the sheer variety at work in the different ways of valuation means there is no single universal standard for such valuations, and that this holds true as well in the realm of ethics. Therefore, what is ethically acceptable or unacceptable is relative to, or that is to say, dependent on one's culture. This position is referred to as *cultural relativism*.

There is something appealing to this way of thinking because cultural relativism seems to conform to what we experience, which is the reality of the differences in how cultures make their ethical valuations. Second, by taking one's culture as the standard, we are provided a basis for our valuations. Third, this teaches us to be tolerant of others from different cultures, as we realize that we are in no position to judge whether the ethical thought or practice of another culture is acceptable or unacceptable. In turn, our own culture's moral code is neither superior to nor inferior to any other, but they would provide us the standards that are appropriate and applicable to us. So, we would not be surprised if we were to hear someone say, "Ethics? It is simple. Just follow whatever your culture says."

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

> This discussion would not be complete if we were to ignore the topic of Filipino values. Early in our upbringing, we were taught about certain valuable traits that we say are characteristics of Filipinos, such as respect for the elderly, close family ties, a sense of hospitality, and also of solidarity with others at times of distress. We proudly say that we value these qualities of Filipinos. These are indeed laudable qualities, but could we simply identify ethics with the positive valuation that we make of these qualities? We will be discussing this and related questions more thoroughly in the last chapter.

Tempting as this idea is, there are problems. In a classic exposition of this topic by James Rachels, he presents some of these difficulties.[5] The first three points in the following paragraphs are a brief restatement of some of his criticisms of cultural relativism; these are followed by an additional fourth point of criticism based on more recent and more contextualized observations.

First, the argument of cultural relativism is premised on the reality of difference. Because different cultures have different moral codes, we cannot say that any one moral code is the right one. But is it a case of the presence of disagreement means there are no right or wrong answers? Isn't it a common experience to be confronted by a disagreement between persons and then to have the conflict clarified later as to who is right or wrong? In other words, disagreement may mean that the question of who is right or wrong is not immediately evident, but it does not necessarily mean that there is no one correct resolution.

Second, under cultural relativism, we realize that we are in no position to render any kind of judgment on the practices of another culture. This seems to be a generous and an open-minded way of respecting others. But what if the practice seems to call for comment? What if a particular African tribe thought it is advantageous and therefore right for them to wipe out a neighboring people through a terrible practice of genocide? What if some Middle Eastern country was highly repressive toward women reaching to the point of violence? What about the traditional practice of head-hunting that is still maintained by certain societies in the Cordilleras? Are we in no position to judge any of this as wrong? Would we be satisfied with concluding that we cannot judge another culture? But this is one of the implications of cultural relativism.

Third, under cultural relativism, we realize that we are in no position to render judgment on the practices of even our own culture. If our culture was the basis for determining right and wrong, we would be unable to say that something within our cultural practice was problematic, precisely because we take our culture to be the standard for making such judgments. If we came from a particular society wherein there is a tradition of arranged marriage, we would simply have to accept that this is how we do things. But what if we are not satisfied by this conclusion? We may be proud and glad about identifying certain traits, values, and practices of our culture, but we may not necessarily laud or wish to conform to all of them. It is possible that we may not be satisfied with the thought of not being able to call our own culture into question.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Fourth, perhaps the most evident contemporary difficulty with cultural relativism is that we can maintain it only by following the presumption of culture as a single, clearly-defined substance or as something fixed and already determined. Now, it is always possible to find examples of a certain culture having a unique practice or way of life and to distinguish it from other cultures' practices, but it is also becoming increasingly difficult to determine what exactly defines one's culture.

Is my culture "Filipino"? What if I identify more with a smaller subset within this group, if, for example, I am Igorot? Is this then my culture? Why not go further and define my culture as being Kankana-ey rather than Ibaloi? Is this then my culture? The point here precisely is the question: What am I supposed to take as "my culture"?

We can think of many other examples that reflect the same problem. Let us say that my father is from Pampanga and my mother is from Leyte, and I was brought up in Metro

Manila: What is my culture? On one hand, let us say that my father is American and my mother is Filipina, and I was brought up in San Diego, California, but I am currently studying in a university in the Philippines: What am I supposed to take as "my culture"?

In an increasingly globalized world, the notion of a static and well-defined culture gives way to greater flexibility and integration. One result of this is to call into question an idea like cultural relativism, which only makes sense if one could imagine a clear-cut notion of what can be defined as my culture.

We can conclude this criticism of cultural relativism by pointing out how it is a problem in our study of ethics because it tends to deprive us of our use of critical thought. On the positive side, cultural relativism promotes a sense of humility, that is, urging us not to imagine that our own culture is superior to another. Such humility, however, should go hand in hand with a capacity for a rational, critical discernment that is truly appreciative of human values. Unfortunately, what happens in cultural relativism is that it basically renders us incapable of discerning about the values we may wish to maintain as we are forced to simply accept whatever our culture gives us. It keeps us from exploring whether there are values that are shared between cultures; it keeps us from comparing and judging—either positively or negatively—the valuations that are made by different cultures. As previously mentioned, this presumes that we can determine culture in the first place, which becomes increasingly questionable in a transcultural world.

As with our earlier discussions on law and religion, this is not to set aside culture entirely as if it were irrelevant. Instead, we are urged to think more carefully about how one's understanding of her belonging to a certain culture could be more fruitful and meaningful for her ethical discernment. We will explore this further in the last chapter.

Returning to the Case of Cris.

Can one claim that fraternities have their own "culture" that deserves respect? What would be the strong and weak points of this claim?

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

SENSES OF THE SELF

It is sometimes thought that one should not rely on any external authority to tell oneself what the standards of moral valuation are, but should instead turn inwards. In this section, we will look into three theories about ethics that center on the self: subjectivism, psychological egoism, and ethical egoism.

SUBJECTIVISM

The starting point of subjectivism is the recognition that the individual thinking person (the subject) is at the heart of all moral valuations. She is the one who is confronted

with the situation and is burdened with the need to make a decision or judgment. From this point, subjectivism leaps to the more radical claim that the individual is the sole determinant of what is morally good or bad, right or wrong. A number of clichés familiar to us would echo this idea:

"No one can tell me what is right and wrong."

"No one knows my situation better than myself."

"I am entitled to my own opinion."

"It is good if I say that it is good."

There is something appealing about these statements because they seem to express a cherished sense of personal independence. But a close look at these statements may reveal problems and in seeing these, we see the problems of subjectivism.

"No one can tell me what is right and wrong." In a sense, there is some validity to this. No one can compel another to accept a certain value judgment if she herself does not concur with it. However, we know that this statement cannot be taken as absolute. We realize, in many instances, that we had maintained an idea or an opinion that further discussion reveals it was actually erroneous. We realize that we can be mistaken and that we can be corrected by others. Why is this not also possibly applicable when we are speaking of ethics?

"No one knows my situation better than myself." Once again, in a sense, there is some validity to this. This particular person who is put in a certain situation, which calls for a decision, has knowledge of the factors that affect her situation and decision. But to take this fact as a ground for not listening to others is to have a mentality that imagines that one's own situation or concern is so personal and unique that there is no way another person can possibly understand her and give her any meaningful advice. But does not it make greater sense to recognize the reality that many human experiences are common and that others may have something useful to suggest?

"I am entitled to my own opinion." Here, once again, is a valid point that is often misused. Certainly, each person has the right to believe what she believes and has the right to express this. But this right is often stubbornly misconstrued as some kind of immunity from criticism and correction. A bigoted racist has an opinion against anyone who is dark-skinned, an anti-Semite has an opinion against Jews, and a misogynist has an opinion against women. We realize that these opinions are highly problematic because there is no basis for considering any of these groups of people as inferior. We would rightly be indignant about an employer who pays his female employees less than the male employees, simply because he is of the opinion that women are inferior to men. But isn't he entitled to his own opinion? To insist on one's right in to having opinions whatever these happen to be is to exhibit a closed-mindedness that rightly invites censure from someone trying to think more critically about values.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

"It is good if I say that it is good." With this line, we get to the heart of the problem with subjectivism. The statement implies: "It is my personal consideration of X as good that makes X good. X is good on the basis of my saying so." The problem now becomes: "What is my basis for saying X is good?" This renders subjectivism an untenable view for someone who is interested in ethics. It takes the fact that I am the subject making the valuation and uses this fact as the very basis for that valuation. But when "I," as subject, am asking what is right or wrong, good or bad, with subjectivism, there is no other basis that I can look toward.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EGOISM

Let us consider another cliché. It would go like this: "Human beings are naturally self-centered, so all our actions are always already motivated by self-interest."

This is the stance taken by *psychological egoism*, which is a theory that describes the underlying dynamic behind all human actions. As a descriptive theory, it does not direct one to act in any particular way. Instead, it points out that there is already an underlying basis for how one acts. The ego or self has its desires and interests, and all our actions are geared toward satisfying these interests.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

This may not seem particularly problematic when we consider many of the actions that we do on a day-to-day basis. I watch a movie or read a book because I want to, or go for a walk and do some window shopping in the mall because I enjoy that. I take a certain course in college because I think it will benefit me, or I join an organization because I will get some good out of it. We do things in pursuit of our own self-interest all the time.

But what about other types of behavior that we would commonly say are directed toward the other? Consider, for example, an act of generosity, in which someone helps a friend with her thesis rather than play videogames, or someone makes use of her free Saturday helping build houses for Gawad Kalinga? The psychological egoist would maintain that underlying such apparently other-directed behavior is a self-serving desire, even if one does not acknowledge it or is even conscious of it. Perhaps he only helped his friend with her thesis because he is trying to impress her. Perhaps she helps out with Gawad Kalinga because this is how she relieves her sense of guilt at being well-off compared to others. The idea is that whether or not the person admits it, one's actions are ultimately always motivated by self-serving desire.

This theory has a couple of strong points. The first is that of simplicity. When an idea is marked by simplicity, it has a unique appeal to it; a theory that conveniently identifies a single basis that will somehow account for all actions is a good example of this. The second is that of plausibility. It is plausible that self-interest is behind a person's actions. It is clearly the motivation behind many of the actions one perform which are obviously self-serving; it could very well also be the motivation behind an individual's seemingly other-directed actions. It is not only plausible, but also irrefutable.

Psychological egoism is an irrefutable theory because there is no way to try to answer it without being confronted by the challenge that, whatever one might say, there is the self-serving motive at the root of everything. The psychological egoist can and will insist on his stand no matter how one might try to object. This opens up two questions: first, "Because we cannot refute it, shall we accept it as true?" and "Do we accept the consequences of this theory?"

The first question asks whether we have to accept the theory because it happens to be irrefutable. Let us consider this analogy: A posits that B has an Oedipal complex and according to A, this translates into a desire in B to get rid of the father figure. Then, A insists that everything about B and what he does—his choice in music, course, favorite food—is all ultimately rooted in this complex. Therefore, no matter what B says, A would be able to insist that even without his acknowledging it deep down, it is this complex that drives him to act the way he does. In this scenario, A's claim is irrefutable. But does B have to accept it? Similarly, one could maintain, if he really wanted to, that human nature is intrinsically self-interested and that human beings could not possibly be benevolent. When they seem to be so, it is only a matter of pretense. One could maintain that but does one have to?

The second point has to do with the problematic consequences of this theory. Consider this scenario: One woman spends her money on expensive clothes, and another woman donates to charity. In terms of psychological egoism, they are both simply and equally doing what is self-serving for themselves. Because they both are simply fulfilling what would serve them, they are of equal moral worth. In judging these persons and these actions, we can ask ourselves: Do we want to give up on our moral intuition concerning the goodness and value of generosity versus the wrongness of selfishness just for the sake of this theory? Most significantly, turning to the next consequence when we move from moral judgment to moral decision, the question is: How then are we supposed to decide? Given psychological egoism, *it does not matter*. We only think that we have a choice but actually whatever way that we end up acting, our minds have actually already determined what serves our interests best.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

So psychological egoism, when we look at its consequences, leads us to a cynical view of humanity, to a gloomy description of human nature, and finally to a useless theory for someone who is concerned with asking herself what is the right thing to do. This is because it ends up nullifying the possibility of any normative ethics in its view of the already-determined human being.

ETHICAL EGOISM

Ethical egoism differs from psychological egoism in that it does not suppose all our actions are already inevitably self-serving. Instead, ethical egoism prescribes that we should make our own ends, our own interests, as the single overriding concern. We may act in a way that is beneficial to others, but we should do that only if it ultimately benefits us. This theory

acknowledges that it is a dog-eat-dog world out there and given that, everyone ought to put herself at the center. One should consider herself as the priority and not allow any other concerns, such as the welfare of other people, to detract from this pursuit.

It is clear that we have our interests and desires, and would want them satisfied. Thus, this question can be asked: Why should I have any concern about the interests of others? In a sense, this question challenges in a fundamental way the idea of not just a study of ethics, but also the effort of being ethical: Why not just look after one's own self? To examine ethical egoism, we will take a look into Plato's *Republic*, which is Plato's response to the assertion that one should only care about one's own interests.

The Myth of Gyges

Plato's *Republic* (359c–360d)

Now, that those who practice justice do so involuntarily and because they have not the power to be unjust will best appear if we imagine something of this kind: having given both to the just and the unjust power to do what they will, let us watch and see whither desire will lead them; then we shall discover in the very act the just and unjust man to be proceeding along the same road, following their interest, which all natures deem to be their good, and are only diverted into the path of justice by the force of law. The liberty which we are supposing may be most completely given to them in the form of such a power as is said to have been possessed by Gyges, the ancestor of Croesus the Lydian. According to the tradition, Gyges was a shepherd in the service of the king of Lydia; there was a great storm, and an earthquake made an opening in the earth at the place where he was feeding his flock. Amazed at the sight, he descended into the opening, where, among other marvels, he beheld a hollow brazen horse, having doors, at which he stooping and looking in saw a dead body of stature, as appeared to him, more than human, and having nothing on but a gold ring; this he took from the finger of the dead and reascended. Now the shepherds met together, according to custom, that they might send their monthly report about the flocks to the king; into their assembly he came having the ring on his finger, and as he was sitting among them he chanced to turn the collet of the ring inside his hand, when instantly he became invisible to the rest of the company and they began to speak of him as if he were no longer present. He was astonished at this, and again touching the ring he turned the collet outwards and reappeared; he made several trials of the ring, and always with the same result—when he turned the collet inwards he became invisible, when outwards he reappeared. Whereupon he contrived to be chosen one of the messengers who were sent to the court; whereas soon as he arrived he seduced the queen, and with her help conspired against the king and slew him, and took the kingdom. Suppose now that there were two such magic rings, and the just put on one of them and the unjust the other; no man can be imagined to be of such

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

> an iron nature that he would stand fast in justice. No man would keep his hands off what was not his own when he could safely take what he liked out of the market, or go into houses and lie with any one at his pleasure, or kill or release from prison whom he would, and in all respects be like a God among men. Then the actions of the just would be as the actions of the unjust; they would both come at last to the same point. And this we may truly affirm to be a great proof that a man is just, not willingly or because he thinks that justice is any good to him individually, but of necessity, for wherever any one thinks that he can safely be unjust, there he is unjust. For all men believe in their hearts that injustice is far more profitable to the individual than justice, and he who argues as I have been supposing, will say that they are right. If you could imagine any one obtaining this power of becoming invisible, and never doing any wrong or touching what was another's, he would be thought by the lookers-on to be a most wretched idiot, although they would praise him to one another's faces, and keep up appearances with one another from a fear that they too might suffer injustice.[8]

In the *Republic*, the characters are engaged in a discussion about justice. Socrates gets his companions to first consider the question, "What is justice?" and later, "Why should one be just?" In Book 2 of the text, the character named Glaucon provides a powerful restatement of the case for egoism by way of a myth. The myth describes a man, a figure named Gyges, who obtains the power to make himself invisible at will and how he quickly learns how to use this power for his own desires rather than for any notion of "justice." Glaucon then asks plaintively, would not we ourselves act with impunity if we had this power to be invisible? To put it simply, if we would never be called in order to account for our actions, perhaps we, too, would just choose to do whatever we want. It seems, Glaucon concludes, that if we are to be honest with ourselves, we would admit that what we really care for is our own self-interest rather than some notion of justice or moral goodness.

It will take Socrates the rest of the ten books of the *Republic* to try to answer this most important question on whether the pursuit of ethics is worthwhile. Does it make sense to be ethical? The beginning of Socrates's answer can be found in Book 4, in which Socrates presents how the good human life stems from a proper harmony of the parts of the soul. Harmony requires a certain ordering, a hierarchical system in which reason as the "highest" part is in charge dutifully followed by the "lower" parts of the soul of will and appetite. The presence of such an internal ordering that one consciously strives to accomplish is what it means for justice to be present in the individual. On the other hand, the absence of order or the lack of harmony, with desires and appetites running rampant, results in acts of injustice. This point is developed in Book 9 with the portrayal of the tyrant. The presence of internal disorder in a person placed in power turns the seemingly pleasant prospect of doing whatever one wants—of acting with impunity—into a terrifying portrait of a character without self-control or self-possession. Being nothing more than a disordered and nervous jumble of cravings, such a person would be so obsessed with these longings than to bother

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

caring about how this might affect others. Situating this story into a larger social and political context, the connection can be made between one's pursuit of one's own interest with abuse of power that may easily result in the misery of millions. The question then that we can ask is: Do we still want to say, in the face of what history has shown us of tyrants and dictators, that to act with impunity is desirable?

This is what ethical egoism ultimately translates into—not just some pleasant pursuit of one's own desires, but the imposition of a will to power that is potentially destructive of both the self and of others. One can take on this view, if one wishes, but it is also possible to wonder whether there is a way of recognizing our being in the world with others, of thinking of our own well-being concomitantly with the well-being of others. Perhaps this is what the study of ethics is all about.

Returning to the Case of Cris:

Do you think it is acceptable that those responsible for the death of Cris got away with murder? Do you think it is right for someone to look after his or her own welfare over any other concern such as justice?

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Later, we shall see more nuanced ways of thinking about happiness—our own and that of others—in both **Utilitarianism** and in the **Virtue Ethics** of Aristotle.

SUMMARY (AND NEXT STEPS)

In this chapter, we have established the scope and the rationale for a discussion of ethics. We explored various domains of valuation in order to distinguish what makes a particularly grave type of valuation a moral or ethical one. We clarified some of the terms that will be used in the study of ethics. We have also explored a number of problematic ways of thinking of ethics: some give a too simplistic answer to the question of our grounds or foundations for moral valuation, while others seem to dismiss the possibility of ethics altogether.

In the following chapters, we will explore a number of different moral theories that have been handed down to us by the history of philosophy. These are various approaches from thinkers who have presented to us their own unique way of thinking on how to determine the moral principles that should be maintained. We will first explore Utilitarianism, which establishes that the best consequences for everyone concerned might be our measure for determining what is right. We then turn to a different notion in the Natural Law Theory, which puts forward the idea that we can base our notion of good and bad on something more intrinsic than the consequences of our actions—that is our

human nature itself. We will then turn to Deontology, which will argue that it is unreliable to base ethics on consequences or on a supposed intrinsic nature; however, reason is able to determine through its own exploration of itself what our moral duty is. We then round out our discussion of theories with one often referred to as Virtue Ethics, which requires us to think of our concept of reason within the larger context of the development of a moral character.

In the final chapter, we will see how these diverse theories—which at first glance may seem to simply be contradicting each other—can inform our own attempts to think of our own grounds for determining moral value.

KEY WORDS

- Ethics
- Morality
- Aesthetics
- Etiquette
- Technique
- Descriptive
- Normative
- Positive Law
- Divine Command Theory
- Cultural Relativism
- Subjectivism
- Psychological Egoism
- Ethical Egoism

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Identify a list of: (a) obligations we are expected to fulfill, (b) prohibitions we are required to respect, and (c) ideals we are encouraged to meet. Discuss whether these are ethical in nature or not.
2. Are clothes a matter of pure aesthetic taste, or does it make sense for clothes to become a subject in a discussion of ethics? Why? How about other forms of adornment, such as tattoos and piercings?

3. Look for a newspaper article that tackles an ethical issue. Consider the following questions:
   a. What makes this a matter of ethics?
   b. What is your own ethical judgment on this case?
   c. What are your reasons for this judgment?
4. Brainstorm and come up with a list of common Filipino values. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of these.
5. Imagine that you are a legislator. What rules or laws that currently prohibit certain acts or practices would you want to amend or repeal? Also, are there certain acts or practices currently permitted by the law that you would want to prohibit? Think of this on the level of your school, your city, and the nation.
6. Comment on this statement: "What I believe must be true if I feel very strongly about it."
7. Is looking after the benefit of your own family over all other aspects considered as another form of egoism? Discuss.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Frankfurt, Harry. "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person." *The Importance of What We Care About: Philosophical Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 11–25.

Nagel, Thomas. "The Fragmentation of Value." *Mortal Questions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 128–41.

Rachels, James. "Can Ethics Provide Answers?" *The Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 10, No. 3, June 1980, pp. 32–40.

Reyes, Ramon Castillo. "The Relation between Ethics and Religious Belief." *The Moral Dimension: Essays in Honor of Ramon Castillo Reyes*, edited by Nemesio S. Que, Jr., Oscar G. Bulaong, Jr., and Michael Ner E. Mariano, Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 2003, pp. 107–112.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

NOTES

1. Here are some of the news articles that came out at the time, arranged chronologically: Andrade, Jeanette L. "U.P. Stud's Death a Mystery." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 29 August 2007; Mallari, Delfin T. "Suspected Hazing Victim Laid to Rest." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 3 September 2007; Andrade, Jeanette L. and Tina G. Santos. "Autopsy: 'Heavy Beating'." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 4 September 2007; Andrade, Jeanette L. et al. "Come Out, Hazing Death Suspects Told," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 8 September 2007; UCANews.com. "Concerns about Hazing Raised as Another University Student Dies," 11 September 2007; Tina G. Santos. "Witness Confirms Mendez Joined Frat Initiation Rites." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 18 September 2007; and Andrade, Jeanette L. "U.P. President Orders Fraternities: Justify Your Existence." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 21 September 2007.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Joshua Norman. "After Toddler Left to Die, China Disquieted." CBSnews.com, 18 October 2011, http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/2007/09/11/concerns-about-hazing-raised-as-another-university-student-dies&post_id=6460. Accessed July 26, 2017.
4. Plato. "Plato's Euthyphro." *Euthyphro*, http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Euthyphro.pdf. Accessed 24 July 2017.
5. James Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism," *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 6th ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006, 14–31.
6. Plato. "Plato's Republic." *Republic*, http://www.idph.net/conteudos/ebooks/republic.pdf. Accessed 24 July 2017.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

ACTIVITY PAGE

Name: ______________________ Date: ______________

Course: ______________________ Grade: ______________

Art and Offense

In 2011, the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) mounted an exhibit that included Mideo Cruz's "Politeismo," an installation comprised of an amalgam of many images including a statue of Jesus wearing Mickey Mouse ears, a crucifix adorned with a bright red phallus, and a picture of the face of Jesus with a wooden ash tray with penis tacked on the middle. Apparently conceived as a piece to promote critical thought and perhaps debate on idolatry, it was seen by many in this predominantly Catholic country to be a deliberate insult to their faith. Given the public outcry and the strong denouncement from various religious and secular leaders, the exhibit was abruptly closed. In addition to being threatened and having his work vandalized, Cruz was charged with obscenity. However, he (as well as the administrators of the CCP) was acquitted of these charges by the courts in 2013.

A case such as this allows us to consider questions on aesthetics, such as "Is it the point of the work of art to be appealing or to be thought-provoking?" It also allows us to consider political questions, such as "Who gets to decide which artists and which projects may or may not receive funding from the state?" Our concern here is ethical, and perhaps we can recognize that a number of highly significant ethical questions can be raised: Does the artist have an ethical obligation to the sensibilities of his audience? Or does he have a moral obligation only to be faithful to his vision and his art? What constitutes offense, and at what point is offense severe enough as to require control or to justify retribution? Does a religious majority have a monopoly on the understanding of what is right or wrong? Does an artist have absolute freedom of expression, or are there proper restrictions to this right?

What do you think?

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

I. Imagine a scenario in which an image of someone who is the object of religious devotion (such as Jesus Christ or Mary, the Mother of Jesus) is placed side by side with a phallic image.

   1. Is this an ethical issue? Why or why not?

2. Does the question of the rightness or wrongness of this depend on which religio[n] you belong to? Explain your answer.

II. Look for another example of an artistic creation—a painting, poem, or song—that is [a] source of either actual or potential conflict between the expression of the artist and [a] sensibility that finds this offensive. Present the significant details and the reasons th[at] the conflicting sides might have on this issue.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

III. Look for and list down other sources wherein we find a dialogue between ethics an[d] the various domains of aesthetic, culture, and religion.

CHAPTER II
UTILITARIANISM

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. discuss the basic principles of utilitarian ethics;
2. distinguish between two utilitarian models: the quantitative model of Jeremy Bentham and the qualitative model of John Stuart Mill; and
3. apply utilitarianism in understanding and evaluating local and international scenarios.

INTRODUCTION

On January 25, 2015, the 84th Special Action Force (SAF) conducted a police operation at Tukanalipao, Mamasapano in Maguindanao. Also known as Oplan Exodus, it was intended to serve an arrest warrant for Zulkifli bin Hir or Marwan, a Malaysian terrorist and bomb-maker who had a $5 million bounty on his head. This mission eventually led to a clash between the Philippine National Police's (PNP) SAF, on the one hand, and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on the other. Although the police operation was "successful" because of the death of Marwan, the firefight that ensued claimed sixty-seven lives including forty-four SAF troopers, eighteen MILF fighters, and five civilians. However, the relatively high number of SAF members killed in this operation caught the attention of many including the Philippine media and the legislature.

In one of the Congress investigations that followed this tragic mission, then Senate President Franklin Drilon and Senator Francis Escudero debated the public hearing of an audio recording of an alleged conversation that attempted to cover up the massacre of the PNP-SAF commandos. Drilon questioned the admissibility of these recordings as evidence under the Anti-Wire Tapping Law whereas Escudero cited the legal brief of the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) arguing that the Anti-Wire Tapping Law protects only the recording and interception of private communications. Drilon cited Section 4 of the Anti-Wire Tapping Act (RA 4200) and explained that "any communication or spoken word, or the existence, contents, substance, purport, or meaning of the same or any part thereof, or any information

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

therein contained obtained or secured by any person in violation of the preceding sections of this Act shall not be admissible in evidence in any judicial, quasi-judicial, legislative or administrative hearing or investigation." Senator Grace Poe, previous chairperson of the Senate committee on public order and dangerous drugs, argued otherwise: "*Sinabi na ni Senator Drilon na ito daw ay illegal, na hindi daw pwede, na ako daw ay pwedeng maging liable kung ito daw ay ipapakinig ko sa Senado. Ako naman, ano ba itong mga batas na ito? ... Ang mga batas na ito ay para malaman natin ang katotohanan at magkaroon tayo ng hustisya. Kung ang mga anti-wiretapping or mga recording na ganito, kung hindi pwedeng ilabas sa publiko, pwede naming gawing basehan sa executive session.*"

Senator Poe's response leads us to ask: Can the government infringe individual rights? If it is morally permissible for the government to infringe individual rights, when can the government do so? Does it become legitimate to sacrifice individual rights when considering the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people?

This case exposes the aftermath of the Mamasapano incident and the Senate investigations. The Senate inquiry proceedings raised questions on the possibility of wire-tapping and the intrusion to one's right to privacy. While the 1987 Philippine Constitution does protect one's right to private communication, it did provide some exemptions to its inviolability. These exemptions include a lawful order of the court and/or issues involving public safety and order. In fact, RA 4200 (or the Anti-Wire Tapping Law) and RA 9372 (or the Human Security Act of 2007) both provided exemptions to the inviolability of the right to privacy in instances of treason, espionage, rebellion, and sedition. While this is certainly a legal issue, can it also constitute a moral concern? By raising the distinction between moral and legal issues and concerns, do you think that these two are different? To simplify things, let us put aside the question of law and let us assume that you were asked to decide whether wiretapping is morally permissible or not. On what instances is wiretapping morally permissible and on what instances is it not morally permissible?

When considering the moral permissibility of wiretapping, we calculate the costs and benefits of wiretapping. If we calculate the costs and benefits of our actions, then we are considering an ethical theory that gives premium to the consequences of actions as the basis of morality and as such is utilitarianism. *Utilitarianism* is an ethical theory that argues for the goodness of pleasure and the determination of right behavior based on the usefulness of the action's consequences. This means that pleasure is good and that the goodness of an action is determined by its usefulness. Putting these ideas together, utilitarianism claims that one's actions and behavior are good inasmuch as they are directed toward the experience of the greatest pleasure over pain for the greatest number of persons. Its root word is "utility," which refers to the usefulness of the consequences of one's action and behavior. When we argue that wiretapping is permissible because doing so results in better public safety, then we are arguing in a utilitarian way. It is utilitarian because we argue that some individual rights can be sacrificed for the sake of the greater happiness of the many. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) are the two foremost utilitarian thinkers.

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832)

Jeremy Bentham was born on February 15, 1748 in London, England. He was the teacher of James Mill, father of John Stuart Mill. Bentham first wrote about the greatest happiness principle of ethics and was known for a system of penal management called panopticon. He was an advocate of economic freedom, women's rights, and the separation of church and state, among others. He was also an advocate of animal rights and the abolition of slavery, death penalty, and corporal punishment for children. Bentham denied individual legal rights nor agreed with the natural law. On his death on June 6, 1832, Bentham donated his corpse to the University College London, where his auto-icon is in public display up to this day to serve as his memorial.

Their system of ethics emphasizes the consequences of actions. This means that the goodness or the badness of an action is based on whether it is useful in contributing to a specific purpose for the greatest number of people. Utilitarianism is consequentialist. This means that the moral value of actions and decisions is based solely or greatly on the usefulness of their consequences; it is the usefulness of results that determines whether the action or behavior is good or bad. While this is the case, not all consequentialist theories are utilitarian. For Bentham and Mill, utility refers to a way of understanding the results of people's actions. Specifically, they are interested on whether these actions contribute or not to the total amount of resulting happiness in the world. The utilitarian value pleasure and happiness; this means that the usefulness of actions is based on its promotion of happiness. Bentham and Mill understand happiness as the experience of pleasure for the greatest number of persons, even at the expense of some individual's rights.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

THE PRINCIPLE OF UTILITY

In the book *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), Jeremy Bentham begins by arguing that our actions are governed by two *"sovereign masters"* —which he calls *pleasure* and *pain*. These "masters" are given to us by nature to help us determine what is good or bad and what ought to be done and not; they fasten our choices to their throne.

> Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand, the standard of right and wrong, on the other, the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it. In words a man may pretend to abjure their empire: but in reality he will remain subject to it all the while. The principle of utility recognizes this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation of that system, the object of which is to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and of law.

The *principle of utility* is about our subjection to these sovereign masters: pleasure and pain. On one hand, the principle refers to the motivation of our actions as guided by our avoidance of pain and our desire for pleasure. It is like saying that in our everyday actions, we do what is pleasurable and we do not do what is painful. On the other hand, the principle also refers to pleasure as good if, and only if, they produce more happiness than unhappiness. This means that it is not enough to experience pleasure, but to also inquire whether the things we do make us happier. Having identified the tendency for pleasure and the avoidance of pain as the principle of utility, Bentham equates happiness with pleasure.

Mill supports Bentham's principle of utility. He reiterates moral good as happiness and, consequently, happiness as pleasure. Mill clarifies that what makes people happy is intended pleasure and what makes us unhappy is the privation of pleasure. The things that produce happiness and pleasure are good, whereas, those that produce unhappiness and pain are bad. Mill explains:

> The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, utility or the greatest happiness principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness; wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure. To give a clear view of the moral standard set up by the theory, much more requires to be said; in particular, what things it includes in the ideas of pain and pleasure, and to what extent, this is left an open question. But these supplementary explanations do not affect the theory of life on which this theory of morality is grounded—namely, that pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things (which are as numerous in the utilitarian as in any other scheme) are desirable either for pleasure inherent in themselves or as a means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain.

Clearly, Mill argues that we act and do things because we find them pleasurable and we avoid doing things because they are painful. If we find our actions pleasurable, Mill explains, it is because they are inherently pleasurable in themselves or they eventually lead to the promotion of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Bentham and Mill characterized

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

moral value as utility and understood it as whatever produced happiness or pleasure and the avoidance of pain. The next step is to understand the nature of pleasure and pain to identify a criterion for distinguishing pleasures and to calculate the resultant pleasure or pain; it is in relation to these aforementioned themes that a distinction occurs between Bentham and Mill.

John Stuart Mill (1806–1873)

John Stuart Mill was born on May 20, 1806 in Pentonville, London, United Kingdom. He was the son of James Mill, a friend and disciple of Jeremy Bentham. John Stuart Mill was home-schooled. He studied Greek at the age of three and Latin at the age of eight. He wrote a history of Roman Law at age eleven, and suffered a nervous breakdown at the age of twenty. He was married to Harriet Taylor after twenty-one years of friendship. His ethical theory and his defense of utilitarian views are found in his long essay entitled *Utilitarianism* (1861). Mill died on May 8, 1873 in Avignon, France from erysipelas.

What Bentham identified as the natural moral preferability of pleasure, Mill refers to as a *theory of life*. If we consider, for example, what moral agents do and how they assess their actions, then it is hard to deny the pursuit for happiness and the avoidance of pain. For Bentham and Mill, the pursuit for pleasure and the avoidance of pain are not only important principles—they are in fact the only principle in assessing an action's morality. Why is it justifiable to wiretap private conversations in instances of treason, rebellion, espionage, and sedition? Why is it preferable to alleviate poverty or eliminate criminality? Why is it noble to build schools and hospitals? Why is it good to improve the quality of life and the like? There is no other answer than the principle of utility, that is, to increase happiness and decrease pain.

What kind of pleasure is morally preferable and valuable? Are all pleasures necessarily and ethically good? Does this mean that because eating or exercising is good, it is morally acceptable to eat and exercise excessively? While utilitarian supporters do not condone excessive pleasures while others are suffering, it cannot be justified on utilitarian grounds why some persons indulge in extravagant pleasures at the expense of others. Suppose nobody is suffering, is it morally permissible on utilitarian principles to maximize pleasure by wanton intemperance? While Bentham and Mill agree on the moral value of pleasure, they do not have the same view on these questions.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

In determining the moral preferability of actions, Bentham provides a framework for evaluating pleasure and pain commonly called *felicific calculus*. Felicific calculus is a common currency framework that calculates the pleasure that some actions can produce. In this framework, an action can be evaluated on the basis of intensity or strength of pleasure; duration or length of the experience of pleasure; certainty, uncertainty, or the likelihood that pleasure will occur; and propinquity, remoteness, or how soon there will be pleasure. These indicators allow us to measure pleasure and pain in an action. However, when we are to evaluate our tendency to choose these actions, we need to consider two more dimensions: fecundity or the chance it has of being followed by sensations of the same kind, and purity or the chance it has of not being followed by sensations of the opposite kind. Lastly, when considering the number of persons who are affected by pleasure or pain, another dimension is to be considered—extent.[3] Felicific calculus allows the evaluation of all actions and their resultant pleasure. This means that actions are evaluated on this single scale regardless of preferences and values. In this sense, pleasure and pain can only quantitatively differ but not qualitatively differ from other experiences of pleasure and pain accordingly.

Mill dissents from Bentham's single scale of pleasure. He thinks that the principle of utility must distinguish pleasures qualitatively and not merely quantitatively. For Mill, utilitarianism cannot promote the kind of pleasures appropriate to pigs or to any other animals. He thinks that there are higher intellectual and lower base pleasures. We, as moral agents, are capable of searching and desiring higher intellectual pleasures more than pigs are capable of. We undermine ourselves if we only and primarily desire sensuality; this is because we are capable of higher intellectual pleasurable goods. For Mill, crude bestial pleasures, which are appropriate for animals, are degrading to us because we are by nature not easily satisfied by pleasures only for pigs.[4] Human pleasures are qualitatively different from animal pleasures. It is unfair to assume that we merely pursue pleasures appropriate for beasts even if there are instances when we choose to pursue such base pleasures. To explain this, Mill recognizes the empirical fact that there are different kinds of pleasures:

> It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact that some *kinds* of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasure should be supposed to depend on quantity alone.[5]

Contrary to Bentham, Mill argues that quality is more preferable than quantity. An excessive quantity of what is otherwise pleasurable might result in pain. We can consider, for example, our experience of excessive eating or exercising. Whereas eating the right amount of food can be pleasurable, excessive eating may not be. The same is true when exercising. If the quality of pleasure is sometimes more important than quantity, then it is important to consider the standards whereby differences of pleasures can be judged. The test that Mill suggests is simple. In deciding over two comparable pleasures, it is important

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

to experience both and to discover which one is actually more preferred than the other.[8] There is no other way of determining which of the two pleasures is preferable except by appealing to the actual preferences and experiences. What Mill discovers anthropologically is that actual choices of knowledgeable persons point that higher intellectual pleasures are preferable than purely sensual appetites.[9]

In defending further the comparative choice between intellectual and bestial pleasures, Mill offers an imaginative thought experiment. He asks whether a human person would prefer to accept the highly pleasurable life of an animal while at the same time being denied of everything that makes him a person. He thinks that few, if any, would give up human qualities of higher reason for the pleasures of a pig. In the most famous quote in Mill's *Utilitarianism*, we read:

> It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.[10]

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

While it is difficult to understand how Mill was able to compare swinish pleasures with human ones, we can presume that it would be better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied. Simply put, as human beings, we prefer the pleasures that are actually within our grasp. It is easy to compare extreme types of pleasures as in the case of pigs and humans, but it is difficult to compare pleasures deeply integrated in our way of life. The pleasures of an Ilonggo eating chicken *inasal* and an Igorot eating *pinikpikan* is an example. This cannot be done by simply tasting *inasal* or *pinikpikan*. In the same way, some people prefer *puto* to *bibingka* or liking for the music of *Eraserheads* than that of the *APO Hiking Society*.

PRINCIPLE OF THE GREATEST NUMBER

Equating happiness with pleasure does not aim to describe the utilitarian moral agent alone and independently from others. This is not only about our individual pleasures, regardless of how high, intellectual, or in other ways noble it is, but it is also about the pleasure of the greatest number affected by the consequences of our actions. Mill explains:

> I have dwelt on this point, as being part of a perfectly just conception of utility or happiness, considered as the directive rule of human conduct. But it is by no means an indispensable condition to the acceptance of the utilitarian standard; for that standard is not the agent's own greatest happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether; and if it may possibly be doubted whether a noble character is always the happier for its nobleness, there can be no doubt that it makes other people happier, and that the world in general is immediately a gainer by it. Utilitarianism, therefore, could only attain its end by the general cultivation of nobleness of others, and his own, so far as happiness is concerned, were a sheer deduction from the benefit. But the bare enunciation of such an absurdity as this last, renders refutations superfluous.[11]

Utilitarianism cannot lead to selfish acts. It is neither about our pleasure nor happiness alone; it cannot be all about us. If we are the only ones satisfied by our actions, it does not constitute a moral good. If we are the only ones who are made happy by our actions, then we cannot be morally good. In this sense, utilitarianism is not dismissive of sacrifices that procure more happiness for others.

Therefore, it is nêcessary for us to consider everyone's happiness, including our own, as the standard by which to evaluate what is moral. Also, it implies that utilitarianism is not at all separate from liberal social practices that aim to improve the quality of life for all persons. Utilitarianism is interested with everyone's happiness, in fact, the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Mill identifies the eradication of disease, using technology, and other practical ways as examples of utilitarianism. Consequently, utilitarianism maximizes the total amount of pleasure over displeasure for the greatest number. Because of the premium given to the consequences of actions, Mill pushes for the moral irrelevance of motive in evaluating actions:

> He who saves a fellow creature from drowning does what is morally right, whether his motive be duty or the hope of being paid for his trouble; he who betrays the friend that trusts him, is guilty of a crime, even if his object be to serve another friend to whom he is under greater obligations. But to speak only of actions done from the motive of duty, and in direct obedience to principle; it is a misapprehension of the utilitarian mode of thought, to conceive it as implying that people should fix their minds upon so wide a generality as the world, or society at large. The great majority of good actions are intended, not for the benefit of the world, but for that of individuals, of which the good of the world is made up; and the thoughts of the most virtuous man need not on these occasions travel beyond the particular persons concerned, except so far as is necessary to assure himself that in benefiting them he is not violating the rights—that is, the legitimate and authorized expectations—of anyone else.[13]

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Utilitarianism is interested with the best consequence for the highest number of people. It is not interested with the intention of the agent. Moral value cannot be discernible in the intention or motivation of the person doing the act; it is based solely and exclusively on the difference it makes on the world's total amount of pleasure and pain. This leads us to question utilitarianism's take of moral rights. If actions are based only on the greatest happiness of the greatest number, is it justifiable to let go of some rights for the sake of the benefit of the majority?

JUSTICE AND MORAL RIGHTS

What is a right? Mill understands *justice* as a respect for rights directed toward society's pursuit for the greatest happiness of the greatest number. For him, *rights* are a valid claim on society and are justified by utility. He explains:

> I have, throughout, treated the idea of a right residing in the injured person, and violated by the injury, not as a separate element in the composition of the idea and sentiment, but as one of the forms in which the other two elements clothe themselves. These elements are, a hurt to some assignable person or persons on the one hand, and a demand for punishment, on the other. An examination of our minds, I think, will show that these two things include all that we mean when we speak of violation of a right. When we call anything a person's right, we mean that he has a valid claim on society to protect him in the possession of it, either by the force of law, or by that of education and opinion. If he has what we consider a sufficient claim, on whatever account, to have something guaranteed to him by society, we say that he has a right to it.[33]

Mill expounds that the abovementioned rights referred are related to the interests that serve general happiness. The right to due process, the right to free speech or religion, and others are justified because they contribute to the general good. This means that society is made happier if its citizens are able to live their lives knowing that their interests are protected and that society (as a whole) defends it. Extending this concept to animals, they have rights because of the effect of such principles on the sum total of happiness that follows as a consequence of instituting and protecting their interests. It is not accidental, therefore, that utilitarians are also the staunchest defenders of animal rights. A right is justifiable on utilitarian principles inasmuch as they produce an overall happiness that is greater than the unhappiness resulting from their implementation.

Utilitarians argue that issues of justice carry a very strong emotional import because the category of rights is directly associated with the individual's most vital interests. All of these rights are predicated on the person's right to life. Mill describes:

> To have a right, then is, I conceive, to have something which society ought to defend me in the possession of. If the objector goes on to ask why it ought, I can give him no other reason than general utility. If that expression does not seem to convey a sufficient feeling of the strength of the obligation, nor to account for the peculiar energy of the feeling, it is because there goes to the composition of the sentiment, not a rational only but also an animal element, the thirst for retaliation; and this thirst derives its intensity, as well as its moral justification, from the extraordinarily important and impressive kind of utility which is concerned. The interest involved is that of security, to everyone's feelings the most vital of all interests.[34]

In this context, our participation in government and social interactions can be explained by the principle of utility and be clarified by Mill's consequentialism. Mill further associates utilitarianism with the possession of legal and moral rights.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

We are treated justly when our legal and moral rights are respected. Mill enumerates different kinds of goods that he characterized as rights and are protected by law. Mill understands that *legal rights* are neither inviolable nor natural, but rights are subject to some exceptions:

> ... It is mostly considered unjust to deprive any one of his personal liberty, his property, or any other thing which belongs to him by law. Here, therefore, is one instance of the application of the terms just and unjust in a perfectly definite sense, namely, that it is just to respect, unjust to violate, the legal rights of anyone. But this judgment admits of several exceptions, arising from the other forms in which the notions of justice and injustice present themselves. For example, the person who suffers the deprivation may (as the phrase is) have forfeited the rights which he is so deprived of: a case to which we shall return presently...

Mill creates a distinction between legal rights and their justification. He points out that when legal rights are not morally justified in accordance to the greatest happiness principle, then these rights need neither be observed, nor be respected. This is like saying that there are instances when the law is not morally justified and, in this case, even objectionable.

> ...The legal rights of which he is deprived may be rights which ought not to have belonged to him; in other words, the law which confers on him these rights may be a bad law. When it is so, or when (which is the same thing for our purpose) it is supposed to be so, opinions will differ as to the justice or injustice of infringing it. Some maintain that no law, however bad, ought to be disobeyed by an individual citizen; that his opposition to it, if shown at all, should only be shown in endeavoring to get it altered by competent authority. This opinion (which condemns many of the most illustrious benefactors of mankind, and would often protect pernicious institutions against the only weapons which, in the state of things existing at the time, have any chance of succeeding against them) is defended, by those who hold it, on grounds of expediency; principally on that of the importance, to the common interest of mankind, of maintaining inviolate the sentiment of submission to law... When, however, a law is thought to be unjust, it seems always to be regarded as being so in the same ways in which a breach of law is unjust, namely, by infringing somebody's right; which, as it cannot in this case be a legal right, receives a different appellation, and is called a moral right. We may say, therefore, that a second case of injustice consists in taking or withholding from any person that to which he has a moral right.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Mill seems to be suggesting that it is morally permissible to not follow, even violate, an unjust law. The implication is that those who protest over political policies of a morally objectionable government act in a morally obligatory way. While this is not always preferred,

Mill thinks that it is commendable to endure legal punishments for acts of civil disobedience for the sake of promoting a higher moral good. At an instance of conflict between moral and legal rights, Mill points out that *moral rights* take precedence over legal rights.

While it can be justified why others violate legal rights, it is an act of injustice to violate an individual's moral rights. However, Mill seems to provide some extenuating circumstances in which some moral rights can be overridden for the sake of the greater general happiness. Going back to the case of wiretapping, it seems that one's right to privacy can be sacrificed for the sake of the common good. This means that moral rights are only justifiable by considerations of greater overall happiness. He qualifies moral rights in this way:

> All persons are deemed to have a right to equality of treatment, except when some recognized social expediency requires the reverse. And hence all social inequalities which have ceased to be considered expedient, assume the character not of simple inexpediency, but of injustice, and appear so tyrannical, that people are apt to wonder how they ever could have been tolerated; forgetful that they themselves perhaps tolerate other inequalities under an equally mistaken notion of expediency, the correction of which would make that which they approve seem quite as monstrous as what they have at least learnt to condemn.

In this sense, the principle of utility can theoretically obligate us to steal, kill, and the like. We say "theoretically" because this merely constitutes a thought experiment and need not be actualized. Since what matters in the assessment of what we do is the resultant happiness, then anything may be justified for the sake of producing the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people.

> Thus, to save a life, it may not only be allowable, but a duty to steal or take by force, the necessary food or medicine, or to kidnap, and compel to officiate, the only qualified medical practitioner. In such cases, as we do not call justice which is not a virtue, we usually say, not that justice must give way to some other moral principle, but that what is just in ordinary cases is, by reason of that other principle, not just in the particular case. By this useful accommodation of language, the character of indefeasibility attributed to justice is kept up, and we are saved from the necessity of maintaining that there can be laudable injustice.[39]

While there is no such thing as a laudable and praiseworthy injustice, Mill appeals to the utilitarian understanding of justice as an act justified by the greatest happiness principle. There is no right to violate where utility is not served by the social protection of individual interests. While he recognizes how utilitarian principles can sometimes obligate us to perform acts that would regularly be understood as disregarding individual rights, he argues that this is only possible if it is judged to produce more happiness than unhappiness.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

In short, Mill's moral rights and considerations of justice are not absolute, but are only justified by their consequences to promote the greatest good of the greatest number.

With these understanding of rights in place, Mill explains his understanding of justice and it is with this that we end this section. For Mill, justice can be interpreted in terms of moral rights because justice promotes the greater social good. He explains:

> ... the idea of justice supposes two things; a rule of conduct and a sentiment which sanctions the rule. The first must be supposed common to all mankind, and intended for their good. The other (sentiment) is a desire that punishment may be suffered by those who infringe the rule. There is involved, in addition, the conception of some definite person who suffers by the infringement; whose rights (to use the expression appropriated to the case) are violated by it. And the sentiment of justice appears to me to be, the animal desire to repel or retaliate a hurt or damage to oneself, or to those with whom one sympathizes, widened so as to include all persons, by the human capacity of enlarged sympathy, and the human conception of intelligent self-interest. From the latter elements, the feeling derives its morality; from the former, its peculiar impressiveness, and energy of self-assertion.[19]

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

SUMMARY

Bentham and Mill see moral good as pleasure, not merely self-gratification, but also the greatest happiness principle or the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. We are compelled to do whatever increases pleasure and decreases pain to the most number of persons, counting each as one and none as more than one. In determining the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people, there is no distinction between Bentham and Mill. Bentham suggests his felicific calculus, a framework for quantifying moral valuation. Mill provides a criterion for comparative pleasures. He thinks that persons who experience two different types of pleasures generally prefer higher intellectual pleasures to base sensual ones.

Mill provides an adequate discourse on rights despite it being mistakenly argued to be the weakness of utilitarianism. He argues that rights are socially protected interests that are justified by their contribution to the greatest happiness principle. However, he also claims that in extreme circumstances, respect for individual rights can be overridden to promote the better welfare especially in circumstances of conflict valuation.

KEY WORDS

- Greatest Happiness
- Moral Right
- Intent
- Justice
- Utility
- Higher Pleasures
- Rights
- Pleasure
- Base Pleasure
- Legal Rights

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Are all pleasures commensurable? Can they be evaluated on a single scale? Can some goods, like friendships, be balanced against other goods, like money?
2. Mill revises utilitarianism by arguing for "higher" pleasures. Which pleasures are higher?
3. Mill proposes that "higher" pleasures are those preferred by the majority of people. Do you agree that this is a good way of distinguishing between higher and lower pleasures? Can a well-informed majority prefer higher pleasures?
4. Does utilitarianism questions individual rights? What if violating the civil rights of a minority increases the sum total of pleasure of the majority?
5. Do you agree that happiness is the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, and that all actions are directed toward pleasure?
6. Are all pleasures comparable, even objectionable pleasures? What if the majority derives pleasure from being sexist?
7. Is it justifiable to build a basketball court because there are basketball fans, than to build a hospital because there are fewer sick people?
8. When is it justifiable to torture suspected criminals?

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

SUGGESTED READINGS

Albee, Ernest. *A History of English Utilitarianism*. New York: Macmillan, 1902.

Alican, Necip Fikri. *Mill's Principle of Utility: A Defense of John Stuart Mill's Notorious Proof.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994.

Berger, Fred R. *Happiness, Justice, and Freedom: The Moral and Political Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Crisp, Roger. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Mill on Utilitarianism*. London: Routledge, 2009.

Lyons, David. *Rights, Welfare, and Mill's Moral Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Mill, John Stuart. *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*. 33 Volumes. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963.

Ryan, Alan. *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*. London: Macmillan, 1987.

Semmel, Bernard. *John Stuart Mill and the Pursuit of Virtue*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

Skorupski, John, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Mill*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

NOTES

1. Christina Mendez. "Senators Clash Over Playing of Mamasapano Tapes." *Philstar.com*, http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/01/27/1546749/senators-clash-over-playing-mamasapano-tapes; accessed 27 February 2017.
2. Jeremy Bentham. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Edited By J. H. Burns and H. L. A. Hart. Oxford: The Athlone Press, 1970, pp. 11.
3. John Stuart Mill. *Utilitarianism*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907, pp. 8–9.
4. *Ibid.*, 9–10.
5. Bentham, pp. 38–39.
6. Mill, 10–11.
7. *Ibid.*, 11–12.
8. *Ibid.*, 12.
9. *Ibid.*, 12–13.
10. *Ibid.*, 14.
11. *Ibid.*, 16.
12. *Ibid.*, 26–28.
13. *Ibid.*, 79–80.
14. *Ibid.*, 80–81.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

ACTIVITY PAGE

Name: ______________________ Date: ______________

Course: ______________________ Grade: ______________

Animal Rights and Welfare

Peter Singer, in his book *Animal Liberation*, argues that animals are equal candidates for moral respect; this does not mean equal treatment as it does equal consideration. While Rene Descartes argues that animals are incapable of feeling pleasure and pain because they do not have any minds, Bentham and Mill argues otherwise. For them, animals are capable of feeling pleasure and pain and are thus to be included in whatever moral deliberation we are to make, especially when the decisions we make affect them. The animal's capacity for suffering is a vital characteristic that entitles them to equal consideration. While animal intelligence is another moral issue to confront, it cannot be denied that animal behaviorists have established that animals do feel physical pain. While other researchers simply dismiss this as an act of anthropomorphizing, the vast research on animal consciousness is worth considering at this point. Should animals have moral rights?

Utilitarianism recognizes that animals do feel physical and emotional pain. But this does not mean that we are not allowed to cause animals pain. When causing animal pain obtains a greater happiness to the majority of humans and nonhuman animals, then doing so to sentient creatures can be morally permissible. For this reason, utilitarians nowadays rarely use the term animal rights as they do talk about animal welfare. If human rights, according to Bentham, are "nonsense upon stilts," then the same is true with animal rights. These rights are not absolute especially when it would be detrimental to the society. Mill do talk about rights to security, liberty, and justice, but he also argues that "particular cases may occur in which some other social duty is so important, as to overrule any one of the general maxims of justice." This can mean that, as a utilitarian, the pain and pleasure of nonhuman animals must be taken into consideration when there are no concerns that would justify their pain for the sake of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. In this case, when animals are used for the development of household products and cosmetics, they are condemned by utilitarians. However, when they are used for medical experimentation that can lead to cure for a debilitating or terminal illness, they are acceptable to a utilitarian. Do you agree with this?

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

I. Go online and look for an instance where animal rights and welfare can be considered an issue. What is the issue that you have identified? Detail your findings and opinion below. Check on the arguments presented by Peter Singer, Joel Feinberg, and Steve Sapontzis.

II. In view of Bentham's and Mill's assertion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, do you think that animal rights and welfare should even be a concern in the Philippines where millions of Filipinos below the poverty threshold are struggling to have a descent lives? Is the concern for animal rights and welfare a first world problem?

III. Consider other topics within the realm of animal rights and welfare. Select one and give an initial presentation of the significance of discussing this topic. Consider too if trees and other elements of nature should also be given rights; check the paper of Christopher Stone entitled "Should Trees Have Standing? Towards Legal Rights for Natural Objects."

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

CHAPTER III
NATURAL LAW

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. recognize how Thomas Aquinas made use of ancient Greek concepts to provide a rational grounding to an ethical theory based on the Christian faith;
2. identify the natural law in distinction from, but also in relation to, the other types of law mentioned by Aquinas: eternal law, human law, and divine law; and
3. apply the precepts of the natural law to contemporary moral concerns.

INTRODUCTION

In October 2016, newspapers reported that Pantaleon Alvarez, Speaker of the House of Representatives, was intending to draft a bill which would amend the country's Family Code, thereby allowing for the legalization of same-sex unions. This would result in the possibility of two men together or two women together being identified as a couple with rights guaranteed and protected by the law. However, as one newspaper report revealed, even before anything could be formally proposed, other fellow legislators had already expressed to the media their refusal to support any such initiative.[1]

The reasons given in the news article vary, ranging from the opinion that seeing two men kiss is unsightly, to the statement that there is something "irregular" about belonging to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) community, and to the judgment that two people of the same sex being together is *unnatural*.

We are used to hearing people justify done something by making the appeal that what they maintain is what is "natural," and therefore acceptable. Likewise, people would judge something as unacceptable on the basis that it is supposedly "unnatural." Thus, we are no longer surprised when we hear people condemn and label many different things as "unnatural": maybe receiving blood transfusions, eating meat, or, as our news report shows, engaging in sexual relations that one might consider deviant. We also realize that sometimes we might find ourselves astonished or perplexed as to what different people might consider "unnatural."

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

In order to proceed, it is therefore necessary to ask: "What do the words natural and unnatural mean?" Sometimes, the word "natural" seems to be used to refer to some kind of intuition that a person has, one which is so apparently true to him that it is unquestioned. For example, a woman may claim that it is simply "unnatural" to eat any kind of insect, and what this means is that she personally finds herself averse to the idea of doing so. In other instances, the word is used to try to justify a certain way of behaving by seeing its likeness somewhere in the natural world. For example, a man might claim that it is okay for him to have more than one sexual partner, since, in a pride of lions, the alpha male gets to mate with all the she-lions. In yet other instances, the word "natural" is used as an appeal to something instinctual without it being directed by reason. For example, a man may deem it all right if he were to urinate just anywhere because after all he sees it as "natural" function of humans. Lastly, we also easily find people using the word "natural" to refer to what seems common to them given their particular environment. For instance, a Filipina may suppose that eating three full meals of rice and *ulam* every day is what is "natural" because everyone she knows behaves in that way.

Given these varied meanings of the term "natural," we need to find a more solid and nuanced way to understand the term. In this chapter, we will explore how Thomas Aquinas provides this, emphasizing the capacity for reason as what is essential in our human nature. This understanding of human nature anchored on our capacity for reason will become the basis of the natural law theory, a theory which will provide us a unique way of determining the moral status of our actions.

THOMAS AQUINAS

There have been various thinkers and systems of thought emerging throughout history that could be said to present a natural law theory. Among them, the one we will be focusing on is the medieval thinker Thomas Aquinas. It has to be recognized, however, that this natural law theory is part of a larger discussion, which is his moral theory taken as a whole. This moral theory, in turn, is part of a larger project, which is Aquinas's vision of the Christian faith. Before we turn to the natural law theory, let us take a look at these contexts.

THE CONTEXT OF THE CHRISTIAN STORY

The fundamental truth maintained and elaborated by Aquinas in all his works is the promise right at the center of the Christian faith: that we are created by God in order to ultimately return to Him. The structure of his magnum opus *Summa Theologiae* follows the trajectory of this story.

There are three parts to this voluminous work. In the first part, Aquinas speaks of God, and although we acknowledge that our limited human intellect cannot fully grasp Him, we nevertheless are able to say something concerning His goodness, His might, and His creative power. Recognizing then that we are created by God, we move on to the second

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

part, which deals with man or the dynamic of human life. This is characterized by our pursuit of happiness, which we should realize rests ultimately not on any particular good thing that is created by God, but in the highest good which is God Himself. Our striving for this ultimate happiness, while important, will not in itself bring us to this blessed state. In other words, salvation is only possible through the presence of God's grace and that grace has become perfectly incarnate in the person of Jesus. Thus, the third part focuses on Jesus as our Savior.

Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274)

Hailed as a doctor of the Roman Catholic Church, Thomas Aquinas was a Dominican friar who was the preeminent intellectual figure of the scholastic period of the Middle Ages, contributing to the doctrine of the faith more than any other figure of his time. His *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas's magnum opus, is a voluminous work that comprehensively discusses many significant points in Christian theology. He was canonized in 1323.

Given that our concern here is the question of ethics, it would seem clear that what would be of greatest interest to us is the second part or the section of this story that centers on human life and its striving toward God. However, bringing up the notion that living a good life leads us to God could easily be misunderstood as a simple exhortation to obey certain rules as given to us through Church doctrines or by following certain passages lifted randomly from sacred Scriptures. In other words, we may fall into the danger of the divine command theory, which we had explored in the first chapter. Instead, we should hope to find that there is much greater complexity, but also coherence, to the ethics of Aquinas.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

THE CONTEXT OF AQUINAS'S ETHICS

A full consideration of Aquinas's ethics would require us to explore his discussion of other matters, such as how, in our pursuit of happiness, we direct our actions toward specific ends. We might explore how emotions—"the passions"—are involved in this process, and therefore require a proper order if they are to properly contribute to a good life. We might explore how our actions are related to certain dispositions (often referred to as "habits") in a dynamic way since our actions both arise from our habits and at the same time reinforce them. We might explore his discussion of how we develop either good or bad habits with a good disposition leading us toward making moral choices, thereby contributing to our moral virtue, and a bad disposition inclining us toward making immoral choices, bringing us to vice. The Christian life, therefore, is about developing the capacities given to us by God into a disposition of virtue inclined toward the good.

Aquinas also puts forward that there is within us a conscience that directs our moral thinking. This does not refer to some simple intuition or gut feeling. For Aquinas, there is a sense of right and wrong in us that we are obliged to obey. However, he also adds that this sense of right and wrong must be informed, guided, and ultimately grounded in an objective basis for morality.

So, we are called to heed the voice of conscience and enjoined to develop and maintain a life of virtue. However, these both require content, so we need something more. We need a basis for our conscience to be properly informed, and we need a clearer guidepost on whether certain decisions we make lead us toward virtue or vice. Being told that one should heed one's conscience or that one should try to be virtuous, does very little to guide people as to what specifically should be done in a given situation. Thus, there is a need for a clearer basis of ethics, a ground that will more concretely direct our sense of what is right and wrong. For Aquinas, this would be the natural law.

We can recall how the ethical approach called the divine command theory urges a person toward unthinking obedience to religious precepts. Given the problems of this simplistic approach to ethics, we can contrast how the moral theory of Aquinas requires the judicious use of reason. In doing so, one's sense of right and wrong would be grounded on something stable: human nature itself.

We will start by exploring how Aquinas restates the Christian message, making use of a philosophical vocabulary appropriated from the ancient Greeks. We then look at how Aquinas speaks of the essence and also the varieties of law. From there, we will be able to explore the precepts of the natural law.

THE GREEK HERITAGE

NEOPLATONIC GOOD

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

God creates. This does not only means that He brings about beings, but it also means that He cares for, and thus governs, the activity of the universe and of every creature.[2] This central belief of the Christian faith, while inspired by divine revelation, has been shaped and defined by an idea stated in the work of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, which had been put forward a thousand years before Aquinas. He is credited for giving the subsequent history of philosophy in one of its most compelling and enduring ideas: the notion of a supreme and absolutely transcendent good.

In his work *The Republic*, it is often supposed that Plato is trying to envision the ideal society. But that plan is only a part of a more fundamental concern that animates the text, which is to provide an objective basis and standard for the striving to be moral. In other words, it can be said that Plato was trying to answer questions such as, "Why should I bother trying to be good?" and "Why cannot 'good' be just whatever I say it is?" His answer, placed

in the mouth of the main character Socrates, is that the good is real and not something that one can pretend to make up or ignore.

Socrates, in discussing this, elevates the notion of the good to unprecedented heights:

The Idea of the Good

Excerpt from *The Republic*[a]

Plato

Now, that which imparts truth to the known and the power of knowing to the knower is what I would have you term the idea of good, and this you will deem to be the cause of science, and of truth in so far as the latter becomes the subject of knowledge; beautiful too, as are both truth and knowledge, you will be right in esteeming this other nature as more beautiful than either; and, as in the previous instance, light and sight may be truly said to be like the sun, and yet not to be the sun, so in this other sphere, science and truth may be deemed to be like the good, but not the good; the good has a place of honor yet higher.

You would say, would you not, that the sun is not only the author of visibility in all visible things, but of generation and nourishment and growth, though he himself is not generation? In like manner the good may be said to be not only the author of knowledge to all things known, but of their being and essence, and yet the good is not essence, but far exceeds essence in dignity and power.

Readers of *The Republic* have long been baffled by this enigmatic passage and are still trying to figure out how exactly to interpret it. Rather than be dismissed, this *idea of the good*—a good which is prior to all being and is even the cause of all being—will become a source of fascination and inspiration to later thinkers even to this day.

In the next centuries after Plato's time, some scholars turned to his texts and tried to decipher the wealth of ideas contained there. Because they saw their task as basically clarifying and elaborating on what the great thinker had already written, these later scholars are often labeled as Neoplatonists.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

In the hands of the Neoplatonists, Plato's idea of the good, which is the source of all beings, becomes identified with the One and the Beautiful. This is the ultimate reality, which is the oneness that will give rise to the multiplicity of everything else in the cosmos. All these beings have a single goal, which is to return to that unity.

The Good and the One
Excerpt from *the Enneads*[4]
Plotinus

Still, do not, I urge you, look for The Good through any of these other things; if you do, you will see not itself but its trace: you must form the idea of that which is to be grasped cleanly standing to itself not in any combination, the unheld in which all have hold; for no other is such, yet one such there must be.

Now it is clear that we cannot possess ourselves of the power of this principle in its concentrated fullness: so to do one must be identical with it: but some partial attainment is within our reach.

You who make the venture will throw forward all your being but you will never tell it entire—for that, you must yourself be the divine Intellect in Act—and at your utmost success it will still pass from you or, rather, you from it. In ordinary vision you may think to see the object entire: in this intellective act, all, less or more, that you can take to mind you may set down as The Good.

It is The Good since, being a power, it is the cause of the intelligent and intellective life as of life and intellect; for these grow from it as from the source of essence and of existence, the Source as being One, simplex and first because before it was nothing. All derives from this; it is the origin of the primal movement which it does not possess and of the repose which is but its absence of need; for neither rest nor movement can belong to that which has no place in which either could occur; center, object, ground, all are alike unknown to it, for it is before all. Yet its Being is not limited; what is there to set bounds to it? Nor, on the other hand, is it infinite in the sense of magnitude; what place can there be to which it must extend, or why should there be movement where there is no lacking? All its infinitude resides in its power; it does not change and will not fail; and in it all that is unfailing finds duration.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Through Neoplatonists like Plotinus, the Platonic idea of the good would continue well into the Christian Middle Ages, inspiring later thinkers and allowing it to be thought anew in a more personal way as a creative and loving God.

ARISTOTELIAN BEING AND BECOMING

In Aristotle's exploration of how to discuss beings, he proposes four concepts which provide a way of understanding any particular being under consideration. Any being, according to Aristotle, can be said to have four causes.

First, we recognize that any being we can see around is corporeal, possessed of a certain materiality or physical "stuff." We can refer to this as the *material cause*. A being is individuated—it becomes the unique, individual being that it is—because it is made up of this particular stuff. Yet, we also realize that this material takes on a particular shape: so a bird is different from a cat, which is different from a man. The "shape" that makes a being a particular kind can be called its form. Thus, each being also has a *formal cause*.

One can also realize that a being does not simply "pop up" from nothing, but comes from another being which is prior to it. Parents beget a child. A mango tree used to be a seed that itself came from an older tree. A chair is built as the product of a carpenter. Thus, there is something which brings about the presence of another being. This can be referred to as the *efficient cause*. Also, since a being has an apparent end or goal, a chair to be sat on, a pen for writing, a seed to become a tree, or a child to become an adult, one can speak of the *final cause* of each being. Identifying these four causes—material, formal, efficient, and final—gives a way to understand any being.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Four Causes
Excerpt from the *Physics*[2]
Book II Chapter 3, 194b17–195a5
Aristotle

Now that we have established these distinctions, we must proceed to consider causes, their character, and number. Knowledge is the object of our inquiry, and men do not think they know a thing till they have grasped the "why" of (which is to grasp its primary cause). So clearly we too must do this as regards both coming to be and passing away and every kind of physical change, in order that, knowing their principles, we may try to refer to these principles each of our problems.

In one sense, then, (1) that out of which a thing comes to be and which persists, is called "cause," for example, the bronze of the statue, the silver of the bowl, and the genera of which the bronze and the silver are species.

In another sense (2) the form or the archetype, that is, the statement of the essence and its genera are called "causes" (e.g., of the octave the relation of 2:1, and generally number), and the parts in the definition.

Again (3) the primary source of the change or coming to rest; for example, the man who gave advice is a cause, the father is cause of the child, and generally what makes of what is made and what causes change of what is changed.

Again (4) in the sense of end or "that for the sake of which" a thing is done, for example, health is the cause of walking about. ("Why is he walking about?" we say. "To be healthy," and, having said that, we think we have assigned the cause.) The same is true also of all the intermediate steps which are brought about through the action of something else as means towards the end, for example, reduction of flesh, purging, drugs, or surgical instruments are means towards health. All these things are "for the sake of" the end, though they differ from one another in that some are activities, others instruments.

This then perhaps exhausts the number of ways in which the term "cause" is used.

Of course, it is not a case of a being that is something which is already permanently set as it is and remains forever unchanging. So in addition to describing a being, Aristotle also has to explain to us the process of becoming or the possibility of change that takes place in a being. A new pair of principles is introduced by him, which we can refer to as *potency* and *act*. A being may carry within itself certain potentials, but these require being actualized. A puppy is not yet a full-grown dog. These potencies are latent in the puppy and are actualized as the puppy grows up and achieves what it is supposed to be. The process of becoming—or change—can thus be explained in this way. Understanding beings, how they are and how they become or what they could be, is the significant Aristotelian contribution to the picture which will be given to us by Aquinas.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

SYNTHESIS

The idea of a transcendent good prior to all being resurfaces in Aquinas in the form of the good and loving God, who is Himself the fullness of being and of goodness; as Aquinas puts it, God is that which essentially is and is essentially good.[6] So, we recognize that all beings are only possible as participating in the first being, which is God Himself.[7] God's act, like an emanation of light, is the creation of beings.[8]

Insofar as God is that from which all beings come, it is possible for us to speak of Him as the first efficient cause.[9] Insofar as God is that toward which all beings seek to return, it is possible for us to speak of Him as the final cause.[10] We see here the beginning of the synthesis by noting how the Neoplatonic movement from and back toward the transcendent is fused with the Aristotelian notion of causes.

It must be noted, though, that this is not some mechanistic unthinking process. It is God's will and love that are the cause of all things; to every existing thing, God wills some good.[11] Creation therefore is the activity of the outpouring or overflowing of God's goodness. Since each being in this way participates in God's goodness, each being is in some sense good.

However, while beings are good because they are created by God, the goodness possessed by being remains imperfect. "For Aquinas, only God in the fullness of His being and goodness is perfect; all other beings are participating in this goodness, and are good to that extent, but are imperfect since they are limited in their participation." But, once again, God did not create us to simply be imperfect and to stay that way as He leaves us alone. Instead, God, in His infinite wisdom, directs how we are to arrive at our perfection. The notion of divine providence refers to how beings are properly ordered and even guided toward their proper end; this end, which is for them to reach their highest good, is to return to the divine goodness itself.[12]

God communicates to each being His perfection and goodness. Every creature then strives to its own perfection; thus the divine goodness is the end of all actions. All things come from God and are created by Him in order to return to Him.

We now need to recall that beings are created by God in a particular way. It is not accidental how beings emerge into existence; each being is created as a determinate substance, as a particular combination of form and matter. This applies to all beings, including man.[13] The particular form determines the materiality which makes a being a certain kind of being; the unique way that we have been created can be called our *nature*.

This nature, as a participation in God's goodness, is both good and imperfect at the same time. Coming from God, it is good, but in its limitations, it has yet to be perfected. This perfection means fulfilling our nature the best we can, thus realizing what God had intended for us to be. We accomplish this by fulfilling or actualizing the potencies that are already present in our nature.

While all beings are created by God in order to return to Him, the way the human being is directed toward God is unique. Given that we are beings with a capacity for reason, our way of reaching God is by knowing and loving him.[14] It is of key importance then that the presence of a capacity for reason is the prime characteristic of the kind of beings we are, and how that capacity for reason is the very tool which God had placed in our human nature as the way toward our perfection and return to Him.

This applies not only to an individual human being, but also to all humankind. But we should not forget how the whole community of being, which is the universe itself, is directed toward its return to God. This is not, as mentioned earlier, an unthinking process, but is the very work of divine reason itself or God's will. We can think, then, of the whole work of creation as divine reason governing a community toward its end. Under the governance of the Divine, beings are directed as to how their acts are to lead them to their end, which is to return to Him. We shall now try to understand this dynamic once again, but this time think of it in terms of *law*.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

THE ESSENCE AND VARIETIES OF LAW

ESSENCE

As rational beings, we have free will. Through our capacity for reason, we are able to judge between possibilities and to choose to direct our actions in one way or the other.[15] Our actions are directed toward attaining ends or goods that we desire. We work on a project to complete it. We study in order to learn. My mother bakes in order to come up with some cookies. Maybe my brother practices playing his guitar in order to get better at it. It can also be as simple as the fact that I play basketball because I enjoy doing so. These are goods, and we act in a certain way to pursue them, so goods are sometimes referred to as the ends of actions.

There are many possible desirable ends or goods, and we act in such ways as to pursue them. However, just because we think that a certain end is good and is therefore desirable does not necessarily mean it is indeed good. It is possible to first suppose that something is good only to realize later that doing so was a mistake. This is why it is important for reason to always be part of the process. Acts are rightly directed toward their ends by reason.[16] But this does not simply mean that through reason we can figure out how to pursue something that we already had thoughtlessly supposed to be good for us; what is necessary is to think carefully of what *really* is in fact good for us.

In thinking about what is good for us, it is also quite possible that we end up thinking exclusively of our own good. Aquinas reminds us that this will not do; we cannot simply act in pursuit of our own ends or good without any regard for other people's ends or good. We are not isolated beings, but beings who belong to a community. Since we belong to a community, we have to consider what is good for the community as well as our own good. This can be called the *common good*.[17]

What exactly the common good is might not always be easy to determine as there are many variables to consider, such as the particular community we are thinking of or the particular ends that the community is pursuing. But that need not occupy us right now. What is of greater significance for us here is the recognition that, since we must consider not just our own good but also that of others, we cannot act in just any which way; there would have to be some kind of measure to our acts. It is good for us to not simply be free to act in whatever way we like. We should recognize the proper measure or the limits in our actions that would allow us to direct our acts in such a way that we can pursue ends, both our own and also that of others, together. The determination of the proper measure of our acts can be referred to as *law*.

Using a simple example, we can think of traffic rules. A motorist cannot just drive in any way he likes, but must respect traffic rules. These rules seem to measure or place a limit on his driving, for example, by placing a maximum speed he can travel on a particular

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

road. Such a limit or such a rule is something good, for both him and for others as it helps prevent motor accidents. As Aquinas puts it, the law must regard properly the relationship to universal happiness.[18]

A law, therefore, is concerned with the common good. In a way, making of a law belongs either to the whole people or to a public person who has care for the common good or is tasked with the concern for the good of the community or of the whole people.[19]

Consider some of these examples. On a modest scale, imagine a student organization of twenty members. Together, all the members decide that it would be best if they were to meet on Friday afternoons or that they all had to contribute for lunch in their meetings. On a larger scale, a teacher who is in charge of a class of forty students has to put some rules in place so that things will go smoothly. Perhaps, she would maintain that students may not just walk in and out of the classroom and that they are not supposed to chatter loudly with their seatmates. The teacher imposes these rules not on a whim, but for the good of the class. On a still larger scale, city officials put up ordinances concerning, for example, garbage collection, traffic schemes, or zoning to control building sites. Ideally speaking, these all are done in view of what would be best for the community.

It is also necessary for rules or laws to be communicated to the people involved in order to enforce them and to better ensure compliance. This is referred to as *promulgation*. In an ideal sense, without considering the reality that sometimes rules are not properly thought out or seem to favor select persons or groups rather than the common good, we can speak of law as a form of restriction and direction of human actions in such a way that the common good is promoted. Aquinas's own summary of this point is worth citing: "The definition of law may be gathered; and it is nothing else than an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated."[20]

Now, in thinking about a community, what if we thought more grandly, not just a small group, a class, a city, or even a country? What if we think of vast community which is the entire universe and everything in it, or in other words, all of being? Is there Someone in charge of this community, guiding all toward their common good and directing all with His wisdom?

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

VARIETIES

We have noted earlier how God, by His wisdom, is the Creator of all beings. By saying this, we do not only recognize God as the source of these beings, but also acknowledge the way they have been created and the way they could return to Him, which is the work of His divine reason itself. This includes the proper measure governing the acts of these beings. Aquinas writes: "He governs all the acts and movements that are to be found in each single creature, so the type of Divine Wisdom, as moving all things to their due end, bears the character of law."[21] This line involves the assertion that the divine wisdom that directs each being toward its proper end can be called the *eternal law*.

Eternal law refers to what God wills for creation, how each participant in it is intended to return to Him. Given our limitations, we cannot grasp the fullness of the eternal law. Nevertheless, it is not completely opaque to us. We must recognize that first, we are part of the eternal law, and second, we participate in it in a special way.

All things partake in the eternal law, meaning, all beings are already created by God in a certain way intended to return to Him. Thus, we can find in them the very imprint of the rule and measure of the acts by which they are guided. These can be determined in the very inclinations that they possess, directing their acts toward their proper ends.[22]

Therefore, irrational creatures (e.g., plants and animals) are participating in the eternal law, although we could hardly say that they are in any way "conscious" of this law. Aquinas notes that we cannot speak of them as obeying the law, except by way of similitude,[23] which is to say that they do not think of the law or chose to obey it, but are simply, through the instinctual following of their nature, complying with the law that God has for them. More appropriately, these creatures are moved by divine providence.

On the other hand, human being's participation is different. The human being, as rational, participates more fully and perfectly in the law given the capacity for reason. The unique imprint upon us, upon our human nature by God, is the capacity to think about what is good and what is evil, and to choose and direct ourselves appropriately. So Aquinas writes: "Wherefore it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end: and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law."[24]

Therefore, by looking at our human nature, at the natural inclinations given to us by God, we can determine the rule and measure that should be directing our acts. These are the precepts of the natural law, which we will study more closely in the next section. However, let us mention first two more kinds of law provided by Aquinas.

Aquinas points out that while reflecting on our human nature will provide us the precepts of the natural law, these are quite general and would have to be made more specific, and at the same time more concrete in the actual operation of human acts.[25] For this reason, there is also *human law*.

Human law refers to all instances wherein human beings construct and enforce laws in their communities. Given the larger picture of Aquinas's view, one would have a basis for assessing the validity or invalidity of a human law: whether or not it conforms to the natural law. Insofar as a human law goes against what nature inclines us toward, it is not properly speaking a law—in the ideal sense of directing us to the common good—but instead is unjust and can be called a matter of violence.[26]

Finally, Aquinas asks us to recall that there is a certain form of happiness that is proportionate to our human nature, which we can obtain by means of our natural principles. However, there also is another, more complete, happiness that surpasses human's nature, a

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

supernatural happiness that can be obtained through the power of God alone. To direct us toward our supernatural end, we had been given further instructions in the form of *divine law*.[27] This term, often confused with eternal law, refers specifically to the instances where we have precepts or instructions that come from divine revelation. For example, we have what is handed down to us in the sacred Scriptures (e.g., the Ten Commandments in the book Exodus in the Old Testament or Jesus's injunction to love one's neighbor in the Gospels).

While this is necessary for Aquinas as he sees our end as the blessed return to God, it is not our concern here insofar as, given that our concern is ethics, one need not rely on the divine law in order to be moral. Of interest then about this natural law theory of Aquinas is that while it is clearly rooted in a Christian vision, it grounds a sense of morality not on that faith but on human nature. Aquinas writes: "So then no one can know the eternal law, as it is in itself, except the blessed who see God in His Essence. But every rational creature knows it in its reflection, greater or less.... Now all men know the truth to a certain extent, at least as to the common principles of the natural law..."[28]

The statement is a remarkable claim: anyone, coming from any religious tradition, just by looking at the nature that she shares with her fellow human beings, would be able to determine what is ethical. The complication one may have over an overtly religious presentation is dispelled when we recognize the universal scope that Aquinas envisions.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

NATURAL LAW

We may now turn to the specifics concerning the natural law.

The Natural Law

Summa Theologiae 1-2, Question 94, Article 2[1]

Thomas Aquinas

Since, however, good has the nature of an end, and evil, the nature of a contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. Wherefore according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law. Because in man there is first of all an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances: inasmuch as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law. Secondly, there is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him more specially, according to that nature which he has in common with other animals: and in virtue of this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law, "which nature has taught to all animals,"[F] such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring and so forth. Thirdly, there is in man an

> inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society: and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance, to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things regarding the above inclination.

In Common with Other Beings

In reading Aquinas, we have to consider how we, human beings, are both unique and at the same time participating in the community of the rest of creation. Our presence in the rest of creation does not only mean that we interact with creatures that are not human, but that there is also in our nature something that shares in the nature of other beings.

Aquinas thus identifies first that there is in our nature, common with all other beings, a desire to preserve one's own being. A *makahiya* leaf folds inward and protects itself when touched. A cat cowers and then tries to run away when it feels threatened. Similarly, human beings have that natural inclination to preserve their being. For this reason, Aquinas tells us that it is according to the natural law to preserve human life. We can thus say that it would be a violation of the natural law, and therefore unethical to take the life of another. Murder, for instance, would be a clear example of a violation of the natural law. On a more controversial note, it seems that taking one's own life would be unacceptable, even in the form of physician-assisted suicide. On a more positive note, we can confidently posit that acts that promote the continuation of life are to be lauded as ethical because they are in line with the natural law.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

In Common with Other Animals

Aquinas then goes on to say that there is in our human nature, common with other animals, a desire that has to do with sexual intercourse and the care of one's offspring. As a matter of fact, animals periodically engage in sexual intercourse at a specific time of "heat," and this could result in offspring. In human beings, too, that natural inclination to engage in the sexual act and to reproduce exists.

The intrinsic connection between the sexual act and fecundity gives rise to a number of notions of what is acceptable and unacceptable in varying degrees of contentiousness. An ethical issue that is hotly contested in some parts of the world is whether abortion is acceptable. From the stance of the natural law, the act of preventing the emergence of new life would be considered unacceptable. Not so controversial, perhaps, would be the claims that we could more easily make about how it is good to care for the young, to make sure that they are properly fed, sheltered, and educated. On the other hand, it is bad to abuse the young, to force children into hard labor or to deprive them of basic needs or otherwise abuse them in a physical or emotional way.

With regard to the sexual act, the moral judgments get more volatile. This argument seems to provide ground for rejecting various forms of contraception since these allow for the sexual act to take place, but inhibit procreation. This also seems to justify the claim that any form of the sexual act that could not lead to offspring must be considered deviant. One of these is the homosexual act.

To explain, Thomas writes: "...certain special sins are said to be against nature; thus contrary to sexual intercourse, which is natural to all animals, is unisexual lust, which has received the special name of the unnatural crime."[29] The question can be raised as to whether all animals "naturally" engage in heterosexual (rather than unisexual or homosexual") intercourse as Aquinas (with the much more rudimentary scientific knowledge of his time) believed. Another question is whether there must be a necessary connection between the act of sexual intercourse and procreation.

UNIQUELY HUMAN

After the first two inclinations, Aquinas presents a third reason which states that we have an inclination to good according to the nature of our reason. With this, we have a natural inclination to know the truth about God and to live in society. It is of interest that this is followed by matters of both an epistemic and a social concern. The examples given to us of what would be in line with this inclination are to shun ignorance and to avoid offending those people with whom one lives. We could surmise on this basis that acts of deception or fraud would be unacceptable to Aquinas. This, as mentioned, is surmise because this is not something we are told directly by Thomas.

In fact, a characteristic of the text which may be frustrating to anyone trying to read Aquinas is that he does not go into great detail here enumerating what specific acts would be clearly ethical or unethical. Instead, he gave certain general guideposts: the epistemic concern, which is that we know we pursue the truth, and the social concern, which is that we know we live in relation to others. The question of what particular acts would be in line with these or not is something that we have to determine for ourselves through the use of reason. Let us elaborate on this further.

First, we had been presented with these three inclinations as bases for moral valuation. In light of this, we know that preserving the self is good. Contrary to common misconception, the sexual inclination and the sexual act are considered good things, not something to be deplored or dismissed. However, reason is not only another inclination that we have in par with the others. Instead, reason is the defining part of human nature. Thomas tells us that there is a priority among the powers of our soul, with the intellectual directing and commanding our sensitive and nutritive capacities.[30] What this amount to is the need to recognize that while our other inclinations are good, as they are in our nature, what it means to be human is, precisely to exercise our reason in our consideration of how the whole self should be comported toward the good. I cannot simply say, "Sex is natural," if what I mean by

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

that is that I could just engage in the act in any way I like without thought or care. Instead, we are enjoined to make full use of our reason and determine when the performance of our natural inclinations is appropriate.

Second, recognizing how being rational is what is proper to man,[31] the apparent vagueness of the third inclination that Aquinas mentions is counter-balanced by the recognition that he is not interested in providing precepts that one would simply, unthinkingly, follow. To say that the human being is rational is to recognize that we should take up the burden of thinking carefully how a particular act may or may not be a violation of our nature. It is to take the trouble to think carefully about how our acts would either contribute to, or detract from, the common good.

For this reason, in making human laws, additions that are not at all problematic for the natural law are possible. At first glance, it may seem like there is nothing "natural" about obeying traffic rules or paying taxes. However, if it has been decided that these contribute to the common good, then they could, in fact, be proper extensions of the natural law. As Aquinas puts it, nothing hinders a change in the natural law by way of addition,[32] since our reason has found and can find many things that benefit individual and communal human life.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have seen how the natural law theory is instrumental to an ethics that is rooted in the Christian faith. In elaborating this, we explored how Aquinas had synthesized concepts of the ancient Greeks to put forward an intellectual grounding that can overcome the limitations of a simplistic divine command theory. Instead, we are provided an objective basis for ethics: our own natural inclinations. Since these are given by God, they provide us the path toward our perfection. Our natural inclinations as enumerated by Aquinas include the desire to preserve our being, the sexual act and its fecundity, and our use of reason.

KEY WORDS

- Idea of the Good
- Material Cause
- Final Cause
- Potency
- Human Law
- Natural Law
- Formal Cause
- Efficient Cause
- Act
- Eternal Law
- Divine Law

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Are there other ways that the word "natural" is used to justify a particular way of behaving? How do these approaches compare to the theory of Aquinas?
2. Can you think of human laws that are proper extensions of the natural law? Explain how this is so. Can you think of other human laws that violate the natural law? Explain how this is so.
3. Are there other forms of harm—short of killing another person—that may be taken as a violation of the natural inclination to preserve one's being? Justify your answer.
4. Are there current scientific developments—for example, in biology—that challenge the understanding of nature presented by Aquinas?
5. Is it possible to maintain a natural law theory without believing in the divine source? Why or why not?

SUGGESTED READINGS

Davies, Brian and Eleonore Stump, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

MacDonald, Scott and Eleonore Stump, editors. *Aquinas's Moral Theory: Essays in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.

McInerny, Ralph. *Ethica Thomistica: The Moral Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*. Revised, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1997.

Pope, Stephen J., editor. *The Ethics of Aquinas*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

NOTES

1. Cayabyab, Marc Jayson. "Minority Solons Oppose Same Sex Union: It's-Unnatural-Unsightly." *Newsinfo.inquirer.net*, 5 October 2016 http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/822013/minority-solons-oppose-same-sex-union-its-unnatural-unsightly-2. Accessed 26 July 2017.
2. Aquinas. Summa Theologiae, First Part, Question Number 103, Article Number 6, online edition by Kevin Knight 2016, accessed July 27, 2017. Newadvent.org/summa. This and all subsequent references to the Summa Theologiae are from this site and will be cited using the format ST I, Q.103,

A.6. The label ST I refers to the volume "First part"; the label ST I-II refers to the volume "First part of the Second part." The reader might also be directed toward a more precise section of the article called the "Reply to Objections," which will be rendered here in the notes following standard usage as "ad."

3. Plato. "Plato's Republic." *Republic*, http://www.idph.net/conteudos/ebooks/republic.pdf. Accessed 24 July 2017.

4. Plotinus. "Plotinus' Enneads." *Enneads*, http://sacred-texts.com/cla/plotenn/index.htm. Accessed July 24, 2017.

5. Aristotle. "Aristotle's Physics." *Physics*, http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/physics.2.ii.html. Accessed 24 July 2017.

6. ST I, Q.6, A.1.
7. ST I, Q.44, A.1.
8. ST I, Q.45, A.1.
9. ST I, Q.44, A.1.
10. ST I, Q.44, A.4.
11. ST I, Q.20, A.2.
12. ST I, Q.22, A.1.
13. ST I-II, Q.55, A.2.
14. ST I, Q.65, A.2.
15. ST I, Q.83, A.1.
16. ST I-II, Q.6, A.2.
17. ST I-II, Q.90, A.3, ad.3.
18. ST I-II, Q.90, A.2.
19. *Ibid.*
20. ST I-II, Q.90, A.4.
21. ST I-II, Q.93, A.1.
22. ST I-II, Q.91, A.2.
23. ST I-II, Q.91, A.2, ad.3.
24. ST I-II, Q.91, A.2.
25. ST I-II, Q.91, A.3, ad.1.
26. ST I-II, Q.93, A.3, ad.2.
27. ST I-II, Q.91, A.4. See also ST I-II, Q.62, A.1.
28. ST I-II, Q.93, A.2.
29. ST I-II, Q.94, A.3, ad.2.
30. ST I, Q.77, A.4.
31. ST I-II, Q.94, A.3.
32. ST I-II, Q.94, A.5.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

ACTIVITY PAGE

Name: ______________________ Date: ____________

Course: ______________________ Grade: ____________

Post-Truth

We find the lines blurred between fact and fiction, between news reports and advertisements. We are accustomed to hearing and reading fake news. We are inundated by figures and statistics that we can barely comprehend, much less confirm. We are told to consider alternative facts and to not take seriously everything we might hear our political leaders say. We read and revel in and then repost the most hyperbolic and hysterical statements without asking ourselves whether we or anyone else should reasonably maintain this. We are now in the "post-truth" era.

This label of "post-truth" means that we are more and more becoming habituated to disregard or at least to devalue the truth. It is a tendency to think of truth as insignificant in view of other concerns. This is a significant question in the field of media ethics, as practitioners in that field—(news reporters, writers, investigative journalists, and advertisers—ought to ask the question as to what extent the integrity of their work might be compromised in view of other interests, such as popularity, profit, higher viewership, or stronger sales. Yet, this issue is not limited to people working in media. It should be recognized as relevant by anyone who makes use of social media, caught up in statements and exchanges of dubious worth. It should be considered by anyone who wants to take seriously Aquinas' claim that reason and a concern for truth are what make us human.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

I. Go online and look for an instance of what might be "fake news." See whether you are able to determine the veracity of the news report. Detail your findings and opinion below.

II. In view of Aquinas's assertion that reason is what makes us uniquely human and that being reasonable opens up both an epistemic concern for truth and also a social concern of being in relation with others, provide an assessment on the value or disvalue of post-truth phenomena such as fake news or alternative facts.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

III. Consider other topics within the realm of media ethics. Select one and give an initial presentation of the significance of discussing this topic.

CHAPTER IV
DEONTOLOGY

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. discuss the basic principles of deontology;
2. apply the concepts of agency and autonomy to one's moral experience; and
3. evaluate actions using the universalizability test.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

INTRODUCTION

During the flag ceremony of that Monday morning, January 24, 2017, the mayor of Baguio City awarded a certificate from the City Government that commended Reggie Cabututan for his "extraordinary show of honesty in the performance of their duties or practice of profession."[1] Reggie is a taxi driver who, just three days before the awarding, drove his passenger, an Australian named Trent Shields, to his workplace. The foreigner, having little sleep and was ill the previous day, left his suitcase inside the taxi cab after he reached his destination. The suitcase contained a laptop, passport, and an expensive pair of headphones, which Trent claimed amounted to around ₱260,000.[2]

Consider closely the moment when Reggie found that Trent had left a suitcase in his taxi cab: If he were to return the suitcase, there was no promise of an award from the City Government of Baguio and no promise of a reward from the owner. What if he took the suitcase and sold its contents? That could surely help him supplement his daily wages. Life as a taxi driver in the Philippines is not easy. A little extra cash would go a long way to put food on the table and to pay tuition fees for his children.

Yet, Reggie returned the suitcase without the promise of a reward. Why? Perhaps, he had previously returned lost luggage to passengers. Maybe, it was his first time to do so. Maybe, he received a reward before, or maybe he knows some fellow taxi drivers who did or did not receive rewards from passengers after they returned lost luggage. However, the point is that there was no promise of a reward. A reward, in the first place, is not an entitlement. It is freely given as an unrequired gift for one's service or effort. Otherwise, it would be a payment, not a reward, if someone demanded it.

Why did Reggie return the suitcase? For now, let us suppose his main reason was simply because it was right to return lost property to the rightful owner, no matter how tempting it is to keep it for oneself. Is it possible that Reggie's reason for returning the luggage was not because of any reward whether psychic or physical? "It is simply the right thing to do," Reggie might have told himself.

What if Reggie did not return the suitcase, destroyed the lock, then took and sold its valuable contents? What is wrong about keeping and benefitting from the valuables that someone misplaced? "It is his fault; he was mindless and careless," Reggie could have thought. As the saying goes: Finders keepers, losers weepers. On one hand, Reggie could have mused: "He will learn to be more mindful of his things from now on." Yet, Reggie returned the suitcase without the promise of a reward.

As we previously said, perhaps, Reggie believed that it was the right thing to do. Even if he felt that he could have benefitted from the sale of the valuable items in the suitcase, he must have believed the principle that it is right to do the right thing. Reggie could be holding on to this moral conviction as a principle of action.

To hold a moral conviction means believing that it is one's duty to do the right thing. What is duty? Why does one choose to follow her duty even if doing otherwise may bring her more benefits?

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

DUTY AND AGENCY

The moral theory that evaluates actions that are done because of duty is called *deontology*. Deontology comes from the Greek word *deon*, which means "being necessary." Hence, deontology refers to the study of duty and obligation. The main proponent of deontology is Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). He was a German Enlightenment philosopher who wrote one of the most important works on moral philosophy, *Groundwork towards a Metaphysics of Morals* (1785). In this work, Kant brings our attention to the fact that we, human beings, have the faculty called rational will, which is the capacity to act according to principles that we determine for ourselves.

To consider the rational will is to point out the difference between animals and persons. On one hand, animals are sentient organisms. Sentience, meaning an organism has the ability to perceive and navigate its external environment. Insofar as dogs and *carabaos* are sentient organisms, we do not see them bumping into trees and walls unless their senses are weak. Animals constantly interact with their surroundings. This is also true to us humans; we are also sentient. Thus, both animals and persons interact in and with the world, reacting to external stimuli and internal impulses to survive and thrive.

On the other hand, people are also rational. Rationality consists of the mental faculty to construct ideas and thoughts that are beyond our immediate surroundings. This is the

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was a German enlightenment philosopher who is thought to herald the "*Copernican Revolution in Philosophy*." What is meant by Copernican Revolution? Nicolaus Copernicus was the 15th century astronomer who proposed the heliocentric model of the universe in his book *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*. This was a major event in the history of ideas because it heralded a radical paradigm shift in the way humans considered their place in the universe. Akin to Copernicus, Kant developed revolutionary insights concerning the human mind and the conditions for the possibility of knowledge. In this chapter, the primary text of Kant, *Groundwork towards a Metaphysics of Morals*, shows his contributions in moral philosophy. By itself, this text is also revolutionary, insofar as Kant's ambition in the text is radical. He intends to develop what he calls the "supreme principle of morality." It is supposedly supreme because by basing it on the faculty of reason, it becomes binding for all creatures that have that faculty. ("Faculty" here means inherent mental capacity.) This way, the binding force of obligation is no longer relative but universal. It no longer depends on what a person's historical, cultural, or religious circumstances are. For as long as that person has the faculty of reason, the moral law is binding. Hence, Kant has become a key thinker in moral reflection.

capacity for mental abstraction, which arises from the operations of the faculty of reason. Thus, we have the ability to stop and think about what we are doing. We can remove ourselves mentally from the immediacy of our surroundings and reflect on our actions and how such actions affect the world. We can imagine a different and better world, and create mental images of how we interact with other people in that world. In the same way, an architect "first" constructs her blueprint of a house in her mind. When the draft of that construction is drawn, she can then give instructions to masons and carpenters on how to build the actual house, which becomes the "second" construction. This happens often in our lives such as when a young girl puts on her nice dress and makeup, when a student writes the outline for an English essay, or when a painter makes initial sketches on a canvass. The first construction consists in how we imagine things can be, then we implement that in the second construction. Through the capacity for imagination and reflection, we conceive of how we could affect, possibly even change, the world we live in.

Thus, we do not only have the capacity to imagine and construct mental images, but we also have the ability to act on—to enact and make real—those mental images. This ability to enact our thoughts is the basis for the rational will. The rational will refers to the faculty to intervene in the world, to act in a manner that is consistent with our reason. As far as we know, animals only act according to impulses, based on their natural instincts. Thus, animals "act" with immediacy (from Latin: *i* + *medius*, or

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

"no middle") with nothing that intervenes between the impulse and the action. They do not and cannot deliberate on their actions. In fact, we may say that animals do not "act." They only "react" to their external surroundings and internal impulses. In contrast, we humans have reason, which intervenes between impulse and act. We have the ability to stop and think about what we are doing to evaluate our actions according to principles. Simply stated, we are not only reacting to our surroundings and internal impulses, but are also conceiving of ways to act according to certain rational principles.

Right now, for example, you may feel lethargic. Your head feels heavy and your eyes are droopy. The corresponding impulse is to close your eyes and then fall asleep. However, your rational will demand something else. Perhaps, you have to finish reading this chapter for a quiz tomorrow. That quiz is part of the big picture, that is, your formation as a student to earn a degree and do productive work. So you struggle to stay awake; you stand up briefly to stretch your legs. You may have already taken some coffee. Right now, as you struggle to stay awake and understand the words on this page, your rational will is victorious over your bodily impulses as long as you stay awake. This demonstrates the triumph of your rational will over your base impulse to just go to sleep. This triumph clarifies the meaning of rational will, the capacity of a person to be the cause of her actions based on reasons and not merely to mindlessly react to the environment and base impulses. In philosophical discussions about human freedom, this capacity is called *agency*, which is the ability of a person to act based on her intentions and mental states.

Let us go back to Reggie. The moment he discovered that Trent had left his suitcase in the taxi cab, Reggie reacted according to his rational will—to return the suitcase. He determined that it was his duty to return it inasmuch as his rational will had conceived such a duty.

Hence, to act according to a duty is a specifically human experience. Animals, if it is true that they do not possess the faculty of rational will, cannot conceive of having duties. This is the starting point of deontology. We may claim that as long as we have rationality, there will always be the tension between our base impulses and our rational will.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

AUTONOMY

Kant claims that the property of the rational will is *autonomy* (Ak 4:440), which is the opposite of *heteronomy*. These three Greek words are instructive: *autos*, *heteros*, and *nomos*, which mean "self," "other," and "law," respectively. Hence, when we combine *autos* and *nomos*, we get autonomy; *heteros* and *nomos* to heteronomy. Crudely stated, autonomy means self-law (or self-legislating) and heteronomy means other law.

Consider the trivial example of brushing one's teeth, which is not yet a moral dilemma but is sufficient to explain the difference between autonomy and heteronomy. When you were a child, did you like to brush your teeth? As far as we can tell, children do not like

to brush their teeth, but parents know that children should, to maintain oral hygiene. So parents try to find ways to get their small children to brush their teeth before going to bed, using a variety of incentives or threats of undesirable consequences. "Hey, Ryan," a mother tells her boy, "go and brush your teeth now or else your teeth will rot!" "Come on now, Liza," a father tells his daughter, "If you brush your teeth in five minutes, I will let you play your computer game tonight." In the case of Ryan and Liza, are they autonomous? Certainly not, as their parents are the ones that *legislate* the principle that children should brush their teeth before they go to bed and *impose* such a principle by using threats or incentives.

Now think about Ryan and Liza twenty years later when they are in their mid-twenties. Suppose they brush their teeth every night before they go to bed, and they do so without the prodding of their parents. At a certain point, perhaps when they were growing up as teenagers, they both reflected on the whole business of brushing one's teeth. Both concluded that they (1) agree with the principle behind it (oral hygiene) and thus, (2) every night they impose it upon themselves to brush their teeth before going to bed. Number 1 refers to the act of legislating a principle, while number 2 refers to the enacting of the principle. Thus, it also refers to the willing of the adopted principle into reality. Are they autonomous? Yes, certainly. Kant describes this as follows:

> The will is thus not only subject to the law, but it is also subject to the law in such a way that it gives the law to itself (self-legislating), and primarily just in this way that the will can be considered the author of the law under which it is subject. (Ak 4:431)

This description of autonomy is unusual. When we think of someone being "subject to the law," we usually think of an imposing authority figure that uses his power to control the subject into complying with his will. Imagine a policeman who apprehends a suspected criminal by forcing him on the ground and putting handcuffs on his wrists. Incidentally, "subject" comes from the Latin words *sub* (under) and *jacere* (to throw). When combined, the two words refer to that which is thrown or brought under something. The will must comply with the law, which is the authority figure.

Surprisingly though, the will must give the law to itself. Therefore, the will is, at the same time, the authority figure giving the law to itself. How can the rational will be subordinate to that which is simultaneously its own authority figure? Isn't that contradictory to be subject to the law and yet also be the authority figure for itself? Thus, Kant describes autonomy as the will that is subject to a principle or law.

This apparent contradiction is entirely possible to exist, but only for self-reflexive human beings that have rational will. Remember Ryan and Liza, and the principle of brushing their teeth. On one hand, heteronomy is the simple legislation and imposition of a law by an external authority (a person must brush her teeth before going to bed). Their parents are the authority figures, and the law is imposed externally by rewards or punishments. On the other hand, autonomy belongs to the grown-up and already rational Ryan and Liza, who

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

have adopted such a law about brushing their teeth. They regularly impose such a law on themselves out of the enactment of the will to follow the law.

The distinguishing point here is the locus of the *authorship* of the law. In any given scenario where a person complies with the law, we ask where the author is, whether it is external or internal. If the author of the law is external, the will is subjected to an external authority, thus heteronomous will. In contrast, if the author was the will itself, imposing the law unto itself, then we describe the will as autonomous. For the 25-year-old versions of Ryan and Liza who brush their teeth before going to bed without any prompting from their parents, their adoption of the childhood law about toothbrushing makes the locus of the authorship internal. Thus, they are autonomous.

However, trivial actions such as brushing one's teeth can hardly be considered "moral." Real moral issues often involve actions like stealing, lying, and murder, in that they have a certain gravity, insofar as those actions directly harm or benefit the well-being of persons. Reggie's case, seen in this light, is clearly a moral issue.

Let us remember that alternative scenario that we imagined earlier: What if Reggie did not return the suitcase, destroyed the lock, then took and sold its valuable contents? Is this not an act of rational will? Can we not claim that Reggie's rational will determines for itself how it enacts its duty in this alternative scenario? Is Reggie not, after all, acting as an autonomous agent? Reggie could have easily come upon the odious principle that he should benefit from Trent's loss because people who lose their things are careless, and thus do not deserve to keep those things. Therefore, Reggie may have concluded, "I am entitled to benefit from this lost suitcase. I am the author of this principle. I am acting autonomously." He may conclude this since no external authority is legislating laws for him by using rewards or punishments. However, this kind of reasoning is mistaken from a Kantian understanding as we will show below.

What do you think of Reggie's principle that he should benefit from other people's loss because they are careless, and thus do not deserve to keep those things? Is it still autonomous agency when a person enacts *any* apparently self-legislated principle? We may argue that the locus of the authorship of the law was certainly internal, when he tells himself, "I am entitled to benefit from this lost suitcase," based on how we have described the difference between autonomy and heteronomy—self and other. Is that what autonomy properly means? Certainly not.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Kant claims that there is a difference between rational will and animal impulse. Take a close look at how he describes the distinction in this passage:

> The choice that can be determined by pure reason is called free choice. That which is determinable only by inclination (sensible impulse, stimulus) would be animal choice (*arbitrium brutum*). Human choice, in contrast, is a choice that may indeed be affected but not determined by impulses, and is therefore in itself (without an acquired skill of reason) not pure, but can nevertheless be determined to do actions from pure will (Ak 6:213).

Thus, there is a difference between what determines a choice or decision, whether it is caused by sensible impulse or by pure reason. On one hand, sensible impulses are usually bodily and emotional. Bodily instincts and desires, such as the urge to eat, drink, sleep, or have sexual intercourse, comprise the set of human compulsions for survival and the propagation of the species. Emotions and sentiments also make up what Kant considers sensible impulses. Practical examples are the jealousy from seeing your girlfriend or boyfriend make eyes at someone, and the rage from being pushed foully by your opponent in a basketball game. As we previously claimed, when we discussed the difference between animals and humans, there is immediacy to sensible impulses. There is hardly anything that comes between the stimulus and the reaction. Kant calls this set of actions that are caused by sensible impulse *animal choice* or *arbitrium brutum*.

On the other hand, there is a choice or action that is determined by pure reason. Kant calls this kind of action *free choice*, and one may argue that human freedom resides in this capacity of reason to intervene, to "mediate" within *arbitrium brutum*. Previously, rationality was described as the mental capacity to construct ideas and thoughts that are beyond one's immediate surroundings. This mental capacity is what makes the intervention possible between stimulus and reaction. With the faculty of reason, a person can break the immediacy of stimulus and reaction by stopping to deliberate and assess possible alternative actions. The above-described jealous partner and raging basketball player, if they had enough self-possession, could refrain from reacting mindlessly to the triggering stimuli and instead construct a rational response. For instance, you may open up with your partner to talk about trust and setting boundaries, or you may tell the guarding opponent to take it easy and play the game well. In both cases, you orient your actions toward an overall aim that you aspire for trust and sportsmanship, respectively. These aims are mental constructions of the faculty of reason. These examples do not imply that people are not affected by sensible impulses. The jealous feelings and anger are present, but they do not immediately and automatically cause the actions. Based on the quote above (Ak 6:213), Kant describes that human choice can be affected but is not determined by sensible impulses.

What does it mean for a human to be affected but is not determined by sensible impulse? It implies that we are indeed basically animals, but we cannot be reduced to mere animality. This is where the correlative conjunction "not only, but also" is useful. When we claim, "The human person is not only an animal, but is also rational," we admit to two

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

possible causes of our actions: sensible impulses and the faculty of reason. Human freedom resides in that distinction.

Let us return once again to Reggie and the alternative scenario when he tells himself, "I am entitled to benefit from this lost suitcase." Is Reggie acting autonomously supposing he did not return the suitcase and instead sold its contents for his own benefit? We asked this at the beginning of this section: Is it always autonomous agency when a person enacts any apparently self-legislated principle? Certainly not. The difference between human choice and animal choice is crucial to giving a correct answer here. Autonomy is a property of the will only during instances when the action is determined by pure reason. When the action is determined by sensible impulses, despite the source of those impulses being nevertheless internal, it is considered heteronomous. Why heteronomous? Because a sensible impulse is "external" to one's self-legislating faculty of reason. Kant confirms this point when he states that the action caused by sensible impulses results always only in the heteronomy of the will because it is what he calls "a foreign impulse" (Ak 4:444), insofar as the will does not give itself the law.

Therefore, Reggie is not acting autonomously, supposing he was to take and benefit from the contents of the suitcase. Why would we consider his will as being heteronomous? Because a sensible impulse would be the cause of such an action, whether it is greed or the excitement of obtaining easy money without working for it, or the shame that arises from being unable to provide for his family. In any of those causes, a sensible impulse is akin to a "foreign impulse" that has the same immediacy of an external authority figure that imposes its will on Reggie.

We can thus make the conclusion that heteronomy of the will occurs when any foreign impulse, whether it is external (as in other persons or institutions that impose their will on the agent) or sensible (as in bodily instincts or base emotions) is what compels a person to act. In contrast, autonomy is the property of the will in those instances when pure reason is the cause of the action.

But what consists in an action that is done by an autonomous will insofar as the cause of the action is pure reason? What does it mean to act according to pure reason?

UNIVERSALIZABILITY

To figure out how the faculty of reason can be the cause of an autonomous action, we need to learn a method or a specific procedure that will demonstrate autonomy of the will. But before explaining this procedure, it will be helpful to first make a distinction about kinds of moral theories, namely, substantive and formal moral theories.

A *substantive moral theory* immediately promulgates the specific actions that comprise that theory. As such, it identifies the particular duties in a straightforward manner that the adherents of the theory must follow. The set of Ten Commandments of the Judeo-Christian

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

tradition is an unambiguous example of a substantive moral theory. The specific laws are articulated mostly in the form of a straightforward moral command: "Honor your father and mother," "You shall not kill," and so forth.

In contrast, a *formal moral theory* does not supply the rules or commands straightaway. It does not tell you what you may or may not do. Instead, a formal moral theory provides us the "form" or "framework" of the moral theory. To provide the "form" of a moral theory is to supply a procedure and the criteria for determining, on one's own, the rules and moral commands. Metaphorically, we can think of a cookbook as akin to a formal moral theory. In using a cookbook, we are given instructions on how to cook certain dishes, but we are not given the actual food themselves, which would be "substantive." In following a recipe for *sinigang*, for example, we may add a slight variation to the ingredients and sequence of steps. But if we want the dish to remain *sinigang* and not transform it into some other kind of viand like *pochero*, we need to follow the steps that are relevant to making *sinigang*. To be exact, a formal moral theory will not give us a list of rules or commands. Instead, it will give us a set of instructions on how to make a list of duties or moral commands.

Kant endorses this formal kind of moral theory. The *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, which he wrote in 1785, embodies a formal moral theory in what he calls the *categorical imperative*, which provides a procedural way of identifying the rightness or wrongness of an action. Kant articulates the categorical imperative this way:

> Act only according to such a maxim, by which you can at once will that it become a universal law. (Ak 4:421)

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

There are four key elements in this formulation of the categorical imperative, namely, action, maxim, will, and universal law. Kant states that we must formulate an action as a *maxim*, which he defines as a "subjective principle of action" (Ak 4:422). In this context, a maxim consists of a "rule" that we live by in our day-to-day lives, but it does not have the status of a law or a moral command that binds us to act in a certain way. Rather, maxims depict the patterns of our behavior. Thus, maxims are akin to the "standard operating procedures" (SOPs) in our lives. We act according to a variety of maxims, even if we are not aware of them. Actually, we become aware of our maxims when we talk about ourselves, when we reveal our habits and the reasons behind them. For example, we tell our friends what we ordinarily do in certain specific situations: When the weekend comes, I usually go to the beach with my family to relax. When the exam week begins, I go to mass so that I will be blessed with good luck. Whenever I meet my crush, I wear my hair in a braid so that he will notice me. These are usually personal "policies" that may or may not be unique to us, but we act according to these maxims nonetheless. This is why Kant calls a maxim a subjective principle of action. We have many maxims in our daily lives, and we live according to them.

In the formulation of the categorical imperative, Kant calls our attention to the kind of maxims that we live by. He claims that we ought to act according to the maxim "by which you can at once will that it become a universal law." What does it mean to will a maxim that can become a universal law? It means that the maxim must be *universalizable*, which is what it means to "will that it become a universal law." This means nothing other than imagining a world in which the maxim, or personal rule, that I live by were adopted by everyone as their own maxim. In this formulation, Kant is telling us to conceive of the maxim as if it obligated everyone to comply. This mental act of imagining a universalized maxim does not mean we picture a world in which everyone actually followed the maxim. Instead, we merely imagine the maxim as a law that everyone ought to follow. The proper way to imagine the universalized maxim is not by asking, "What if everyone did that maxim?" but by asking, "What if everyone were obligated to follow that maxim?" Here is a clear example.

In *Groundwork towards a Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant takes up the issue of making false promises (Ak 4:422). He narrates the predicament of a man who needs money, but has no immediate access to obtain it except by borrowing it from a friend. This man knows that he will not be able to pay the money back, but if he says he cannot return the money, then no money will be lent to him. Hence, the predicament is simply about him borrowing money, while knowing that he cannot pay it back. This is a specific act under the general category of acts called *false promising*. Kant says that the man would like to make such a promise, but he stops and asks himself if what he is about to do is right or wrong: is it really wrong to borrow money without intending to pay it back? If we were to formulate this act as a maxim, it would go this way: "When I am in need of money, I shall borrow it even when I know I cannot pay it back."

Remember that Kant states that we should act according to a maxim by which we can at once will that it become a universal law. What does it mean to universalize the maxim about borrowing money without intending to return it? It is simple. Imagine a hypothetical world in which each person, whenever she is in need of money, is *obligated to borrow* from another even when she knows she cannot pay it back. We do not imagine that people *actually* borrowed money without intending to return it. Instead, we think of them as obligated to do so. Now, there are two possibilities in this hypothetical world where people are obligated to borrow money without intending to pay: the maxim can either make sense or not make sense as a universal law. By "making sense," we refer to the logical plausibility of the universalized maxim. The opposite of logical plausibility is self-contradiction or logical impossibility.

Let us assess that hypothetical world. If borrowing money without intending to pay were everyone's obligation to comply with, what would happen to the status of the universalized maxim? The purpose of borrowing money would be defeated because no one will lend money. In a world where it is an obligation to borrow money without paying back, all lenders would know that they will not be paid and they will refuse to lend money. The institution of money-borrowing would lose its meaning if everyone was obligated to

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

borrow money without intending to pay it back. As a universalized maxim, it would self-destruct because it becomes impossible. This is how Kant assesses it:

> Here I see straightaway that it could never be valid as a universal law of nature and be consistent with itself, but must necessarily contradict itself. For the universality of a law that each person, when he believes himself to be in need, could promise whatever he pleases with the intent not to keep it, would make the promise and the purpose that he may have impossible, since no one would believe what was promised him but would laugh at all such expressions as futile pretense (Ak 4:422).

In the passage above, Kant distinguishes between being "consistent with itself" and "contradict itself." Look at the maxim again: "When I am in need of money, I shall borrow it even when I know I cannot pay it back." The meaning of the act "to borrow" implies taking and using something with the intent to return it. In the maxim, the claim is to borrow "even when I know I cannot pay it back," which contradicts the very meaning of "to borrow." The contradiction is evident: to borrow (implies returning) but the intention is not to return. Of course, in the real world, many people borrow money without intending to pay, but it is the logical plausibility of the universalized maxim that is at stake. Here, we reveal the contradiction that occurs when we scrutinize the maxim because, after all, one contradicts oneself when one borrows money (implies intent to return) without intending to pay it back. It makes no sense. This is why Kant claims that the universalized maxim "could never be valid as a universal law of nature and be consistent with itself, but must necessarily contradict itself." Thus, we can conclude that the act of borrowing money without intending to pay is rationally impermissible. Here, we discover two ways by which Kant rejects maxims. The universalized maxim becomes either (1) self-contradictory or (2) the act and its purpose become impossible.

What is the result of all these? We reveal the rational permissibility of actions insofar as they cannot be rejected as universalizable maxims. In contrast, those universalized maxims that are rejected are shown to be impermissible, that is, they are irrational and thus, in Kant's mind, immoral. But what does *rational permissibility* mean? Simply put, it refers to the intrinsic quality of an action that it is objectively and necessarily rational. Using the universalizability test, we can reveal the objective necessity of an action as rational. Observe, for example, the quality of the arithmetical claim, "1 + 1 = 2." It is objectively necessary because the quality of the claim is universally and logically valid, and we understand this to be always true as rational beings. Observe the difference between the quality of objectively necessary claims with contingent claims, such as claims about the world like "The sky is blue," the truth of which depends on the actual situation in the world. Therefore, we have demonstrated that borrowing money without intending to pay, as a kind of false promise, is objectively and necessarily wrong, insofar as it encounters a self-contradiction and logical impossibility when it is universalized as a maxim.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

SUMMARY

At this juncture, it has become clear how Kant's categorical imperative is a formal, not substantive, moral philosophy. We have shown how an action can be tested and via this test, it can also be distinguished whether such an action is permissible or not. Instead of being given a list of substantive moral commands, we now have a sort of tool, like a measuring instrument, that tells us whether an action is morally permissible or not. Hence, we have the capacity to make our own list of moral commands. Instead of receiving them from others, we use our own rational faculty to produce our own list of moral duties.

Returning to Reggie and the suitcase that was left in his cab, he can now test on his own the moral permissibility of the formulated maxim: "When a suitcase that does not belong to me is left in my cab, I shall take its contents and sell them for my own benefit." He can now assess this maxim by imagining it as everyone's obligation. Does the universalized maxim encounter a self-contradiction, or does it remain self-consistent? Certainly, the meaning of ownership, when a suitcase belongs to someone, is to have the right to possess, use, and dispose of the thing as one pleases. So what happens when a person is obligated to take possession of an object that does not belong to her? The universalized maxim of Reggie becomes contradictory, for the meaning of ownership is contradicted. How is it that everyone is obligated to take a suitcase and sell its contents, despite the fact that they do not have the right to possess, use, and dispose of that suitcase?

Now, imagine applying this procedure to other scenarios in which a person encounters moral problems, such as lying, cheating in an exam, murder, and adultery, among others. You may also test positive actions, such as paying for something that you are buying, returning something you borrowed, or submitting a school project on time. Can the maxims in the specific actions under those moral issues be universalized without encountering self-contradiction? It is for each one of us to test on our own, not for Kant or any other authority figure to determine for us. On your own, try identifying an action that is considered lying or cheating in an exam, formulate the maxim, then test that maxim for universalizability. Is there a contradiction that is revealed in the universalized maxim?

In summary, this procedure is properly used when one wishes to determine the moral permissibility of an action. Indeed, we are often already told which actions are right or wrong, but this knowledge is usually based on what authority figures say. Our parents, priests, school rules and regulations, and government ordinances already prescribe clearly determined moral commands. So what is the categorical imperative for, if we already know whether or not an action is right?

The categorical imperative is precisely for the rational will that is autonomous. Recall that autonomy implies a self-legislating will. The test for universalizability makes possible that self-legislation, for the result of the categorical imperative, is nothing other than the capacity to distinguish between permissible and impermissible moral acts. Any rational will

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

can then begin the work of producing a list of duties, what a rational and autonomous will believes to be right and wrong actions.

In conclusion, what can deontology contribute to our lives, specifically to our moral reflection? The answer lies in one concept: *enlightenment morality*. This kind of morality is opposed to *paternalism*, which evokes the metaphor of father (from the Latin *pater*). A father is a benevolent authority figure who takes care and provides safety and sustenance for his children. In this metaphor, the father has the power to make decisions for and enforce obedience on the children, as long as the children are dependent and may not know yet what is best for them. Thus, the father makes decisions on behalf of and in the interest of the children. It is his duty to raise and nurture them for their own good. The children are expected to comply and obey because they are still unfit to make good decisions on their own. Children, when let on their own, would likely follow base impulses because they lack the necessary experience and rational will to survive and flourish in this world. But what happens when children grow and become mature adults? When they move on to develop their minds and live their own lives? Certainly, paternalism has to give way to a more mature rational will when the children are no longer children, when they mature, and can begin to navigate the complex world.

This is therefore the place of deontology in the spirit of enlightenment morality. Deontology is based on the "light" of one's own reason when maturity and rational capacity take hold of a person's decision-making. Reason is depicted as having its own light in contrast to our long experience of "paternalism" in human history, in which we find dictatorship and authority figure that claim to be benevolent, but have proven to be oppressive and exploitative of those who do not have political power. With deontology, particularly the method of universalizability, we can validate and adopt those rules and laws that are right and reject those that are irrational, thus impermissible because they are self-contradictory. This is then the practical value of deontology in our moral reflection: we are encouraged to have courage to think on our own, to use our rational will against external authorities as well as internal base impulses that tend to undermine our autonomy and self-determination.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

KEY WORDS

- Rational Will
- Agency
- Duty
- Maxim
- Universalizability
- Autonomy versus Heteronomy
- *Arbitrium Brutum* versus Free Choice
- Substantive versus Formal Moral Theory
- Rational Permissibility
- Enlightenment Morality versus Paternalism

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In what way does a rational will distinguish a human being from an animal insofar as the animal is only sentient?
2. What is the difference between autonomy and heteronomy? What does autonomy have to do with free will in contrast to animal impulse?
3. How does the method called universalizability work? What are the steps to test if an action is rationally permissible?
4. What is meant by enlightenment morality as opposed to paternalism? Why is deontology a kind of enlightenment morality?

SUGGESTED READINGS

Allison, Henry. *Kant's Theory of Freedom*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Ross, William David. *Kant's Ethical Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954.

Sullivan, Roger. *Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Wood, Allen. *Kant's Ethical Thought*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Wood, Allen. *Kantian Ethics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

NOTES

1. Enrico Belga, "Honest Baguio City Taxi Driver Gets Scholarship: Reggie Cabututan Reaps the Rewards of Honesty." *Rappler.com*, 24 January 2017, Accessed 10 August 2017. http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/159310-honest-taxi-driver-scholarship-baguio.
2. *Ibid.*
3. All citations of Immanuel Kant's original writings follow the standard *Akademie Ausgabe* edition, which indicates the volume and page number of the work (e.g., "Ak 4:431" means volume 4, page 431). These works are available online in the original German language: https://korpora.zim.uni-duisburg-essen.de/Kant/verzeichnisse-gesamt.html. Accessed 10 August 2017.

ACTIVITY PAGE

Name: ______________________ Date: ______________

Course: ______________________ Grade: ______________

Whistle-Blowing and the Duty of Speaking Truth to Power

Business ethics is a field of applied moral philosophy wherein the principles of right and wrong (as we are learning about deontology, virtue ethics, utilitarianism, among others) are made pertinent and relevant to the workplace. Just because the primary purpose of business is the proverbial bottom-line called profit, it does not mean that profit is the only motive. More and more people are realizing that to make a business sustainable, we need to make decisions that balance a triple bottom-line; namely, people, planet, and profit. This requires that we must improve our competence in decision-making that calibrates benefits for the stakeholders (people), the environment (planet), and the investors (profit). Often, those business decision-makers who do everything, especially the illegal and immoral acts to maximize profit in a single-minded way, somehow harm their company's long-term sustainability. For example, they may lose customers if they produce substandard goods and services just to make short-term profit. On the other hand, their employees might keep resigning and they have to continuously hire new people because the compensation is not fair and just. They lose money in the long-term because they spend more for training costs because they pay below minimum wage salaries therefore hiring employees that lack certain qualities they need for their company. Thus, there is a place for ethical principles in business, insofar as a business decision-maker's goal is sustainability and not merely profit. But what can someone in the workplace do in the face of unethical business practices?

Recent history in the Philippines has witnessed many controversial whistle-blowers. Names such as Primitivo Mijares, Heidi Mendoza, and Rodolfo Lozada Jr. have become part of the narratives of different ethical scandals in the past few decades. But what is whistle-blowing? We can consider it as a kind of speaking truth to power. It happens often in the workplace that an authority figure violates a law or makes an unethical decision, such as bribery or extortion, deception, and exploitation of labor, among others. When it happens that an authority figure instructs a subordinate to do an unethical act, the subordinate may not agree with undertaking the act if he wants to live by certain moral principles. There is a problem that arises here. On one hand, the subordinate must follow the instructions of the authority figure because the employer-employee contract binds the subordinate to follow the orders of the authority figure. To do otherwise would be insubordination, which can be grounds for termination. He could lose his job. On the other hand, if the unethical act that is instructed by the authority figure is clearly against the principles of the subordinate, can he refuse to do it without fear of losing his job? In this problematic scenario, the subordinate needs to find a solution. Whistle-blowing is one way of making an ethical intervention.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

However, the whistle-blowers that we named above resorted to one kind of whistle-blowing, namely, exposing the wrong doing externally either by testifying in a public hearing or by going to mass media such as a radio announcer or journalist. While external whistle-blowing can be effective, it is not the only manner by which a subordinate can blow the whistle against an erring authority figure. Here are three other intervention methods: (1) secretly informing a higher authority figure (the "boss of the boss") about the unethical act, (2) writing an anonymous letter to the authority figure threatening to expose the wrong doing, and (3) collaborating with like-minded colleagues to sabotage the undertaking of the unethical act and to prevent it from being done. It takes a strong moral character to stand up to authority in the spirit of doing the right thing. But more than moral character, it is important to be wise and clever in choosing which intervention method to use in order to uphold one's moral principles.

I. Go online and look for news items on whistle-blowers. Identify the crime or unethical act that they are exposing as well as the perpetrators of the crime. Detail your findings and opinion below.

II. Reconcile these two topics: our discussion of autonomy and the duty to "speaking truth to power." Suppose you are already working for a company and your boss tells you that you should offer a bribe to a government agent to obtain permit to build and operate a factory in a province. What would you do? What are your alternatives if you believe that it is wrong to bribe government agencies?

III. Consider other topics in the field of business ethics. Select one and give a presentation of the significance of discussing this topic.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

CHAPTER V
VIRTUE ETHICS

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. discuss the meaning and basic principles of virtue ethics;
2. distinguish virtuous acts from non-virtuous acts; and
3. apply Aristotle's ethics in understanding the Filipino character.

INTRODUCTION

An online news account narrates key officials from both the legislative and executive branches of the government voicing out their concern on the possible ill effects of too much violence seen by children on television. The news estimates that by the time children reach 18 years old, they will have watched around 18,000 simulated murder scenes. This prompted then-Department of Education Secretary Bro. Armin Luistro to launch the implementing guidelines of the Children's Television Act of 1997 in order to regulate television shows and promote more child-friendly programs. Ultimately, for Bro. Luistro, to regulate television programs would help in the development of children's values.[1]

According to the news article, the Department of Education held a series of consultations with various stakeholders to address the issue of exposure of children to TV violence. They also implemented the rules and guidelines for viewing safety and created a television violence rating code to be applied in all TV programs. Lastly, they also set 15% of television airtime for shows conducive to children.

Luistro's claim seems to be based on a particular vision of childhood development. Children at a young age have not yet achieved full personal growth and mental development. This situation makes them particularly vulnerable to possible undesirable effects of seeing violent images presented on television. When they see violence on television on a regular basis, they may consider such violent acts as "normal" and part of the daily occurrences in life. Much worse is that they might tend to believe that such acts, since committed by adults, are permissible. In these situations, the saying "Life imitates art" unfortunately becomes uncomfortably true.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

There have been numerous studies on the effects of television violence on children. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, for instance, enumerated the harmful effects of television violence such as being insensitive to the possible ill consequences brought about by watching violent shows. The study also suggests that children exposed to television violence begin to "imitate what they observe" and consider violence as "a way to solve problems."[2]

Mature individuals are aware that it is vital for children to go through the process of building their personality, identity, or character. How does the continuous exposure to violence on television affect the character that children develop? Is it possible that constant watching of violence on television results in aggression among children? What is the role of the child's environment in her capacity to develop into a good individual? These questions are real concerns that society needs to address. Perhaps, it is best to look closely at how good moral character is developed among individuals. What elements are involved in order to achieve this? One theory that can possibly provide a comprehensive understanding of how an individual can develop moral character is *virtue ethics*.

Aristotle (384–322 BCE)

Aristotle was born in Macedonia and studied philosophy under Plato in Athens. He was considered to be the brightest among Plato's students in the former's school, the Academy. He later founded his own school, Lyceum, where he became a very productive intellectual, having written numerous works on different topics such as the theoretical and practical sciences, and logic. He was also known to be the tutor of Alexander the Great who tried to conquer the world. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is his major work in moral philosophy.

Virtue ethics is the ethical framework that is concerned with understanding the good as a matter of developing the virtuous character of a person. Previous chapters emphasized different aspects of ethics: consequences of an act for utilitarianism, natural inclinations for natural law, and autonomy for deontology. Virtue ethics, on the other hand, focuses on the formation of one's character brought about by determining and doing virtuous acts. The two major thinkers of Ancient Greece, Plato and Aristotle, had discourses concerning virtue. But Aristotle's book entitled *Nicomachean Ethics* is the first comprehensive and programmatic study of virtue ethics.

Aristotle's discourse of ethics departs from the Platonic understanding of reality and conception of the good. Both Plato and Aristotle affirm rationality as the highest faculty of a person and having such characteristic enables a person to realize the very purpose of her existence. But at the

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

end, they differ in their appreciation of reality and nature, which, in turn, results in their contrasting stand on what the ethical principle should be.

For Plato, the real is outside the realm of any human sensory experience but can somehow be grasped by one's intellect. The truth and, ultimately, the good are in the sphere of forms or ideas transcending daily human condition. On the other hand, for Aristotle, the real is found within our everyday encounter with objects in the world. What makes nature intelligible is its character of having both form and matter. Therefore, the truth and the good cannot exist apart from the object and are not independent of our experience.

When one speaks of the truth, for example, how beautiful Juan Luna's *Spoliarium* is, she cannot discuss its beauty separately from the particular painting itself. Same is true with understanding the good: the particular act of goodness that one does in the world is more important than any conception of the good that is outside and beyond the realm of experience. One sees the ethical theory of Aristotle as engaging the good in our day-to-day living.

HAPPINESS AND ULTIMATE PURPOSE

Aristotle begins his discussion of ethics by showing that every act that a person does is directed toward a particular purpose, aim, or what the Greeks called *telos*. There is a purpose why one does something, and for Aristotle, a person's action manifests a good that she aspires for. Every pursuit of a person hopes to achieve a good. One eats for the purpose of the good that it gives sustenance to the body. A person pursues a chosen career, aiming for a good, that is, to provide a better future for her family. A person will not do anything which is not beneficial to her. Even a drug user "thinks" that substance abuse will cause her good. This does not necessarily mean that using drugs is good but a "drug addict" would want to believe that such act is good. Therefore, for Aristotle, the good is considered to be the *telos* or purpose for which all acts seek to achieve.

One must understand that an individual does actions and pursuits in life and correspondingly each of these activities has different aims. Aristotle is aware that one does an act not only to achieve a particular purpose but also believes such purpose can be utilized for a higher goal or activity, which then can be used to achieve an even higher purpose and so on. In other words, the different goods that one pursues form a hierarchy of *teloi* (plural form of *telos*). Aristotle says:

> ...But a certain difference is found among ends; some are activities, others are products apart from the activities that produce them. Where there are ends apart from the actions, it is the nature of the products to be better than the activities. Now, as there are many actions, arts, and sciences, their ends also are many; the end of the medical art is health, that of shipbuilding a vessel, that of strategy victory, that of economics wealth. But where such arts fall under a single capacity—as bridle-making and the other arts concerned with

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

> the equipment of horses fall under the art of riding, and this and every military action under strategy, in the same way other arts fall under yet others—in all of these, the ends of the master arts are to be preferred to all the subordinate ends; for it is for the sake of the former that the latter is pursued.[3]

When one diligently writes down notes while listening to a lecture given by the teacher, she does this for the purpose of being able to remember the lessons of the course. This purpose of remembering, in turn, becomes an act to achieve a higher aim which is to pass the examinations given by the teacher, which then becomes a product that can help the person attain the goal of having a passing mark in the course. It is important for Aristotle that one becomes clear of the hierarchy of goals that the different acts produce in order for a person to distinguish which actions are higher than the other.

With the condition that there is a hierarchy of *telos*, Aristotle then asks about the highest purpose, which is the ultimate good of a human being. Aristotle discusses the general criteria in order for one to recognize the highest good of man. First, the highest good of a person must be final. As a final end, it is no longer utilized for the sake of arriving at a much higher end. In our example above, the purpose of remembering the lessons in the course, that is why one writes down notes, is not the final end because it is clear that such purpose is aimed at achieving a much higher goal. Second, the ultimate *telos* of a person must be self-sufficient. Satisfaction in life is arrived at once this highest good is attained. Nothing else is sought after and desired, once this self-sufficient goal is achieved, since this is already considered as the best possible good in life. Again, in the example given above, the goal of remembering the lessons in the course is not yet the best possible good because a person can still seek for other more satisfying goals in her life.

So what is the highest goal for Aristotle? What goal is both final and self-sufficient? It is interesting to note that for Aristotle, the question can only be adequately answered by older individuals because they have gone through enormous and challenging life experiences which helped them gain a wealth of knowledge on what the ultimate purpose of a person is. According to Aristotle, older individuals would agree that the highest purpose and the ultimate good of man is happiness, or for the Greeks, *eudaimonia*. Aristotle says:

> Now, such a thing happiness, above all else, is held to be; for this we choose always for itself and never for the sake of something else, but honor, pleasure, reason, and every virtue we choose indeed for themselves (for if nothing resulted from them we should still choose each of them), but we choose them also for the sake of happiness, judging that by means of them we shall be happy. Happiness, on the other hand, no one chooses for the sake of these, nor, in general, for anything other than itself.[4]

One can therefore say that happiness seems to fit the first criterion of being the final end of a human being. For it is clear that conditions for having wealth, power, and pleasures are not chosen for themselves but for the sake of being a means to achieve happiness. If one accumulates wealth, for example, she would want to have not just richness but also

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

power and other desirable things as well, such as honor and pleasures. But all of these ends are ultimately for the sake of the final end which is happiness. In itself, happiness seems to be the final end and the highest good of a person since no other superior end is still being desired for.

Aristotle continues in saying that happiness is also the self-sufficient end. He says:

> ...Let us examine this question, however, on another occasion; the self-sufficient we now define as that which when isolated makes life desirable and lacking in nothing; and such we think happiness to be; and further we think it most desirable of all things, without being counted as one good thing among others—if it were so counted, it would clearly be made more desirable by the addition of even the least of goods; for that which is added becomes an excess of goods, and of goods, the greater is always more desirable.[7]

Happiness for Aristotle is the only self-sufficient aim that one can aspire for. No amount of wealth or power can be more fulfilling than having achieved the condition of happiness. One can imagine a life of being wealthy, powerful, and experiencing pleasurable feelings and yet, such life is still not satisfying without happiness. Once happiness is achieved, things such as wealth, power, and pleasurable feelings just give value-added benefits in life. The true measure of well-being for Aristotle is not by means of richness or fame but by the condition of having attained a happy life.

Even though older individuals agree that happiness is the highest end and good that humans aspire for, there are various opinions on what specifically is the nature of the ultimate *telos* of a person. One is that happiness is attached with having wealth and power. Others associate happiness with feelings that are pleasurable. Some take nobler things like honor and other ideals as constitutive of happiness. For Aristotle, arguing for or against every opinion proves to be a futile attempt to arrive at the nature of happiness. Instead, Aristotle shows that one can arrive at the ultimate good by doing one's function well.

How does a person arrive at her highest good? According to Aristotle, if an individual's action can achieve the highest good, then one must investigate how she functions which enables her to achieve her ultimate purpose. If she performs her function well, then she is capable of arriving at happiness. Aristotle then proceeds with discussing the function of human beings to distinguish one person's activity from other beings. How does a human being function which sets her apart from the rest?

For Aristotle, what defines human beings is her function or activity of reason. This function makes her different from the rest of beings. Aristotle expresses this clearly:

> ...What then can this be? Life seems to be common even to plants, but we are seeking what is peculiar to man. Let us exclude, therefore, the life of nutrition and growth. Next there would be a life of perception, but it also seems to be common even to the horse, the ox, and every animal. There remains, then, an active life of the element that has a rational principle; of this, one part has such a principle in the sense of being obedient to one, the other in the sense of possessing one and exercising thought.[8]

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

If the function of a human being is simply to do the act of taking in food in order to sustain her life and continue living, then what makes her different from plants? Also, if the function of a human being is to do the act of perceiving things, then what makes her different from animals?

What defines a person therefore is her function or activity of reason. A person's action to be considered as truly human must be an act that is always in accordance to reason. The function of a human being is to act following the dictates of her reason. Any person for that matter utilizes her reason but Aristotle further says that a person cannot only perform her function but she can also perform it well. A dancer, for example, becomes different from a chef because of her function to dance while the chef's is to cook. Any dancer can dance but what makes her distinct from an excellent dancer is that the latter dances very well. The same principle applies to human beings. What distinguishes a good person from other human beings is her rational activity that is performed well or excellently. A good individual therefore stands closer to meeting the conditions of happiness because her actions are of a higher purpose.

Aristotle says:

> ...Now, if the function of man is an activity of the soul which follows or implies a rational principle, and if we say "a so-and-so" and "a good so-and-so" have a function which is the same in kind, for example, a lyre player and a good lyre player, and so without qualification in all cases, eminence in respect of goodness being added to the name of the function (for the function of a lyre player is to play the lyre, and that of a good lyre player is to do so well): if this is the case, (and we state the function of man to be a certain kind of life, and this to be an activity or actions of the soul implying a rational principle, and the function of a good man to be the good and noble performance of these, and if any action is well performed when it is performed in accordance with the appropriate excellence: if this is the case) human good turns out to be activity of soul in accordance to virtue, and if there is more than one virtue, in accordance with the best and most complete.[7]

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

The local saying *"Madaling maging tao, mahirap magpakatao"* can be understood in the light of Aristotle's thoughts on the function of a good person. Any human being can perform the activity of reason; thus, being human is achievable. However, a good human being strives hard in doing an activity in an excellent way. Therefore, the task of being human becomes more difficult because doing such activity well takes more effort on the part of the person.

VIRTUE AS EXCELLENCE

Achieving the highest purpose of a human person concerns the ability to function according to reason and to perform an activity well or excellently. This excellent way of doing things is called *virtue* or *arete* by the Greeks. Aristotle is quick to add that virtue is something that one strives for in time. One does not become an excellent person overnight: "For one swallow does not make a summer, nor does one day; and so too one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed and happy…"[4] This means that being virtuous cannot be accomplished by a single act. It is commendable if a minor participant in a crime becomes a whistle-blower, exposing all the grave acts that were committed by his cohorts. But one should be careful in judgment of calling immediately that individual as being a "person of virtue." Being an excellent individual works on doing well in her day-to-day existence.

What exactly makes a human being excellent? Aristotle says that excellence is an activity of the human soul and therefore, one needs to understand the very structure of a person's soul which must be directed by her rational activity in an excellent way. For Aristotle, the human soul is divided into two parts: the irrational element and the rational faculty. The irrational element of man consists of the vegetative and appetitive aspects. The vegetative aspect functions as giving nutrition and providing the activity of physical growth in a person. As an irrational element, this part of man is not in the realm where virtue is exercised because, as the term suggests, it cannot be dictated by reason. The vegetative aspect of the soul follows the natural processes involved in the physical activities and growth of a person. Whereas, the appetitive aspect works as a desiring faculty of man. The act of desiring in itself is an impulse that naturally runs counter to reason and most of the time refuses to go along with reason. Thus, this aspect belongs to the irrational part of the soul. Sexual impulse, for example, is so strong in a person that one tends to ignore reasonable demands to control such impulse. However, unlike the vegetative aspect, the desiring faculty of man can be subjected to reason. Aristotle says, "…Now, even this seems to have a share in the rational principle, as we said; at any rate in the continent man it obeys the rational principle…"[5] Desires are subject to reason even though these do not arise from the rational part of the soul.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

In contrast, the rational faculty of man exercises excellence in him. One can rightly or wrongly apply the use of reason in this part. This faculty is further divided into two aspects: moral, which concerns the act of doing, and intellectual, which concerns the act of knowing. These two aspects are basically where the function of reason is exercised.

One rational aspect where a person can attain excellence is in the intellectual faculty of the soul. As stated by Aristotle, this excellence is attained through teaching. Through time, one learns from the vast experiences in life where she gains knowledge on these things. One learns and gains wisdom by being taught or by learning. There are two ways by which one can attain intellectual excellence: philosophic and practical. *Philosophic wisdom* deals with attaining knowledge about the fundamental principles and truths that govern the

universe (e.g., general theory on the origins of things). It helps one understand in general the meaning of life. *Practical wisdom*, on the other hand, is an excellence in knowing the right conduct in carrying out a particular act. In other words, one can attain a wisdom that can provide us with a guide on how to behave in our daily lives.

Although the condition of being excellent can be attained by a person through the intellectual aspect of the soul, this situation does not make her into a morally good individual. However, Aristotle suggests that although the rational functions of a person (moral and intellectual) are distinct from each other, it is necessary for humans to attain the intellectual virtue of practical wisdom in order to accomplish a morally virtuous act.

In carrying out a morally virtuous life, one needs the intellectual guide of practical wisdom in steering the self toward the right choices and actions. Aristotle is careful in making a sharp distinction between moral and intellectual virtue. In itself, having practical wisdom or the excellence in knowing what to act upon does not make someone already morally virtuous. Knowing the good is different from determining and acting on what is good. But a morally good person has to achieve the intellectual virtue of practical wisdom to perform the task of being moral. This distinction draws a sharp contrast between Aristotle's understanding of the dynamics of knowledge and action from that of Socrates's view that knowledge already contains the ability of choice or action. Aristotle says:

> ...This is why some say that all the virtues are forms of practical wisdom and why Socrates, in one respect, was on the right track while in another, he went astray; in thinking that all the virtues were forms of practical wisdom, he was wrong, but in saying they implied practical wisdom, he was right. This is confirmed by the fact that even now, all men, when they define virtue, after naming the state of character and its objects, add "that (state) which is in accordance with the right rule"; now the right rule is that which is in accordance with practical wisdom. All men, then, seem somehow to divine that this kind of state is virtue, viz., that which is in accordance with practical wisdom.[10]

It seems that for Socrates, moral goodness is already within the realm of intellectual excellence. Knowing the good implies the ability to perform morally virtuous acts. For Aristotle, however, having intellectual excellence does not necessarily mean that one already has the capacity of doing the good. Knowing the good that needs to be done is different from doing the good that one needs to accomplish.

Therefore, rational faculty of a person tells us that she is capable of achieving two kinds of virtue: moral and intellectual. In discussing moral virtue, Aristotle says that it is attained by means of habit. A morally virtuous man for Aristotle is someone who habitually determines the good and does the right actions. Moral virtue is acquired through habit. Being morally good is a process of getting used to doing the proper act. The saying "practice makes perfect" can be applied to this aspect of a person.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Therefore, for Aristotle, a person is not initially good by nature:

> Again, of all the things that come to us, by nature, we first acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the activity (this is plain in the case of the senses: for it was not by often seeing or often hearing that we got these senses, but on the contrary we had them before we used them, and did not come to have them by using them); but the virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them...[17]

Any craft that one does can be perfected by habitually doing the right action necessary to be good in a particular craft. Being a good basketball player, for example, involves constant training and endless hours of shooting and dribbling the ball in the right way until one habitually does the right stroke in shooting the ball and the right tempo in dribbling the ball. It is only when she properly plays basketball consistently that she will be recognized as a good basketball player.

The same is true with moral virtue. A moral person habitually chooses the good and consistently does good deeds. It is in this constant act of choosing and doing the good that a person is able to form her character. It is through one's character that others know a person. Character then becomes the identification mark of the person. For instance, when one habitually opts to be courteous to others and regularly shows politeness in the way she relates to others, others would start recognizing her as a well-mannered person. On the other hand, when one habitually chooses to be rude to others and repeatedly demonstrates vulgar and foul acts, she develops an image of an ill-mannered person. The Filipino term *pag-uugali* precisely reflects the meaning of moral character. One can have *mabuting pag-uugali* (good character) or *masamang pag-uugali* (bad character).

How does the continuous exposure to violence on television affect the kind of character that children will develop? One can surmise that if we rely on the above-mentioned study, children tend to mimic the violence they watch on television and such habit could develop into a character that can tolerate behaviors that are hostile in nature.

MORAL VIRTUE AND MESOTES

As stated by Aristotle, developing a practical wisdom involves learning from experiences. Knowledge is not inherent to a person. Knowing the right thing to do when one is confronted by a choice is not easy. One needs to develop this knowledge by exercising the faculty of practical reason in her daily life. In attaining practical wisdom, she may initially make mistakes on how reason is applied to a particular moral choice or action. But through these mistakes, she will be able to sustain practical wisdom to help steer another's ability to know morally right choices and actions. In other words, she is able to mature and grow in her capacity of knowing what to do and living a morally upright life.

This is why when it comes to life choices, one can seek the advice of elders in the community, those who gained rich life experiences and practical wisdom, because they

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

would be able to assist someone's moral deliberation. Parents can advice their children how to behave in front of family members and relatives. Senior members of the community like priests, counselors, and leaders may also guide the young members on how relationships with others are fostered.

Bro. Armin Luistro, with his practical wisdom and experience, has observed the possible effect of television violence on the young so he issued guidelines on television viewing for children. He says that good values instilled on children are "sometimes removed from the consciousness of young people" because of television violence. As former Secretary of the Department of Education, he possibly learned so much about the consequence of such situation on the young.

However, when practical wisdom guides the conduct of making morally right choices and actions, what does it identify as the proper and right thing to do? As maintained by Aristotle, it is the middle, intermediate, or *mesotes* for the Greeks that is aimed at by a morally virtuous person. Determining the middle becomes the proper tool by which one can arrive at the proper way of doing things. Aristotle says:

> In everything that is continuous and divisible, it is possible to take more, less, or an equal amount, and that either in terms of the thing itself or relative to us; and the equal is an intermediate between excess and defect. By the intermediate in the object, I mean that which is equidistant from each of the extremes, which is one and the same for all men, by the intermediate relatively to us that which is neither too much nor too little—and this is not one, nor the same for all. For instance, if ten is many and two is few, six is the intermediate, taken in terms of the object, for it exceeds and is exceeded by an equal amount; this intermediate according to arithmetical proportion. But the intermediate relatively to us is not to be taken so; if ten pounds are too much for a particular person to eat and two too little, it does not follow that the trainer will order six pounds; for this also perhaps too much for the person who is to take it, or too little—too little for Milo [a famous Greek athlete], too much for the beginner in athletic exercises. The same is true of running and wrestling. Thus, a master of any art avoids excess and defect, but seeks the intermediate and chooses this—the intermediate not in the object but relatively to us.[12]

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Based on Aristotle, a morally virtuous person is concerned with achieving her appropriate action in a manner that is neither excessive nor deficient. In other words, virtue is the middle or the intermediary point in between extremes. One has to function in a state that her personality manifests the right amount of feelings, passions, and ability for a particular act. Generally, feelings and passions are neutral which means that, in themselves, they are neither morally right nor wrong. When one shows a feeling of anger, we cannot immediately construe it as morally wrong act. But the rightness or wrongness of feelings, passions, and abilities lies in the degree of their application in a given situation. It is right to get angry at an offensive remark but it is not right to get angry at everyone just because you were offended by someone. One can be excessive in the manner by which she

manifests these feelings, passions, and abilities. But one can also be deficient in the way she expresses these. For example, she may be outraged at the attacks of terrorists and yet may be insensitive because she is not directly affected.

A morally virtuous person targets the *mesotes*. For Aristotle, the task of targeting the mean is always difficult because every situation is different from one another. Thus, the *mesotes* is constantly moving depending on the circumstance where she is in. The mean is not the same for all individuals. As pointed out by Aristotle, the mean is simply an arithmetical proportion. Therefore, the task of being moral involves seriously looking into and understanding a situation and assessing properly every particular detail relevant to the determination of the mean. One can be angry with someone, but the degree and state of anger depends accordingly with the nature of the person she is angry with. The aid of reason dictates how humans should show different anger toward a child and a mature individual. *Mesotes* determines whether the act applied is not excessive or deficient. Likewise, an individual cannot be good at doing something haphazardly but reason demands a continuous habituation of a skill to perfect an act. Targeting the middle entails being immersed in a moral circumstance, understanding the experience, and eventually, developing the knowledge of identifying the proper way or the mean to address a particular situation.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

In relation to the news article, the government and its agencies responsible for protecting and assisting the young on their personal development should act in view of the middle measure. The government could have dismissed the issue or could have banned television shows portraying violence. But such extremes censure the citizen's freedom of expression and artistic independence, which can result in another issue. Wisely, the government acted on the side of the middle measure by going through a series of consultations to address the issue of television violence—implementing the rules and guidelines for viewing safety, dedicating 15% of television airtime for child-friendly shows, and enforcing a television violence rating code that took into account the "sensibilities of children." It seems that the government acted in a manner that is not deficient and excessive.

Aristotle's discussion ultimately leads to defining what exactly moral virtue is—"a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, that is, the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it."[13]

Moral virtue is firstly the condition arrived at by a person who has a character identified out of her habitual exercise of particular actions. One's character is seen as a growth in terms of the continuous preference for the good. Secondly, in moral virtue, the action done that normally manifests feelings and passions is chosen because it is the middle. The middle does not fall short or is excessive of the proper proportion by which these feelings or passions should be expressed. Aristotle adds that the middle is relative to us. This does not imply that *mesotes* totally depends on what the person identifies as the middle. Such case

would signify that Aristotle adheres to relativism. But Aristotle's middle is not relative to the person but to the situation and the circumstance that one is in. This means that in choosing the middle, one is looking at the situation and not at oneself in identifying the proper way that feelings and passions should be dispensed.

Thirdly, the rational faculty that serves as a guide for the proper identification of the middle is practical wisdom. The virtuous person learns from her experiences and therefore develops the capacity to know the proper way of carrying out her feelings, passions, and actions. The rational faculties of this person, specifically practical wisdom, aid in making a virtuous person develop this habit of doing the good. A moral person in this sense is also someone who is wise. Habit is not simply borne out repetitive and non-thought-of activities in a person. Habits for Aristotle are products of the constant application of reason in the person's actions. One sees Aristotle's attempt to establish a union between the person's moral action and knowledge that enables him to achieve man's function.

Aristotle clarifies further that not all feelings, passions, and actions have a middle point. When a mean is sought, it is in the context of being able to identify the good act in a given situation. However, when what is involved is seen as a bad feeling, passion, or action, the middle is non-existent because there is no good (*mesotes*) in something that is already considered a bad act. When one murders someone, there is nothing excessive or deficient in the act: murder is still murder. Further, there is no intermediary for Aristotle in the act because there is no proper way that such act can be committed. Aristotle states:

> But not every action nor every passion admits of a mean; for some have names that already imply badness, e.g., spite, shamelessness, envy, and in the case of actions, adultery, theft, murder; for all of these and suchlike things imply by their names that they are themselves bad, and not the excesses or deficiencies of them. It is not possible, then, ever to be right with regard to them; one must always be wrong. Nor does goodness or badness with regard to such things depend on committing adultery with the right woman, at the right time, and in the right way, but simply to do any of them is to go wrong. It would be equally absurd, then, to expect that in unjust, cowardly, and voluptuous action there should be a mean, an excess and a deficiency; for at that rate there would be a mean of excess and of deficiency, an excess of excess, and a deficiency of deficiency...[14]

In the study mentioned wherein children are beginning to consider violence as "a way to solve problems," it seems apparent that they would like to think that there is somehow a "good" in an unjust act since it can become a problem-solver. If violence becomes a tool by which difficult situations are addressed, then it can be construed by children of bearing some positive value. Aristotle's view is contrary to this. As an act, violence, in itself, is bad. A person cannot employ violence as if it were a virtue or a middle measure in between vices of being "deficient" in violence or being "excessive" of the same act. There is something terribly wrong in such demonstration.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Aristotle also provides examples of particular virtues and the corresponding excesses and deficiencies of these. This table shows some of the virtues and their vices:[15]

Excess	Middle	Deficiency
Impulsiveness	Self-control	Indecisiveness
Recklessness	Courage	Cowardice
Prodigality	Liberality	Meanness

In the table, Aristotle identifies the virtue of courage as the middle, in between the vices of being coward and reckless. Cowardice is a deficiency in terms of feelings and passions. This means that one lacks the capacity to muster enough bravery of carrying herself appropriately in a given situation. Recklessness, on the other hand, is an excess in terms of one's feelings and passions. In this regard, one acts with a surplus of guts that she overdoes an act in such rashness and without any deliberation. The virtue of having courage is being able to act daringly enough but able to weigh up possible implications of such act that she proceeds with caution.

It is only through the middle that a person is able to manifest her feelings, passions, and actions virtuously. For Aristotle, being superfluous with regard to manifesting a virtue is no longer an ethical act because one has gone beyond the middle. Being overly courageous (or "super courageous") for instance does not make someone more virtuous because precisely in this condition, she has gone beyond the middle and therefore has "moved out" from the state that is virtuous. Therefore, one can always be excessive in her action but an act that is virtuous cannot go beyond the middle. Filipinos have the penchant of using superlative words like "over," "super," "to the max," and "*sobra*" in describing a particular act that they normally identify as virtuous. Perhaps, Aristotle's view on virtue is prescribing a clearer way by which Filipinos can better understand it.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

SUMMARY

Aristotle's virtue ethics starts with recognizing that happiness is the ultimate purpose or *telos* of a person. As the ultimate purpose, happiness is deemed as the final and self-sufficient end of a person. It is by realizing the highest goal of a person that she achieves happiness that is also considered as the greatest good. Attaining happiness is arrived at when she performs her function, which is to act in accordance to reason in an outstanding manner. It is in doing her function well that virtue, excellence, or *arete* is realized.

To carry out the task of performing her function well, the person has to understand the structure of the soul where her reason will operate. Aristotle shows that human soul is divided into the irrational and rational faculties. The vegetative aspect of the irrational part of the soul cannot be directed by reason because it does the natural processes of the soul that are responsible for the physical growth. The appetitive aspect of the irrational part of the soul, on the other hand, is driven by impulses which are, in general, contrary to reason but can be acted out obeying the dictates of reason. Therefore, reason can manage the appetitive aspect, and impulses can be handled well by a person.

The rational faculty of the soul is the part where excellence can be attained. Part of the rational faculty of the soul is the intellectual aspect concerned with the act of knowing. Excellence on this faculty is achieved through learning. One learns well that is why she gains philosophical and practical wisdom. Philosophical wisdom is the knowledge of the general principles that constitute reality, while practical wisdom is the knowledge of determining the appropriate action in a given situation. One can learn from experience and therefore can gain sufficient understanding on what to do.

Aristotle points out that having intellectual excellence does not make one into a morally good person. Knowing the good and being able to determine the appropriate action in a given situation do not make her do the good automatically. Practical wisdom, as such, is still in the realm of the intellectual aspect of the soul. The moral aspect of the rational faculty concerns itself with the act of doing the good. She becomes virtuous or excellent in doing the good by habitual performance. To be a morally virtuous individual is a constant carrying out of the act of goodness. The unethical person, on the other hand, is someone who habitually performs bad deeds. This habitual action for Aristotle is what forms the character of the person. Her identity is associated with accomplishing the good or bad action. Virtue ethics is concerned primarily with the task of developing a good character.

Aristotle sees the development of one's character as the constant interaction between the faculties of the rational part of the soul. Practical wisdom is deemed as a necessary ingredient in guiding the moral faculty in doing the appropriate action. Practical wisdom identifies the right action and the moral faculty aptly executes it. What practical

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

wisdom identifies as the right action according to Aristotle is the *mesotes* or the middle measure of an action, feeling, or passion. The middle is always in between an action, feeling, or passion that is deficient or excessive. Nothing is lacking or is too much from an act that is morally good. For Aristotle, virtue is the good in between vices.

To sum up, moral virtue, according to Aristotle, is a "state of character" which habitually acts according to the middle measure that practical wisdom identifies as the moral choice that should be acted upon, given the concrete situation that presents to the person. The goal of virtue ethics is to promote the maturity of the character of the person. Building a good character is a task and responsibility of every person.

KEY WORDS

- Character
- Virtue
- Vices
- Virtue Ethics
- *Eudaimonia*
- *Telos*
- *Mesotes*
- *Arete*
- Practical Wisdom

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is moral virtue? What is intellectual virtue?
2. What is the difference between moral and intellectual virtue? Explain.
3. Identify some Filipino traits and categorize each as virtue (middle) or vices (excess or deficiency). Place them in a table.
4. How is a person's character formed according to Aristotle?
5. Who do you think possesses a moral character in your community? Explain your answer.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Copleston, SJ, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy: Greece and Rome*. Vol. 1, New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1993.

Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Fragility of Goodness*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle, edited by Jonathan Barnes. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

NOTES

1. Tarra Quismundo. "DEPED Releases Rules for Law Shielding Kids from TV Violence." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 17 July 2012, http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/230377/deped-releases-rules-for-law-shielding-kids-from-tv-violence. Accessed 17 February 17 2017.
2. "TV Violence and Children." American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, December 2014, https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/ Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-And-TV-Violence-013.aspx. Accessed 20 February 2017.
3. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, Bk. I, 1094a3-16.
4. *Ibid.*, 1097a37-1097b7
5. *Ibid.*, 1097b14-21
6. *Ibid.*, 1097b33-1098a5
7. *Ibid.*, 1098a8-18
8. *Ibid.*, 1098a19
9. *Ibid.*, 1102b27-29
10. *Ibid.*, Bk. VI, 1144b17-25
11. *Ibid.*, Bk. II, 1103a26-35
12. *Ibid.*, 1106a26-1106b8
13. *Ibid.*, 1106b36-1107a2
14. *Ibid.*, 1107a9-22
15. *Ibid.*, 1107a27-1108a9

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

ACTIVITY PAGE

Name: ______________________ Date: ____________

Course: ______________________ Grade: ____________

Pornography

Sexual ethics is a study of a person's sexuality and the manner by which human sexual conduct must be exercised. There are many instances where sexual behavior must be observed in order to properly nurture good interpersonal relationships. Thus, sexual ethics becomes a vital subject that must be studied by everyone. One particular topic being discussed within sexual ethics is the issue of pornography. Pornography is the explicit manifestation of sexual matters presented in different forms of media. Pornography normally shows different illustrations of nudity and sexual acts in print, videos, and social media outfits. Some people view pornography as immoral, citing how it treats persons as mere sexual objects for pleasure. Some people, on the other hand, view pornography as a personal way of displaying one's freedom of expression, which must be respected by everyone. What is your view on this?

Perhaps, virtue ethics, as a framework for moral valuation, can be utilized in assessing one's sexual behavior specifically with regard to the person's fondness for pornography. If virtue ethics aims for the development of the person's good character, does watching pornographic materials reflective of such a character? Is there a virtue that is produced by the behavior of patronizing pornography? What do you think will happen with regard to the character of a person if one habituates the act of watching pornography? Virtue ethics challenges the person to look at one's habits concerning sexual behavior. What would possibly be affected by such behavior is the person's appreciation and valuation of human relationships.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

I. Go online and list down various sources that can help you understand the different issues on pornography. Identify the topics being discussed by these sources.

II. Discuss the possible implications (positive or negative) of the patronage of pornography to the development of one's character.

III. Discuss a different topic within the scope of sexual ethics and explain how this might affect the development of one's virtuous character.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

ography

is might

CHAPTER VI
SYNTHESIS: MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. identify the different factors that shape an individual in her moral decision-making;
2. internalize the necessary steps toward making informed moral decisions; and
3. apply the ethical theories or frameworks on moral issues involving the self, society, and the non-human environment.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

INTRODUCTION

What is the value of a college-level class in Ethics? We have been introduced to four major ethical theories or frameworks: utilitarianism, natural law ethics, Kantian deontology, and virtue ethics. None of them is definitive nor final. What then is the use of studying them? Each represents the best attempts of the best thinkers in history to give fully thought-out answers to the questions "What ought I to do?" and "Why ought I to do so?" This quest has not reached its final conclusion; instead, it seems that the human condition of finitude will demand that we continue to grapple with these questions. The story of humanity appears to be the never-ending search for what it means to be fully human in the face of moral choices.

The preceding chapters clarified several notions: (1) These questions of what the right thing to do is and why are questions that all human beings—regardless of race, age, socioeconomic class, gender, culture, educational attainment, religious affiliation, or political association—will have to ask at one point or another in their lives; (2) Neither the laws nor rules of one's immediate community or of wider culture or of religious affiliation can sufficiently answer these questions, especially when different duties, cultures, or religions intersect and conflict; (3) Reason has a role to play in addressing these questions, if not in resolving them. This last element, reason, is the power that identifies the situations in which rules and principles sometimes conflict with one another. Reason, hopefully, will allow one to finally make the best decision possible in a given situation of moral choice.

Chapter I pointed out one of the capacities reason provides us—it enables us to distinguish between human situations that have a genuinely moral character from those that are non-moral (or amoral). It shows us that aesthetic considerations and questions of etiquette are important facets of human life, but they do not necessarily translate into genuine ethical or moral value. However, reason also reminds us that the distinctions are not always easy to identify nor explain. The choice of clothing that one is to wear, in general, seems to be merely a question of aesthetics, and thus one is taste. In many urban centers in the Philippines in the twenty-first century, people wear a wide variety of clothing styles and such a situation does not seem to attract attention. Yet in some cultures, what a woman wears (or does not wear) may bring upon harsh punishment to her according to the community's rules. Afghanistan in the 1990s was ruled by the Taliban, and women were expected to wear the full-body burqa; a woman caught in public with even a small area of her body exposed could be flogged severely. How is one to make an intelligent, sensible decision when confronted by such possible quandaries in specific situations?

The ethical or moral dimension compared to the realms of the aesthetic or of etiquette is qualitatively weightier, for the ethical or moral cuts to the core of what makes one human. Mistakes in aesthetics ("crimes," as it were, against the "fashion police") or in etiquette (which can be considered "rude," at worst) can be frowned upon by members of one human society or another, but need not merit the severest of punishments or penalty. Reason, through proper philosophizing, will aid an individual (and hopefully her wider community) to make such potentially crucial distinctions.

Ethics teaches us that moral valuation can happen in the level of the personal, the societal (both local and global), and in relation to the physical environment. Personal can be understood to mean both the person in relation to herself, as well as her relation to other human beings on an intimate or person-to-person basis. Ethics is clearly concerned with the right way to act in relation to other human beings and toward self. How she takes care of herself versus how she treats herself badly (e.g., substance abuse, suicide, etc.) is a question of ethical value that is concerned mainly with her own person. Personal also refers to a person's intimate relationships with other people like her parents, siblings, children, friends, or other close acquaintances. When does one's relationship lead to personal growth for the other? When does it ruin the other? For most people, it is clear enough that there are right and wrong ways to deal with these familiar contacts. Ethics can help us navigate what those ways can be.

The second level where moral valuation takes place is societal. Society in this context means one's immediate community (one's neighborhood, barangay, or town), the larger sphere (one's province, region, or country), or the whole global village defined as the interconnection of the different nations of the world. One must be aware that there are many aspects to social life, all of which may come into play when one needs to make a decision in a moral situation. All levels of society involve some kind of culture, which may be loosely described as the way of life of a particular community of people at a given period

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

of time. Culture is a broad term: it may include the beliefs and practices a certain group of people considered valuable and can extend to such realms as art (e.g., music, literature, performance, and so on), laws (e.g., injunctions against taboo practices), fields of knowledge (e.g., scientific, technological, and medical beliefs and practices at a given point in time), and customs of a community (e.g., the aforementioned rules of etiquette). Ethics serves to guide one through the potentially confusing thicket of an individual's interaction with her wider world of social roles, which can come into conflict with one another or even with her own system of values.

Of specific interest for the individual living in the twenty-first century is the interplay between her membership in her own society and her membership in the larger human, that is, the global community. In an age defined to a large extent by ever-expanding globalization, how does one negotiate the right thing to do when one's own culture clashes with the outside community's values? Again, ethics will assist one in thinking through such difficulties. This will be discussed further as this chapter progresses.

The latter part of the twentieth century gave birth to an awareness among many people that "community" does not only refer to the human groups that one belongs to, but also refers to the non-human, natural world that serves as home and source of nurturance for all beings. Thus, ethics has increasingly come to recognize the expansion of the question "What ought I to do?" into the realm of human beings' responsibilities toward their natural world. The environmental crises that currently beset our world, seen in such phenomena as global warming and the endangerment and extinction of some species, drive home the need to think ethically about one's relationship to her natural world.

Applying rational deliberation to determine a person's ethical responsibility to herself, society, and environment is the overall goal of a college course in Ethics. We shall explore all of these later in this chapter. In order to do this, we must first attempt to explore the self that must undertake this challenge. We are talking about the moral agent, the one who eventually must think about her choices and make decisions on what she ought to do. We cannot simply assume that ethics is an activity that a purely rational creature engages in. Instead, the realm of morality must be understood as a thoroughly human realm. Ethical thought and decision-making are done by an agent who is shaped and dictated upon by many factors within her and without. If we understand this, then we shall see how complex the ethical situation is, one that demands mature rational thinking as well as courageous decision-making.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

THE MORAL AGENT AND CONTEXTS

The one who is tasked to think about what is "right" and why it is so, and to choose to do so, is a human individual. Who is this individual who must engage herself in ethical thought and decision-making? *Who one is*, in the most fundamental sense, is another major topic in the act of philosophizing. The ancient Greeks even had a famous saying for it: "*Epimeleia hê auto*," usually translated into English as "Know thyself." In response to this age-old philosophical challenge, the Filipino philosopher Ramon C. Reyes (1935–2014), writing in his essay "Man and Historical Action,"[1] succinctly explained that "who one is" is a cross-point. By this, he means that one's identity, who one is or who I am, is a product of many forces and events that happened outside of one's choosing. Reyes identifies four cross-points: the physical, the interpersonal, the social, and the historical. Who one is, firstly, is a function of *physical* events in the past and material factors in the present that one did not have a choice in. You are a member of the species *Homo sapiens* and therefore possess the capacities and limitations endemic to human beings everywhere. You inherited the genetic material of both your biological parents. Your body has been shaped and continues to be conditioned by the given set of environmental factors that are specific to your corner of the globe. All of these are given; they have happened or are still happening whether you want to or not. You did not choose to be a human being, nor to have this particular set of biological parents, nor to be born in and/or grow up in such a physical environment (i.e., for Filipinos to be born in an archipelago with a tropical climate situated near the equator along the Pacific Ring of Fire, with specific set of flora and fauna, which shape human life in this country to a profound degree).

Ramon Castillo Reyes (1935–2014)

Ramon Castillo Reyes was born in 1935 in the Philippines. He attended the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1956. He obtained his PhD in Philosophy from the Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium in 1965. Reyes returned to the Philippines and was a teacher in the Department of Philosophy of the Ateneo de Manila University from 1965 to 2013, where he taught Ethics, Modern Philosophy, and Contemporary Philosophy to generations of Ateneo students. He was awarded the Metrobank Most Outstanding Teacher Award in 1987. Reyes was one of the pioneers in the Philippines of the philosophical approach known as existential phenomenology. His book *Ground and Norm of Morality: Ethics for College Students*, first published in 1988, has served as the textbook for thousands of students in the country. "Doc Reyes," as he was fondly called by students and colleagues, died in 2014.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

An individual is also the product of an *interpersonal* cross-point of many events and factors outside of one's choosing. One did not choose her own parents, and yet her personality, character traits, and her overall way of doing things and thinking about things have all been shaped by the character of her parents and how they brought her up. All of these are also affected by the people surrounding her: siblings, relatives, classmates, playmates, and eventually workmates. Thus, who one is—in the sense of one's character or personality—has been shaped by one's relationships as well as the physical factors that affect how one thinks and feels. Even Jose Rizal once argued that what Europeans mistook as Filipino "laziness" was actually a function of the tropical climate and natural abundance in the archipelago: Filipinos supposedly did not need to exert themselves as much as Europeans in their cold climates and barren lands were forced to do.

A third cross-point for Reyes is the *societal*: "who one is" is shaped by one's society. The term "society" here pertains to all the elements of the human groups—as opposed to the natural environment—that one is a member of. "Culture" in its varied aspects is included here. Reyes argues that "who one is" is molded in large part by the kind of society and culture—which, for the most part, one did not choose—that one belongs to. Filipinos have their own way of doing things (e.g., *pagmamano*), their own system of beliefs and values (e.g., closely-knit family ties, etc.), and even their own notions of right and wrong (e.g., a communal versus an individualistic notion of rights). This third cross-point interacts with the physical and the interpersonal factors that the individual and her people are immersed into or engaged in.

The fourth cross-point Reyes names is the *historical*, which is simply the events that one's people has undergone. In short, one's people's history shapes "who one is" right now. For example, the Philippines had a long history of colonization that affected how Philippine society has been formed and how Philippine culture has developed. This effect, in turn, shapes the individual who is a member of Philippine society. A major part of Philippine history is the Christianization of the islands during the Spanish conquest. Christianity, for good or bad, has formed Philippine society and culture, and most probably the individual Filipino, whether she may be Christian herself or not. The historical cross-point also interacts with the previous three. Each cross-point thus crosses over into the others as well.

However, being a product of all these cross-points is just one side of "who one is." According to Reyes, "who one is" is also a project for one's self. This happens because a human individual has freedom. This freedom is not absolute: one does not become something because one chooses to be. Even if one wants to fly, she cannot, unless she finds a way to invent a device that can help her do so. This finite freedom means that one has the capacity to give herself a particular direction in life according to her own ideal self. Thus, for Reyes, "who one is" is a cross-point, but in an existential level, he argues that the meaning of one's existence is in the intersection between the fact that one's being is a product of many forces outside her choosing and her ideal future for herself. We can see that ethics plays a big role in this existential challenge of forming one's self. What one ought to do in one's

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

life is not dictated by one's physical, interpersonal, social, or historical conditions. What one ought to do is also not abstracted from one's own specific situation. One always comes from somewhere. One is always continuously being shaped by many factors outside of one's own free will. The human individual thus always exists in the tension between being conditioned by external factors and being a free agent. The human individual never exists in a vacuum as if she were a pure rational entity without any embodiment and historicity. The moral agent is not a calculating, unfeeling machine that produces completely objective and absolutely correct solutions to even the most complex moral problems.

Using Reyes's philosophical lens, we can now focus on one of the major issues in ethical thought: What is the relationship between ethics and one's own culture? The following section focuses on this philosophical question.

CULTURE AND ETHICS

A common opinion many people hold is that one's culture dictates what is right or wrong for an individual. For such people, the saying "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" by St. Ambrose applies to deciding on moral issues. This quote implies that one's culture is inescapable, that is, one has to look into the standards of her society to resolve all her ethical questions with finality. How she relates to herself, her close relations, her own society, with other societies, and with the natural world are all predetermined by her membership in her society and culture.

Generalizations concerning supposed Filipino traits sometimes end up as empty stereotypes, especially since one may be hard put to think if any other culture does not exhibit such traits. For instance, in the case of what many assume is a trait that Filipinos possess, namely hospitality, can we say that Chinese are not hospitable? Most probably, they are hospitable too, but they may exhibit such hospitality in radically different ways. Thus, to simply say that there is a "Filipino way" of doing things, including a "Filipino way" of thinking about what the right thing to do and why, remains a matter for discussion. Is there really a Filipino morality that may be distinct from a Chinese morality? We hear claims from time to time that "Americans are individualistic; Filipinos are communal," a supposed difference that grounds, for some people, radically different sets of moral values. But one may ask: Is there really any radical difference between one culture's moral reasoning and another's? Or do all cultures share in at least some fundamental values and that the differences are not on the level of value but on the level of its manifestation in the context of different socio-historical-cultural dimensions? One culture, because of its particular history, may construct hospitality in a particular way and manifest it in its own customs and traditions. Yet, both cultures honor hospitality.

The American philosopher James Rachels (1941–2003) provided a clear argument against the validity of cultural relativism in the realm of ethics.[2] Rachels defines cultural relativism as the position that claims that there is no such thing as objective truth in the

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

realm of morality. The argument of this position is that since different cultures have different moral codes, then there is no one correct moral code that all cultures must follow. The implication is that each culture has its own standard of right or wrong, its validity confined within the culture in question. However, Rachels questions the logic of this argument: first, that cultural relativism confuses a statement of fact (that different cultures have different moral codes), which is merely descriptive, with a normative statement (that there cannot be objective truth in morality). Rachels provides a counter-argument by analogy: Just because some believed that the Earth was flat, while some believe it is spherical, it does not mean that there is no objective truth to the actual shape of the Earth.

Beyond his criticism of the logic of cultural relativism, Rachels also employs a *reductio ad absurdum* argument. It is an argument which first assumes that the claim in question is correct, in order to show the absurdity that will ensue if the claim is accepted as such. He uses this argument to show what he thinks is the weakness of the position. He posits three absurd consequences of accepting the claim of cultural relativism. First, if cultural relativism was correct, then one cannot criticize the practices or beliefs of another culture anymore as long as that culture thinks that what it is doing is correct. But if that is the case, then the Jews, for example, cannot criticize the Nazis' plan to exterminate all Jews in World War II, since obviously, the Nazis believed that they were doing the right thing. Secondly, if cultural relativism was correct, then one cannot even criticize the practices or beliefs of one's own culture. If that is the case, the black South African citizens under the system of apartheid, a policy of racial segregation that privileges the dominant race in a society, could not criticize that official state position. Thirdly, if cultural relativism was correct, then one cannot even accept that moral progress can happen. If that is the case, then the fact that many societies now recognize women's rights and children's rights does not necessarily represent a better situation than before when societies refused to recognize that women and children even had rights.

Rachels concludes his argument by saying that he understands the attractiveness of the idea of cultural relativism for many people, that is, it recognizes the differences between cultures. However, he argues that recognizing and respecting differences between cultures do not necessarily mean that there is no such thing as objective truth in morality. He argues instead that though different cultures have different ways of doing things, cultures may hold certain values in common. Rachels posits that if one scrutinizes the beliefs and practices of different cultures, however far apart they are from each other, no culture, whether in the present world or in the past, would promote murder instead of prohibiting it. Rachels argues that a hypothetical culture that promotes murder would immediately cease to exist because the members would start murdering each other. Rachels ends his article on cultural relativism by noting that someone can recognize and respect cultural differences and still maintain the right to criticize beliefs and practices that she thinks are wrong, if she performs proper rational deliberation.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

This, however, should not be taken as a reconciliation of all differences in the name of some abstract universal value system. The cultural differences between one society and another in terms of norms, practices, and beliefs are not trivial matters that one can disregard. They are actually part of "who one is" and cannot be set aside. One should instead think of a common human condition, a set of existential situations that human beings share and that are fleshed out through a group's unique set of historical experiences and manifested in a group's particular cultural constructions.

Thus, the challenge of ethics is not the removal of one's culture because that is what makes one unique. Instead, one must dig deeper into her own culture in order to discover how her own people have most meaningfully explored possibly universal human questions or problems within the particularity of her own people's native ground. Thus, hospitality, for example, may be a species-wide question. But how we Filipinos observe and express hospitality is an insight we Filipinos must explore because it may be in our own practices that we see how best we had responded to this human question. It may be best because we responded specifically to the particularity of our own environmental and historical situation. One can then benefit by paying attention to her own unique cultural heritage, because doing so may give her a glimpse into the profound ways her people have grappled with the question of "What ought I to do?"

Ethics, therefore, should neither be reduced to one's own cultural standards, nor should it simplistically dismiss one's unique cultural beliefs and practices. The latter can possibly enlighten her toward what is truly ethical. What is important is that one does not wander into ethical situations blindly, with the naive assumption that ethical issues will be resolved automatically by her beliefs and traditions. Instead, she should challenge herself to continuously work toward a fuller maturity in ethical decision-making. *Moral development* then is a prerequisite if the individual is to encounter ethical situations with a clear mind and with her values properly placed with respect to each other. We shall discuss moral development further but let us now focus on the relationship between one's religion and the challenge of ethical decision-making.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

RELIGION AND ETHICS

Many people who consider themselves "religious" assume that it is the teachings of their own religion that define what is truly "right" or "wrong," "good" or "bad." The question of the proper relationship between religion and ethics, therefore, is one that demands philosophical exploration. There are many different religions in the world. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism are four of the largest religious groups in the world at present, based on population. The Philippines is predominantly Roman Catholic, yet many other religions continue to flourish in the archipelago. Beyond all the differences, however, religion in essence represents a group's ultimate, most fundamental concerns regarding their existence. For followers of a particular religion, the ultimate meaning of their existence, as

well as the existence of the whole of reality, is found in the beliefs of that religion. Therefore, the question of morality for many religious followers is reduced to following the teachings of their own religion. Many questions arise from this assertion. This is where a philosophical study of ethics enters.

Many religious followers assume that what their religion teaches can be found either in their sacred scripture (e.g., the Bible for Christians, the Qur'an for Muslims, etc.) or body of writings (e.g., the Vedas, including the Upanishads, and other texts for Hindus; the Tao Te Ching, Chuang-tzu, and other Taoist classics for Taoists) or in other forms (other than written texts) of preaching that their leaders had promulgated and become part of their traditions. A critical, philosophical question that can be asked, vis-à-vis ethics, is "What exactly does sacred scripture (or religious teaching) command?" This is a question of interpretation since even the same passage from a particular religious tradition (e.g., "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" [Genesis 21:24]) can have many different interpretations from religious teachers even from within the same tradition. Therefore, based on what Ramon C. Reyes says concerning an individual's cross-points, one can see that the reading or interpretation of a particular passage or text is the product of an individual's embodiment and historicity and on the other hand, her existential ideal. This does not mean that religious teaching is relative to the individual's particular situation (implying no objective and universal truth about the matter) but that any reading or interpretation has a historical particularity affected by the situatedness of the reader. This implies that the moral agent in question must still, in full responsibility, challenge herself to understand using her own powers of rationality, but with full recognition of her own situatedness and what her religious authorities claim their religion teaches.

Second, one must determine what justifies the claim of a particular religious teaching when it commands its followers on what they "ought to do" (whether in general or in specific situations). Relevant to this is Plato's philosophical question in his dialogue *Euthyphro*, which was mentioned in an earlier chapter: "Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?" Philosophers have modified this question into a moral version: When something is "morally good," is it because it is good in itself and that is why God commands it, or is it good because God simply says so? If a particular preacher teaches her followers to do something because it is what (for example) their sacred scripture says, a critical-minded follower might ask for reasons as to why the sacred scripture says that. If the preacher simply responds "that is what is written in the sacred scripture", that is tantamount to telling the follower to stop asking questions and simply follow. Here, the critical-minded follower might find herself at an unsatisfying impasse. History reveals that there were people who twisted religious teaching that brought harm to their followers and to others. An example is the Crusades in the European Middle Ages. European Christians, who followed their religious leaders' teaching, massacred Muslims, Jews, and even fellow Christians to recapture the Holy City of Jerusalem from these so-called heathens. A contemporary example is when terrorists who are religious extremists use religion to

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

justify acts of violence they perform on fellow human beings. The problem here is not that religion misleads people; the problem is that too many people perform heinous acts simply because they assumed they were following the teachings of their supposed religion, without stopping to think whether these actions are harmful. The philosophical-minded individual therefore is tasked to be critical even of her own set of beliefs and practices and to not simply follow for the sake of blind obedience.

These critical questions about one's culture and religious beliefs show us the need for maturity or growth in one's morality, both in terms of intellect and character. The responsible moral agent then is one who does not blindly follow externally-imposed rules, but one who has a well-developed "feel" for making informed moral decisions. The following section discusses this need for developing one's feel for morality.

MORAL DELIBERATION

There is a big difference between a young child's reasoning on the right thing to do and the manner a morally mature individual arrives at an ethical decision. This necessary growth, which is a maturation in moral reasoning, has been the focus of study of many theorists. One of them is the American moral psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1927–1987) who theorized that *moral development* happens in six stages, which he divided into three levels. The first level is what he called *pre-conventional* and it corresponds to how infants and young children think. This pre-conventional level, whose reasoning is centered on the consequences of one's actions, is divided into two stages. The first stage of reasoning centers around obedience and the avoidance of punishment: to a young child's mind, an action is "good" if it enables one to escape from punishment; "bad" if it leads to punishment. Later, a child enters the second stage of reasoning and learns to act according to what she thinks will serve her self-interest; thus, what is "good" at this age is what the child thinks can bring her pleasure. Kohlberg used the term pre-conventional to refer to these two stages since at this age, a young child basically thinks only in terms of the pain (punishment) or pleasure (reward) brought about as a consequence of her actions. Thus, her concentration is on herself and what she can feel, instead of her society's conventions on what is right or wrong.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

The second level of moral development according to Kohlberg is the *conventional* since this is the age in which older children, adolescents, and young adults learn to conform to the expectations of society. This is the time when one learns to follow the conventions of her group. This second level is divided into two stages: the third and fourth stages of moral development. The third stage is when one begins to act according to what the larger group she belongs to expects of her. The individual here assumes that what will benefit her best is when the other members of her group approve of her actions. The general tendency at this age is to conform first to the values of one's immediate group, such as her family, playmates, or later on, *barkada*. Older children and adolescents eventually begin to value

the expectations of the larger group they belong to, whether it be their school, religion, or state. The fourth stage is achieved when a person realizes that following the dictates of her society is not just good for herself but more importantly, it is necessary for the existence of society itself. The individual at this stage values most the laws, rules, and regulations of her society, and thus her moral reasoning is shaped by dutifulness to the external standards set by society.

In Kohlberg's reasoning, people who merely follow the rules and regulations of their institution, the laws of their community or state, the doctrine of their religion—even if they seem to be the truly right thing to do—are trapped in this second or conventional level, which is still not yet the highest. The point of Kohlberg's theory is not to ascertain what defines the goodness or rightness of the act. Thus, in this sense, Kohlberg's idea is not an ethical theory. Instead, it is a psychological theory that attempts to describe the stages of a person's growth in moral thinking. The morally mature individual, for Kohlberg, must outgrow both (1) the pre-conventional level, whose pleasure-and-pain logic locks one into self-centered kind of thinking, an egoism, as well as (2) the conventional level, which at first glance looks like the sensible approach to morality. The second level might, *de facto*, be the way that many (if not most) adults think about morality, that it is simply a question of following the right rules. The great insight of Kohlberg, however, is that a truly morally mature individual must outgrow even the simple following of supposedly right rules. This is where the third level comes in.

The third and highest level of moral development for Kohlberg is what he calls *post-conventional* since the morally responsible agent recognizes that what is good or right is not reducible to following the rules of one's group. Instead, it is a question of understanding personally what one ought to do and deciding, using one's free will, to act accordingly. This level, which is also divided into two stages (the fifth and the sixth), represents the individual's realization that the ethical principles she has rationally arrived at take precedence over even the rules or conventions that her society dictates. Moral maturity therefore is seen in an agent who acts on what she has understood, using her full rationality, to be what is right, regardless of whether the act will bring the agent pleasure or pain and even regardless of whether the act is in accordance with one's community's laws or not. An agent has attained full moral development if she acts according to her well-thought-out *rational principles*. In the earlier stage of this level of moral development in the fifth stage, the moral agent sees the value of the *social contract*, namely, agreements that rational agents have arrived at whether explicitly or implicitly in order to serve what can be considered the common good are what one ought to honor and follow. This notion of common good is post-conventional in the sense that the moral agent binds herself to what this theoretical community of rational agents has identified as morally desirable, whether the agent herself will benefit from doing so or not. Additionally, this notion of the common good is not reducible to pre-existing communal rules, traditions, or laws since even these must be weighed using rational discourse. Thus, what is good or right is what honors the social contract; what contradicts it is bad.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

The sixth and highest stage of moral development that exists even beyond the fifth stage of the social contract is choosing to perform actions based on universal ethical principles that one has determined by herself. One realizes that all the conventions (laws, rules, and regulations) of society are only correct if they are based on these universal ethical principles; they must be followed only if they reflect universal ethical principles. This is, for Kohlberg, the full maturity of post-conventional thinking since this stage recognizes that in the end, the question of what one ought to do goes back to the individual moral agent and her own rationality. Kohlberg's insight is that, ultimately, one must think for herself what she ought to do. This stand recognizes the supposed fact that there might be instances when the agent must choose to go against what the community of rational thinkers deems as good if she really thinks she must, assuming that she has committed her full rationality in arriving at that decision.

One does not have to agree completely with Kohlberg's theory of moral development to see its overall value. This theory helps, at the very least, point out the differences in moral reasoning: the more mature kind is seen in people who are not anymore dictated by the logic of reward and punishment, or pain and pleasure. Simply following rules even if, theoretically, they are the correct ones, does not necessarily qualify as morally mature behavior. One must make free use of her own power of reasoning in cases of moral choice and not remain a creature of blind obedience to either pain and pleasure or to the demands of the group, if one aspires to moral maturity.

The significance of studying the different ethical theories and frameworks becomes clear only to the individual who has achieved, or is in the process of achieving, moral maturity. For someone who is still in Kohlberg's pre-conventional or conventional stages, moral valuation remains a matter of seeking reward or avoiding punishment, or at best, a question of following the dictates of other people.

For one who is well on the way to moral maturity, the task of using one's reason to understand moral issues becomes a real possibility and an authentic responsibility. Part of this maturity is also the realization that ethical thinking is not a completely intellectual task, but one that also involves the feelings. In the next section, we shall have a brief treatment of the role of emotions and feelings in moral deliberation. Armed with this clarification, let us afterward turn to the challenge of making sense of moral problems.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

FEELINGS IN MORAL DELIBERATION

Emotions or feelings have long been derided by purely rationalistic perspectives as having no place in a properly executed moral decision. This prejudice, however, needs to be re-examined thoroughly. Although some emotions or feelings can derail one from a clear-minded decision in an ethical situation, it is also not possible that human choice can be purged of all feelings; the moral agent, after all, is neither robot nor computer. A more realistic attitude toward decision-making is to appreciate the indispensable role emotions have on

an agent's act of choosing. Aristotle precisely points out that moral virtue goes beyond the mere act of intellectually identifying the right thing to do. Instead, it is the condition of one's character by which the agent is able to manage her emotions or feelings. Note that Aristotle does not say, "Remove all feelings." Instead, he sees that cultivating one's character lies in learning to manage one's feelings. The emotions are, as much as reason itself, part of what makes one a human being. There is a popular Filipino saying: "*tulak ng bibig; kabig ng dibdib*" (literally, "The mouth says one thing, but the heart drives you to do another thing."). This saying can mean that what an individual says, and in that sense what an individual's mind or intellect dictates what one ought to do, can sometimes be overcome by what her feelings actually drive her to do. Thus, part of the genius of Aristotle is his realization that it is possible that there can be a disconnect between intellectual knowledge of the good and the actual ability of an individual to perform accordingly. The latter is mainly a function of character formation, that is, of habituating the proper management of one's feelings. Aristotle accepts that feelings cannot be set aside in favor of some illusory, purely intellectual acceptance of the good. Instead, he sees moral virtue as a matter of habitually managing one's feelings in the rightful manner. As his famous line from Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics* puts it: "Anyone can get angry—that is easy...; but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way, that is not for everyone, nor is it easy." Doing the right thing for Aristotle is being able to manage one's feelings so that she is actually driven or propelled to do what she already sees (intellectually) as right.

The responsible moral agent then as a supposedly "dispassionate" moral decision-maker is an unrealistic ideal. The passions or feelings do not necessarily detract from making an informed moral decision. One can even argue that making a moral decision, because it is all about what she values, cannot but involve her most serious feelings. What she must do then is to educate and to cultivate her feelings so that they do not remain in the pre-conventional level, that is, of self-centered feelings reducible to individualistic notions of pleasure and pain. The morally developed or mature individual or agent therefore must have honed her intellectual capacity to determine the relevant elements in a moral situation, including the moral principles to explore. On top of that, she must also have cultivated her feelings so that she neither simply gives in to childish emotions, nor does she also dismiss the "right feelings" required for a truly informed moral decision. The mature moral agent realizes that she is both a product of many forces, elements, and events, all of which shape her situation and options for a decision. She also realizes that she is not merely a puppet of external causes. Instead, a meaningful moral decision is one that she makes in full cognizance of where she is coming from and of where she ought to go. At this point, we are ready to identify the steps in making informed moral decisions.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

MORAL PROBLEMS

What must a morally mature individual do when she is confronted with a moral problem? In order to answer this question, we must first understand that there are different types of moral problems, each one requiring a particular set of rational deliberations. We may attempt to construct an outline of what we ought to do when confronted with the potential ethical issue.

The first step that we ought to take if there is a potential ethical issue is to determine our level of involvement in the case at hand. Do we need to make a moral decision in a situation that needs action on our part? Or are we trying to determine the right thing to do in a particular situation being discussed? In the latter situation, we may be making a *moral judgment* on a particular case, but one that does not necessarily involve ourselves. We may just be reading about a case that involves other people but we are not part of the case. In any Ethics class, students are made to imagine what they would do in a particular situation. Their moral imagination is being exercised in the hope of cultivating moral reasoning and giving direction to the needed cultivation of their feelings through habits. But they must be able to distinguish between making a judgment on a particular ethical situation and coming up with a morally responsible decision for a situation that they are actually a part of. Being a moral *agent* specifically refers to the latter situation. We must therefore identify which activity we are engaged in, whether we are making a judgment on a case that we are not involved in or if we truly need to make a decision in a situation that demands that we act.

After ascertaining our involvement in the potential moral situation, we then need to make sure of the facts. The first fact to establish is whether we are faced with a moral situation or not. Are we truly confronted with a genuinely moral situation, or one that merely involves a judgment in the level of aesthetics or of etiquette and therefore is just an amoral or non-ethical question? But if the situation we are involved in truly has moral weight, if it strikes one to the core because it involves what it truly means to be human, then we must now establish all the facts that might have a bearing on our decision. We must set aside all details that have no connection to the situation. We must also identify whether an item in consideration is truly factual or merely hearsay, anecdotal, or an unfounded assumption, and thus unsupportable. This is where such things as "fake news" and "alternative facts" have to be weeded out. Letting such details seep into our ethical deliberation may unfairly determine or shape our ethical decision-making process, leading us into potentially baseless choices or conclusions. The responsible moral individual must make sure that she possesses all the facts she needs for that particular situation, but also only the facts that she needs—no more, no less.

The third step is to identify all the people who may potentially be affected by the implications of a moral situation or by our concrete choice of action. These people are called the *stakeholders* in the particular case. Identifying these stakeholders forces us to

give consideration to people aside from ourselves. The psychological tendency of most of us when confronted with an ethical choice is to simply think of ourselves, of what we need, or of what we want. This is also where we can be trapped in an immature assumption that the only thing important is what we "feel" at that moment, which usually is reducible to Kohlberg's notion of pre-conventional thinking. When we identify all the stakeholders, we are obliged to recognize all the other people potentially concerned with the ethical problem at hand, and thus must think of reasons aside from our own self-serving ones, to come up with conclusions that are impartial (in the sense that they take consideration of everyone's welfare), though still thoroughly involved.

Aside from identifying the stakeholders, we must also determine how they may be affected by whichever choice the agent makes in the given ethical situation, as well as to what degree. Not all stakeholders have an equal stake in a given moral case; some may be more favorably or more adversely affected by a particular conclusion or choice compared to others. A person's awareness of these probabilities is necessary to gain a more comprehensive assessment of the matter at hand in order to arrive at hopefully stronger reasons for making a definite ethical conclusion or choice.

After establishing the facts and identifying the stakeholders and their concerns in the matter, we must now identify the ethical issue at hand. There are several types of ethical problems or issues:

a. The first one is a situation in which we need to clarify whether a certain action is morally right or morally wrong. This is where the different ethical theories or frameworks can serve. Why is murder said to be an unethical or immoral act? How will utilitarianism explain the moral significance of this action? How about the natural law theory? Deontology? Virtue ethics?

b. The second type involves determining whether a particular action in question can be identified with a generally accepted ethical or unethical action. An example would be the issue of the ethical value of the death penalty. Can we say that death penalty is tantamount to murder? What would the different ethical theories or frameworks say regarding this issue? There is hardly an ethical problem if the agent's question is clearly about performing a widely-considered unethical or immoral action, such as "Ought I to murder my neighbor?" Murder in almost all, if not all, societies is unquestionably considered one of the worst acts a human being can perform. The situation in question only assumes an ethical identity if, in this case, there is a query as to whether a particular act of killing a human being is tantamount to murder or not. The issue of legalizing the death penalty, for example, is precisely an ethical issue or question, since for some people, the act in which a state executes someone guilty of a heinous crime should not be considered an act of murder, which is always wrong. The ethical debate surrounding the imposition of the death penalty is generally not about

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

whether some acts of murder are justifiable or not, but rather whether legally-sanctioned executions ought to be considered as murder or not.

c. The third type points to the presence of an *ethical dilemma*. Dilemmas are ethical situations in which there are competing values that seem to have equal worth. The problem can be concerned either with a choice between two competing moral goods or between two evils. The responsible moral individual therefore must be able to recognize what exactly the ethical issue at hand is and formulate and state it clearly as a moral problem. She has to identify the fundamental values in conflict in such a situation in order to assess later if a workable solution to the ethical problem can be negotiated that will somehow not end up surrendering one value for the sake of another. The individual must try to find the best balance possible that may honor the competing values. She must then identify the possible choices in a given ethical situation and weigh which one among them can best meet the interest of all the stakeholders in question, as well as provide a satisfactory balance between the values in question. The individual must therefore identify the probable consequences that a particular choice of action will bring to the stakeholders concerned in order to determine which choice possibly is the best, given the situation. The popular "Robin Hood" scenario is an example of such. Usually put in the question, "Is it right to steal from the rich in order to feed the poor?" What one is confronted here is a situation in which two competing values are in conflict with one another.

The final step, of course, is for the individual to make her ethical conclusion or decision, whether in judging what ought to be done in a given case or in coming up with a concrete action she must actually perform. Real ethical decisions are often very difficult enough to make and for so many different reasons. Not all the facts in a given case may be available to the agent for her consideration. Some facts may eventually turn out to be misleading, or not true at all, and so the agent's vigilance and meticulousness in establishing the facts will always be tested in any given ethical situation. Additionally, it is extremely demanding to account for all the stakeholders concerned as well as the identity and extent of their interests in the particular case. An agent may overlook certain individuals or undervalue their interests. Many people tend to underestimate the value of the human rights of criminals, assuming immediately that criminals have surrendered all their rights on account of the crime they committed against society especially in cases of heinous offenses such as serial murder or terrorism. Then, there is the difficulty of identifying all the values at play in a given ethical issue. The moral agent must be able to learn how to avoid the seduction of surrendering to blind simplification. It is so much easier to turn a blind eye to other values that one does not want to consider in a situation for whatever reason. Often, in the name of some value that is valid enough, such as "peace and security," an agent may be tempted to minimize other values, such as human rights or the supposed inviolable dignity of the individual human person.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

The responsible moral individual, however, must forge on realizing full well that cultivating one's capacity for mature moral choice is a continuing journey in her life. Aristotle recognizes the importance of continuous habituation in the goal of shaping one's character so that she becomes more used to choosing the right thing. Not that doing so will ever become an automatic process, the way a computer performs mathematical calculations mechanically. A moral individual is always a human being whose intellect remains finite and whose passions remain dynamic, and who is always placed in situations that are unique. There are no automatic moral decisions; therefore, such a phrase is patently paradoxical. One must continue to manage her reason and passions to respond in the best way possible to the kaleidoscope of moral situations that she finds herself in.

THE VALUE OF STUDYING ETHICAL THEORIES OR FRAMEWORKS

What then is the role of ethical theories or frameworks in the continuing cultivation of one's capacity for moral choice? Given the remark at the beginning of this chapter that none of the ethical frameworks we have studied is final and complete, how then should one make use of them for the development of her faculty for moral valuation?

These ethical theories or frameworks may serve as guideposts, given that they are the best attempts to understand morality that the history of human thought has to offer. As guideposts, they can shed light on many important considerations, though of course not all, in one's quest to answer the twin questions of "What ought I to do?" and "Why ought I to do so?" Individually, they can clarify many important aspects of morality. *Utilitarianism* pays tribute to the value of impartiality, arguing that an act is good if it will bring about the greatest good for the greatest number of those affected by the action, and each one of those affected should be counted as one, each equal to each. Utilitarianism thus puts every single stakeholder at par with everyone else, with no one being worth more than any other. Whether president or common citizen, rich or poor, man or woman, young or old, everyone has as much worth as anyone else. Utilitarianism, arguably, puts more value on the notion of "common good" compared to any of the other ethical frameworks we have covered.

The *natural law theory*, on the other hand, puts more emphasis on the supposed objective, universal nature of what is to be considered morally good, basing its reasoning on the theorized existence of a "human nature." This theory has the advantage of both objectivity and a kind of intuitiveness. The latter pertains to the assumption that whatever is right is what feels right, that is, in the innermost recesses of one's being or of one's conscience (and not just in some shallow emotional level) because what is good is imprinted in our very being in the form of natural inclinations.

Kantian deontology puts the premium on rational will, freed from all other considerations, as the only human capacity that can determine one's moral duty. Kant focuses on one's *autonomy* as constitutive of what one can consider as moral law that is free from all other ends and inclinations—including pain and pleasure as well as conformity to

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

the rules of the group. This shows Kant's disdain for these rules as being authorities external to one's own capacity for rational will.

From valuing all human beings to intuiting what is universally good and to practicing one's autonomy in determining what one ought to do, all of these explore the possible roles of reason and free will in identifying what one ought to do in a given moral situation. What Aristotle's *virtue ethics* in the end indicates is the need for the habituation of one's character to make any and all of these previous considerations possible. To weigh the collective happiness of human beings, to choose to act on what one's innermost nature dictates, and to practice one's autonomy regardless of all other considerations especially those that impinge on one's will: these are lofty enough goals for human reason and will. But what can possibly sustain or brace a moral agent so that she is able to maintain the effort to implement such rigorous demands on the part of reason? Aristotle's answer is the solid resolve of one's character, which can only be achieved through the right kind of habituation.

One has to realize that the philosophical study of ethical theories or frameworks must not merely end in a smorgasbord of theories from which one may choose a framework that she may apply willy-nilly to a particular moral situation. The assumption that ethics is merely a matter of finding whichever theory seems to work for the case at hand ends in a cynical cul-de-sac: such an attitude still does not make any substantial headway into answering the twin questions of "What ought I to do?" and "Why ought I to do so?" Such an approach substitutes a smug attitude of expediency for the complex and difficult task of truly searching for what is right.

What the responsible moral individual must instead perform is to continuously test the cogency and coherence of the ethical theory or framework in question against the complexity of the concrete experience at hand. In such a spirit of experimentation, the moral individual is able to play off the theories against one another, noting the weakness in one for a particular case and possibly supplementing it with the strengths of another.

In the following section, let us try to show the strengths and drawbacks of each theory or framework in application to the different realms of human action: the personal, the social (both local and global), and the environmental.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

SELF, SOCIETY, AND ENVIRONMENT

INDIVIDUAL/SELF

In the realm of the self, as noted earlier, one has to pay attention not just on how one deals with oneself, but also on how one interacts with other individuals in personal relations. One may respond to the demand for an ethically responsible "care for the self" by making full use of the four ethical theories or frameworks.

John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism, though seemingly a hedonistic theory given its emphasis on maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain, elevates the human element above the animalistic and above the merely selfish. Mill builds on the earlier version of utilitarianism, the one espoused by Jeremy Bentham, which first posited that what makes an action good is that it brings about the greatest happiness for the greatest number. The genius of Bentham was his addition of extent, (that is, the number of people affected by an action) to the list of circumstances that an individual must consider in determining what one ought to do in a particular situation. Greatest happiness for Bentham then means quantity, but not just for oneself since the other half of his maxim refers to "the greatest number" that points to the extent or number of people affected by this happiness. Thus, there is no selfishness even in Bentham's version. Mill additionally stresses the difference between kinds of pleasures and remarks that "It is better to be a Socrates dissatisfied rather than a pig satisfied." This important distinction exalts the moral individual over and above her purely physical, material feelings or emotions. Therefore, what is good or right does not simply reduce to what "I feel is good for me." It instead puts premium on the higher kinds of pleasure that are apt for the human being and which would be of benefit to the greatest number affected. One's moral or ethical responsibility to herself then is to make sure that everything she does will be for the greatest happiness, not just in number but in kind and not just for her but for everyone affected by her acts.

Thomas Aquinas's natural law theory states as its first natural inclination the innate tendency that all human beings share with all other existing things; namely, the natural propensity to maintain oneself in one's existence. Any action therefore that sustains and cultivates one's biological or physical existence is to be deemed good, while all actions that lead to the destruction of one's existence is to be called bad or evil. Aquinas thus specifies that taking care of one's being is a moral duty that one owes to herself and to God. Making sure that one lives a healthy life and that one avoids all things that may hurt one or cause one harm is, for Aquinas, part of a person's moral responsibility for herself. On top of this first inclination, one may also look at the third natural inclination that says that part of human nature is to promote the truth and cultivate a harmonious life in society with other humans. Part of one's responsibility to herself then is a dedication to the truth (and thus to cultivate an aversion for lies and ignorance) and to live a peaceful social life. Aquinas teaches that a person cannot remain within her own selfish desires since doing so might lead her to harm herself, to dispense with the truth, or to destroy harmony in her community. Thus, the moral philosophy of Aquinas calls on a person to go beyond what she thinks she wants and to realize instead what her innermost nature inclines her to do, which is the promotion of life, of the truth, and of harmonious coexistence with others.

Kant's deontology celebrates the rational faculty of the moral agent, which sets it above merely sentient beings. Kant's principle of universalizability challenges the moral agent to think beyond her own predilections and desires, and to instead consider what everyone ought to do. His principle of humanity as end in itself teaches one to always treat

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

humanity, whether in her own self or in any other individual, as the end or goal of all human actions and never merely as the means. Kant goes beyond simply telling people to not use others as instruments. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with using a human being as a means or a tool for one's own purposes because human interaction is not possible without that happening. What Kant is concerned with is when someone *merely* uses a human being, whether another person or herself, and forgets to treat that human being as the goal or purpose of an action in and of herself. Many people lose sight of what is truly important because they become consumed with many other perceived goals: financial wealth, revenge, domination, and so on. What they seldom realize is that they have lost themselves in the process of attempting to satisfy such desires. Lastly, Kant's principle of autonomy teaches one that no one else can tell her what she ought to do in a particular situation; the highest authority is neither the king nor the general nor the pope. The highest authority, that which is self-legislating in the realm of moral law, is none other than the rational individual herself. Her moral or ethical responsibility to herself is to maintain her dignity as a rational agent, and thus become the self-legislator in the realm of morality. She cannot be the follower or the slave of her own selfish desires or of external authority.

Aristotle's virtue ethics teaches one to cultivate her own intellect as well as her character to achieve *eudaimonia* in her lifetime. For Aristotle, one's ethical or moral responsibility to herself is one of self-cultivation. Aristotle is quite forgiving when it comes to individual actions, knowing full well the difficulty of "hitting the mark" in a given moral situation. What the thinker is more concerned with is whether one's actions lead one to become a better person in terms of cultivating her character. One may make mistakes from time to time, but in the end, the important question to ask is whether the person learned from such mistakes and therefore constructed a more or less orderly life. If the person's life in the end is one big mistake, then the person has not become *eudaimon* or a "happy" (that is, "flourishing") person. Life for Aristotle is all about learning from one's own experiences so that one becomes better as a person. But make no mistake about this, one *must* become a better person and not just live a series of endless mistakes.

The realm of the personal also extends to one's treatment of other persons within one's network of close relations. Utilitarianism's recognition of the greatest happiness principle shows that even in interpersonal interaction, what must rule is not one's own, subjective notion of what is pleasurable. Instead, the greatest happiness, in this case where everyone is affected by this particular set of relationships, is what must take precedence in one's choice of actions. The other, therefore, is as important as one's self in her consideration of the moral worth of her actions. Thus, in a person's relationship with her parents, siblings, other family members, neighbors, classmates, playmates, and eventually workmates, she must put into consideration the happiness of every single individual affected by her actions.

Natural law theory, through its recognition of the inviolable value of human life whomever it belongs to, immediately offers an ethic of interpersonal relationships. Coupled with this, the value that Aquinas gives to the production and care for offspring (the second

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

natural inclination), as well as to the promotion of the truth and the peaceful and orderly social life (the third natural inclination), provide guidance on how one ought to relate with her close relations. Again, the value of human life, of proper education, and of promoting the truth and peaceable social life, must be upheld by the individual in her relations with family and friends.

Kant's deontology recognizes the principle of humanity as end in itself and as a cornerstone of ethical decision-making because this theory recognizes the full autonomy of every single rational agent. Everything else in the universe can be used by the rational agent as mere means; only a rational agent herself can never be reduced to mere means, but must always be treated as end it itself. Thus, one must not abuse either oneself, nor one's fellow human beings (in the context of one's close relations) by treating them as mere means. "One must always treat humanity, whether in oneself or in any other, always as end in itself," as Kant himself said. It does often happen that one can forget the innate value of one's parents (over and above their usefulness as one's "source of finances") or one's friends (over and above the fact that "they entertain me"). Kant reminds one to never reduce a human being to the level of the instrument or tool.

Finally, Aristotle's Virtue Theory teaches that one must always find and act on the *mesotes* whether in treating oneself or any other human being. This *mesotes* points to the complexity of knowing what must be done in a specific moral situation (a measure that does not necessarily apply to a different situation), which involves identifying the relevant feelings that are involved and being able to manage them. It happens too often in one's personal relationship with others, whom one is close to, that "feelings" get in the way of forming meaningful, constructive bonds. There is a saying that "familiarity breeds contempt," which refers to the tendency of many people to lapse into an attitude that tends to be hurtful to others one is closest to. This attitude is a compound of feelings that one has, but these are feelings one most probably has not yet sifted through. Temperance, therefore, is one Aristotelian virtue that clearly applies to treating oneself and other people close to oneself fairly and with much circumspection.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

SOCIAL LIFE: IN THE PHILIPPINE CONTEXT AND IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

One's membership in any society brings forth the demands of communal life in terms of the group's rules and regulations. The ethical question arises when the expectations of a particular society come into conflict with one's most fundamental values. Philippine society, for example, is made up of many ethnolinguistic groups, each with its own possibly unique culture and set of traditions. The demands of the nation-state, as seen in the laws of the land, sometimes clash with the traditions of indigenous culture. One example is the issue of land ownership when ancestral land is at stake: Can members of an indigenous group lay claim to a land that they do not technically own because they do not have a legal title for it? As we had seen earlier in this chapter in the discussion of cultural relativism, it is problematic

for an individual to simply accede to her group's given set of beliefs and practices. How would each ethical framework discuss this problem?

Mill's utilitarian doctrine will always push for the greatest happiness principle as the prime determinant of what can be considered as good action, whether in the personal sphere or in the societal realm. Thus, Filipinos cannot simply assume that their action is good because their culture says so. Instead, the fundamental question ought to be, "Will this action bring about the greatest happiness for the greatest number?" An individual must therefore think carefully whether her action, even if her culture approves of it (whichever it might be—"Filipino" culture, Ibaloi culture, and Maranaw culture, among others), will truly benefit everyone affected by it. The notion of the "greatest number" can also go beyond the borders of one's own perceived territory. Should one stop at "what is good for us" even if it is for the detriment of other people from other lands? Such considerations suggest that even an action done by Filipinos within the Philippine territory technically cannot remain a "matter for Filipinos only" if the action can potentially affect those outside the borders of the nation.

Thomas Aquinas, on the other hand, in his natural law theory, has a clear conception of the principles that should guide the individual in her actions that affect her larger society. Once more, human life, the care and education of children, and the promotion of truth and harmonious social living should be in the mind of an individual when she performs actions directed to the larger whole. For Aquinas, no harmonious social life will be possible if individuals that comprise such a society do not value human life, telling the truth and peaceful coexistence. Thus, contemporary social issues that have to do with the dissemination of "post-truth," "alternative facts," and "fake news" in the realm of social media are rightful targets of a Thomistic criticism of what ought and ought not to be allowed in our dealings with each other. On the other hand, the demand of the natural law for a peaceful and orderly social life can be put in danger by acts of criminality and terrorism. The morally responsible agent must therefore guard against committing any act that can go against this twofold requirement of the third natural inclination of human nature.

Immanuel Kant argues for the use of the principles of universalizability and of humanity as end in itself to form a person's autonomous notion of what she ought to do. These principles can and should apply directly to the construction of ethical duty in one's social life. Thus, no manner of heteronomous rules and expectations should dictate one's choice of actions, whether they be laws of the state or international treaties, cultural norms and customs, or even the laws of one's religion. According to Kant's framework, if a person is to follow any of these heteronomous laws, it must be because such a law is in accordance with her understanding of her moral duty, but must not be in any way contrary to it. Thus, Kant is not saying that a person ought not to follow any heteronomous laws. Instead, she must make sure that if she were to follow such a law, that she understands why it is truly the right thing to do. More positively, citizens of a particular society ought to make sure that the

laws and rules that they come up with are actually in line with what universalizable moral duty will prescribe.

Aristotle's virtue ethics prescribes *mesotes* as the guide to all the actions that a person has to take, even in her dealing with the larger community of people. Virtues such as justice, liberality, magnificence, friendliness, and rightful indignation suggest that they are socially-oriented Aristotelian virtues. A person ought to be guided by them in her dealings with either the local or the wider global society. She must also be aware that none of these virtues are fixed points; rather, each one will have a *mesotes* that is determined by the particular context. This is a very important point, especially if a person is in discourse with people coming from other groups within her own society or even from other societies and cultures. Within the Philippines, there are around 175 ethnolinguistic groups, each with its own language and culture, and therefore each with its own set of beliefs and practices. Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), on the other hand, perform their jobs in other countries abroad, and so they must balance the need for acculturation on one hand and keeping one's Filipino identity on the other. Temperance once again presents itself as one Aristotelian virtue that will be vital here: In the name of other virtues such as justice, much temperance is needed in dealing with the other participants in social intercourse.

We have seen here how each of the four ethical frameworks we have covered can be used as a fecund starting point for thinking through what a person's moral responsibility is toward herself, her close relations, her fellow members in society, and her fellow human beings in a global society. All four frameworks concern one's relationship with humans. However, one realm that has only recently been given much attention, but one which seems to demand an ethical response, is that of the non-human, physical environment that human beings live in.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

THE NON-HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Questions of environmental ethics, of the ethical or moral responsibilities human beings have toward the non-human world, only appeared in the twentieth century. Previously, most ethical theorists focused more on interhuman relations rather than human-to-non-human relations. Consequently, some argues that using any of the four ethical theories or frameworks may be an exercise in anachronism, that is, in forcing together elements that belong to different time periods. We will, therefore, merely suggest beginning possibilities for further exploration into an environmental ethics based on any of the four classical ethical theories.

In the case of utilitarianism, some scholars point out that this hedonistic doctrine that focuses on the sovereignty of pleasures and pains in human decision-making should extend into other creatures that can experience pleasures and pains; namely, animals. Thus, one of the sources of *animal ethics* is utilitarianism. Of course, animals themselves cannot become moral agents because they do not seem to have reason and free will. Some thinkers,

however, will argue that animals can experience pleasure and pain. Some would therefore argue that since the greatest happiness principle covers the greatest number of creatures that experience pleasure and pain, then that number should include animals. Therefore, though only humans can make moral decisions, animal ethics proponents argue that humans should always take into account the potential pleasure or pain that they may inflict on animals. What is good then is not only what is good for the greatest number of human beings affected, but also for the greatest number of creatures that can feel pleasure or pain. To extend the argument, though the other members of an ecosystem (e.g., plants) may not have the capacity for pleasure and pain, humans still ought to perform actions that will not lead to their destruction, that in turn might lead to pain for the animals that live off them. There is a general call for actions that do not just benefit humans but the whole ecosystem as well, since it is possible that nonhuman creatures might be harmed by neglecting the ecosystem.

Since Kantian deontology focuses on the innate dignity of the human being as possessing reason, it can be argued that one cannot possibly universalize maxims that, in the end, will lead to an untenable social existence. Can one accept the following maxim as something that everyone ought to follow: "One ought to not worry about environmental destruction, as long as it produces economic wealth for my society?" Such thinking is shortsighted and, in the end, does not produce universalizable maxims.

Thomas Aquinas, on the other hand, may not necessarily talk about the physical environment and human moral responsibility to it as such, but one can try to infer from his philosophy that certain actions should be avoided because they do not produce a harmonious, peaceful society. One can argue that neglecting the physical environment because of shortsighted economic goals (e.g., overfishing the waters off the coast of our islands or cutting down trees in our mountains and hills) will eventually lead to disasters such as flooding or famines that will affect society in a detrimental fashion.

Lastly, Aristotle's virtue ethics also pick up on the problem of such shortsightedness and ask how this can possibly lead to becoming a better person. One may actually invent a neo-Aristotelian vice here: the vice of *myopia*. This is a nearsightedness, not a physical one, but in one's understanding of the implications of her actions. This problem is therefore connected to a lack of intellectual virtue, to a deficiency in foresight. How can a person claim that she is cultivating her character (for the purpose of finally attaining *eudaimonia*) if she is guilty of the vice of myopia? One becomes a better person, therefore, if she learns to expand her vision to see beyond what is merely at close hand. Thus, seeing beyond the immediate is a virtue. One may argue therefore that Aristotle would support the argument that a person has the moral responsibility to see beyond what is immediate. If so, one must see beyond the satisfaction of immediate economic needs and make sure that harming the environment for the sake of such will not eventually lead to something much worse.

What we have tried to show here in this current section is possibility: that classical

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

ethical theories contribute to potentially solve twenty-first century problems. The important point here is not to "force answers" but to be open to real possibilities, as well as accepting real dead-ends. One must see the value of testing one's hypotheses, but also of the virtue of accepting that some hypotheses need to be let go.

A CLOSING THAT IS REALLY AN OPENING

At the end of this introduction to ethical study, we should already have a more or less clear idea of how to make informed moral decisions. You should, at this point, have sufficient mental and affective equipment to arrive at sound judgments for cases in discussion or for enacting real-life decisions. The four classical ethical theories or frameworks that we have taken up are in no way exhaustive. There are many other theories especially in the twentieth century that have emerged to take up the question of "What ought I to do?" and "Why ought I to do it?" These four frameworks, however, have proven to be some of the most influential in human thought and should serve as an introduction to other theories or to further discussions on moral philosophy. They are not to be seen as options to dictate on what one is supposed to do in a particular situation. This is the cynical way these frameworks are sometimes employed: use them as needed to justify what one wants to do in a particular situation. The more productive use of these frameworks instead is to employ them as beginning guides to one's further exploration into the topic of morality. Test them out: identify their strengths, recognize their weak points, stretch them out to see up to where they can work, and think of what can be added to the parts where they do not work anymore.

In the end, there is only a beginning: We do not have a computer program here that can automatically calculate what is the right thing to do in a given situation. It seems safe to assume that there can never be such a thing. There is only the human individual along with her community of fellow human beings who need to accept that they must continue to explore the meaning of what is good and right while hoping to arrive at the best judgments they can make at this point in time. Realizing the finitude of human understanding and of the capacity to make choices, but at the same time hoping that one's best attempt at doing what is right does mean something in the end—these are part and parcel of making informed moral decisions.

Do not worry, you can do it!

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

SUMMARY

Making informed decisions in the realm of morality entails first understanding who one is, in order to account for reasons that one comes up with as the agent who must choose in a moral situation. Reyes explains that one's self is a cross-point of many forces and factors that shape one's choices but do not dictate upon them. The mature moral agent must understand how her society, history, culture, and even religion shape who she is. She must also realize though that her choices in the end cannot simply be a mere product of these outside forces, but must be made in the spirit of freedom. Kohlberg teaches that one's realization of her own freedom to determine her own moral principles, free from all conventions, happens in a process of maturity. An essential element in maturity is the realization that one's choices, even in the realm of ethics, cannot simply be a function of rational thought but are inevitably shaped also by the feelings. Thus, there is the additional responsibility of cultivating one's feelings as well as one's reason. The moral agent must be mature enough to be able to cultivate the necessary steps to ensure a sound, well-informed moral decision. With the aid of the different ethical theories or frameworks discussed in the previous chapters, the morally mature agent will be able to appreciate her responsibility toward herself, her society, and her environment.

KEY WORDS

- Cross-Point
- Culture and Cultural Relativism
- Emotions and Feelings
- Environment
- Ethical Responsibility
- Global Community
- Informed Decision-Making
- Moral Agent
- Moral Development and Maturity
- Religion
- Self
- Society

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How can you be a genuine Filipino if you do not follow Filipino customs?
2. What is the distinction between a religious notion of sin and the philosophical understanding of immoral or unethical acts?
3. How realistic is Kohlberg's ideal of the highest stage of post-conventional morality, that of universal ethical principles, given that feelings and emotions are inseparable from human choice?
4. Given that the human condition is one of finitude, how will you know that you are sufficiently informed when you finally make your moral judgment?
5. If a global ethic is currently emerging, does this mean that the true meaning of morality changes over time? Please explain your answer.
6. Is there a difference between one's ethical responsibility toward fellow humans and toward nonhuman nature? Please explain your answer.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Appiah, Kwameh Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers (Issues in Our Time)*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006.

Arivia, Gadis and Donny Gahral Adian, editors. *Relations between Religions and Cultures in Southeast Asia (Indonesian Philosophical Studies, I)*. Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2009.

Chaleff, Ira. *Intelligent Disobedience: Doing Right When What You're Told to Do Is Wrong*. With a Foreword by Philip G. Zimbardo. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2015.

Chua, Romulo L. and Rodolfo L. Nazareno. *Ang Mahalaga sa Buhay: A Handbook of Filipino Values*. n.p.: Cellar Book Shop, 1992.

Dumont, Jean-Paul. *Visayan Vignettes: Ethnographic Traces of a Philippine Island*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Dy, Manuel B., Jr., editor. *Philosophy of Man*, 2nd ed., Makati City: Goodwill Trading Co., 2001.

Gripaldo, Rolando M., editor. *Filipino Cultural Traits: Philippine Philosophical Studies 3. (Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series III, Southeast Asia, Volume 1)*, n.p.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005.

Hourdequin, Marion. *Environmental Ethics: From Theory to Practice*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Jacobsen, Michael and Ole Bruun, editors. *Human Rights and Asian Values: Contesting National Identities and Cultural Representations in Asia (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies: Democracy in Asia Series, Number 6)*. London: Routledge, 2000.

James, Carrie. *Disconnected: The Youth, New Media, and the Ethics Gap (The John D. Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning)*. With a Foreword by Henry Jenkins. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014.

Jocano, F. Landa. *Filipino Indigenous Ethnic Communities: Patterns, Variations, and Typologies (Anthropology of the Filipino People, II)*. Quezon City: Punlad Research House, 1998.

Kohlberg, Lawrence. *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stage and the Idea of Justice (Essays in Moral Development, Volume 1)*. New York: Harper & Row, 1981.

Li, Xiaorong. *Ethics, Human Rights and Culture: Beyond Relativism and Universalism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

MacKinnon, Barbara and Andrew Fiala. *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues*, Concise, Eighth Edition. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2015.

Malik, Kenan. *The Quest for a Moral Compass: A Global History of Ethics*. New York: Melville House, 2014.

Mercado, Leonardo N. *The Filipino Mind: Philippine Philosophical Studies 2 (Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series III, Asia, Volume 8)*. n.p.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1994.

Munsey, Brenda, editor. *Moral Development, Moral Education, and Kohlberg: Basic Issues in Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, and Education*. With a Response by Lawrence Kohlberg. Ann Arbor, MI: Religious Education Press, 1980.

Musschenga, Albert W., Wouter van Haaften, Ben Spiecker, and Marc Slors, editors. *Personal and Moral Identity (Library of Ethics and Applied Philosophy, Volume 11)*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002.

Pojman, Louis P., Paul Pojman, and Katie McShane. *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*. 7th ed., Boston: Cengage Learning, 2017.

Rachels, James. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. New York: Random House, 1986.

Schlegel, Stuart A. *Tiruray Justice: Traditional Tiruray Law and Morality*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.

Singer, Peter. *One World Now: The Ethics of Globalization*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016.

Smith, David Whitten and Elizabeth Geraldine Burr. *Understanding World Religions: A Road Map for Justice and Peace*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

Smith, Huston. *The World's Religions*. New York: HarperOne, 2009.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Steger, Manfred B. *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Van Manen, Max. *Pedagogical Tact: Knowing What to Do When You Don't Know What to Do (Phenomenology of Practice, Volume 1)*. London: Routledge, 2015.

NOTES

1. Reyes, Ramon C. "Man and Historical Action." *Philosophy of Man*, edited by Manuel B. Dy, Jr. 2nd ed., Makati City: Goodwill Trading Co., 2001, pp. 113–118.
2. Rachels, James. "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism." *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, New York: Random House, 1986, pp 15–32.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

ACTIVITY PAGE

Name: ______________________ Date: ____________
Course: ______________________ Grade: ____________

Organ Trafficking and Human Needs

The many developments in the past few decades in both the life sciences and in biotechnology have given rise to the recognition of a host of ethical issues that are concerned with the physical survival and welfare of living creatures including, of course, human beings. These ethical discussions have been gathered under the name of bioethics, a rapidly emerging field of applied ethics. Both medical ethics and animal ethics can actually be classified as subfields within the larger sphere of bioethics, while environmental ethics can have a lot of concerns that are tied up with bioethics. Given that animal ethics, in the form of the topic of animal rights, has already been covered in Chapter II and environmental ethics treated earlier in this chapter, let us now concentrate on medical ethics. This field focuses on moral issues in medical practice and research. One such issue that has given rise to much debate is the phenomenon of organ trafficking, which is defined as the trade in human organs (whether from living or nonliving people) for the purpose of transplantation. The trade can happen through the sale of organs or through any other means including coercive force.

In 2009, the Philippine government halted a planned kidney transplant from a Filipina wife to her Saudi Arabian husband. It was discovered that the couple had only been married for a short time and that the man did not know how to speak in English or Filipino, while the wife could not speak Arabic—a situation that raised a lot of suspicion on the part of the authorities. The government's allegation was that the planned transplant was not really an organ donation, which Philippine law allows, but was, in actuality, a case of an organ sale, which is tantamount to organ trafficking prohibited by law. One possible reason for the woman's consent to this alleged deal is the widespread poverty among Filipinos. Although organ trafficking is patently illegal in the Philippines and in many other nations, it continues to be a tempting possibility, especially for impoverished individuals, to earn some much-needed cash. Most people are born with two kidneys, and an individual can live on a single kidney. Supposing that the transplant will be done under strict medical supervision, that there is a shortage of available kidney donors, and setting aside the clear illegal status of organ trafficking, is it really wrong for a person in great financial need to sell one of her

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

kidneys to someone who requires a transplant to survive and who is willing and able to offer a generous amount of cash?

I. This chapter identified and explained the steps in making informed decisions when confronted with moral problems. The steps can be summarized as follows:

1. Determine your involvement in the moral situation.
2. Gather all the necessary facts.
3. Identify the stakeholders.
4. Name all the alternative choices possible and their potential effects on all stakeholders.
5. Identify the type of ethical issue at hand.
6. Make your ethical conclusion or decision.

Apply now all six steps to the question, "Is selling one of my kidneys to a paying customer morally defensible?" Write down your application below:

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Step 4:

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Step 5:

Step 6:

II. Examine your feelings or emotions regarding the issue of organ trafficking. Did you feel sympathetic to the woman who was about to sell her kidney to her Saudi Arabian husband? Or were you morally repulsed by what she was planning to do? Apply Ramon C. Reyes's idea of the five cross-points that contribute to the formation of who you are in order to understand your feelings about this particular moral issue. List below the elements that make up each of your cross-points:

1. Physical Cross-Point:

2. Interpersonal Cross-Point:

3. Social Cross-Point:

4. Historical Cross-Point:

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

5. Existential Cross-Point:

Given the five cross-points that make up who you are, can you provide an explanation below why you feel the way that you do toward the woman who was about to sell her kidney? How can you make sure that your feelings about the matter are not trapped in Kohlberg's pre-conventional stage?

1. How did I feel toward the woman who was about to sell her kidney and why:

2. How do I make sure my feelings are morally mature and not trapped in the pre-conventional stage:

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

III. Search your library resources as well as online sources to come up five other ethical issues that can be categorized under "medical ethics." List the issues down, cite your sources, and provide a short explanation of each issue as well as one main argument for and one main argument against a particular stand on the issue. Pay particular attention to topics that are relevant to the contemporary Philippine context. Make sure your sources are trustworthy and that you get all the necessary facts straight (including the possible scientific explanations).

Medical Ethics Issue A:

1. Ethical Issue:

2. Sources:

3. Explanation:

4. Position/Stand on the Issue:

5. Argument for the Position:

6. Argument against the Position:

Medical Ethics Issue B:

1. Ethical Issue:

2. Sources:

3. Explanation:

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

4. Position/Stand on the Issue:

5. Argument for the Position:

6. Argument against the Position:

Medical Ethics Issue C:

1. Ethical Issue:

2. Sources:

3. Explanation:

4 Position/Stand on the Issue:

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

5. Argument for the Position:

6. Argument against the Position:

Medical Ethics Issue D:

1. Ethical Issue:

2. Sources:

3. Explanation:

4. Position/Stand on the Issue:

5. Argument for the Position:

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

6. Argument against the Position:

Medical Ethics Issue E:

1. Ethical Issue:

2. Sources:

3. Explanation:

4. Position/Stand on the Issue:

5. Argument for the Position:

6. Argument against the Position:

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

REFERENCES

Albee, Ernest. *A History of English Utilitarianism*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Alican, Necip Fikri. *Mill's Principle of Utility: A Defense of John Stuart Mill's Notorious Proof*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994.

Andrade, Jeanette L. "U.P. President Orders Fraternities: Justify Your Existence." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 21 September 2007.

Andrade, Jeanette L. "U.P. Stud's Death a Mystery." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 29 August 2007.

Andrade, Jeanette L. and Tina G. Santos. "Autopsy: 'Heavy Beating'." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 4 September 2007.

Andrade, Jeanette L. et al. "Come Out, Hazing Death Suspects Told." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 8 September 2007.

Appiah, Kwameh Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers (Issues in Our Time)*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006.

Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae*. Online edition by Kevin Knight, 2016, Newadvent.org/summa. Accessed 27 July 2017.

Aristotle. "Aristotle's Physics." *Physics*, http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/physics.2.ii.html. Accessed 24 July 2017.

Aristotle. "Nicomachean Ethics." *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, Edited by Richard McKeon, New York: Modern Library, 2001.

Arivia, Gadis and Donny Gahral Adian, editors. *Relations between Religions and Cultures in Southeast Asia (Indonesian Philosophical Studies, I)*. Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2009.

Barnes, Jonathan, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Belga, Enrico. "Honest Baguio City Taxi Driver Gets Scholarship: Reggie Cabututan Reaps the Rewards of Honesty." *Rappler.com*, 24 January 2017, http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/159310-honest-taxi-driver-scholarship-baguio. Accessed 10 August 2017.

Berger, Fred R. *Happiness, Justice, and Freedom: The Moral and Political Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Cayabyab, Marc Jayson. "Minority Solons Oppose Same Sex Union: It's Unnatural, Unsightly." *Newsinfo.inquirer.net*, 5 October 2016, http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/822013/minority-solons-oppose-same-sex-union-its-unnatural-unsightly-2. Accessed 26 July 2017.

Chaleff, Ira. *Intelligent Disobedience: Doing Right When What You're Told to Do Is Wrong*. With a Foreword by Philip G. Zimbardo. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2015.

Chua, Romulo L. and Rodolfo L. Nazareno. *Ang Mahalaga sa Buhay: A Handbook of Filipino Values*. N.p.: Cellar Book Shop, 1992.

"Concerns About Hazing Raised as Another University Student Dies." *UCANews.com*. September 11, 2007. http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/2007/09/11/

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

concerns-about-hazing-raised-as-another-university-student-dies&post_id=6460. Accessed 26 July 2017.

Copleston, SJ, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy: Greece and Rome, Volume I.* New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1993.

Crisp, Roger. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Mill on Utilitarianism.* London: Routledge, 2009.

Davies, Brian and Eleonore Stump, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Dumont, Jean-Paul. *Visayan Vignettes: Ethnographic Traces of a Philippine Island.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Dy, Manuel B., Jr., editor. *Philosophy of Man.* 2nd ed., Makati City: Goodwill Trading Co., 2001.

Frankfurt, Harry. "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person." *The Importance of What We Care About: Philosophical Essays,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 11–25.

Gripaldo, Rolando M., editor. *Filipino Cultural Traits: Philippine Philosophical Studies 3. (Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series III, Southeast Asia, Volume 1).* N.p.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005.

Hourdequin, Marion. *Environmental Ethics: From Theory to Practice.* London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

Jacobsen, Michael and Ole Bruun, eds. *Human Rights and Asian Values: Contesting National Identities and Cultural Representations in Asia (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies: Democracy in Asia Series, Number 6).* London: Routledge Curzon, 2000.

James, Carrie. *Disconnected: The Youth, New Media, and the Ethics Gap (The John D. Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning).* With a Foreword by Henry Jenkins, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014.

Jocano, F. Landa. *Filipino Indigenous Ethnic Communities: Patterns, Variations, and Typologies (Anthropology of the Filipino People, II).* Quezon City: Punlad Research House, 1998.

Kant, Immanuel. "Akademieausgabe von Immanuel Kants Gesammelten Werken." *Korpora.org,* https://korpora.zim.uni-duisburg-essen.de/Kant/verzeichnisse-gesamt.html. Accessed 10 August 2017.

Kohlberg, Lawrence. *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stage and the Idea of Justice (Essays in Moral Development, Volume 1).* New York: Harper & Row, 1981.

Li, Xiaorong. *Ethics, Human Rights and Culture: Beyond Relativism and Universalism.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Lyons, David. *Rights, Welfare, and Mill's Moral Theory.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

MacDonald, Scott and Eleonore Stump, editors. *Aquinas's Moral Theory: Essays in Honor of Norman Kretzmann.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.

MacKinnon, Barbara and Andrew Fiala. *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues,* Concise, Eighth Edition. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2015.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Malik, Kenan. *The Quest for a Moral Compass: A Global History of Ethics*. New York: Melville House, 2014.

Mallari, Delfin T. "Suspected Hazing Victim Laid to Rest." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 3 September 2007.

McInerny, Ralph. *Ethica Thomistica: The Moral Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*. Revised ed. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1997.

Mercado, Leonardo N. *The Filipino Mind: Philippine Philosophical Studies 2 (Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series III, Asia, Volume 8)*. N.p.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1994.

Mill, John Stuart. *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*. 33 volumes, London: Routledge, 2014.

Munsey, Brenda, editor. *Moral Development, Moral Education, and Kohlberg: Basic Issues in Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, and Education*. With a Response by Lawrence Kohlberg. Ann Arbor, MI: Religious Education Press, 1980.

Musschenga, Albert W., Wouter van Haaften, Ben Spiecker, and Marc Slors, editors. *Personal and Moral Identity (Library of Ethics and Applied Philosophy, Volume 11)*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002.

Nagel, Thomas. "The Fragmentation of Value." *Mortal Questions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 128–41.

Norman, Joshua. "After Toddler Left to Die, China Disquieted." *CBSnews.com*, October 18, 2011. http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/2007/09/11/concerns-about-hazing-raised-as-another-university-student-dies&post_id=6460. Accessed 26 July 2017.

Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Fragility of Goodness*. 2nd ed., New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Plato. "Plato's Euthyphro." *Euthyphro*, http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Euthyphro.pdf. Accessed 24 July 2017.

Plato. "Plato's Republic." *Republic*, http://www.idph.net/conteudos/ebooks/republic.pdf. Accessed 24 July 2017.

Plotinus. "Plotinus' Enneads." *Enneads*, http://sacred-texts.com/cla/plotenn/index.htm. Accessed 24 July 2017.

Pojman, Louis P., Paul Pojman, and Katie McShane. *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*, 7th ed., Boston: Cengage Learning, 2017.

Pope, Stephen J, editor. *The Ethics of Aquinas*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002.

Quismundo, Tarra. "DepEd Releases Rules for Law Shielding Kids from TV Violence." Inquirer.net, July 17, 2012, http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/230377/deped-releases-rules-for-law-shielding-kids-from-tv-violence. Accessed 17 February 2017.

Rachels, James. "Can Ethics Provide Answers?" *The Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 10, No. 3 June, 1980, pp. 32–40.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Rachels, James. "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism." *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, edited by Stuart Rachels, New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012, pp. 14–31.

Reyes, Ramon C. "Man and Historical Action." *Philosophy of Man*, edited by Manuel B. Dy, Jr. 2nd ed., Makati City: Goodwill Trading Co., 2001, pp. 113–118.

Reyes, Ramon C. "The Relation between Ethics and Religious Belief." *The Moral Dimension: Essays in Honor of Ramon Castillo Reyes*, edited by Nemesio S. Que, Jr., Oscar G. Bulaong, Jr., and Michael Ner E. Mariano, Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 2003, pp. 107–12.

Ryan, Alan. *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*. London: Macmillan, 1987.

Santos, Tina G. "Witness Confirms Mendez Joined Frat Initiation Rites." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 18 September 2007.

Schlegel, Stuart A. *Tiruray Justice: Traditional Tiruray Law and Morality*. N.p.: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016.

Semmel, Bernard. *John Stuart Mill and the Pursuit of Virtue*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

Singer, Peter. *One World Now: The Ethics of Globalization*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016.

Skorupski, John, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Mill*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Smith, David Whitten and Elizabeth Geraldine Burr. *Understanding World Religions: A Road Map for Justice and Peace*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

Smith, Huston. *The World's Religions*. New York: Harper One, 2009.

Steger, Manfred B. *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Tardieu, Ambroise. *Aristotle*. Internet Archive Wayback Machine, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristotle_1.jpg. Accessed 20 February 2017.

"TV Violence and Children." American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, December 2014, https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-And-TV-Violence-013.aspx. Accessed 20 February 2017.

Van Manen, Max. *Pedagogical Tact: Knowing What to Do When You Don't Know What to Do (Phenomenology of Practice, Volume 1)*. London: Routledge, 2015.

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

INDEX

A

abortion, 58
action, 73, 75
aesthetics, 2, 100
animal choice, 71
Animal Liberation, 43
animal rights, 43
animals, 67–68, 71–72
Anti-Wire Tapping Law, 27–28
appetitive aspects, 87
approval of one's actions, 108–9
Aquinas, Thomas, 46–47
  ethics of, 47–48, 52–60
arbitrium brutum, 71
arete. *See* virtue
Aristotle, 51–52, 82, 111
authorship, 69–70
autonomy, 68–72
axiology, 4

B

Bentham, Jeremy, 28–29
bestial pleasures, 32–33

C

Cabututan, Reggie, 65–66
categorical imperative, 73–75, 76
"cause," 51–52
character, 88, 91, 94–95
childhood development, 81–82
Children's Television Act of 1997, 81
choices, 71
Christian faith, 48
common good, 54–55, 109
consequences of one's action, 28, 29
contraception, 59
conventional level, 108
cross-points, 102–3
Crusades, 107
Cruz, Mideo, 25
cultural relativism, 12–14, 104–5
culture, 12, 13–14, 101, 103
  and ethics, 104–6

D

decisions, 71
  See also informed decision-making
deontology, 21, 66, 77, 115
descriptive study of ethics, 5
differences, 12
divine command theory, 9–10, 48
divine law, 57

E

efficient cause, 51
elders, 89
emotions, 110, 111
ends, 83
enlightenment morality, 77
environmental ethics, 121–23
epistemic concerns, 59
epistemology, 4
eternal law, 55–56, 57
ethical dilemma, 114
ethical egoism, 17–20
ethical frameworks, 7
ethical problems. *See* moral problem
ethical theories, 115
ethics
  and culture, 104–6
  and religion, 106–8
  definition, 2–6
  descriptive study of, 5
  sources of authority, 8–14
etiquette, 2, 100
eudaimonia, 84

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

Euthyphro, 9–10, 107
excellence, 87

F

facts, 112
faith, 9–11
false promising, 74
felicific calculus, 32
Filipino values, 12
final cause, 51
first construction, 67
formal cause, 51
formal moral theory, 73
Four Causes, 51–52
fraternity hazing, 1–2
free choice, 71
free will, 109

G

generosity, 16
Glaucon, 19
God, 47, 48, 52–55
good, 82–83
goodness, 52–5, 82–83
Groundwork towards a Metaphysics of Morals, 66, 73–74

H

happiness, 30– 32, 56–57, 84–85
harmony, 19
heteronomy, 68, 72
highest good of man, 84–85
highest purpose, 84–85
historical cross-points of events, 103
human, 59–60, 71–72, 85–86
human law, 56, 60
human life, 58
Human Security Act of 2007, 28
human soul, 87

I

idolatry, 25
impulses, 67, 71
individual rights, 28
informed decision-making, 111–13, 114
intellectual excellence, 87
intellectual pleasures, 32–33
intellectual virtue, 88
interpersonal cross-points of events, 103
irrational element of man, 87

J

judgment, 13
justice, 35–36, 37–38

K

Kant, Immanuel, 66–67
killing, 11
Kohlberg, Lawrence, 108

L

laws, rules, and regulations of her society, 8–11, 109
legal rights, 35–36
level of involvement in the case, 112
Luistro, Armin, 81

M

Mamasapano incident, 27–28
Man and Historical Action, 102
Marwan, 27
material cause, 51
maxim, 73, 74, 75
Mendez, Cris Anthony, 1–2
mesotes, 90, 91
metaphysics, 4
middle virtue, 90, 93
Mill, John Stuart, 28–29
moral decision, 5
moral development, 108–10
moral issue, 5
moral judgment, 5

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

moral maturity, 109, 110
moral problem, 112, 113–14
moral rights, 35–36, 37–38
moral theory, 7
moral virtue, 88–93
morally virtuous person, 90–91
morals, 3–4
myopia, 122

N

natural, 46
natural law, 57–58
natural law theory, 20, 115
Neoplatonists, 50
Nicomachean Ethics, 82
normative study of ethics, 5

O

obedience, 108
oneness, 50

P

pain, 29–30
paternalism, 77
philosophic wisdom, 87–88
philosophy, 4
physical events, 102
Physics, 51
Plato, 7, 10, 18, 48–49, 82–83
pleasure, 29–30, 31–32
Plotinus, 50
Politeismo, 25
pornography, 97
positive law, 8–9
post-conventional level, 109–10
practical wisdom, 88, 89, 90
pre-conventional level, 108
principle of utility, 29–32
promulgation, 55
psychological egoism, 16–17
punishment, 108

R

RA 4200, 27–28
RA 9372, 28
Rachels, James, 12, 104–5
rational faculty of man, 87, 88
rational permissibility, 75, 76
rational will, 66, 67, 68, 71
rationality, 66, 67
reason, 85–86, 100
reasoning, 6–7
reductio ad absurdum, 105
religion, 9–11
    and ethics, 106–8
religious extremists, 107–8
Republic, 18–19, 49
Reyes, Ramon C., 102
rights, 35–36

S

SAF 44, 27–28
second construction, 67
self
    theories, 14–20, 116–19
self-realization, 109
sense of end, 52
sexual act, 58–59
sexual ethics, 97
Singer, Peter, 43
social contract, 109
societal cross-points of events, 103
society, 100, 101
    laws, rules, and regulations of, 109
    Philippine, 119–21
Socrates, 7, 19, 49
Special Action Force (SAF), 27
St. Thomas Aquinas. *See* Aquinas, Thomas
stakeholders, 112–13
subjective principle of action, 73
subjectivism, 14–16
substantive moral theory, 72–73
Summa Theologiae, 46–47, 57–58

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY

T

technical valuation, 3
television violence, 81–82
teloi, 83–84
telos, 83–84
The Apology of Socrates, 7
The Good and the One, 50
The Idea of the Good, 49–50
The Myth of Gyges, 18–19
theory of life, 31
truth, 59

U

universal law, 74, 75
unnatural, 45–46
utilitarianism, 20, 28–38, 43, 115

V

vegetative aspect, 87
vice, 93
virtue, 87–89
virtue ethics, 82–93, 116

W

whistle-blowers, 79
"who one is," 102–4
will, 73
wiretapping, 27–28

FOR ACADEMIC USE ONLY