**1**

To begin, I understand ethics as a set of beliefs or moral principles that are intended to both govern and influence an individual’s behaviors. As well, ethics typically involves one’s character and tries to improve it. The character becomes improved overtime because the behavior that the system reinforces becomes habitual overtime, and once this habitually is reached beliefs or moral principles that were encouraging that behavior are no longer needed as much. Common sources for the beliefs or principles found in ethical systems can include a religion, culture, society, and families. Another function of ethics is to define right and wrong conduct.

Second, I understand values as the deemed importance of something. This “something” can include a particular behavior, an object, characteristics of someone, etc. Values help to determine what behaviors should be reinforced by an ethical system. Often times something becomes deem important because of the positive things that it is able to produce. In other words, the importance of something can lie in the magnitude of good that comes from its intended functions.

Together, ethics and values try to define both good and bad conduct, provide motivation for expected behaviors, and deem the importance of various things.

**2**

Plato was once speaking to a man, Glaucon, about the nature and origins of justice. Glaucon claimed that justice came out of a compromise that was made after observing a number of historical situations. The situations consisted of several similar elements in which one party was affected while the other party inflicted the affection. Stealing would be an example. In these situations, unjust was served and no punishments were inflicted on the second party. This caused the first party to suffer injustice and the second to feel inadequate for there was no retribution. Thus justice was made to make the first party feel the retaliation and the second to feel the retribution, thus solving both problems. It is dealt as a lesser of the two evils.

Glaucon continued by saying that now good people put into situations of judgment are forced to serve justice even though it may not be the proper thing to do for the situation. They are forced by others to serve this unjust justice.

Plato responded by saying that the basis of a “good man” must be changed so that men are not appraised by serving justice, nor unjust. Men put into positions of judgment should do what is right for the benefit of the people and that others should accept the “good man” in either situation, not just when he serves justice.

Altruism is the situation the Plato proposes, the practice of selfless concern for the well-being of others; egoism is the situation that Glaucon proposes, practices made in self-interest and personal gain.

I find this selection quite interesting. I never thought of the origins of justice as being a compromise to the service of unjust, but as well, I love Plato’s response by saying that the “good man” put into the situation should have an altruistic nature and not care of how others will respond. But it is equally important that the people who would have appraised justice to be served in any situation should not have an influence on the ruling that the “good man” must make that way he can remain a good and just man.

**3**

The passage discusses the roles of anthropology and abnormality and their effects on each other. Anthropology has to do with the study of human societies and cultures and their development; abnormality is anything that is abnormal or that does not fit in with the norms of a culture.

Abnormality can be regarded as both a good or bad thing within a society. As with the example of the Indian tribe, the girl who was perceived as communicating with the the spirits was considered as a special person amongst the tribe; which falls into an abnormal group. As with the example of homosexuality though, it is condoned as evil in many societies and cultures, and people who practice it fall into an abnormal group. This goes to show that abnormality can both result in a group of people or an individual being marked as either “good” or “bad” within the perceptions of the norms of the respective cultures. In other words, abnormality can serve as a double edged sword.

Over time, societies change and developments occur, thus the norms change which then changes what is defined as abnormal. When these changes occurred, it was observed that people have a difficult time conforming the new changes often times adopt a abnormal behavior because of the inner-conflict of the conformity. I found this to be quite interesting becuase as homosexaulity is becoming more accepted, more people are beginning to practice it. It follows a positive correlation relationship.

**4**

Midgely proposes this concept called moral isolationism. It states that because we cannot understand other cultures completely, we should not be allowed to judge them at all for any reason. The world is divided into many cultures, societies, and other divisions that causes different cultures to exist, so we as humans must be very careful not to judge other cultures just because we think that we know what is going on.

Over time, societies change and developments occur, thus the norms change which then changes what is defined as moral. When these changes occurred, it was observed that people have a difficult time conforming the new changes often times adopt a abnormal behavior because of the inner-conflict of the conformity. I found this to be quite interesting becuase as homosexaulity is becoming more accepted, more people are beginning to practice it. It follows a positive correlation relationship.

I agree with this view because it is true and very important to adhere to because people are heavily influenced by their cultures. The reasoning for behaviors is hard to understand unless we make a serious effort to try and understand them.

**5**

Continuing with relativism and isolation, I have to agree with the idea that both of these are good attempts to try and explain where morals and norms come from, but they appear to be quite inadequate at doing just that. I think that there is an objective way of looking at what is moral and not, but that we as humans have yet to find this model at look at morals and ethics.

I say this because I believe that for every thing we do there is an affixed consequence. It is bound by a law that must be followed. These laws are independent of any entity, being, etc. These laws may not take effect for a very long time, but they will eventually.

I think that all people have an intuition for what these laws are, and know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. It is a normative system; meaning that they are permissible, obligatory, and restricted actions. This primarily comes from my religious beliefs, which I believe are objective and reality. But as humans, we are unable to agree upon an independent function or entity to objectively compare each others cultural and isolationist based morals thus it becomes impossible to do so.

**6**

I really like the idea of utilitarianism in some ways. One reason is because it promotes the idea there is moral truth and that morals are objective, not dependent on a group’s or individual’s view of what is morally good or bad; which is found in a relativistic view. Another reason is because with this view, it seems as if one is able to truly act altruistically, which was denied in the egoistic view. In other words, it seems almost like a good compromise between the previous two theories that we considered for ethical behaviors.

One of the more appealing reasons that I like utilitarianism is because it promotes pleasure for people, and it aims to affect the most people possible. I like this view because when I have studied historical revolutions which we as society deem as important steps toward good and equality, them all benefited a large group of people that brought them happiness and pleasure. It seems that our society has some utilitarist views integrated into society. Another reason I believe that our society uses utilitarianism is because the USA seems to think that it has the right to be in other countries business that seem to be morally wrong from our standpoint.

**7**

I found Bentham’s view quite interesting. It interested me in that it tried to propose a method that could be used to try to quantify the good or evil of actions that will effect other people. It used several categories to determine whether or not the action could be deemed as good or bad, based on the the sum of the magnitude of “good” or “bad” that was judge to each criterion. Several of these categories included: intensity, duration, certainty or uncertainty, propinquity or remoteness (closeness), fecundity (same kinds of feelings), purity (opposite feelings), and extent.

This is a utilitarianism idea because utilitarianists base morals as right if it benefits the majority of people. I think that some of it is good, but it is lacking in some areas. I like how it tries to provide a model for people, particularly legislatives and people in political power, to judge or predict the outcomes of certain actions they are considering on performing for the majority of the populus.

Overall, I think that this is a good model to follow for people to determine the magnitude of good or bad their planned actions may cause, thus helping them to decide what course of action would be the most beneficial; which from a utilitarian perspective would be defined as morally good and very ethical.

**8**

Despite the length of the read, I found it quite informative and interesting to learn John Stuart Mill’s approach to utilitarianism. I particularly find his definition of utilitarianism quite interesting. As he put it, its a theory based on the principle that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness; happiness being pleasure and the absence of pain. The the reverse is the presence of pain and the absence of pleasure. As well, I liked his distinction between the quality and quantity factors between pleasure.

Mill’s view of utilitarianism seems to be very humanist because of the focus on human’s overall happiness rather than the objective view of some of a supreme deity or being. In some ways, though, I must agree with the critic’s remarks that were addressed in this short essay. I do not know if this moral theory would adequately protect the rights that some governments have established, such as the USA, in hopes of bringing and protecting the happiness of the citizens. Throughout history, it seems as if time and time again one individual becomes prideful and wants to rule all, even if it costs the happiness of those he rules or of a targeted group considered inferior.

**9**

Now knowing a little more about utilitarianism, I think that I favor relativism in some ways. One reason that I do is because different cultures seem to define activities and behaviors that promote pleasure differently, which seems to indicate that it would be dependent on culture, thus a lesser form of relativism. One thing that I prefer about utilitarianism though is the fact that it seems to be more objective and has some independent methods of determining moral conflicts between multiple cultures, unlike relativism.

Learning more about Mill’s view, mostly in class, has helped to understand his view of determining what things would bring the most pleasure. The two factors that are involved, according to Mill, is quality and quantity. His method of determining what things should be obligatory are proportional to the amount of pleasure something will bring you. What brings you the most pleasure can be determined by having a group of people who know how to experience two different things, such as Halo vs Hamlet, and you let them vote. The one with the majority would be the one with the most pleasure, thus it should be the one that you should do. This view in some ways bothers me because it does not seem to be objective, but claims to be the only right way according to this view. Between Bentham’s and Mill’s view, I would probably personally prefer Bentham’s because of its objective approach.

**10**

In the previous class period, we learned about the two different utilitarianism types. The distinction that was made addresses some of the problems that I previously had with utilitarianism. The traditional view of utilitarianism can be stated as act utilitarianism, or the idea that you must do what will bring you the most pleasure no matter what. The distinction made is called rule utilitarianism, which states that people must do what will bring the most pleasure as long as it conforms to the rules established, if those rules were established to bring the most pleasure to the aggregate group of humans.

This distinction made addresses my previous issue with utilitarianism, which was the fact that the rules that were established are generally for the majority happiness, so breaking them seemed to be quite counter-intuitive. As well, it seemed that many people felt this way and that is what the major reason that this distinction became widely accepted and helped address the counter-intuitiveness of act utilitarianism. But now I am left wondering what Bentham and Mill would classify themselves as since this distinction was not made until they were already gone.

**11**

I was unable to find the selected reading on canvas, thus I will continue on some of the criticisms that we discussed directed towards utilitarianism.

Some of the criticisms of the utilitarian view seem to all point to the fact that its moral principles can be very counter intuitive in many views. The chemist example that we discussed seemed to portray this very well. The idea that one who would be making chemical warfare weapons rather than someone of equal power who would abuse their power, thus you as the other option must take the job to minimize the pain that would be felt by those affected seems to be quite counter intuitive. Also, it seems to disregard honesty and integrity in this light of the chemist view, which implies some serious consequences to the morality of an individual.

Rule utilitarianism seems to try and address this issue, but for personal matters, it seems to not be sufficient. In the end, I am going to disregard utilitarianism as my moral choice mainly because of the many counter intuitive situations that may arise.

**12**

Kant’s approach to explaining metaphysics is quite interesting. Some of the things that seemed to be lacking in the other moral theories that we’ve discussed, relativism and utilitarianism, are addressed in the particular explanation. One of these issues was the idea that moral actions seemed to be subjective to some extent. Metaphysics aims to be objective in all cases and based on the intent of the motive and not the consequences of the actions.

One apparent problem is the idea that there seems to be no pure moral actions. But this should not be a problem because moral principles from not from experience, but from reason. Experiences depend on circumstances, moral principles must be absolute and objective, according to this theory, to be valid. Thus it becomes hard for a human to comprehend a moral principle because human’s are molded by experiences, the very thing that moral principles can not be based on.

In this read, I did not understand the whole section on rational beings using others as means to an end. The categorical imperative also was quite confusing. But as I understand it, it is, “act only in such a way that you could want the maxim of your action to become a universal law.” In other words, do only things for a motive that you would want to become an absolute law.

**13**

The reading pages in the syllabus did not seem to match up with any correct readings, as such I will simply discuss things that were covered in our previous class period. (pages 130-140)

We began talking about the categorical imperative and Kant’s rationale for this. From what I now understand about the categorical imperative, categorical means that it is not dependent on any situations, the imperative means that it applies to all categories. In other words, something is only moral is it fits the categorical imperative, which includes the same set of motivations for all categories for any set of circumstances. In this way Kant’s metaphysics becomes universal and absolute; an objective way of determining morality.

One of the rules that comes from the categorical imperative is, “act only on that maxim, you can at the same time will to be a universal law.” Simply put, this means that when you are performing an action, if you would allow everyone else to do the same thing and nothing major would change, then it is moral. The example used was stealing an apple. Imagine one person is wanting to steal an apple, by the categorical imperative, you must allow everyone else to do the same. The problem becomes that when everyone is allowed to steal an item, there would no longer be any ownership and that is a major change that would be inevitably degrading.

This is quite logical, and so far I prefer Kant’s metaphysics over relativism and utilitarianism.

**14**

Kant gives what he believes is one of the aspects of the categorical imperative, “Act only on that maxim, whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law.” This is simply stating that you can only act on a maxim (a universal truth or claim) that you would at the same time allow everyone else to do. If you can do that, than the action that you are about to perform would indeed be moral because it passes on aspect of the categorical imperative.

One of the examples Kant gives is an excellent example of this. Imagine that an individual is feeling sorry for himself and that he finds no purpose for his life. He is considering taking his own life since of the lack of purpose. The maxim, in this case, would be the idea that he can feel sorry for himself and end his own life because of it. Now, for the action to be moral, he must be willing to let this maxim be universalized and not have the system of nature change. Obviously, if this were to be universalized, the system of nature would change drastically, thus the action, commit suicide, is not moral and should not be performed.

This aspect of the categorical imperative is quite interesting, and in class we were looking at some others formulations. Kant claims that these formulations are all of the same rule, yet some situations pass one formulation but not another; thus these rules must be different and not formulations of the same rule.

**15**

In our previous class period, we discussed the difference between universalism and absolutism. The distinction between these two factors of a moral theory are important things to consider when choosing a particular moral theory to follow and adhere to.

For some time I had assumed that Kant’s deontology was a theory that was universalistic and not absolutistic, but I was wrong in my initial impression. Kant is an absolutist, which means that he does not believe there are any exceptions to any rules. In general, I think that there are many cases in which an exception to a rule must be made, and as such I would not personally choose to be a strict Kant deontological member. Rather, as discussed in class, I would choose an alternative that still uses the categorical imperative but has a system of determining conflicting moral actions. This method is to follow your initial intuition; this seems to work because intuition is our sense with the morality of actions.

I still prefer Kant’s deontological view over relativism and utilitarian because it is universalistic and because its criticisms, unlike utilitarianism, do not seem to be contradictory and as serious of repercussions.

**16**

David Hume’s *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* seems to put much emphasis on moral senses and reason in the making of a moral judgment. Hume makes this distinction because both our moral senses and reason are needed in order to make a moral judgment. Moral senses are what makes the distinction between vice and virtue; reason is needed to form a judgment about what is both useful and worthwhile.

Hume makes a distinction between virtues. They consist of two categories: artificial and natural. I like the fact that Hume makes this distinction. Artificial virtues are those that are created by society and are viewed as good and upheld by society. Some this included are promises, modesty, chastity, etc. Natural virtues are come from nature and tend to be universal. Some natural virtues include friendship, beneficence, good sense, etc.

Hume claims that it is not reason that motivates us to do actions. Instead, it is moral sentiments and passions that is the primary motivation. As well, actions should include both utility and sentiment. Actions that are moral need to have both of these. In other words, actions that are motivated by passion and are for the benefit of others.

**17**

In the syllabus, no reading was selected for the 15th, as such, I will continue writing of what I understand from Hume’s writings.

Hume seems to agree with Kant on the face that reason is an important aspect in moral judgements. Although Kant believes that it is because humans are autonomous that they are bound to moral laws, Hume seems to think that reason is only one important aspect. Hume seems to think that reason is not the only thing that is needed for making moral judgements because reason alone deals with facts, information and logic. Sentiment is also another important factor in moral judgements because it can lead us to choose one decision or another. In other words, it appears as if Hume likes the idea that anything that is involved in decision making, primarily reason and sentiment, it becomes a factor for determining something as moral or not.

Hume also makes a distinction between virtues. They consist of two categories: artificial and natural. I like the fact that Hume makes this distinction. Artificial virtues are those that are created by society and are viewed as good and upheld by society. Some this included are promises, modesty, chastity, etc. Natural virtues are come from nature and tend to be universal. Some natural virtues include friendship, beneficence, good sense, etc.

**20**

I think that it is quite interesting that Hume argues that reason can not be the primary factor in determining moral actions and judgements. His reasoning for this is that you can list all the functions of reason and never find anything closely related to moral judgments in that list. According to Hume, reason alone cannot determine what is moral and what is not.

The two functions of reason that Hume lists includes rationale relations, including finding things within something, and matters of fact, such as observations of the universe. Hume claims that you cannot determine if something is moral because the morality is not found within something, this being the first function of reason. The second function seems to be irrelevant to ethics and morality because morality is not something one observes, it is experienced.

As discussed in class though, the major critique with Hume’s view is that it does not tell how someone should act to be considered moral. It is not quite as normative as some of the other views that have been considered; this appears to be a problem for many people. I think that Hume’s approach is quite interesting, particularly his building of benevolence and progress of sentiment. It makes logical sense and is quite relatable because I have personally experienced it.

**21**

I like Aristotle's idea about ethics. His reasoning is that human actions are always means to a higher end, and that the highest human end is ultimately happiness. Aristotle claims that humans aim for happiness for its own sake, and not for any other. Ethics, then, is used to determine how best to experience the most happiness.

Aristotle continues by saying that virtues are what allows us to achieve the most happiness. In order to achieve the highest experience of happiness, one must follow some specific virtues to maximize the happiness. Virtues naturally dispose someone to behave right in order to experience happiness. In other words, virtues allow someone to behave subconsciously and still allows them to remain happy. Aristotle also says that virtues act as a mean state between the extremes of excess and deficiency. I really like this idea of a balance between extremes.

The problem with this view is that the mean state that virtues create in a person are subjective and depend on the person. This creates a view that is hard to be systematic with. It seems to be a good balance between Hume's and Kant's view with respect to systematics and telling what others to do. Its not too objective nor too subjective.

**22**

After rereading this section in the book, I have come to understand Aristotle's approach to ethics, and what seems to be any controversial topic, a little better. He seems to like the idea that everything has a higher goal in mind. For human's this would be happiness. As well, there are certain things and behaviours that are involved in accomplishing the end goal. Virtues are the methods that human's accomplish the end goal of happiness.

Aristotle continues by saying that virtues are what allows us to achieve the most happiness. In order to achieve the highest experience of happiness, one must follow some specific virtues to maximize the happiness. Virtues naturally dispose someone to behave right in order to experience happiness. In other words, virtues allow someone to behave subconsciously and still allows them to remain happy. Aristotle also says that virtues act as a mean state between the extremes of excess and deficiency. I really like this idea of a balance between extremes.

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**23**

Beginning to discuss Aristotle’s virtue approach to ethics in class has made it make more sense now. The discussion that we had about some of the basic Greek words and their translations has brought an understanding to the text that we have been assigned. Throughout the text, the word happiness is used quite a bit. This was quite interesting to me and made me wonder what the difference was between Aristotle’s view of happiness and a utilitarian view of happiness and pleasure.

Aristotle used the Greek word eudaimonia as the telos of a human, or the ultimate purpose of a human. Eudaimonia is often times translated to happiness, but the intended connotations in Greek are not portrayed in the English word, happiness. The word eudaimonia, in Greek, implies complete, whole, or fulfilled; not just pleasure. Happiness, in English, seems to only imply pleasure, not a state of completeness and wholeness. Understanding this seems to add a depth to Aristotle’s view of human’s telos. In other words, human’s are not just seeking pleasure, but also a fulfillment and completeness, which is what Aristotle implied with the word eudaimonia.

**24**

The more we discuss Aristotle's virtue view and the more I come to understand it, the more I like it. It seems to explain many of the things that I have already believed or observed. One of the more appealing things about his view is the idea that a virtue is the ‘mean’ of an emotion. For example, fear is an emotion, and an excess of fear is cowardice and a deficiency is recklessness, the mean or the middle is courage, thus making courage a virtue. Ever since I was young, I always thought that everything had a balance, much like Aristotle does with emotions and virtues.

As well, Aristotle's demonstration and explanation with the horse’s bridle is a perfect metaphor for his view. Although Aristotle uses this example to demonstrate the concept of intermediate ends that help to achieve the ultimate telos, I related the idea that virtues become those intermediate ends and that those help one to obtain the telos of a human, which is, according to Aristotle, eudaimonia. Aristotle claims that human’s need to develop these virtues so that they become a part of their character, who they really are. Once this has been obtained, happiness and fulfillment for a human becomes quite natural and second-nature.

**25**

I was very found of Aristotle's view up until I had learned that Aristotle had restrictions for those who were able to receive the telos of humans. His restrictions seemed to be demeaning and too restrictive. Some of the criteria included having the opportunities to develop the virtues necessary to receive ultimate eudaimonia. Some specific groups of people who Aristotle said were not able to receive eudaimonia were women, slaves, and disfigured (even by means that were out of their control).

When virtue based ethics was revived, some people found these issues to be quite startling and they tried to address some of them with keeping the virtues but getting rid of some of the restrictions that he imposed on his view. They attempted to remove the elitist restrictions that were inherent in Aristotle's view. They began to say that the best thing that a human can becomes, or their telos, was culturally defined. This becomes a relativistic view and has some of the same problems that relativism has. In response to this, another development and view came about and began to say that virtues help one achieve eudaimonia but for a culture's preferences to be considered good, they needed to promote some specific virtues, and then they can be justified with their other virtues and the type of people that come about by the culture's promoted virtues.

**26**

I find Mavrodes’ view to be quite interesting; that is that morality does not exist if a God does not. His claim is that morality is dependent on God, and it would logically follow that is there were no God, there would be no morality because of this dependence. In his article, he argues that it is indeed possible to deduce religion from morality, because morality is from God. Mavrodes continues by entertaining the opposite view that morality does and can exist without religion or God.

Mavrodes does not think that morality would psychology become dead if religion were to end. He uses the claim that there are those who are not religious, but still have a sense of morality and doing what is specified in some moral theories. In other words, because there are those who are not religious but still adhere to moral theories, he claims that moral theories would not become psychologically dead even in the extreme case that religions ceased to exist. He does not think that these moral theories would have any significance though and that humans would not be obligated nor refrained from any action or behavior.

**27**

Some of the questions that we raised in class I have been wondering about for the past couple days. The main question that we have been discussing was whether or not morality comes from God or if God is God because he adheres to some independent moral system. If God is the source or morality, my question is what determines what he chooses to be moral. Is there some system that He uses to determine what to define as good and wrong? If so, what is this process that He uses. I am also wondering if humans were to understand this process, if they too would be able to determine the same things that God does with the system used to determine morality.

If there is no system that God uses to determine what is moral, than what makes him the exception of the universe to determine what is moral and what the consequences for those moral actions are?

These are just some of the things that I have been thinking about since the last class period; it is quite interesting and intriguing.

**31**

After reading the entry and learning more about its history, I think that it is quite interesting that this is one of the only reliable sources that humans have about Confucius and his teachings. Also, the presentation of the conversation between Confucius and various other Chinese philosophers was also quite interesting. The constant questions and expletive advice makes for an interesting read that can be pondered and thought about; I really like the advice that is given and that can be applied in one’s life to better it.

I find some of Confucius ideas interesting though. For example, it seems that Confucius has a respect for heaven, but find that the spirits that come from heaven are quite difficult to understand and thus this gives him reason to believe that people should then base their values on moral philosophy, such as tradition, children and a natural love for other human beings. Although, the perfect all encompassing end goal that Confucius speaks of seems to be practically impossible to obtain, he verifies this when he says that be believes that no one has yet obtained this end goal called *ren*. I personally find it hard to believe in any moral philosophy that thinks that the best thing to obtain, in this case *ren* as impossible or impractical.

**32**

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The structure of the discussion between the individuals in the text is also quite interesting. It seems comparable to the book of Psalms in the old testament written by King David of old. The only difference though seems to be some of the issues discussed and the manner in which they are discussed. They both offer advice and principles to live by within a number of different situations and this is where I place these texts values; in their ability to help someone live a good and wholesome life.

**33**

Last time in class, we talked about the impact of Confucius and his views. I think it is quite interesting that this man might have been the biggest influence in the history of world with regards to the number of people possibly affected. This with the idea that he had no idea what influence he would have is interesting to consider when he was living and teaching others. Overall though, the most interesting thing is the fact that Confucius thought that he had failed himself. He wanted to be an adviser to one of the 5 great ‘governors’ of one of the various leaders in China; specifically to advise them on how to unite China and become a powerful empire just as it once was. But after some time of trying to make this happen, Confucius settled for teaching others in a similar manner of Plato.

Personally, I find Confucius’s *Analects* dialogue quite hard to read in some cases simply because it has no organization involved with it. I find it helpful to take a phrase or section than to read and analyze the principles are taught or expressed in that phrase specifically.

**35**

Discussing some of the differences between confucianism and taoism, its interesting that two mainstream Chinese philosophers could have such an effect on such a large amount of people. By far though, Confucius seems to have affected more people in numbers than Lao-tzu. Taoism seems to advocate both humility and religious piety as the principles that should guide human behaviour.

In the end though, I find some of Confucius ideas interesting though. For example, it seems that Confucius has a respect for heaven, but find that the spirits that come from heaven are quite difficult to understand and thus this gives him reason to believe that people should then base their values on moral philosophy, such as tradition, children and a natural love for other human beings. Although, the perfect all encompassing end goal that Confucius speaks of seems to be practically impossible to obtain, he verifies this when he says that be believes that no one has yet obtained this end goal called *ren*. I personally find it hard to believe in any moral philosophy that thinks that the best thing to obtain, in this case *ren* as impossible or impractical. These principles found in Confucius dialog seems to come down to having common sense and just knowing what’s up. I think that people should develop this sense of common human decency and to live by it.

**36**

Discussing the history of buddhism was quite interesting. Last time in class, we talked about how buddhism began in India. In the beginnings, buddhism was a dominant religion in India. Over time though, and when India got invaded and taken over, buddhism became an underground religion and was there for some time. Later though, when some social changes were taking place, buddhism resurfaced and become a dominant religion once again. It was quite interesting because it was a dominant religion once it resurface once again.

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**37**

Last time in class, we finally began discussing how Buddhism relates to ethics and morality. I think that learning about the legend of Buddhism was also quite interesting. We learned that it is believed that a man named Buddha was taken to a person that can predict the future as a little boy. The father of Buddha was told that he would grow up to be either a great leader or someone who would never do anything productive. Buddha’s father wanted to assure that his son would become a great person, so he spoiled him greatly.

When Buddha grew older, he went out with one of his servants one day and saw someone who was sick. He was surprised to see that someone could suffer so much. The next day, he saw someone who was dying in the streets; he was, once again, very surprised. The next day, he saw a corpse, making him realize that everyone was destined for death. After all this and thinking about it, he decided to leave and go on a spiritual walkabout. He went to all different types of spiritual schools, but eventually became enlightened himself. It was interesting to learn about the meaning of him placing his hand down on the ground. This shows that he willingly left his enlightened state to try and help others learn the truth that he had come to know.

**38**

I am finally starting to understand Buddhism a little better, but I have to admit that Eastern philosophy and ways of thinking are very hard to grasp and understand. I think that this is mostly because I am a traditional Western! The most startling thing was the Buddhist view of the universe and how we, everything living, are exactly identical to this thing. The distinctions are simply an illusion. It seems to be a very hard idea to grasp, because it there really is only one thing that exists and that everything else is identical to it, how does everything else exist and feel so real?

As well, the idea that that Buddhist have about the universe that we know about. They seem to think that this is all an illusion, and that it is because of our craving that makes it feel so real. It seems that humans love and crave for the things of this illusion, that they themselves make it the way it is. They are the ones who make it desirable for themselves. But the illusion, in the end, causes pain and suffering; all we have to do is let go, stop craving the things of the illusion, and receive nirvana; ultimate peace and joy.

**39**

*Past one*

**42**

The past couple times in class, we have been talking about the environment and ethics. It is interesting to see all the different views that people have about the environment and how ethics becomes involved. The first thing that seems to be involved is whether someone thinks that an ecological system and all of its components has worth because others place value on it, or if it is valuable for its own sake. These two types of worth can be simplified to whether it has extrinsic or intrinsic worth. Those who claim that the environment has extrinsic worth generally would say that the environment does not need protecting and that humans should generally be allowed to do whatever they want with it. In contrast, those who think that the environment has intrinsic value claim that the environment needs to be protected and that it is unethical to use it without moral action and consideration.

I find these two views to be quite interesting and conflicting. If the value that the environment has is simply its economic benefit, then there seems to be nothing that would prevent a company to use and destroy it. Although, if it is valuable for its own sake, than it would appear that it would have infinite or unquantifiable worth, which makes it have moral worth.