

### **Reading Response for *The Fundamentals of Ethics***

As its title suggests, the main argument of this reading was a deep dive into the vast field of ethics and its importance. It would be impossible to address the entire field of ethics so this reading addresses central points such as: some skepticism of ethics, where to begin thinking about ethics, a definition of morality, and a definition of moral reasoning.

One of the biggest skepticism of ethics is the idea that it is entirely subjective. The author argues that no matter if you agree if ethics is entirely subjective or not, an individual's view on ethics can be educated and improved from someone who has studied ethics intensively. The discussion on ethics is especially important, the relations an individual has with the people around them, as well as the quality of their lives depend on their ethic views.

The reading then gives a short list of reasonable constraints of very plausible points such as "friendship is valuable". The author does this mainly to have everyone on the same page with the same constraints to begin where to start thinking about ethics. From this, the author tries to define morality but falls short. There is no objective widely agreed-on definition of morality, however, readers can get a sense of what morality is through considering other questions such as "what are our duties to others?" and supplement these with the aforementioned short list of reasonable constraints.

Finally, the reading dives into what moral reasoning and its main components: a set of reasons, along with a conclusion these reasons support. These two pairs would be what

philosophers call an argument. Like all arguments, there are good arguments and bad arguments, good philosophers must make logically valid arguments.

### **A Critical Point**

One critical point I would like to develop more about the reading would be if ethics were subjective or not. The reading makes an argument that we should be open-minded to experts who have thought about ethics intensively so that we may learn and improve our view on ethics. This is a very strong argument, no matter if one thinks ethics are subjective or not, one can always improve the way they view their world and their personal ethics if they are simply open to listening. The person they are listening to does not even have to be an expert for them to think critically about a different point of view.

However, this reading does a poor job on addressing if ethics are subjective or non-subjective. It dances around the idea of if ethics are subjective or not with a notion that if one is more open-minded one will learn more. The reading then tries to relate skepticism of ethics with the aforementioned short list of reasonable constraints which would imply how ethics are not subjective. However, right after the list is stated, the reading talks about how it is totally possible to challenge the author on these points. Therefore, implying that ethics are non-subjective (list of reasonable constraints) but also subjective at the same time (list of constraints are up for debate). This makes it a weak argument against the skepticism of if ethics are subjective or not.