



Lesson 1: Introduction to Ethics (Intro & Chapter 1)

Key Concepts & Definitions

- **Philosophy:** Often considered difficult because it is seen as **speculative** rather than **practical**. This book aims to show its practical side.
- **Good Life:** The search for a "good life" became a problem when man started thinking.
 - **Eastern Philosophy:** Focused on the **perfection of the self**.
 - **Western Philosophy:** Began by comparing beliefs, which led to discrimination.
- **Ethics (Definition):** Comes from the Greek word **ethos** (customs, usage, or character). It is defined as "**a practical and normative science**, based on **reason**, which studies **human acts**, and provides **norms** for their goodness and badness".
- **Ethics as a Science:**
 - **Practical Science:** The knowledge is **applicable to human action** and daily experience.
 - **Normative Science:** It sets **norms or guidelines** for human actions.
 - **Based on Reason:** It uses reason to validate truth, distinguishing it from **religion**, which is based on **faith**.
- **Human Acts vs. Acts of Man:**
 - **Human Acts (Actus Humanus):** Actions done with **knowledge** and the **full consent of the will**. These proceed from **deliberate free will**.
 - **Acts of Man (Actus Hominis):** Actions done **without knowledge or will** (or both). This includes spontaneous, biological processes like breathing.
 - **Note:** Ethics specifically studies **voluntary human conduct**.
- **Standards of Morality (Kant):** Immanuel Kant proposed three moral bases:
 - Human freedom
 - Immortality of the soul
 - The existence of God
 - These are considered necessary postulates, as without them, morality would be meaningless.
- **Divisions of Ethics:**
 - **General Ethics (or Normative Ethics):** Deals with the foundational concepts and **universal principles** of morality.
 - **Applied Ethics (or Special Ethics):** Focuses on **applying general principles to particular situations** in life , such as professional ethics, legal ethics, or bioethics .

Key People

- **John Locke:** Considered a human person as "**a thinking intelligent being**".
- **Immanuel Kant:** Views the human person as an "**autonomous self-regulating will**" who is capable of making moral decisions.
- **Viktor Frankl:** Believed man is "**ultimately self-determining**" and that the search for meaning is our primary motivation.
- **Erich Fromm:** Stated that **conscience** helps a person know what to do to "become his own self".
- St. Thomas Aquinas: Believed **conscience** is what "constitutes the human person as a moral subject".
- **Plato:** Called Ethics the "**Supreme Philosophy**".

Lesson 2: The Moral Agent (Chapters 2 & 3)

Key Concepts (Chapter 2)

- **Dilemma:** From the Greek words *dis* (twice) and *lemma* (assumptions). In ethics, it's a situation where an agent is confused about the right decision because of several **competing values**.
- **Moral Standard:** Deals with matters that can **seriously injure or benefit** human beings. Its validity is based on **justification**, not on majority approval.
- **Case Study (Baby Theresa):** An infant born with **anencephaly** (parts of the brain and skull missing). Her parents' request to donate her organs while she was alive created a moral dilemma. This pitted principles like "**don't use people as means**" against the "**greatest number principle**" (saving other infants).
- **Cultural Relativism:** The view that ethical systems vary by culture and are **equally valid**. It holds that moral standards are a **product of society**.
- **Moral Relativism:** The idea that there are **no universal or absolute moral principles**. Standards of right and wrong are **relative to a specific culture**.
- **Critique of Relativism:** The theory is **self-contradictory** (it claims the *absolute* truth that there is no absolute truth).
- **Ethnocentrism:** The view that one's own ethnic group and its values are **superior** to all others.
- **Theocentrism:** The view that **God's system** of beliefs and values is morally superior to all others.
- **Filipino Morality:**
 - **Problem:** A conflict exists between what Filipinos "say as Christians and what they do as Filipinos".
 - **Edmund Burke:** "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for **good men to do nothing**".
 - **Strengths of Filipino Character:**
 1. **Pakikipagkapwa-tao** (concern for others)
 2. Strong **family orientation**
 3. Joy and humor
 4. Flexibility and adaptability
 5. Hard work and industriousness
 6. Religiosity (which can lead to **bahala na**, entrusting one's fate to God)
 7. Patience and ability to survive

Key People & Theories (Chapter 3)

- **Aristotle:**
 - Believed the morality of an action is based on the **character** of the person who did it.
 - **Character (Ethos):** Comes from the Greek *charakter* (a mark impressed on a coin). In philosophy, it refers to the **moral aspect** of a person. Aristotle used the term **ethic**.
 - **Arête (Excellence):** Aristotle's concept of morality is linked to excellence. Excellence is associated with **function**. A person has a great character if they function in the "**most excellent way consistently**".

- **Lawrence Kohlberg:**
 - An American psychologist known for his theory of **moral development**.
 - **Heinz Dilemma:** Used to assess moral reasoning (a man, Heinz, must decide whether to steal a drug to save his dying wife).
 - **Focus:** Kohlberg was not interested in *what* decision was made (yes or no) but in the **reasons** given for the decision.
- **Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development:**
 - **Level 1: Pre-Conventional (Self-Focused)**
 - **Stage 1: Obedience and Punishment:** Morality is based on **avoiding punishment**.
 - **Stage 2: Pleasure Orientation (Instrumental):** Morality is based on **satisfying one's own needs** and the exchange of favors (reciprocity).
 - **Level 2: Conventional (Group-Focused)**
 - **Stage 3: Peer/Group Acceptance:** "Good boy" orientation; morality is based on **winning approval** from one's immediate group.
 - **Stage 4: Social Structure Orientation:** Morality is based on maintaining **law and order**, authority, and duty.
 - **Level 3: Post-Conventional (Self-Chosen Principles)**
 - **Stage 5: Social-Contract Orientation:** Morality is based on **individual rights**, equality, and democratically established order.
 - **Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principle:** Morality is based on self-chosen, **universal principles of conscience**, such as human life, dignity, and equality.
- **Carol Gilligan:**
 - A critic of Kohlberg, she noted his theory was based on an **all-male sample**.
 - She argued that it ignored the distinct patterns of moral development in girls, which she claimed are based on principles of **compassion and care** rather than abstract law and justice.

Lesson 3: The Act (Chapter 4)

Key Concepts

- **Feelings and Morality:** Moral decisions are often affected by **feelings** and are not fully objective.
- **Reason and Impartiality:** The opposing view is that morality must be **objective** and rooted in **reason**, not subjective feelings.
 - Feelings can be **irrational**, selfish, or products of prejudice.
 - Moral judgments must be backed by **good reasons**.
- **Case Study (Tracy Latimer):** A 12-year-old with cerebral palsy was killed by her father, Robert.
 - The father argued his reasoning was not about her handicap, but about ending the "**torture**" of her constant, tremendous pain and future surgeries.
 - This highlights the conflict between an emotional response (pity, familial love) and a rational/legal principle (all life is precious).
- **Impartiality:** A moral agent must be impartial, considering every decision and person as **equally important**.
- **Conscientious Moral Agent:** Rachels & Rachels define this as someone who:
 - Is concerned **impartially**.
 - Carefully **sifts facts**.
 - Accepts principles only after **scrutinizing** them.
 - Is willing to "**listen to reason**" and revise prior convictions.
 - Is willing to **act** on the results of this deliberation.

Key People

- **David Hume:**
 - Argued that moral judgments are formed by **feelings (moral sentiments)**, not by reason alone.
 - Reason only judges "matters of fact"; moral assessments are "**emotional reactions**".
 - Goodness or badness lies in the *person* (their passions, motives) not in the *object* or *action*.
 - A behavior is virtuous if it is **useful** or **agreeable** to the people affected by it.
- **Thomas Nagel:**
 - Argued that morality must be rooted in **reason** to be objective.
 - He noted it's difficult to establish a universal moral decision due to disagreements about what is right or wrong in particular cases.

Lesson 4: The Epicurean Ethics (Chapter 5)

Key Concepts & Theories

- **Hedonism:** The general term for any philosophy stating that **pleasure is good** and **pain is evil**. From the Greek *hedone* (pleasure).
- **Cyrenaic Hedonism (Aristippus):**
 1. Life is a search for pleasure.
 2. **Intensity:** Emphasized *intensity* (quantity) of pleasure. **Sensual pleasures** are the best because they are the most intense.
 3. **The Present:** Advocated for "Eat, drink, and be merry today for tomorrow you may die".
- **Epicureanism (Epicurus):**
 1. Philosophy is the "**medicine of the soul**".
 2. **Quality:** Emphasized the *quality* of pleasure, not quantity.
 3. **Highest Good:** The highest pleasure is **peace of mind** (or *ataraxia*) and freedom from physical pain.
 4. **Goal:** To banish the fear of the gods and the fear of death.
 - *Fear of Gods:* Gods exist, but they are unaware of us and function only as ethical ideals.
 - *Fear of Death:* Death should not be feared, as we will have no feeling (pleasure or pain) after we die.
- **Types of Pleasure (Epicurus):**
 1. **Natural and Necessary:** (e.g., food)
 2. **Natural but Not Necessary:** (e.g., sex)
 3. **Neither Natural nor Necessary:** (e.g., luxury, fame, popularity).
 4. Epicurus advocated for a simple life, satisfying only the first type of pleasure to achieve real happiness.
- **Self-Centered Philosophy:** Epicureanism is a form of **egoistic hedonism** because it focuses only on *one's own* pleasure. It implies limiting social relationships to avoid pain and entanglements.
- **Eight Counsels for Epicurean Living:**
 1. Do not fear God
 2. Do not worry about death
 3. Do not fear pain
 4. Live a simple life
 5. Pursue pleasure wisely
 6. Make friends and be a good friend
 7. Be honest
 8. Avoid fame and political ambition

Lesson 5: Human Acts vs. Acts of Man

(This lesson expands on definitions from Chapter 1)

Key Concepts

- **Human Acts:**
 - Require the use of **free will and intellect**.
 - They are done **freely, deliberately, and voluntarily**.
 - They reveal the value of **responsibility or accountability**.
- **Acts of Man:**
 - Done **without free will and intellect**; often by **instinct**.
 - Performed without conscious deliberation.
 - Examples: breathing, digestion, circulation.
 - We **do not moralize acts of man**, only human acts.
- **Three Constituents of Human Acts:**
 - **Knowledge:** The agent has **full knowledge** and deliberate evaluation of the action.
 - **Freedom:** The agent is **free from any external factors** and internal pressure; no constraint.
 - **Voluntariness:** The action proceeds from the **willingness** of the individual, with perceived knowledge of the end.
- **Freedom (Philosophers):**
 - **Jean-Paul Sartre:** An atheist, he claimed "**Man is condemned to be free**". **Existence precedes essence**. Man is nothing but what he makes of himself.
 - **Martin Heidegger:** Focused on **Dasein** ("being-there"). "**Being-there has to be made**" (*Ginagawa ang pagiging ging tao*). We are responsible for "projecting" our lives.

Impediments to Human Acts

These are factors that intervene and can reduce the quality (or culpability) of a human act.

1. **Ignorance:** Lack of pertinent information.
 - **Invincible Ignorance:** Total ignorance that **cannot be dispelled**. Culpability is **negated**. (e.g., an illiterate person caught jaywalking).
 - **Vincible Ignorance:** Ignorance that **can be dispelled** through effort. It **lessens culpability** but does not remove it.
 - **Affected Ignorance:** Pretending to be ignorant. This **increases culpability**.
 - **Supine/Crass Ignorance:** Exerting **little effort** to know.
2. **Concupiscence (Passion):** An **inordinate passion** (e.g., anger, pride) hinders correct reasoning.
 - **Antecedent Concupiscence:** A **spontaneous, sudden** passion (e.g., cursing out of surprise). Culpability is **lessened or negated**.
 - **Consequent Concupiscence:** One is aware of the passion and **chooses to arouse it** (e.g., deliberately acting on anger, gluttony). Culpability **increases**.
3. **Fear:** Being threatened by impending danger.
 - An act done **with fear** is still **voluntary and culpable**.
 - **Grave Fear:** A threat so serious it **forces** the act (e.g., robbery). Culpability can be **lessened or negated**.
 - **Light Fear:** A threat that is not serious. A bad act done under light fear is **culpable**.

4. **Violence:** Related to fear. One is culpable if they do ***not exert all necessary efforts*** to defend their life or dignity.
 - **Self-Defense:** Not culpable if there was no intention to kill. Conditions: (1) **Unjust** aggression, (2) **Actual** aggression, (3) **Proportional/minimum** violence used.
5. **Habit:** A firm, stable pattern of acting.
 - Good habits are **virtues**; bad habits are **vices**.
 - Vices are **culpable**. Culpability is lessened *only* if the person is actively **exerting effort to correct** the vice.