CHAPTER 1

LEARNING TO THINK LIKE A PHILOSOPHER

“Without philosophy we should be little above the animals that dig or erect their habitations”

- Voltaire Antiquity Sec. V

The Shallow Pond

Imagine that you are a college professor and there is a path from the library at your university to the Humanities Lecture Hall which passes a shallow ornamental pond. On your way to give a lecture, you notice that a small child has fallen in and is in danger of drowning. If you wade in and pull the child out, it will mean getting your clothes muddy.

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and either cancelling your lecture or delaying it until you can find something clean and dry to wear. If you pass by the child, so you may give your lecture on time, the child will die.\textsuperscript{1a} What would you do? (Refer to questions 1 to 3 at the end of this chapter.)

The Envelope

In your mailbox, there is a letter from the United States Committee for UNICEF, a world organization whose mission is to help less fortunate children from less developed countries. After reading the letter, you researched the organization and know that it is not a “scam” and that 100\% of all donations go to their intended “victims.” Therefore, you correctly believe that unless you send a $100 check, instead of each child living, over thirty more children will die soon without your contribution. Make no other assumptions; just deal with whether or not you would send the money.\textsuperscript{1b} Would you send the $100? (Refer to questions 1 to 4 at the end of this chapter.)

Ethics and Values

It has been said that Diogenes of Sinope (c. 400 BCE) roamed the streets with a lantern looking for an honest man.\textsuperscript{2} Legend has it that he never found such a person. It is no wonder that there is such cynicism toward business ethics. Just turn to the pages of the \textit{New York Times}, \textit{Los Angeles Times}, or the \textit{Chicago Tribune} and a day will not go by without an article about a business or businessperson who is facing charges or is being questioned about unethical conduct during the course of employment. As a businessperson, will you be able to take the moral high road, or be no different than the Voltaire quote above referring to the metaphorical unethical lower road?

In the first case, “The Shallow Pond,” the action you would take may be easier to determine, so at this point you will have passed the litmus test
for ethical decision making. Yet, when it meant facing unemployment by missing a class observation, which would result in you losing tenure, did you find your moral compass somewhat shakier? What about the second case, “The Envelope,” where there is no clear-cut answer, yet your response will affect the lives of thirty children, not one?

In the business world, you will be faced with a multitude of decisions every day. In each case, the course of action you take and how ethical this course of action is will differ, depending on the situation’s complexity and your own moral compass. The famous Greek philosopher Heraclitus once said, “You cannot step into the same river twice, for other waters are continually flowing on.” Each day we are faced with a changing river flow of ethical dilemmas and have to determine whether our personal desires or ego will compromise our personal moral compass. But as Aristotle believed, just because we fall down ethically one time, does not mean the next time faced with a similar situation, we cannot make the wiser, ethical choice.

“We only have a few rules around here, but we really enforce them.”
The purpose of this book is to examine your actions and compare them to the standards of morality that we would expect others in our situation would live up to. But, what or who determines these standards and whether we even want to fulfill them, is an even more complex issue. Furthermore, if we decide to follow these moral standards, how can we also satisfy the goals of our business or employer? Throughout this book, various approaches will be used to help answer these questions. Although there may not be any right or wrong answers, by applying some of the philosophies and approaches included in this book, and by reflecting upon your own motives before deciding on a particular course of action, it is expected that the quality of your decisions will be optimized for all parties affected by your decision, including yourself.

For purposes of discussion, I will first refer to a few terms: ethics, ethical dilemma, and values. Ethics is a branch of philosophy that identifies why and if a particular moral standard should be a moral standard. For example, telling the truth is a moral standard; so is paying one’s debts, not cheating one’s customers, and not stealing from a business. However, as stated, the study of ethics examines why and if a particular action should be a moral standard. Whether to miss a class in order to save a drowning child or attend the class and not save the child as discussed in the scenario earlier, is called an ethical dilemma. An ethical dilemma is a situation or decision where there is no obvious solution in terms of what is the right thing to do. In the study of ethics, the potential actions (such as whether to save the drowning child) are weighed against certain values. Values are those things you believe in and compare to one or more moral standards, which would enable you to make the most ethical choice. Examples of values include friendship, religion, and money. It has been said that Socrates believed that unexamined life is not worth living. In the following activity, you will be given the opportunity to examine your own values.
The Alligator River Story

Once upon a time there was a woman named Abigail who was in love with a man named Gregory. Gregory lived on the shore of a river. Abigail lived on the opposite shore of the river. The river that separated the two lovers was teeming with man-eating alligators. Abigail wanted to cross the river to be with Gregory. Unfortunately, the bridge had been washed out. So she went to Sinbad, a river boat captain, to take her across. He said he would be glad to if she would consent to go to bed with him preceding the voyage. She promptly refused and went to a friend named Ivan to explain her plight. Ivan did not want to be involved at all in the situation. Abigail felt her only alternative was to accept Sinbad’s terms. Sinbad fulfilled his promise to Abigail and delivered her into the arms of Gregory.

When she told Gregory about her amorous escapade in order to cross the river, Gregory cast her aside with disdain. Heartsick and dejected, Abigail turned to Slug for her tale of woe. Slug, feeling compassion for Abigail, sought out Gregory and beat him brutally. Abigail was overjoyed at the sight of Gregory getting his due. As the sun sets on the horizon, we hear Abigail laughing at Gregory.

You may want to discuss this with some of your classmates and friends and see who they believe was the most moral, and rank them to the least moral character. Responding to who you believe was the most or least moral identifies your values. Identifying why these are values reflects the study of ethics. Yet, how do we determine whose values are right or in the case of the Alligator River story, which character was most ethical? (See questions 1 to 3 at the end of the chapter.)
Moral Development

**Lawrence Kohlberg**

When analyzing what would be the “right” or ethical thing to do, we first need to understand how moral reasoning is developed. According to Piaget and, later on, Kohlberg and Gilligan, moral development is contingent upon the structure of one's thinking over time. One must pass through stages to make an ethical decision, and the higher the stage you are at, the more developed you are. In his landmark study on moral development, using only males, Lawrence Kohlberg developed six stages to identify levels of ethical development of an individual. These six stages were part of three levels: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional.

On the preconventional level, your decision making is based upon how you will benefit by your decision (i.e., motivated by selfishness). In Gilligan's model it is based upon what will others think of your decision (what will other people think?). In Kohlberg's model it is based upon whether you will be caught or not. We will use the characters of the “Alligator River Story” to exemplify Kohlberg's theory: If Abigail based her decision on the belief that Gregory would never find out, or if she did not go with Sinbad because Gregory would find out, she would be in the first stage. In the second stage, termed “instrumental-relativist orientation,” an action is taken that will benefit another individual only if this person obtains something in return. In this stage, you make a decision based upon whether you will be caught or not. We will use the characters of the “Alligator River Story” to exemplify Kohlberg's theory: If Abigail based her decision on the belief that Gregory would never find out, or if she did not go with Sinbad because Gregory would find out, she would be in the first stage. In the second stage, termed “instrumental-relativist orientation,” an action is taken that will benefit another individual only if this person obtains something in return. In this case, Sinbad demonstrated this stage since the only way he would help Abigail get across the river would be if she would return the favor by having sexual relations with him. In other words, I will do something for you, if I can expect eventually you will do something for me.

In the conventional level, we have the third stage, termed “interpersonal concordance,” where one does something ethical if he or she believes others will see them as “nice.” If Sinbad took Abigail to see Gregory, only because he wanted everyone to see him as a “good guy,” but would
not have done so if no one else would know that he helped Abigail, this would exemplify the third stage. The fourth stage, “law and order,” is based upon rules that society has set up. For example, if Sinbad lacked a license to cross the river and refused Abigail passage, even if it meant “life and death,” because he did not want to break the law, Sinbad would be categorized as being in the fourth stage.

In the postconventional level, the fifth stage appears, called the “social contract” stage. In this stage, there is the view that even though it is a law, it could possibly change given the circumstances (as opposed to not changing in the previous level). Using the example from the fourth stage, if Abigail had to cross the river because Gregory needed a kidney which she could donate, and Sinbad, who lacked a nautical license, took Abigail because he believed even if it was against the law, if he was caught and explained his situation, perhaps he would not be penalized for sailing without the required permit. The last stage, the “universal-ethical principle orientation,” is more like a Golden Rule concept of treating others as we would want to be treated and would even be willing to risk something of value to stand up for these rights. In this situation, let us assume the river was very treacherous, but the only way Gregory’s life may be saved would be to take Abigail on his boat. If Sinbad did so to save Gregory’s life, he would be on the highest stage of moral development according to Kohlberg’s theory.

**Carol Gilligan**

Carol Gilligan, who studied under Kohlberg, also developed a moral development model. However, because Kohlberg’s study only involved male subjects, women who were faced with some of Kohlberg’s standard decisions found themselves unable to go beyond the third or fourth stage of Kohlberg’s model. In her study, Gilligan included females and developed an alternative model, identifying the same three levels that
Kohlberg identified in his study, but differed in terms of the steps, which enabled females to score on the postconventional level, which they could not do under Kohlberg’s model. Gilligan found that girls who were faced with some of Kohlberg’s ethical dilemmas seldom went beyond the third or fourth stage of Kohlberg’s model.

Gilligan’s study uncovered a very important point. The reason females scored lower than their male counterparts under Kohlberg’s model was because women’s construction of a moral problem focuses upon their obligation to care for others and be responsible to maintain good relationships, as opposed to the males whose focus was on rules and justice, where caring for others played little, if any, role in moral decision making. So, those females who were faced with ethical dilemmas, using Gilligan’s model of moral development, were found to be on a higher level than if evaluated using Kohlberg’s model.

Gilligan’s model, like Kohlberg’s, had a preconventional level, marked by caring for oneself without regard to others, which she termed “caring for self.” However, before moving on to the next level, Gilligan identified a transitional period which she termed “selfishness and responsibility,” which recognized an attachment or connection to others. One example may be if Abigail felt it would be too much trouble to see Gregory but started to think about how disappointed Gregory may feel by not seeing her. In this transitional period, note how from being selfish, Abigail now weighs her responsibilities to others and may have second thoughts about not seeing Gregory, based upon his feelings.

Now, let us discuss another scenario demonstrating the “caring for others” conventional stage, where Abigail wants to see Gregory because he is so desperate to see her, so she will do anything necessary, in order not to disappoint him. Unfortunately, when she asks Sinbad to take her, he will only do so if she has sexual relations with him. Therefore, even though Abigail believes very strongly in being monogamous to Gregory, at the same time, she does not want Gregory to be disappointed. Complicating the situation more, what if she believes it may take years before the bridge can be rebuilt for her to see Gregory, can her action be seen as a higher level
of moral development than Kohlberg’s model would show? According to Gilligan, even though it (having relations with Sinbad) might be bad for Abigail, since it is good for Gregory (he will be able to see Abigail), by having sexual relations with Sinbad, Gilligan’s model might consider this action to be at the conventional level, as opposed to Kohlberg’s model who would consider it preconventional (instrumental relativist).\(^{13}\) It is at this point that Abigail could be entering the next transitional phase, “goodness to truth.”\(^{14}\) It should also be pointed out that having sexual relations with Sinbad may or may not be accepted by Gregory, but at the time her decision was made, Abigail’s thoughts were on doing whatever was necessary to see Gregory and not disappoint him.

This transitional phrase begins with a reconsideration of the relationship between oneself and others, where self-sacrifice in the service of caring for others is being dishonest to oneself.\(^{15}\) Take the example of a woman with five children who is pregnant by her husband. The husband then announces that he is leaving her and does not want to be married to her anymore. Assuming it is not against her religious beliefs to have an abortion, she realizes that by not having an abortion she would have six children, would not be able to take care of them or herself, but if by having an abortion, she could continue to work and provide a stable home that she could not if she had a sixth child. Using Abigail as an example, let us assume that if she had sexual relations with Sinbad, she would be depressed and would always feel dishonest, even though she knows that Sinbad would never tell Gregory. This awareness may lead her to refuse Sinbad’s offer and disappoint Gregory but would enable her to enter into the final level, postconventional, marked by the ethic of care and being responsible to oneself as to others.\(^{16}\) The best example to substantiate why this is the highest level of moral development hinges upon the belief that being selfless is not the same as being selfish. After all, if you have ever been on an airplane, during the demonstration of what happens if the oxygen mask falls down and you have a young child sitting next to you, the flight attendants always tells you to put the mask on yourself first and then on your child. Why? If you did not put it on yourself first, it is possible that you could pass out and would not be able to help your child and that would be irresponsible or selfish. The same
applies with this postconventional level because fully, morally developed individuals take care of themselves so they are able to take care of others.

## Comparing the Kohlberg and Gilligan Model

### Figure 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Kohlberg</th>
<th>Gilligan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preconventional</td>
<td>Stage 1: Punishment and obedience (&quot;If I don't get caught, I will do it.&quot;)</td>
<td>Caring for Self (&quot;If it is good for me, it was the right choice.&quot;)</td>
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<td>Stage 2: Instrumental-relativist orientation (&quot;I will do it for you, if you do something for me.&quot;)</td>
<td>Transitional period: Selfish to responsibility (&quot;Maybe I should think of others.&quot;)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>Stage 3: Interpersonal concordance (&quot;I better do it or others will think I am not nice.&quot;)</td>
<td>Caring for others (&quot;Even if it is bad for me, since it is good for you, I will do it.&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stage 4: Law and order (&quot;If it is a law, it has to be right.&quot;)</td>
<td>Transitional period: Goodness to truth (&quot;I wonder, if it is good for others, is it also good for me?&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postconventional</td>
<td>Stage 5: Social contract (&quot;It may be against the law, but maybe the law is not right.&quot;)</td>
<td>Ethics of care (&quot;It is alright to help yourself first, so you are able to help others.&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stage 6: Universal-ethical principle orientation (&quot;Despite personal risk, I must do the right thing to help others.&quot;)</td>
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The Moral Compass

The following chart (figure 1.2) identifies some of the approaches that may be taken when faced with an ethical dilemma such as the “Alligator River Story.” The first approach is biblical or religious law. But, can we use religion in all situations to determine which would be the best ethical course to take when faced with a decision such as the one Abigail encountered? To begin with, although most religions may look at Abigail’s actions with Sinbad as immoral (sexual relations before marriage), there are other ethical dilemmas that we cannot depend solely on religion to help us steer in the correct moral direction. For example, if Sinbad did not have any preconditions but told Abigail that he could only take her to see Gregory on a Saturday and she was a religious person of the Jewish faith, her action may be considered immoral if she sailed on this day. However, if she was a Roman Catholic, traveling on a Saturday would be permissible and not a breach of ethics from a religious point. Therefore, religion may not be an acceptable moral standard for everyone because with each different religion, there may be a difference in determining whether an act is ethical. Furthermore, if a person is an atheist or agnostic, are they exempt from any moral standards or is their bar of ethics any lower than those who practice their religions?

Perhaps, using constitutional or state law, as established and agreed upon by society, could be a potential measurement of morality. After all, if it is constitutionally sound or is statutorily permissible, why wouldn’t it be ethical? However, slavery, prohibition of women’s rights, and the prohibition of interracial marriages exemplifies why laws do not guarantee ethicality for every given situation.

For the same reason, moral realism cannot be deemed an ethical guide either, as there are several practices in business that have been practical because they are acceptable but are not ethical. Examples include: churning a client’s portfolio so you earn a commission for doing so; corporate raiding underpriced stocks and after purchasing the company, selling its assets for a profit while letting the firm’s employees go; or allowing international child labor in order to keep up with your competitor who also follows this practice.
Instead, maybe we can look at humankind and trust that all people have consciences and thus their guilt will prevent them from taking the unethical action. Guilt “is both a cognitive and an emotional experience that occurs when a person believes that he or she has violated a moral standard and is responsible for that violation.”17 After all, “have you ever done something unethical even though you knew it was wrong?” If you or anyone else you know responds affirmatively, it can be strongly argued that you cannot trust guilt (your conscience) to prevent you from conducting an immoral action.

Another approach may be moral relativism, which may be defined as “the idea that it is wrong to legislate morality because all morality is subjective.”18 Essentially, this approach may be seen either as each individual determines what constitutes an ethical action or society will determine the moral action to take in a given situation. The problem is that individuals may believe they are making moral decisions, when in fact they are not. Look at an individual who steals money from a company so his family may take a well, deserved vacation to Disneyland. Or, what about how certain societies believe a women should not be given the same opportunities as men? Both demonstrate why moral relativism is not an acceptable approach to determine the best ethical course of action when faced with an ethical dilemma.

This then bring us to our final approach, universal philosophy. There are certain philosophies that may be used and would be accepted in most societal circles. For example, Immanuel Kant believes that “you never treat humanity as a means but always at the same time an ends.”19 He believed that you do not use people and should their positions be reversed, would anyone want to be used for another’s advantage? Would you like to find out that the only reason someone wanted you to take them on a date was so you could drive them to their boyfriend's house only to leave you for him? There are several philosophies that could be applied and still be accepted universally. It is based upon this premise, which we will follow when deciding what the best ethical course of action would be when faced with an ethical dilemma.
The Moral Compass

Figure 1.2

Philosophy and Its Contemporary Branches

What is philosophy? Philosophy literally means “lover of wisdom” (philos, love; sophos, wisdom). However, in his book First Philosophy, Andrew Bailey best expressed what it means to be philosophical in the following passage:

To be philosophical is to continue to question the assumptions behind every claim until we come to our most basic beliefs about reality, and then to critically examine those beliefs. 20
It is believed that the first Western philosophers such as Thales, Xenophanes, Pythagoras, and Heraclitus lived on the banks of the Mediterranean more than 2,500 years ago, while the first Eastern philosophers such as Lao-Tzu were believed to have lived in China around the same time period. But, within the discipline of philosophy there are subdisciplines or branches within the field of knowledge. For purposes of brevity, I will discuss just a few of those branches.

The first is **epistemology**, which includes questions about knowledge, such as: What is knowledge? and How do we know what we know? Is something the truth or is it an opinion? A second branch of philosophy is metaphysics or ontology. **Metaphysics** (ontology) deals with questions of reality: What is appearance and what is real? What kind of reality does the universe have—it is mind or matter or some kind of spiritual being? What kind of reality do you have as a human being? In addition, it raises questions about our existence, such as: Are our lives predetermined or do we have free will?

**Axiology** is the branch of philosophy that deals with the study of values, which is why we have **political philosophy**, the examination of social values and the justification of various political institutions and political relations, as well as **aesthetics**, which is the philosophy of art or the value of beauty. This then leads to another form of philosophy, ethics. Whereas morality looks at what is right or wrong and focuses upon the standards of morality, **ethics** is the study of examining these standards and why something may be right or wrong. So, morality may determine that it is wrong to steal something from another human being. Yet, the study of ethics would look at why it is wrong to steal from another and whether it could be justifiable to steal from another person in a certain situation (e.g., stealing a rowboat to save a child from drowning).

The last branch of philosophy for our purposes of discussion is **logic**, first discovered by Aristotle in the fourth century BCE, it is a specialized branch of philosophical science that examines the science of valid defenses. One example would be as follows:
All men are mortal.
Socrates is a man.
Therefore, Socrates is mortal.  

If the first statements (called premises) are valid, then the final statement is valid (conclusion). Although, this is an elementary example, and the study of logic is more complex, by using logic when determining whether or not an action is moral, the discipline of ethics becomes more plausible. Next, we will explore some of the earlier Greek philosophers.

The First Philosophers

The first or pre-Socratic philosophers were credited with two developments: (1) enabling others to understand the world by their use of reason, without referring to religion and (2) encouraging their followers to use their own reason by thinking for themselves. As a result, they were the first teachers who did not teach dogmatically (unquestioned beliefs) but taught their students to discuss, argue, debate, and put their own ideas forward, in order to be scrutinized by others. Some of these earlier philosophers who will be briefly discussed in this next section are Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes of Miletus; Pythagoras of Samos; Heraclitus; and Parmenides. Because most early philosophers were men, following the first six pre-Socratics, we will review three female pre-BCE philosophers: Arignote of Samos, Aesara of Lucania, and Perictione I and II.

Thales of Miletus

In ancient history, seven men have been called sages or wise men and Thales was one of the first; he shared this title with Solon, Periander, Cleobulus, Chilon, Bias, and Pittacus. Thales of Miletus (625–545 BCE) was recognized generally as the first in history to define philosophy and did so by defining a philosopher as “one who looks for a rational explanation of his experience of reality, who tries to grasp the real as a matter of understanding, as opposed...to a magical, mythical, fictional...explanation of things.”
The philosophical question that challenged Thales was: “What is the world made of?” Although we now know that all material objects are reduced to energy, Thales believed the world was made of water and that the earth floated on a body of water, which was unbounded (not infinite since the concept had not yet created), and since life depended upon water, the source of all things had to have been water.

It has been said that Thales was the first to believe in the immortality of the soul, as well as being credited for declaring one of the most historical proverbs in philosophy as a response to the question, “What is most difficult?” in which he replied, “to know oneself.” Interestingly, some have credited Socrates with the proverb “Know thyself,” but many have attributed it to Thales. In addition, according to historical accounts of his life, it has been said that Thales discovered the seasons of the year, divided it into 365 days, and predicted the eclipses of the sun.

Yet, Thales was somewhat of an eccentric. There is one story in which he said that there were three blessings for which he was grateful to fortune: “first, that I was born a human being and not one of the brutes; next, that I was born a man and not a woman; thirdly, that I was born a Greek and not a barbarian.” There is a tale that once Thales accompanied a woman to observe the stars, but he fell into a ditch because he was not looking around, and his cry for help drew this retort, “How can you expect to know all about the heavens, Thales, when you cannot even see what is before your feet?”

However, it should be pointed out that philosophy is, among other things, “the attempt to find a single intuition of being, a single system of reality, that will synthesize and hold together the many facets of our specialized knowledge and social structure.” Although there was never any proof that Thales wrote anything, and his belief that water is what held everything together eventually in time proved wrong, he was the first person to be concerned with looking for explanations in terms of causal relationships between bodies in space and time, rather than solely a subjective association of ideas and will always be remembered for this innovative thinking.
Anaximander and Anaximenes of Miletus

As a pupil of Thales, the Milesian, Anaximander, was born around 611 BCE and is credited with being the first Greek to make a map, develop an instrument in the form of a sundial to measure off the seasons in Sparta, and engineer various types of models to duplicate and study the regularities of nature. This is believed to have led him to the more general idea that nature is regular and predictable, which he believed was natural law. Furthermore, although he had agreed with Thales in thinking that there is a common substance of which all things are composed, it was not water, but a “boundless something” (apeiron) that contained every sort of shape and quality and was without any definition or specific characteristics of its own.

Anaximander believed everything real in matter had definite qualities, where it would be hot in some cases, cold in others, sometimes wet, sometimes dry; however, these qualities were always in pairs. He felt that these opposites were warring with each other such as winter (the moist and cold) against the summer (hot and dry); the cycle of the seasons, and perhaps the day and night. In addition, he believed the earth to be in the center of the universe. However, it is this concept of opposites that had contemporary implications. The following quote epitomizes Anaximander’s concept of opposites: “according to necessity; for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the assessment of Time.” This has been used in modern-day tort law where the injury of one individual is compensated by the party responsible for the injury. So, if you steal $1,000 from your employer, you would be responsible for paying back that employer $1,000 (and perhaps the interest lost during the time you possessed the employer’s funds). Even if you wanted to apply it to criminal law, suppose someone stole $1,000 and it would take a person a month to earn it, the criminal who stole the money and could not repay it should spend a month in jail, which would be an appropriate penalty in terms of time to compensate for the crime. Oddly enough, this could be classified as an ethical concept.

Another early philosopher, Anaximenes, also from the Ionian region and a citizen of Milesia, was a protégé of Anaximander but believed that
all things originated from air. Anaximenes believed that when rarefied (made less dense), air became fire and when condensed it became wind, then cloud, then water, then earth, and then stone; so as condensation was a source of cold, rarefaction was a source of heat and because of his primary focus with the natural world, he was known as a “cosmologist,” like Thales and Anaximander. His theory of air was based upon an empirical argument of rarefaction: breath blown through compressed lips is cold, but with the mouth open, it becomes warm.” The next philosopher, Pythagoras, finds another solution to the question, What is the world made of?

Pythagoras

Pythagoras believed that the fundamental principles of the universe were derived from mathematical relations (a precursor to Albert Einstein's thinking a millennium later). Pythagoras is believed to have been born on Samos, an island off Miletus, on the Asia-Minor coast of what is now Turkey around 570 BCE and died in 497 BCE. Although it is agreed that his mother was Pythias, there is a myth that Pythagoras's father was the son of Apollo. However, most believed his father was Mnesarchus, husband to Pythias. Pythagoras is thought to be the first person who invented the term “philosophy” and who first applied the word “cosmos” to the universe.

Pythagoras believed that real things and their relationships are somehow expressible by numbers, if they are not numbers themselves. He believed there was a direct correlation between the unity of numbers and the unity of the universe. To validate this, Pythagoras observed that the interval between notes on the musical scale was expressed numerically, depending on the length of string required to produce these notes or sounds. He reasoned, if the physical length and tone were expressed by numbers, why can't the rest of the universe have this same relationship to numbers?

Pythagoras founded a religious community with a set of ascetic and ceremonial rules, the most famous of which was the prohibition of the eating of beans. He taught the doctrine of transmigration of souls,
which is the belief that human beings had souls separable from their bodies, and at death a person’s soul enters another body, not necessarily that of a human.\(^{58}\)

There is an anecdote that Pythagoras intervened in the beating of a dog by saying, “Stop! Cease your beating, because this is really the soul of a man who was my friend: I recognized it as I heard it cry aloud.”\(^{59}\) Pythagoras believed not only in the immortality of the soul but by following these religious rules you are pursuing holiness, which in turn means the pursuit of purification whereby the soul is released from the body.\(^{60}\) In addition, he contended that final perfection comes when the soul is freed from the body and united or reunited with the One (Unity).\(^{61a}\)

Pythagoras is known for several quotes, but this one demonstrates the importance of higher level thinking and is found in a book by Diogenes Laërtius: “the soul of a man is divided into three parts, intelligence, reason, and passion. Intelligence and passion are possessed by other animals, but reason by man alone.”\(^{61b}\) Later, in Chapter Four, you may notice how this resembles the thinking of the nineteenth-century philosopher, John Stuart Mill. Basically, this brings reasoning into the discussion of ethics and morals and how humankind is superior to lower level animals, in this respect.

**Heraclitus**

Heraclitus was born circa 540 BCE in Ephesus and died around 480 BCE.\(^{62}\) He was considered to be the most famous of the early Ionian philosophers based upon his often quoted statement, “You cannot step into the same river, for other waters are continually flowing on.” This statement has been interpreted to mean that everything (e.g., truth, knowledge) is in a constant state of flux.\(^{63}\) Given this statement is true and all things are in constant motion, Heraclitus then raised two questions: “What is the source of this unified motion?” and “What is the agency (means) where movement is provided?”\(^{64}\)

His view of the universe focused upon a concept that he termed “logos”—an untranslatable word which means “word”—but has connotations of
proportion and measure. Historically, it has also been translated to mean “law, reason, intelligence, and wisdom.” But regardless of its exact meaning, according to Heraclitus, the logos was the first principle of knowledge to the understanding of the world and represented a structure or pattern of the world, which was concealed from the eyes of an ordinary person. This could be seen as the first seeds of epistemological thought, a branch of philosophy not yet developed.

Heraclitus also believed that the logos was the first principle of existence and that the unity of the world as we know it is a process of maintaining a balance between tightening and retracting, much like the shooting of a bow and arrow. His vision of the universe was that enemies sustain their hate through their animosity toward each other much like war, which is inseparable to peace; therefore, we must continue to fight our enemies in order to attain peace.

He also thought the three principal elements of nature were fire, earth, and water. However, of the three, he believed that fire was the primary element controlling and modifying the other two. In Heraclitus’s cosmology, fire had the role that water had for Thales and that air had for Anaximenes. Furthermore, he believed that the virtuous soul could survive the death of its physical body and eventually would rejoin the cosmic fire. Curiously, the process of separation and unity (exemplifying Heraclitus’s opposites) mirrored the Eastern philosophical concept of the yin and yang and demonstrated that the dynamism between opposites was the driving force for the external conditions of the universe. Is it possible that this was the planting of another seed for a branch in philosophy called metaphysics, which examines the nature of one’s existence? The next philosopher we will discuss is considered to be the founder of metaphysics. His name is Parmenides.

**Parmenides**

Although not much is known of Parmenides’ life, it is believed that he was born around 510 BCE, died circa 440 BCE, and was originally from Elea, a Greek city on the coast of Italy. Unlike his predecessors, instead of devoting himself to cosmology, Parmenides dedicated his study to metaphysics, or “the study of issues beyond the physical world such as:
the meaning of life, the existence of free will, the nature of the mind, and the possibility of life after death. His works influenced Plato who dedicated one of his writings, *Parmenides*, on his behalf.

Whereas Heraclitus argued that everything changes and denied that anything can stay the same or that permanence exists in the world, Parmenides believed that permanence is the fundamental character of reality. He believed that reality must be eternal and unchanging and therefore the changing world of our experience cannot be real and is actually an illusion. In his poem, “Way of Truth,” a goddess reveals to Parmenides that “the unshaken heart of well rounded Truth,” is actually reality and that “the opinions of mortals in which is not true belief at all,” are the changing untruths. Parmenides’ distinction between appearance and reality and between opinion and knowledge led to Plato’s doctrine that the sensible world is lower in degree of reality than the world of intelligence.

In the English language just as we tend to use the same word such as “dying” as a verb (he is dying) or as a noun (the dying), the Greeks did the same thing but more often. So, when the Greek philosophers would write “being” as a noun or as a verb “to be,” it could be quite confusing especially since there are translations involved as well. To distinguish the difference between the noun and the verb, when discussing Parmenides’ topic “being” it will be written with a capital *B* meaning whatever is engaged in being (as opposed to “being” in lowercase letters, which indicates “to be”).

Now back to Parmenides, what did he mean by “Being” (for something to be)? When Parmenides refers to Being, he defines it as more than just existing. In the first four lines of his poem, which follows below, Parmenides believes if Being is that of which something is true (be / is), then Unbeing is that of which nothing is true, in other words, cannot exist (cannot be / is not):

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What you can call and think must Being be
For Being can, and nothing cannot, be.
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Never shall this prevail that Unbeing is;  
Rein in your mind from any thought like this.

Unbeing you won’t grasp—it can’t be done—  
Nor utter; being thought and being are one.  

However, if something does not exist, it must be something or else it cannot be thought of. For example, have you ever been “daydreaming” and someone asks what you have been thinking about and you say nothing or you cannot remember? So, does this mean that because you do not remember what you were thinking it did not exist? And, if it did exist, how can nothing exist?

Where many have accepted the principle “nothing can come from nothing,” Parmenides expanded this by believing that Being has no beginning and no end and cannot be subject to change.

Where Heraclitus may have believed that when water boils it changes to air, it is the death of water and the birth of air; while for Parmenides it is not changing from a Being to an Unbeing but changes within Being not changes of Being. Therefore, Being is real or truth which is why one part of his poem is entitled “Way of Truth,” while the world of senses or change was reflected in the second part of his poem, “Way of Seeming.” The question now facing many philosophers is which of the two theorists were correct, Heraclitus or Parmenides?

In early Greek history, there was a group of sages or wisemen called Sophos, who freely gave out their wisdom and would practice what many considered the earlier stages of philosophy throughout each of their wakening moments. Their predecessors, known as Sophists, were paid to help their students think philosophically; and since these iterant philosophers traveled from place to place to find students who would pay fees for their services, the word sophisticated resulted from them. The next chapter will discuss some of these Sophists.
Arignote

Women were part of the Pythagorean societies and have been believed to play a major role in the development of early Pythagorean philosophy. Scholars believe that Pythagoras developed much of his philosophical doctrines from Themistoclea, the priestess at Delphi (circa 600 BCE). Arignote, daughter of Pythagoras, describes how mathematical relationships can link what is real with all that exists:

..the eternal essence of number is the most providential (n.b. the guardianship of G-d over his creatures) cause of the whole heaven, earth and the region in between. Likewise it is the root of the continued existence of the gods and daimones (demons), as well as that of divine men.

Arignote was born in 500 BCE, and was educated in the Pythagorean School known for the study of mathematics and its role in the order of the universe, which includes astronomy. Not much is known about Arignote except that she believed the numbers 1,2,3, and 4 and their relationships to other numbers support her philosophy that the numbers are central to the origin of all order. She wrote on behalf of her mentor, as did many disciples of the time, which in this case was her father.

Aesara

Aesara was a Pythagorean philosopher born in Lucania, the southern part of Italy, sometime between 425 and 100 BCE, during the time when it was believed that her fragment of work, On Human Nature, was written. The passage that appears below describes her philosophy of the tripartite (divided into three parts) of the human soul, which consists of reason or mind, spiritedness, and desire.

Human nature seems to me to provide a standard of law and justice both for the home and for the city. By following the tracks within himself whoever seeks will make a discovery; law is in him and justice, which is the orderly arrangement of the soul. Being threefold,
it is organized in accordance with triple functions: that which effects judgment and thoughtfulness is (the mind), that which effects strength and ability (high spirit), and that which effects love and kindliness is desire. These are all so disposed relatively to one another that the best part is in command, the most inferior is governed, and the one in between holds a middle place; it both governs and is governed.  

Aesara believed that it is important to understand the three parts of the soul. She believed that one part should not dominate another part for harmony to occur for an individual, family, or society. For example, if you need to lease an automobile as transportation to school or work, using reason, it would be better to lease a 2015 Jeep Wrangler than a 1999 Jeep Wrangler with over 250,000 miles, with poor brakes and a mechanically unsound transmission. If you would enjoy driving the new Jeep, knowing it was dependable and affordable, your desire to work overtime would be a good choice. Your spirited part would make sure you lease something you could afford and not let your passion to lease a $1.7 million 2015 Bugatti Veyron 16.4 automobile be dominated by the desire part.

**Perictione**

Many scholars question whether Perictione was Plato’s mother or a student of Plato. Although it is believed there were two writings by a Perictione, one called “On the Harmony of Women” (Perictione I) and the other “On Wisdom” (Perictione II), we will concentrate on the first work by Perictione I. The passage below originates from “On the Harmony of Women,” written by Periction I:

One must deem the harmonious woman to be full of wisdom and self control; a soul must be exceedingly conscious of goodness to be just and courageous and wise, embellished with self-sufficiency and hating empty opinion. Worthwhile things come to a woman from these...if...such a woman should govern cities and tribes...
Having mastery over appetite and high feeling she will be righteous and harmonious; no lawless desires will impel her. …Women who eat and drink every costly thing, who dress extravagantly, are ready for the sin of every vice….The woman who seeks these things seeks these things an admirer of feminine weakness. It is beauty that comes from wisdom, not from these things, that gratifies women who are well born.93

In this passage, Perictione addresses what a woman must do to be moral and at the same establishes her beliefs that women have the ability to rule their cities as well. It should also be noted that moderation or temperance is included in this philosophy, which was also espoused by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Perictione establishes the philosophy that excess is a vice and wisdom is more important than one’s attire. Perhaps one could say, it is the woman who makes the clothes, not the clothes that makes the woman.

“On the Harmony of Woman” was written sometime between 425 and 300 BCE, when some scholars believe her brother (Charmides) and uncle (Critas), both friends of Socrates, were listed as the “Thirty Tyrants” who ruled Athens during the brief oligarchy at the end of the Peloponnesian War. Perictione and her husband Ariston (Plato’s father) had four children: Ademantus, Glaucon, Plato, and Potone (their only girl).94

Potone became the mother of Speusippus, who eventually took over Plato’s Academy upon his death, instead of Plato’s best student Aristotle who was not born in Athens.95

Although little is known about the other Perictione (II), including her actual name, she is credited with writing “On Wisdom,” which discusses the importance of mathematics and its relationship to the world. However, this fragment from her essay below establishes the belief of humankind’s contemplation as an avenue to wisdom:

Mankind came into being and exists in order to contemplate the principle of the nature of the whole.
The function of wisdom is to gain this very thing.... It is appropriate to wisdom to be able to see and to contemplate those attributes which belong universally to all things...wisdom searches for the basic principles of all things....Therefore...this person seems to be the wisest and most true and, moreover, to have discovered a noble height... 

Summary

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that examines the reasons why certain actions are considered moral. However, it first must be determined what the values are of the decision maker in order to better understand why one action was taken compared to another action for the same situation. Values are what are considered to be important to an individual. The next step is to identify the reasons certain actions or even values would be categorized in terms of moral development. Two psychologists—Lawrence Kohlberg and his protégé Carol Gilligan—identified what they believed to be three different levels of moral development; Kohlberg’s subjects were male and Gilligan’s were female. Although the outcome was different depending upon which model was used, another question arises: What can you use as a moral standard to determine whether one individual’s value is better than another individual’s value?

After assessing some moral standards, such as biblical or religious law, Constitutional or state law, moral realism, guilt and moral relativism, and recognizing conflict in all of these standards, the best approach to decision making is to apply universally accepted philosophies when measuring whether a particular action would be categorized a being ethical.

Branches of philosophy include metaphysics, epistemology, axiology, aesthetics, ethics, and logic, among others. Early male philosophers helped to shape the modern-day discipline of philosophy. The first was Thales, considered by many to be one of the seven sages or wisemen. He questioned what the universe consisted of, and ultimately came up with the solution that everything was comprised of water.
Anaximander believed that the universe was made up of a “boundless something” (apeiron) which contained every sort of shape and quality and was without any definition or specific characteristics of its own. Anaximenes, a protégé of Anaximander, disagreed with his mentor and believed that all things originated from air. Another philosopher, Pythagoras, believed that the fundamental principles of the universe were derived from mathematical relations. Philosopher Heraclitus raised two questions: What is the source of this unified motion, and what is the agency (means) where movement is provided? He believed that everything changed from earth, fire, and water, but fire was the primary source of change. Parmenides believed that everything, like the truth, did not change and whatever changes would not be real or an illusion. This was the basis for a later known philosopher, by the name of Plato, who used these concepts to further the theories.

In terms of female philosophers, Pythagoras’s daughter, Arignote, supported the belief in the importance of numbers and their relationship to the origin of the natural world and causal effects. Aesara of Lucania believed that for harmony to occur between an individual and family or society, the three parts of the soul (reason, desire, and spirit) must be equally applied when making a decision, for allowing one part to dominate another part, could have a detrimental effect on the outcome. Another philosopher, Perictione I, addressed what a woman must do to be moral and at the same established her beliefs that women have the ability to rule their cities as well. Perictione II established the belief of humankind’s contemplation as an avenue to wisdom, thus concluding this section on first philosophers.
Key Terms

**Aesthetics:** basically, the philosophy of art or the value of beauty.

**Axiology:** the branch of philosophy that deals with the study of values.

**Conventional level:** according to Kohlberg’s model, it is based upon when you are making a decision. The deciding factor is what others think of your decision. (What will other people think?) In Gilligan’s model, it is based upon doing what is best for others and detrimentally neglecting yourself.

**Epistemology:** includes questions about knowledge, such as: What is knowledge? and How do we know what we know?

**Ethical dilemma:** a situation or decision affecting others when there may not be an obvious solution in terms of what is the right thing to do.

**Ethics:** a branch of philosophy that identifies why and if a particular moral standard should be a moral standard.

**Logic:** a specialized branch of philosophical science first discovered by Aristotle in the fourth century BCE which examines the science of valid defenses.

**Metaphysics** (or ontology): deals with questions of reality: What is appearance? and What is real?

**Philosopher:** one who looks for a rational explanation of his or her experience of reality, who tries to grasp the real as a matter of understanding, as opposed to a magical, mythical, fictional explanation of things; means a lover of wisdom.

**Philosophy:** a discipline in which philosophers continue to question the assumptions behind every claim and the most basic beliefs about reality, and then to critically examine those beliefs.

**Political philosophy:** the examination of social values and the justification of various political institutions and political relations.

**Postconventional level:** according to the Kohlberg model, the determining factor when making a decision is based upon a higher level of development when you act in a manner for the good of humankind, and your motivation is not for any personal reward or motivated by what others may think. In the Gilligan model, it is putting yourself ahead of others, not to be selfish but to be selfless.

**Preconventional level:** based upon when you are making decisions in which the determining factor is how you are benefited by that decision (i.e., motivated by selfishness).

**Values:** ideals you believe in and are then compared to one or more moral standards, which would enable you to make the most ethical choice (e.g., friendship, religion, money).
Chapter Review Questions

1. What is philosophy? How does Andrew Bailey define philosophy in this chapter?
2. What are some of the branches of philosophy? Define at least two of them.
3. Why can we rely more on universal philosophies to use as moral standards than on biblical or religious law, constitutional or state laws, moral realism, guilt, or moral relativism? Explain the advantage of using universal philosophies and give examples of why some of the others may not be used by everyone.
4. How does Kohlberg’s theory differ from Gilligan’s theory of moral development? Discuss specifically why the female subjects scored lower in their moral development using Kohlberg’s model and higher using Gilligan’s model.
5. Who are some of the first philosophers and how did their philosophies differ? Respond to this question by describing the philosophies of at least three of these philosophers.

Case Review Questions

Answer the following from “The Shallow Pond” found on page 1.
1. Would you save the child or attend the lecture on time? Explain your response.
2. If your weekly lecture was being observed by your Department Chair in order to make a decision on tenure for a Board meeting the following day (a decision on tenure means either you earn a permanent position with the college or you lose your job), would you still save the child? Explain your response.
3. What if the job market was so poor and your were the sole wage earner for your family of four, that being rejected for tenure would lead to unemployment, would you still save the child? Explain your response.

Answer the following from “The Envelope” found on page 2.
1. Would you send the $100 if you had the money? If not, why were you willing to save one child from drowning in a pond but not save the thirty children by donating $100? Explain your responses.
2. Which of your values played a role in your decisions?
3. Which of your values played a role in your decisions for the “The Shallow Pond”?
4. Did the values used in “The Shallow Pond” conflict with those from “The Envelope”? If so, how can you justify this conflict?
Answer the following from “The Alligator River Story” found on page 5.

1. Who do you think was the most moral? Why?
2. Who do you think was the least moral? Why?
3. List in order of morality (the most moral first, the next most moral person second) all five of the characters. Then, compare your list with other members in the class. Can you come to a consensus?

**Endnotes**


1b Ibid. (modified by author).


6 Ibid., 54-55.

7 Ibid., 55.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.


12 Ibid., 74.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., 82.

15 Ibid., 82-83.

16 Ibid., 74, 84.


21 Ibid., 1.


24 Ibid., 20.

25 Ibid.


27 Ibid.


32 Ibid, 2.
33 Ibid, 25, 37.
34 Ibid, 41.
36 Ibid., 35.
37 Ibid.
41 Ibid., 23.
42 Ibid., 20.
43 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
52 Ibid., 11.
55 Ibid., 13-14.
56 Ibid., 14.
58 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
61a Ibid.
68 Ibid.
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72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., 16.
78 Ibid., 11.
80 Ibid., 9-10.
81 Ibid., 11.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.

85 Ibid., 11.
86 Ibid., 12.
88 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
92 Ibid., 71.
93 Ibid., 32-33.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.