

Raymundo, Jino

ITETHIC

Book: Contemporary Moral Problems

Title: Chapter 1: Ethical Theories (John Rawls: A Theory of Justice)

Internet Reference:

<http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Learning Expectations:

What theories can be derived from justice?

Will justice help people?

Quote:

"In justice as fairness the original position of equality corresponds to the state of nature in the traditional theory of the social contract. This original position is not, of course, thought of as an actual historical state of affairs, much less as a primitive condition of culture. It is understood as a purely hypothetical situation characterized so as to lead to a certain conception of justice."

Book Review:

- The society today has given enough liberty, at least for me. I don't think I'm missing on something. I am very happy and contented with my life right now. I believe I have never violated any law. And I also believe I wasn't of any nuisance to any other people. Here in the Philippines, there exists no equal society. A pyramid exists in this society. "You can go higher, only if you step on to someone". Special favors are enjoyed by people with "connections". Such privileges can entitle one to job opportunities; permit to do unlawful acts, a shortcut to something, etc. The government fails to regulate such activities because most people in the government are tied up with those "connections". The government is the biggest Mafia group here in this country. Those who oppose them are treated accordingly. I believe it would take another 20 years to fix our country. Hope springs eternal to those who believe.

What I have learned:

I have accepted the fact that all people will not think the same.

Integrity Questions:

1. What are the two principles of justice?
2. Do you agree on Rawls?

Review Questions:

1. Carefully explain Rawl's conception of the original position.

- Original position is a hypothetical that aims to define what principles of justice that would be present in a liberated society.

2. State and explain Rawl's first principle of justice.

- The first principle according to John Rawls is equal liberty. This proposes the maximization of each and everyone's rights.

3. State and explain the second principle. Which principle has priority such that it cannot be sacrificed?

- The second principle states that, to achieve equality, one must help those who have the least advantage in life.

Discussion Questions:

1. On the first principle, each person has an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty as long as this does not interfere with a similar liberty for others. What does this allow people to do? Does it mean, for example, that people have a right to engage in homosexual activities as long as they don't interfere with others? Can people produce and view pornography if it does not restrict anyone's freedom? Are people allowed to take drugs in the privacy of their homes?

- This allows people to act on their own. Each person is the judge of his or her own actions. For as long as he doesn't damage rights and disobey the law.

2. Is it possible for free and rational persons in the original position to agree upon different principles than those given by Rawl's? For example, why wouldn't they agree to an equal distribution of wealth and income rather than an unequal distribution? That is, why wouldn't they adopt socialism rather than capitalism? Isn't socialism just as rational as capitalism?

- No two people are exactly the same. This question brings up the thought of communism. Sure, it would be a better place to live in if all were earning the same amount. But, there have to be a hierarchy. It is inevitable. It is the nature of man.